

THE TALAKAWA TESTIMONIES

**Saturday
18th October, 2008
20th Shawwal 1429**

Jigawa State Government of Nigeria



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Introduction

On October 18, 2008, history was made in Dutse the capital of Jigawa State where the Talakawa Summit^{*}, organized by the Jigawa State Government in partnership with select national and international NGOs viz ActionAid International-Nigeria, Global Call for Action Against Poverty, the UN Millennium Campaign Against Poverty, the Centre for Democracy and Development and the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) was held at the old State Library. During the summit, randomly selected men and women of the toiling masses from the 27 local government areas in the state captured, in their own words, the reality of their lives before Governor Sule Lamido, His Eminence, the Sultan of Sokoto, representatives of international donor agencies, of the Nigerian power elite and, indeed the world since the event was televised live by both the Nigerian Television Authority and the African Independent Television.

The Talakawa summit, though unprecedented in the annals of contemporary Nigerian history, has historical and ideological antecedent. The ideological basis of the Sule

^{*} *Talakawa* (plural) and *Talaka* (singular) are Hausa words which mean “the poor, the deprived, and the underprivileged” in the economic sense. This meaning is employed in the entire report.

Lamido-led government that was behind the Talakawa Summit could be located within a radical and pro-poor political heritage created and sustained by the two foremost Nigeria's political parties of the first and second republics namely; the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) and its successor, the People's Redemption Party (PRP). Governor Sule Lamido himself publicly alluded to the ideological background of his government in Jigawa State in his inaugural speech delivered on May 29, 2007 where he said:

Let me, therefore, at this juncture, state the ideological background of the leadership of this new government. It is firmly anchored on the antecedent of Democratic Humanism as defined and epitomized by its chief exponent, Mallam Aminu Kano. That is the only ideological framework by which this government can satisfy the yearnings of the vast majority of our people whom poverty and misery have reduced to conditions unworthy of human beings. These are the people for whom life has, in the words of the People's Redemption Party, (PRP) "been a sad chronicle of unfulfilled promises, dashed hopes and

unrealized expectations” (Lamido Sule, *Expanding the Frontiers of Democracy in Jigawa State*, May 29, 2007:10).

Surely, going by this stated historical antecedent of the new government in Jigawa State, there seems to be an unbroken link between Sa'adu Zungur, Mallam Aminu Kano, Mohammed Abubakar Rimi and Sule Lamido. They are united by the ideological commitment that has at all times stood for the “elimination of some of the historical nightmares of the Talakawa”- poverty, ignorance and diseases, among others. It is an ideological orientation that consistently focuses on the enthronement of a new social order in which the poor and the down-trodden would have a dominant presence in the economic and political system.

Historically, as is well known, the NEPU/PRP politics is rooted in the struggle towards the emancipation of the oppressed and exploited masses. From the 1950s, NEPU struggled against colonialism and the indirect rule system, which was symbolized by the Native Authority (N.A.) under the emirs in northern Nigeria and which flourished on the denial of all rights to the masses. Then in the 1980s, its successor, the PRP struggled toward redeeming the masses (*Talakawa*) from oppression, discrimination, hunger, disease, ignorance. The focus of this particular brand of politics revolved around the needs and aspirations of the masses. Indeed, the life-time concern and commitment of

the NEPU/PRP activists has been the welfare of the Talakawa.

It is against this historical background that one can understand the first policy pronouncement of Governor Sule Lamido and its linkage with that of his political contemporaries the two PRP governors of Kano and Kaduna during their inaugural speeches in 2007 and 1979 respectively. The two PRP governors in 1979 announced the abolition of the hitherto oppressive *Jangali* and *haraji* taxes, and Sule Lamido in 2007 announced a new policy that entitles physically challenged persons to a monthly allowance of N7000, which is above the United Nations anti-poverty recommendation of one dollar a day. These actions were concrete manifestations of the historic commitment toward the emancipation of the Talakawa dating back to the NEPU days.

Accordingly, guided by the above ideological background the new government of Jigawa State rejects the traditional top-down approach of addressing poverty, whereby the elite and super elite discuss, formulate, and implement policies on poverty without consulting the poor. It is the belief of the Jigawa State Governor Sule Lamido, that no such programme can be credible without the full consultation and involvement of the *Talakawa*, by getting to know their situation, their worries and their suggestions on how to solve their problems. This had been the consistent stand of

the late Malam Aminu Kano and all NEPU/PRP activists. The *Talaka* is the pillar of democracy; he has the power of the vote and therefore deserves to be served by elected leaders. He who wears the shoe knows where it pinches.

Against this background, the Jigawa State Government convened the Jigawa Talakawa Summit on 18th October, 2008. Present at the summit were representatives of the poor across 51 vocational groups of the state, which included physically challenged persons, blacksmiths, fishermen, fish sellers, wood carvers, weavers, locally processed sweet makers, grain sellers, labourers, barbers, hide tanners, shoe shiners, brick layers, tailors, drivers, commercial motorcyclists, welders, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, vulcanisers, nail cutters, hide sellers, painters, peasant farmers, cart pushers, laundry men, water hawkers, construction workers, food sellers, groundnut oil producers, traditional birth attendants and pormade makers. Others present were lumberjarks, recycled material collectors, herbalists, hawkers, dyers, hunters, fruit sellers, floor mat weavers, bakers, gardeners, vegetable sellers, women petty traders, firewood sellers, cow milk sellers, butchers, and clay pot makers. Invited participants at the summit were traditional rulers, community and religious leaders, political leaders, national and international NGOs, MDAs, development partners and more than 20,000 *Talakawa*.

The objective of the Talakawa Summit was to provide an opportunity for the voiceless poor to speak on poverty and suggest how best to address it. This is a critique of elitist policy formulations that are not based on actual experience of poverty but on distant speculation. It was essentially assumed that, unless the dynamic experiences of the meat seller who, however, eats without a piece of meat in his meal, the mother who experienced the death of her children on account of malaria or the woman who has seen her neighbour die in the process of delivery are captured, the war on poverty will continue to be based on distant speculation of policy makers. Specifically, therefore, the objectives of the summit included, among others:

1. To provide a platform whereby the poor and those who experience poverty most would capture the reality of their existence in their own words.
2. To generate, collect and collate the Talakawa input on how to eradicate/alleviate poverty in all its ramification.
3. To use the Talakawa testimonies and narratives about the nature, dimension, manifestation and remedies to their plight with a view to adopting implementable measures that can address the phenomenon of poverty in Jigawa State.

The Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence Sa'ad Abubakar III in his speech expressed solidarity with the objectives of the summit and read out the Poverty Pledge, which urges consistent and unalloyed commitment to fighting poverty by empowering the poor and promoting justice rather than merely providing charity.

Elder statesmen who had been involved all their lives in the struggle for the emancipation of the *Talakawa* through the instrumentality of NEPU/PRP gave inspirational speeches, reminding those at the helm of affairs that they were enjoying the fruits of decades of sacrifice and martyrdom by others. With the war against political domination and oppression won, it is time to launch a renewed war against poverty and want. They called on the *Talakawa* to challenge their elected representatives to prevent the siphoning of public funds. They condemned any form of oppression of the *Talakawa*.

It is pertinent to conclude this introduction by acknowledging the support and cooperation of several individuals, groups, and institutions in the successful conduct of the *Talakawa* Summit*. It is not possible to mention every individual or group due to limitations of space. A few, however, deserve a special mention due to their primary role at the Summit. Among these are His Excellency, the Governor of Jigawa State, Alhaji Sule Lamido whose initiative the *Talakawa* Summit was and

whose leadership of the process guaranteed the success of the summit; the Deputy Governor, Alhaji Ahmed Mahmoud Gumel; the Speaker and members of the Jigawa state House of Assembly who actively participated in organizing the Summit; the Secretary to the State Government, Dr. Aminu Abdullahi Taura; the Chief of Staff, Alhaji Aminu Ringim, also deserve special commendation for their active role in organizing the Talakawa Summit; members of the State Executive Council; Special Advisers and Assistants to the Governor as well as chairmen of local government councils.

Next comes the Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III whose presence at the Summit completed the power elite, the civil society and the traditional authority triad against poverty. This trans-class alliance against poverty was concretised at the summit by His Eminence leading several emirs, Governor Sule Lamido, civil society leaders and politicians in the year's *Stand Up Against Poverty* to read the pledge.

Worthy of acknowledgement also are members of the Jigawa traditional institution particularly the Emirs of Hadejia, Gumel, Kazaure, Ringim, and Dutse, Muslim clerics, as well as opinion and community leaders. Special appreciations also go to the Judiciary of Jigawa State headed by the Chief Judge Alhaji Tijjani Abubakar, and the Grand Khadi of the Sharia Court of Appeal, Alhaji Munir Mustapha. Jigawa State indigenes in the diaspora, who

were able to contribute to the success of this event through whatever means are as well duly acknowledged. In particular, we refer to Jigawa State members of the National Assembly, as well those working with the Federal Executive and the Judiciary.

Over forty governmental and non-governmental organizations dealing with poverty, employment, and empowerment who attended the Summit, particularly the partners viz ActionAid International-Nigeria, Global Call for Action Against Poverty, the UN Millennium Campaign Against Poverty, the Centre for Democracy and Development and the Centre for Information Technology and Development-CITAD. To this list is added the office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs for its invaluable support. We also sincerely thank representatives of International donor agencies for participating in this noble enterprise.

Special appreciations go to the trio of the NEPU/PRP icons who set the tone of this summit with their inspirational speeches. These are Alhaji Lili Gabari, veteran politician; Alhaji Mudi Sipikin, the poet of the masses; and Alhaji Tanko Yakasai, the politician with a difference. The over 50 representatives of the poor who gave the insights on the plight of the poor are hereby acknowledged and commended for the eloquent and articulate manner they accomplished the task of capturing their existence which

they must have been murmuring to themselves and their Lord, or shared with their intimate friends only. Worthy also of mention and commendation are members of the two committees charged with the responsibility of conducting this summit. The coordinating committee headed by His Excellency the Governor, Alhaji Sule Lamido, and the communiqué committee headed by the SSG, Dr. Aminu Abdullahi.

We acknowledge the mass media for the quality of publicity given to the summit as well as the security and the law enforcement agencies for their roles in the entire process. May Allah help us achieve the noble objectives of the Talakawa Summit, amen.

Section One: Speeches

Welcome Address by the Governor, Alhaji Sule Lamido

In the name of Allah, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. His Excellency the Deputy Governor, Jigawa State; His Eminence the Sultan and Successor to Usmanu Fodiyo as Commander of the Muslim faithful; Speaker of Jigawa State House of Assembly; The Chief Justice of Jigawa State; our Special Guest of Honour, also representing the President of the Republic, who is also chairing this effort to join hands with the *Talakawa* to fight poverty, the Emirs within the state, Emir of Hadejia, Emir of Kazaure, Emir of Gumel, Emir of Ringim, Emir of Dutse, and representative of my friend the Niger State Governor who is chairman of Forum of 19 Northern States' Governors, members of the National and State Assemblies and representatives of invited stakeholders, who came in solidarity and to make a positive contribution to building a virile community; and representatives of the international community and the United Nations, its agencies, NGOs and related foundations and banks whose *raison d'être* is the very essence of what we are gathered here for, along with other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, *Assalamu alaikum* (peace be upon you all).

The issues I will be raising here will not be new, because they have been discussed in radio broadcasts time and again. So why are we gathered here today? The Master of Ceremony (MC) has said that we are here as part of efforts to uplift the lives of fellow Nigerians, especially the poor

people of Jigawa State. In this very arena present are some of these very servants of God, called the *Talakawa*; also present are elected leaders like us, occupying posts from the Governorship to membership of state assemblies and chairmen of local governments. Our royal fathers, who shoulder the burden of leading the whole community and guiding it to uphold the best conduct as derived from history, are also here. Also present here is the Council of learned scholars of Jigawa State, made up of prominent scholars from all shades of opinion and schools of thought, who perform the duty given to them in the spiritual realm of guiding the faithful to right conduct based on what Allah (God) has ordered. Still in this arena are elderly members of the intelligentsia, who for upwards of 40 years have been involved in running a modern polity, in form of retired ministers, retired directors-general and other top government functionaries who had been active forty plus years back. Above all, His Eminence the Sultan is also in our midst.

At the heart of this gathering is a break with the past, where we elites used to gather all by ourselves to speculate on “what is poverty”, “what is hunger”, “how devastating can poverty be?” Alas, the much rarified atmosphere of such gatherings, so far removed from the grassroots makes it near impossible to grasp either the true nature or the devastation caused by poverty. I therefore thought it is time there is a paradigm shift, instead of having the usual

gathering of the elites talking to each other, far removed from the grassroots, as is the practice the world over, why don't we invite the poor, why don't we give a listening ear to the poor we the religious scholars, the traditional rulers, the government functionaries, the development partners and aid agencies? Let us all listen to them. We have experts with the technical know-how to solve the problems that may be afflicting these poor citizens. They have this theoretical knowledge that they have amassed. But let them too listen, after listening they can now come up with an agenda or a list of activities that would be implemented as a remedial action by those of us elected to lead, along with the religious scholars who preach, and the traditional rulers and all others too. From there, we will be in a position to lay a foundation, in beginning to truly discharge the trust given to us by God as leaders of our people. Therefore this day is for these servants of God the *Talakawa*; it is not our day. We the elites have been proffering solutions to their problems to no avail. Today therefore, we should listen to them.

I am thus making a strong appeal to the leaders gathered here, namely religious leaders, traditional rulers, elected representatives, the educated elite and development partners that we should be patient with what will be said. We only invited the *Talakawa* to say their minds, we have not coached them. We have not asked them to say this or that, but they will say it as they find it fit. Therefore, they may be carried away by their objective condition, and by

emotion; they may use words that may be construed as “rude” by rulers or leaders. But these words might not have been intended as such, being part of their repertoire of life to enable us to be educated and to take necessary action needed. And let us note that they may not speak like the literati, with sentence structure all correct, tenses and grammar all in order rather they will be direct and perhaps raw in their speech. We should therefore be patient with their manners; in fact their rawness is the icing on the cake of why we are gathered here today. It is my fervent prayer that we will have a peaceful summit. I once again welcome all of you to this extraordinary summit.

Address by the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III

I seek refuge in Allah from Satan, the accursed. All praises and thanks are due to Allah the Lord of Glory, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. May peace and blessings of Allah be upon His messenger Muhammad, together with his companions and his family. May the mercy of Allah be upon the revivalist Shehu Usman Dan Fodiyo along with his assistants and all those who followed their path, till the day of judgement. His Excellency, the Jigawa State Governor, the Governor of the *Talakawa*, distinguished guests especially the *Talakawa*, for truly this day is yours so you are distinguished guests, peace and the mercy of Allah be upon you and His blessings too.

I am happy to see us all gathered today at Dutse by the Grace of Allah, for the sole purpose of discussing and identifying ways and steps that need to be taken to improve the living conditions of the people, especially the poor segment of them and the less fortunate. This initiative of the Governor and his aides is pointer to the fact that, there is always that progressive leadership that has foresight, is compassionate and strategic in its thinking. We pray to Allah to bless his efforts and to give this land more of such leaders.

We call on all those Allah has made into leaders, that we must always remember the trust God gave us to look after his servants, so that we do our outmost to protect their rights and uplift their living conditions. All praise is due to Allah, we are indeed pleased to see the efforts of the state government in providing social amenities to its people. One year ago we came to Jigawa on official duty. Yesterday upon our entry to Dutse, the Jigawa state capital, we have seen tremendous transformation. We therefore give special thanks to the Governor for the many development projects he has started, especially those that impact greatly on the *Talakawa*. This Governor is one Governor that truly listens. Last year we made an appeal for assistance on behalf of our people in Fagam community. Today we are happy to note that, the road that we asked to be rehabilitated then has since become an ongoing project, and the people went all the way to Sakkwato to register their gratitude. We once again thank the Governor and pray to Allah to reward the Governor abundantly.

Here we wish to draw the attention of the people to continue to extend maximum cooperation to their leaders, to ensure the success of various development programmes. People should know that they must embrace education, health, rural development and similar programmes. As a pace setter, the inauguration of today's programme opens the door of leaders, so that citizens can extend their complaints and problems to their elected leaders. Therefore such opportunity should be used to affirm the trust and offer useful advice. This opportunity must not be squandered in needless critique, creating confusion or fomenting strife. Our community must realize that just as citizens have claims on leaders, so the leaders too have rights that must be discharged by their followers. We pray to Allah to further guide us to justice and success. *Talakawa* this day is yours. Say what truly is tormenting you and whatever is in your hearts without fear, so that your leaders will hear your cries. Peace be unto you.

Inspirational Speeches

To ensure that all those who will come to speak understand the historical context of this gathering, some selected stalwarts of old Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) and Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) were invited to comment on the life of the *Talaka* in yesteryears, to mention the sort of struggle waged to liberate the *Talaka* and to give him/her a voice in the democratic choice of who

becomes his political leader. These stalwarts were Alhaji Lili Gabari, Alhaji Mudi Sipikin and Alhaji Tanko Yakasai. Here is what they said.

Speech by Alhaji Lili Gabari

Distinguished Guests, ladies, gentlemen and members of the public, peace be upon you. We have been called upon to serve to you a slice of history on the political struggle that was waged in the recent past. This invitation is weighty indeed, because whenever one is called to narrate history, there is bound to be among the audience, those that will misunderstand the motive. So from the onset let me seek pardon from those that may be hurt by what I will narrate. Indeed it is important that those seeking public office know what has gone past, to enable them to continue building on that foundation. Today I am about 75-76 years old, therefore I not only know what happened during the times of NEPU and PRP, but I also recall many events that happened earlier.

In truth I know a lot of people who were slaves, bought as chattel, and who served as domestic slaves in households; I know their names. Later after the coming of the white man, after slaves have been liberated, these people did not abandon their slavery easily, but with great difficulty. It should therefore come as no surprise if during the yesteryears the society was afflicted with inertia, the people afflicted by inability to liberate themselves, inability to understand their predicament, stark ignorance and total

incomprehension of the deep oppression that was their lot. This situation is one of the reasons why when NEPU as a political party made a debut, we children of the poor *Talakawa* embraced it, in all parts of this very state. But because of certain factors related to the interests of the Colonial masters and other leaders of that time, the party did not make the impact it sought. What happened has become a historical fact and it cannot be wished away. Truly, the calamities visited on activists of the party of torture, disgrace, expulsion, and whimsical imprisonment need no elaboration here, to spare many people who may be offended by such expose, contrary to my wishes.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that our narration will help solve the problems created by actions of the past, for left unsaid the issues will not be a balm on the festering wound. It is precisely the perpetuation of such retrogressive leadership that is responsible for the underdevelopment of our land, but what we are doing is resisting such, and we will not stop until a day we see people like the present crop of leaders in Jigawa at the helm of affairs of the nation, trying to bring about a programme of action that we had all along believed in.

What happened in the past was truly horrendous, as I said earlier. Back then we NEPU activists were not protected by the judiciary; we were not even allowed to settle in towns. In many neighboring states are those who settled there as refugees and have still not returned home till today; some

have died, while others are still alive; still when you meet some of us today we are in extreme destitution because we are yet to find our feet, we are still struggling, we are still fighting to liberate ourselves. It is therefore a must we tell those on the ladder aspiring to high political office, that this power whose fruits they find themselves enjoying, did not just fall from the sky, but is a product of our decisive, bitter and bloody political struggle. I therefore call upon those occupying and aspiring to leadership positions, especially at the local government level, especially chairmen of local councils and state governors, to note that some of us are still alive and watching their moves. In truth, whenever we see something going wrong we will speak out, and damn the consequences, for there is no adversity that could befall us which has not occurred in the past. We therefore have no reason to fear what did not scare us in the past.

I call on all those who came to this summit to return home with a renewed determination, because it is now that the struggle really begins. In the past the struggle was with the Colonial masters, who told the leaders of that time that we wanted to overthrow their power, so they launched a war on us and did all they could to disgrace and humiliate us. Now we are in a new era, where the actual perpetrators of corruption and embezzlement are the people of the land. It should be noted that all those engaged in such despicable acts are being watched by us, and for the sake of seeking God's pleasure alone, we will form an association that will

fight them wherever we may be. I therefore pray to Allah to grant us long life, to give us good health so that we could continue the struggle knowing that our past efforts have not been in vain. Today, whether one likes it or not, it is the agenda of our struggle that is shaping the society, and that struggle will not cease to have that impact for a long time to come. Peace be upon you.

Speech by Alhaji Mudi Sipikin

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, peace be upon you. This is a day of joy and a most encouraging one indeed, for having such a patriotic and committed leader, Alhaji Sule Lamido who has invited us to make informed comments. I that stand before you today was one of the delegates to the Constitutional Conference in England, on 6th August, 1953. Amongst the delegates, all 56 have died, but only two of us, Anthony Enahoro and I being the only survivors.

At that time, we were privileged to have been given five pounds five shillings each at Culture House, to attend the Conference. Two pounds two shillings were for accommodation, two pounds two shillings for feeding and the balance of one pound and one shilling was pocket money. In the ensuing 57 years, there is nowhere we have not been to among Nigerian towns and villages. As Alhaji Lili Gabari said, our mobilization was spread in different locales, involving travel to different places. The colonial

masters and their collaborators were busy “sucking the blood of the peasants”. That was why in one of my political poems I said:

Colonial masters inflict oppression on us,
They gobble up northern farm produce,
Carting it all home for profit,
Profiteering beyond imagination,
Should they buy at thirty pounds,
They resell at three hundred pounds.
Look at our groundnut and cotton,
They simply tip us, they do not buy,
Buying our produce for a pittance, selling theirs
expensively,
Oh, the brazenness of it all, knows no bounds!

What I have to say is much here, because the Whiteman would, in those days, fix the price of local produce low, such as 16 bags of groundnut at six pounds, while fixing the price of a six yard bundle of pure white textile cloth at two pounds two shillings. We can talk at length on this. We thank Allah that has brought a government that has remembered us and is looking towards the past in retrospect. There are indeed painful things in these poems I hold that would move people such that they may indeed find it difficult to go back home, because of the pain and emotion that they may evoke. I stop here, peace be upon you.

Speech of Alhaji Tanko Yakasai

His Excellency Jigawa State Governor, Alhaji Sule Lamido, His Excellency the Deputy Governor, His Eminence the Commander of the Muslim faithful, The Chief Justice, Grand Khadi and all other protocols observed. My warmest congratulations to the Jigawa State Governor, Alhaji Sule Lamido for being the lone offspring of our political movement who has remained steadfast in the cause of the *Talakawa*, despite being of royal blood by birth. He is not alone amongst the blue blooded that have remained committed to the emancipation of the *Talakawa*, as there have been others like the late Malam Abubakar Zukogi, erstwhile Secretary-General of NEPU, who despite being of royal birth, was committed to the struggle for the liberation of *Talakawa* till his soul went back to Allah. There are others like that still with us today. Surely, without their sacrifice there would have been no success to speak about, much less to celebrate.

The twin evils that have always confronted the poor masses of the North were: one, oppression and injustice; two, poverty and want. We fought oppression and injustice, because we observed that they are obstacles on our path to fighting poverty and want; for only when the poor and the deprived (*Talaka*) breathes the air of freedom and feels liberated that he could have the will to fight off the yoke of poverty and want. The Northern Region was one of the three administrative units of colonial Nigeria. There was the Northern region, then the Western region where the Yorubas

predominate, and finally the Eastern region where the Igbo coexist with many minority tribes. The Northern region occupied over 70% of the landmass of Nigeria and had more than 55% of the total national population. The Northern region was divided into provinces; into each province there were Emirs who were chairmen-in-council of the Native Authority (NA) administration.

In the NA system, the Emir was the overall head, he had councilors as advisers, he appointed district heads, he appointed the *ayaga*; the Emir appointed the judge, he appointed the Warden who looked after the jail and he also appointed the *Sarkin Kasuwa*, head of the market. When NEPU first appeared the poor peasants were really oppressed and taxes beyond their financial capacity were being forced on them. Many had to escape into exile because of their inability to pay, abandoning their children and the rest of their family. Many were the refugees who never returned home, having died in foreign lands, after spawning generations in their places of exile. At that time, the *Sarkin Kasuwa* had the right to pick, for free, whatever he chose in the market; the vegetable seller, the butcher, all must set aside part of their merchandise for him. At that time, when there was a budget vote for a capital project like road or school or hospital, the Emirs appropriated it for themselves; instead they mobilized the poor peasants to undertake the labour for free. The same peasant is made to spend time farming the Emir's farms instead of tending his own.

We mention all these only as historic episodes, to show the long struggle against such exploitation and oppression. And truly with the help of Allah the struggle triumphed. We succeeded in changing the method of appointing political leaders, from selection to election. In the past when political parties were to pick candidates, it was the Emirs who nominated the candidates that the peasants were to elect. We fought not just for the right of the peasant to select those that would stand for election, but also that the peasant must be the one to select from amongst all the contestants the one most fit for whatever position being contested for, be it governor, assembly representative, or chairman of the local council. From there, the frontline of the struggle shifted to those who have been elected but have turned into oppressors of the peasants. We therefore call on you all to join this new struggle, to ensure that all the resources set aside for uplifting the peasants are judiciously used for that purpose. I can say categorically that this fight is a gigantic one indeed.

We wanted to show the
long struggle against
truly with the help of
succeeded in changing
leaders from selection
parties were to pick
nominated the candidates
We fought not just for
that would stand for
be the one to select
those in for what
government assembly
control. From there
those who have been
oppressors of the
join this new struggle
side for helping the
purpose. I can say
one indeed.

Section Two: Testimonies

From there the
those who have
oppressors of
join this new
side for helping
purpose. I can
one indeed.

The Talakawa Testimonies: Narratives from Occupational Guilds/Groups

1. Alhaji Abdu Baduku (Traditional Leather Worker)

I seek refuge from Satan the accursed. I start in the name of Allah Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. My name is Abdu Baduku, Babura local government of Jigawa State, in Nigeria. I am a leather worker by occupation, and this craft is a family tradition that I inherited from my father. There are three flavours to leather work/craft: one strand specializes in amulets, a second strand specializes in making decorative leather materials for horses, while a third branch makes footwear. I belong to the branch that makes footwear because any footwear is important, therefore the craft of cobbling should not be at the bottom of hierarchy of occupations. Because everybody here, from His Excellency the Governor, to the Sultan, Emirs, in fact everyone present at this arena has a pair of shoes on his feet, to protect his health and to protect his religious practices. If one were to conduct ablution with a pair of shoes on one's feet, one could wander in and out of the bathroom without endangering one's ablution. Yet the humble cobbler today only survives on his wits.

As a teenager, I grew up to see my family utilize the locally tanned animal skin that is locally dyed to make shoes, using left over food as adhesive. With time, large company products flooded the market and our locally produced shoes were abandoned and tagged inferior. I told my father that

since the taste of the market has changed, the product has to follow suit. I sought his permission to learn how to make such modern shoes. He gave his blessing. There was one man in my ward with two brand new pairs of Italian shoes, bought for N12,000 (twelve thousand naira) each. I approached the man to lend me the shoes just for two days, to enable me copy the design. He laughed and said, take them even for four days. I took the shoes and studied them, copying on paper the designs which I later transferred to our traditionally tanned leather. In putting together the shoe, where the foreign shoe was sewn mechanically, I did mine manually; where an adhesive was required, I used leftover food-based local adhesive. I kept the foreign shoes for seven days, at the end of which I took the pair I made along with them back to their owner. I told him, "Here are the ones I have done". He took a fancy to the pair I made, asking how much I expended and I said two thousand naira. He paid four thousand naira for them. That opened a new opportunity for me.

There was a friend of mine from Kofar Wambai who advised that since I was keen on making shoes, I should go to Kano and buy factory tanned leather, along with industrial quality adhesive and other tools of the trade. I went and bought them accordingly. I continued making shoes but with time the cost of the materials kept going up with inflation, till it reached ten thousand naira. Even then, with ten thousand naira worth of raw materials, I could

make about 12 pairs of shoes, within two weeks. With time I found whole sellers in the Sabon Gari market who would buy my produce. However with the flooding of the local market by cheaper foreign shoes, ours were shunned. It was not that the foreign imports are either better designed or of higher quality than ours, it is just that Nigerians have a penchant for overseas merchandise.

What pains me the most is the fact that if we can be assisted to acquire mechanical devices with which we can express our creativity, instead of our VIPs wearing all those *made in China* and *made in England* footwear, they could be wearing equally good *made in Babura Jigawa State* shoes. Therefore the problems confronting the local shoe manufacturing industry are the same, the practitioner's ethnicity notwithstanding, be he an Igbo, or Yoruba or Kanuri, or Igbira. It is not clear who is supposed to assist us, is it the local, state or federal tier of government? Or is it the NGOs or organizations supported by the development partners?

Our plea is that we be assisted with mechanical devices for shoe manufacture. For sure, all shoes made by Europeans are made using devices that have taken the tedium out of the process, to the extent that where we make five pairs of shoes manually in two weeks, using mechanical devices we can make 50 pairs, in the same period. With these, instead of cheap imports, there can be even cheaper and higher quality

local substitutes, within a short time *made in Babura Jigawa State* will have flooded the Nigerian market. With time running out, I leave you with a greeting of peace.

2. Alhaji Badamasi Mai Burodi (Bread Baker)

In the name of Allah, Most compassionate, Most Merciful. I am Alhaji Badamasi Ringim Mai Burodi, a baker of bread for the past 50 years. Perhaps in the entire crowd at this arena, there is no one who has been a baker for that long, and in the foreseeable future I will remain a baker. Back then, a bag of flower was selling for thirty shillings, today the same bag sells for six thousand naira; that is how we buy flour and sugar. By the Will of Almighty Allah, I have 33 children and a true blessing they have been. With time they have attended formal schools but they have not gone beyond secondary or attained diploma levels, because I cannot afford to pay for them beyond that. The second issue is that the price of flour is now beyond us. I swear by Allah that we now take flour on credit from the dealer; after we have baked products and sold them, we repay the dealer and use the profit to feed our families.

Another issue is the recent arrival of the Chinese on the baking scene, who have come with new tools of the trade. We do not have modern machinery, but they have modern machinery and big trucks. They have power generating plants and master baker machines they have all the tools that we lack. Today, we and our offspring face the prospect

of being their labourers. That is the bleak future we face. I crave the indulgence of the civil servants but it seems some of them are conniving to further drive us, the poorly capitalized bakers, out of the industry through new (health and safety) regulations. For we are required to modify our working tools and have only aluminum utensils, and aluminum tables as work benches, and if not we will not be allowed to bake bread. Of course the new comers have capital, even if they are asked to have an all-glass factory they can set up one, but we on the other hand have a weak financial base.

We want the government to assist us with tools and equipment, with flour mixers, with modern ovens with these no Chinese can bake better bread than myself. I know the “a” to “z” of bread baking, it is only tools that I lack, by Allah it is only lack of tools, because today my expertise is such that if someone passes by with bread, I can diagnose whatever is wrong with that bread. It might be that there is too much salt or too little salt I will know, for I need not even touch it, such is my expertise. I leave you in peace.

3. Ya'u Gambo (Skin Tanner)

Peace be unto you all, I am Ya'u Gambo Wanzamai, Maigatari local government, engaged in the craft of tanning animal skin to hide, using skills handed down from our fathers and our grandfathers. What we do is to go to the market and buy animal skin from those who deal in it, with the fur, wool and all. We first of all soak it in a metal ore

solution (*kuza*), next we scrape off the fur and wash it, then we soak it, then we immerse it in another chemical, made from the Jerusalem Thorn plant (*bagaruwa*), then we stretch it after smearing it with a powder (*hauyau*), then we wash it and dye it into whatever colour we so desire. We can dye it white, or red or even black black is the colour of the traditional water-skin used to draw water from wells. This process I have described is a combination of strength and native wisdom and skills handed down. This (showing a tool) is what we call *kadaki*, with it we scrap the hide to make it smooth and uniform. And after the finished hide has been dyed black we can make a water-skin. (Showing a sample) this is a *guga*, the original one known to everyone, but nowadays there is another made from old tubes of tyres sewn with thread and there are others made from plastic products, all being used to draw water. In order for us to keep practicing our craft of adding value to animal skin, we call on the government, local, state or federal to help us with modern tools and equipment, so that we can tan any type of animal skin and no matter the volume, within a short time. If that happens we can supply this state with all its requirement of tanned leather. In fact others can come from outside the state to buy same high quality finished leather too. Peace be upon you all.

4. Umma Ado (Pomade Maker / Seamstress)

I seek Allah's protection from Satan the accursed. I start in the name of Allah Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. I am Umma Ado representing the Association of Pomade

Makers and Seamstresses, made up of those who make pomade and also sew dress for sale to the public. I learnt to make pomade for sale ten years ago. Here (holding up a sample) is the type of pomade we make, which His Excellency the Governor has seen previously. This one we sell at N40 per bottle in the villages. The demand from the villages exceeds the supply and there is scarcity due to our low capital base and increase in the price of the raw materials. Rimi market is the source of our raw materials, which is where we buy adhesive material, wax and scent. We mix all these and package the product to suit the market we wrap some in a piece of polythene for sale at ten naira, some at twenty naira, for the poor.

Presently many of us are unable to continue making pomade, even though there is demand from the village markets. We therefore appeal to His Excellency the Governor for assistance to enable us to continue this craft. Even if it is the local council that will assist, we do not mind. We just want to continue making pomade as a means of livelihood.

We complement this occupation with sewing, which we learnt at Gagarawa centre. Thanks be to Allah, we have mastered the skills we went all the way from not knowing how to step on the pedal, to being novice seamstresses learning the cuts using paper, learning to cut patterns and learning to join them. Anyone who goes to Gagarawa Women Centre will see samples of the dresses I did, because

even in the immediate past 'id (sallah) festival, many customers patronized my services after my graduation. But lacking my own sewing machine, I used to come with the material to the centre, but they would say we have already graduated and there were now other sets of students using the facilities. Nevertheless I usually beg for permission to use the sewing machines when there were no lessons. Unfortunately on non-working days I just have to hold onto my materials helplessly. We therefore appeal to the state and local government for assistance. The graduates of the centre who have acquired top skills like me are many. We wish to acquire tools for making pomade and sewing machines. Even if this would be on credit, to be repaid over time, we will appreciate it. I leave you in peace.

5. Salisu Shehu (Shoe-shiner)

Peace be unto you, I am Salisu Shehu, from Dutse local government, but originally from Gumel. I am a shoe-shiner who repairs and polishes shoes. A previous speaker, a cobbler, has said that he makes shoes, but I repair and polish them. I come into town daily and I earn something like one hundred and fifty naira, with which I feed my family and pay school fees for my children. They have now finished primary school but I have no funds to sponsor them to secondary school. They are just idling away at home. We therefore appeal to government, federal or state or local council for assistance, so that we can improve the earning power of our profession. Because it is from our daily

income of one hundred and fifty naira that we pay transport fare, and if sickness befalls us or members of our family, we buy medicine from it. I swear by Allah, that sometimes when we go to hospital, we are forced to return home with the children because we cannot afford the drugs. We are sometimes forced to try local herbs. If we are lucky the child is cured, fine; if not the child dies, as decreed by Allah.

It is from the same one hundred and fifty naira that I buy the tools of the trade such as polish, patches of leather, the needles for sewing shoes, and shoe mats that need to be replaced in some shoes. There is demand for our services because everyone alive uses shoes. We therefore appeal for assistance so that we can continue doing this job profitably. We even look forward to having tools from overseas. Sometimes our customers have no change to pay us the ten naira fee we charge, so they consume another service say in a barbing salon and ask the barber to pay us the ten naira.

6. Auwalu Unguwar Ganji (Representative of Wood Carvers' Guild)

I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the accursed. I start in the name of Allah Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. The one speaking before you is Auwalu Unguwar Ganji, a wood carver and representative of wood carvers' guild from Gwaram local government. I inherited this vocation from my father and grandfather, and by the Grace of Allah, any legitimate heir will not abandon the family trade. I started

by learning to carve a hoe handle from the *maganji* wood like this (demonstrating), and here is a piece of wood (an exhibit) yet to be carved, and here (showing more exhibits) are other finished products of this process.

To begin the process I go to the forest daily and come back with about twenty suitable pieces of wood, for the rest of the day, and a second and even a third day; I take my time carving these. I then take the finished hoe-handle product to the market. Each of the twenty pieces is sold at a wholesale price of eight naira, in the dry season. But at the onset of the rainy season the hoe stump can fetch up to ten naira, a piece. If by the Grace of Allah I have as much as two dozen of these in a week that I take to the market, if they have money they pay me on the spot. Else they ask me to come back the following week for payment. This is the source of livelihood for our family and even support for our parents.

We therefore appeal to the governments, be they federal, state or local and the overseas donor agencies to assist mom-and-pop cottage industries like ours, because the meagre earnings from carving about 20 of these pieces of wood over three days, cannot possibly support one person, much less a whole family. With modern machinery, instead of carving 20 in three days, by the Grace of Allah, I can do 200 in the same period. By this our craft could advance, and

there would be boost in our socio-economic status. This is my brief narrative. May Allah reward us with blessings and may He assist us, amen.

7. Alto Gidan Karofi (Tie-and-dye Artiste)

Peace be upon you, my name is Alto Gidan Karofi, from Miga local government. I work for local cloth weavers and I too am a weaver who also has a tie-and-dye skill. Our family has dying pits where my father and mother and grandfather practiced their craft, where I too am practicing. But we face acute shortage of raw materials like *fam-fam* and *baba* (indigo dye). Right now we have pots that are just full of water instead of dye solutions. We are therefore appealing for assistance even if to buy tinned dye to continue our craft. We dye *tantami*, mats, wrappers, turbans, shirts and big gowns too. We can be assisted with raw materials like *baba* from Kano. I have no son, wife or grandchild because I could not marry. But once we have raw materials and can work, our economy and lives will improve.

8. Dayyaba Abdullahi (Traditional Sweet Maker)

Peace be upon you, my name is Dayyaba Abdullahi from Garki local government. My occupation is local sweet or candy production, called *alewa*. I have been doing it now for two years. I take a bag of sugar worth 6,000 naira on credit, then buy wood worth 200 naira. Then I boil water in a pot, then I pour the sugar into the water and just before the solution boils I add freshly squeezed lemon juice. Once the

mixture has turned into jelly, I pour it onto a flat stone and turn it until more of the water evaporates and it becomes more solid. Then even while it is so hot, I gather the jelly and hang it from a hook that is pegged unto a tree, then I pull it, stretching it repeatedly into long strands as it cools. Just before it becomes completely solid, I stretch it on a clean mat quickly into thin strands suitable for chewing. I then use scissors to cut the strand into chunks.

Whole sellers come to buy 100 naira worth of the sweet for 80 naira. From that one bag of sugar, I make 8,000 naira worth of sweet. From the proceeds I recoup the cost of the sugar, then pay for the 200 naira wood, and pay for the lemon, and finally my profit of 1,700 naira, with which I send my children to school. But if those whole sellers fail to pay-up fully for the credit they have taken, I take the loss, cutting my profit margin to just 1,000 naira, with which to assist my children and my father. At this point in time, it is from this profit that I look after my parents, other relatives and neighbours. We therefore seek assistance from the government in form of capital, so that we can buy raw materials for our trade with ease, so as to expand the business. We need assistance to acquire machinery that could replace the tree on which we peg the hook for drawing the jelly, and a tool for boiling the sugar solution within five minutes instead of thirty minutes. Even as we appeal for help, we also pray to Allah for His help, amen. Have a good day.

9. A Welder

Lack of electricity is our biggest headache for the last nine years, because our profession is impossible without electricity. Yet today the poor class has no access to power even for domestic use, much less those who need it for a vocation. This has left us in a quandary. For instance if there is electricity supply, we make four metal doors daily and the profit margin ranges from two to four thousand naira. Of my six apprentices, four are married and it is from this I will give each his daily wage and take mine too. But with poor electricity supply, we barely make one thousand naira how much do I give them and how much do I get to keep? This is our precarious reality.

Besides we have so many problems in this profession. Government needs to come in and see what it can do. First, we take on young apprentices, but we fail to graduate them because we cannot afford to buy for them both the welding tool and a generator as agreed in our contract, because with epileptic power supply how do you generate the money to keep body and soul together, much less invest in tools? So there is uneasy calm as we get on each others' nerves, they having reached a skill level to be on their own, but we cannot afford to equip them. Second, government should play the role of graduating these apprentices so that when we deem them sufficiently skilled to stand on their own feet, it would equip them. For us, there should be an arrangement where we can be given additional training. We could even

be sent to other places to learn new techniques, so as to unleash our creative energies.

In the recent past, I wanted to come up with intermediate technology tools that could assist traditional tannery craftsmen to clean animal skins. But as I keep buying fuel and metal parts to experiment, I said to myself, this money being sunk into this research and experimental effort can be better utilized in a more productive venture. Why did this thought came up? Because I am clueless as to the solution I was trying to create. But if I am sent to learn more, I can handle many challenges. For instance my colleagues make mould for brick making, we also make ruler for bakeries. We have the capacity to innovate many tools that would aid development, but government has neglected us, nay it is hostile to us because it has refused to supply us the most basic thing we need, electricity.

If there were to be power, as I leave here I would get busy creating products. In a month I pay not more than two thousand naira electricity bill. Imagine a situation where one buys fuel and after trying to construct something it is incomplete, then without selling that product how does one progress? For instance, there was my master, who taught me the profession, he has no capacity to buy generator and he relies on me to give him something to eat, because he is idle as a result of lack of electricity.

We do not ask for cash from government, rather we ask for two things. That it equips those we train with the tools to become independent entrepreneurs of their own. Second, that a scheme be evolved, even if annually; some of us should be selected and sent for advanced training. If we combine our native skills with whatever we are taught, we can really come up with solutions that would advance our nation. Certainly no community ever develops unless it is able to come up with its own technological products. The advanced economies got to where they are through engineering innovations, sometimes by trial by error. But we the skilled artisans who can do this are shunned and government is somewhere making grandiose plans, saying it wants to teach people skills. It selects both those with the interest and those uninterested, who are mostly only after what will be paid to them at the end of the exercise. In the end, it is not the one who learns the skill that will be equipped but someone else. Peace be upon you.

10. Musa Danmarka (Kolanut Seller)

This is a family occupation that I have been doing for some time but there is no progress because my sole capital is the tray (*baka*) upon which I sell the kolanut. By the Grace of Allah each day I take my *baka* to our benefactors in the business, who advance us kolanut worth about 400 naira. I then go round to places where people congregate to sell to them, making a profit of 50 to 70 naira daily. That is what we use to feed the family and from it we pay to have our children ferried to school on commercial motorcycle.

We therefore in the name of Allah plead with the government to see how it can help us boost this occupation, because in all honesty from my income I cannot even feed myself. Similarly I cannot clothe myself from my honest earnings. I have to beg those better-off to assist me with their cast off clothes. Therefore we plead with the government to help us get the bounty of Allah. Peace be upon you and have a good day.

11. Magaji Kila (Wood Carver)

My name is Magaji Kila, from Gwaram local government. I carve or construct talking drum (*kalangu*) along with mortar and pestle. I also construct all types of traditional drums like *jauje*, *kotso*, *banga* and others. It is only me and my brother that remain in this occupation, and I thank Allah for the opportunity to tell you about our occupation.

12. Umar Lawan (Laundryman)

I am Umar, the laundryman, from Jahun local government. I pray that just as Allah in his power brought the distinguished guests who have graced this occasion safe, may He similarly return them to their family likewise. My occupation is washing and ironing customer apparel. I started this job when I was 12 years old as an apprentice. When I started I could only wash, but could not iron; and from my earnings I buy soap, sometimes omo detergent and water to enable me to wash the clothes. We used to be paid 300 naira then, whose value far exceeds money of

nowadays. Because then from the 300 naira earnings I was able to feed myself and even assist my family. With time, my master decided that I too should become independent. A separate shop was hired for me, for which I paid an annual rent.

We need the help of state or local government, so that the association of laundrymen from Jahun local government can secure land and acquire machinery for washing and ironing. We are confident that once this is done, not just Jigawa and Kano states, but even residents of Abuja would bring their laundry to us. I leave you in peace.

13. Ubangida Dunari (Carpenter)

Peace be upon you all people. I am Ubangida Dunari Kafinta. Small cottage carpenters like me have a very critical problem. That problem is that no matter how good we are, or how much effort we put to excel, when the time comes for our top officials both at state or local government levels to award contracts for the supply of furniture, they go straight to Kano or Abuja. In this case when will carpenters and their companies in the state ever progress or grow, if every time they are bypassed and others are being patronized, leaving them barely able to feed their families?

In fact we appeal to the local government that is closer to the grassroots, to mercifully assist us in a suitable way with tools and modern saws for cutting wood, shaping them into

curves, polishing and spraying. With the right tools given to us, we Jigawa state carpenters can make products that would match any furniture being fancied overseas or from other states, God willing. There is absolutely no reason why we should not be assisted, for the alternative is economic retrogression and social decay if we are always dismissed as unpolished or lacking in expertise. Even our children whom we hope will inherit us have started running away from the profession to our dismay.

Even in the matter of roofing buildings, I swear by Allah that we are as good as any other expert, but what we see is that people travel to Kano to bring the Chinese to roof a building. I swear by Allah that we are now in a situation where a building engineer can comfortably hand over his roofing design to a Jigawa carpenter and depart without worry; rest assured that it will be executed with exactitude. So in the first instance, why we are never considered? Instead they always go to another state to bring someone. This needs to change and with the right assistance we will record tremendous progress. Peace be unto you all.

14. Isyaku Musa (Representative of Farmers)

Peace, my name is Isyaku Musa from Ringim local government, representative of the farmers of Jigawa state. Truly irrigation farming is the bedrock of Jigawa economy, but it is not given any priority save for some attention to rain-fed agriculture. But rain-fed agriculture is subsistence

farming and is secondary in purely economic terms. Irrigation agriculture during the dry season is the real cash cow that empowers a farmer to assist his children, parents and the larger family. Alas, irrigation agriculture is more or less dead in Jigawa state. Yet in every local government of the state, if we were to undertake irrigation agriculture and the crops were to survive, we would generate tremendous income, with the help of Allah. But because of some transnational migratory ruthless Fulani nomads (*'yan bakwaloji*) that come into the state seasonally, I swear by Allah that no matter the field or garden crop sown, be it wheat, pepper or tomatoes, from the day their herds enter the state, within two weeks to three, all would be destroyed and lost. Then there is loss of life and property too.

From the angle of law and order, no constable or intermediate officer up to the commissioner of police is at ease, nor is any Emir down to village or ward head able to sleep easy in Jigawa state because of the conflicts these foreign migratory nomads generate with their wanton destruction of farm produce. Any farmer encountered on the farm, even if he does not challenge the destruction, is simply slaughtered and Allah is our witness if the police commissioner is aware of this. Government should see what it can do to protect its peasants, because all of them are farmers. Farming is the father of all other professions. All those who profess one occupation or craft depend on farming to survive, before venturing into revenue earning occupation.

So the citizens of Jigawa state grow either millet or guinea corn in the rainy season to feed themselves for the whole year round. But they also need dry season farming to generate income to take care of their domestic and cultural obligations, e.g. naming ceremonies or keeping kinship ties. In fact we can be economically self-sufficient using agriculture. But now I swear by Allah that nowhere in Jigawa state will you see the huge granaries of old as a result of the destructive activities of these foreign nomadic Fulani. No matter what you grow or what effort you have made, it will all be destroyed. Government needs to urgently come to the aid of its citizens, to rescue our parents and our grandparents, to rescue us and our younger ones from this menace.

The fallout from this devastation is that even an 80 year old man will be seen with a *Bagco* travelling bag, during the dry season, joining the rural-to-urban migration exodus, in search of extra income. The tragic result of this massive exodus, I swear by Allah, is that if there should ever be ethnic clashes in the southern states of Nigeria, the victims from Jigawa state would have a higher than normal proportion of all victims from Northern Nigeria. This is because a higher than normal proportion of them do not stay at home. In this we differ from our grandparents who used to be fully engaged all year round, but now we swarm out as a result of the foreigners that destroy our crops, vandalise our wealth, kill us, and rape our women. I swear by Allah the

trauma and grief of rape leads to the death of many of the victims.

I swear if you go to Kura in Kano state, the same migratory Fulani do not cause havoc at all, but here within two to three weeks every granary in sight, stored at home or on the farm will have been plundered or destroyed. They then leave the state after laying it to waste. As for our domestic cattle rearing Fulani with whom we have a symbiotic relationship, in that their cattle eat from our farm leftover and we derive milk from them, their own cattle are left nothing to eat. This very year I remember, when the first rains fell on a Wednesday, I swear by the name of Allah, Who Alone is God Almighty, a bull worth fifty-thousand naira was sold for five thousand naira in this Jigawa state. So bad was his emaciation due to lack of fodder in the dry season. We passionately appeal that these issues be looked into. For us we have no other state to look up to except Jigawa. Peace be upon you all.

15. Bulama Makaho Burseli (A Blind Traditional Grass Mat Weaver)

Peace be upon you all, I am Bulama Makaho Burseli, from Birniwa local government, leader of the association of raffia (*kaba*) grass mat makers. We are the ones who go to cut raffia grass from the forest, from which we make mats. We sell these mats and use the income to feed our families. Therefore a suitable assistance package should be arranged to uplift our earnings. I leave you in peace.

16. Ibrahim Muhammad (Vulcanizer)

I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the accursed. I begin in the name of Allah the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. Greetings of peace to all of you gathered here. My name is Ibrahim Muhammad Gurgu, a vulcanizer from Sule Tankarkar local government. The leader of the disabled in the state has already spoken about the lame and their ability to do many occupations. No doubt the lame can be carpenters, they can be motorcycle mechanics, in fact anything that does not involve climbing can be done by a lame person.

I started taking interest in the occupation of vulcanizing since I was small attending primary school. When I returned from school on my custom-made tricycle, I would spend my spare time watching vulcanizers at work. Gradually I became familiar with their techniques and tools to the extent of being able to "patch" tubes of bicycles. After my primary school, I sponsored myself to school from what I earned when I worked with the vulcanizers after school hours. From this occupation I was able to marry and have three children, all supported from my vulcanizer earnings. I was able to leave my rented accommodation for a house I bought all by myself with income from this vocation. I started with bicycles but later moved to motor cycles, mending not just the tube and tyre but the rim as well. I also have about four apprentices under me, who assist with certain jobs which require the use of all the limbs. At the end of each day when we count the day's takings from five to seven hundred naira,

I give them at least thirty to fifty naira each. I use the rest to look after my family.

Next we are calling on the governments, local, state and federal to find ways of assisting us to do our jobs more efficiently. We are aware of the technical progress everywhere. There are machines that generate and store air under pressure for up to two weeks, so that customers are serviced immediately, without waste of time. There are tools to help open up tyres with ease so that if in the past one was able to manually open and repair one tyre in an hour, with the new tool he can do ten tyres in one hour. There are engines that can patch tubes automatically. Since the spare parts of the tools we are using now are proving hard to get, we have to go outside the state; our suppliers do not stock the original parts. In fact, fake and original versions of rubber tubes abound, but for public safety it is better to have the original available at affordable prices. We therefore appeal to the government to critically look into our situation and intervene, in the form of credit lines so that we too can stock genuine spare-parts for the machinery we use in vulcanizing, to expand this craft throughout the state. Considering my physical challenge and my perseverance and the financial benefit that this trade has given me by the Grace of Allah, I remain grateful. I leave you all in peace.

17. Umar Mazawa (Weaver)

Greeting of peace to everyone, I am Umaru Mazawa from Miga local government, a cloth weaver using traditional

loom. We use traditional technology to weave, beginning with cotton as raw material which women spun into yarn, which we buy. It then goes through stages of *wakadi*, and *andira*, before being woven into strips of cloth. Sometimes the weaving is shaped into a sleeve and the stripes combined to be the body of the flowing gown or a short traditional gown. We pay for the different parts to be sewn together, at a cost of between four and eight hundred naira. We then pay 5,000 naira for a beautiful handmade embroidery to be made around the neck or in the pattern of *tsamiya*. From there we send the finished product to the market.

However, our craft is beset by multiple problems. There is no cotton. In most of the rural areas nobody grows cotton anymore. Then even when the finished dress is sent to the market, there is no guaranteed market or a good price. We display it in the market shed and if it is sold fine, if not it is brought back home. But if it has good design, the cream of the society, that is the elite, do buy it and give it as gift item, being example of hand woven fabric. If Allah brings customers we sell, if not we keep taking it to the market. In fact the tools used in making the cloth are becoming scarce, on top of which is the tedium involved in the production. Still it can fetch up to 10,000 naira.

However our children have shied away from learning the craft from us, because of the difficulty, poor returns and the lack of materials. We inherited it from our fathers, who inherited our grand fathers, but we lack any successors.

Today when you demand to see traditional hand-woven cloth, our children will display what we wove for their use, as sample of what their parents did. We are the last; the skill has ended with us. It is now up to government to look at the difficulties being experienced and to pity us in our old age, with failing eye sight, and to see what it can do to save this craft. In the past, whoever wanted to see traditional weaving loom he or she would be asked to go to Mazawa. We used to be about 20 weavers there, but now only about three of us are alive, others have gone away from this town. I leave you in peace.

18. Ladi (Oil Miller and *Kuli-kuli* Producer)

Peace be on you all. I am Ladi from Gwadayi, wife of Alhaji Ahmadu na Umaru Gaji, in Buji local government. I am here to represent those who extract oil from groundnut and fry the groundnut cake residue into a local delicacy of round balls (*kuli-kuli*). I started this business when 50 measures of groundnut were bought for two pounds. Back then I would painstakingly remove all impurities and the groundnut coat. I would then pound the groundnut using mortar and pestle, then boil it over fire using a traditional steering process (*tuki*) until the oil is extracted. Then there were no mechanical milling machines. I would then separate the oil and use the cake residue to make local delicacy called *kuli-kuli* (or *karago*), the total of which is sold for between three and six pence. As things progressed, I took *tungura* to work it in a week. I get girls volunteering to participate in the extraction process. As my reputation spread someone who

found it hard to sell his/her groundnut would tell me, "Ladi, should I return the raw groundnut from the market to be processed by you?" And I would accept it all, may be up to 15 *tungura*. Out of it, my neighbours would accept a portion to process, others would accept other portions and the business kept booming until we had to load the processed by-product *karago* unto a truck for evacuation and the oil loaded into jerry cans. At the same time both the raw material and products were getting more expensive and we also were getting older. Overtime the *tungurori* I was taking were getting less and less. Between last year and the year before that, I did no more than five *tungura*. Just imagine this. Of that, what would I give those who process for me and what do I get to fund the orphans I look after? Now I am doing just three *tungura* and of that what do I get to provide for what the kids will eat even of Moringa leaf salad and what do I give those who work for me? In the end, my appeal is for the government to find a way to assist us.

19. Aminu Ya'u (Cart Pusher / Water Vendor)

I seek refuge in Allah from Satan the accursed. I start in the name of Allah the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful, peace be upon you all. My name is Aminu Ya'u Kiyawa. I am a porter by occupation for over 20 years. When I started, I could hardly push the load of water cans in the pushcart. Thanks be to Allah, I came to master the tool. Before now, on a daily basis I made between 300 and 350 naira. Thanks be to Allah, it is with this I used to feed my parents, then I financed my wedding. Now I frequent markets like

Gujungu, Shuwarin, Garki, Kachako and also operate here at home. This is a brief narrative of my vocation of porter and water vendor. I am appealing to the government, to come especially to our local government of Kiyawa and set up companies for us, and provide other things that will uplift our standard of living, that of our children and our families.

20. Musa Hassan (Leader of the Lame)

It is part of our culture in that whenever someone becomes disabled, immediately pressure is mounted on him or her to start begging. This involves linking them with learned scholars to learn the Qur'an. Even the learned, when they have completed their studies or have memorized the Holy Book and they have no vocation to fall back on, they contemplate the dark art of fortune telling. In the years gone by, some governments brought a blind man from England, who ran a school teaching the disabled in Kaduna. Some of our disabled were sent there for training. The graduates can be seen in some workshops as disabled persons welding bicycle parts, making shoes and doing other vocations. Indeed the disabled can do most vocations that do not involve climbing. All these are the vocations we are capable of doing if we are assisted with training so that we can abandon begging, the attribute we disabled are associated with on the streets. In truth recently a training workshop was opened but it has derailed and has stopped its services. We advise that local councils be made to set up similar training workshops, fully equipped we know where the equipment is sold so that training could be given to those in need. For

instance, we used to have one training centre in Hadejia, it should be re-opened. If this is done we believe there will be progress. We suggest that all disabled persons be trained, unless they are too old to learn. We make a special call to Muslim Organizations I am particularly happy to see the Council of Ulama here in this our state to step in and help the disabled. I am yet to see a place where up to ten disabled persons were assembled and trained or looked after by Muslim Organizations. In contrast, our Christian brothers, as is well known, set up schools to train the disabled. We say that looking after the disabled is not for the government alone. Finally we are very happy with the opportunity given to us to spell out our problems and offer suggestions. May Allah reward you all. Our ultimate goal is to be assisted to stand on our feet. We want empowerment not pity!

21. Sarki Mamuda (Fresh Vegetable Seller)

I am Sarki Mamuda, inhabitant of Sabon Garin Dan Masara, representing fresh vegetable sellers in Dutse market. We are gathered in this arena with the avowed aim of fighting poverty. If there is sincerity in this, it should be known that our parents, namely farmers, are in dire situation. We the sellers of the fresh vegetables use folded jute bags to do our business. We call on you if you are sincere in fighting this poverty to identify and deal with the hypocritical government officials amongst yourselves. I say this because, I Sarki Mamuda was neck-deep in the politics of the People's Redemption Party (PRP) and I have a family whose size is more than twelve but I swear by Allah that I do

not own a house of my own and I have no capital of five hundred naira.

Whenever the big men want to organize any ceremony or reception in Dutse local government, they know that we have everything that they want from green beans, to cucumber, cabbage and baskets of tomatoes of different varieties, but they allege that our prices are too high. They take pick-up trucks to Kano to buy all they want, thereby sabotaging us. It is a pity claims are being made that the economy of Dutse is being developed. We wonder if it is true with such lack of patronage of the local businesses. This attitude pains me to no end, especially since I am a political activist.

Let me state that whoever is holding political post or office, like those people in Kano, I have never gone to fawn or beg from him; I have stuck with my vocation to earn a living, but it is proving impossible. I have stopped supporting the schooling of my children. Just the day before yesterday my daughter needed blood transfusion but I told them it was beyond my financial ability, so I prescribed green vegetable leaf soup for her to build up her blood because that is what I can afford. I therefore raise my voice to call, in the name of Allah, that everything that can be done to boost our occupation, be done. Like helping us acquire cooling tools that could preserve our merchandise for ten or even twenty days. For instance, by coming here, I have left vegetables worth five thousand naira unattended; I have spent the

whole day here without five kobo in my pocket. I have not gone to urinate, I have not eaten and I have sent no feeding allowance to my family.

22. Bilkisu Abdullahi Sasika (*Fura-porridge Beverage Seller*)

My vocation is selling beverage by name *fura-and-nono* (porridge mixed with cow milk). There is no market for the *fura* porridge except when it is mixed with cow milk. The problem is that the milk is so scarce, certainly supply is inadequate not like before. In times gone by, there was plentiful supply of milk with our parents, who raised cattle and had lots of grazing forest land. Nowadays milk is scarce, as a result I had to reduce the amount of porridge I make daily to about a measure of millet. In fact, I manually separate the chafe from the grain, clean and wash the grain, then make it into porridge. I then go in search of milk from those hamlets with two or three heads of cattle, with my calabashes in a net. Here I get a calabash full of milk for one hundred naira; but there I get a bigger one for three hundred naira. In this way I get five even six or seven lots which I arrange in my net and take home. With about ten children at home, I prepare part of the milk for their meal. Then I start preparing to travel to sell my goods.

These days motor transport is not like in the olden days. I used to pay 30 naira to reach my market, but now I pay over 70 naira. With the return journey, the cost comes to 120 to 140 naira. For each calabash of milk I get a profit of 20 to 30

naira. If Allah in His mercy brings whole sellers who buy milk to take to Kano, where it is more expensive, then I can get profits ranging from 100 to 150 naira. As for my *fura* I make 150 to 200 naira from one measure of millet. From this I derive my recurrent expenditure income, to pay for the motorcycle transport, and buy food stuff for my children. However, it is a marginal income I get, since from time to time a boy or a girl will fall sick and I will be unable to transport them to the hospital. In some instances, we resort to Fulani herbal practices of using leaves of the *neem* tree or *garahunu* as source of cure. Since there is all this talk of assisting those living marginally, we appeal for a boost in our capital, so as to improve our income and the lives of our children. We also need help with grazing areas.

23. Gambo Musa Babura (Traditional Birth Attendant)

My name is Gambo Musa Babura, from Babura local government. My vocation is traditional midwifery. I started about ten years ago. I took up this profession to assist fellow women. On this job, I am on 24 hours call at whatever time of the day or night a woman goes into labour, I will answer the call and be there to assist a fellow woman, rain or shine. When I supervise a birth, I would clean up the baby, then the mother and their surrounding environment, no matter how unsightly the mess, without any qualms. With bare hands, no task is too difficult for me. Our reward is in the form of one measure of grain, a tablet of soap and 100 naira. Sometimes, we get, in addition, soup condiments like chili

pepper and ginger spice. Generous or affluent customers can give twice this amount as token of appreciation for services rendered to them. But even then, it might only be given after two days or even after the seventh day naming ceremony. There is no prior bargaining, it is all discretionary.

I thank Allah, it is not the chores or my personal inconveniences that really bother me in this vocation. What agitates my mind the most is the needless deaths of so many of our women due to all sorts of complications during birth. Many of the babies also die. Sometimes there is a still birth or a spontaneous abortion. These happen because we live in the rural areas, when at the point a woman goes into labour and needs medical intervention, she might be living far from any access road. It is a herculean task getting her to any medical facility, if any is within reach that is.

Many a time, the husband would have followed the seasonal migratory exodus in search of work in the urban centres, leaving the pregnant wife with his parents. When she goes into labour, it is doubly difficult to arrange prompt transport to a medical centre, and unless by Divine intervention, complications may set in. An animal drawn carriage (*amalanke*) might be the only means of conveyance. To be frank, even an air ambulance will not make a woman in labour comfortable, but the pathetic use of animal drawn carriage, on a near non-existing pot-holed and plant roots riddled road is best imagined, on the patient. Any wonder at

the end of such journeys, either the baby or both baby and mother end up dying. This is the tragic result of lack of access roads. For this same lack of road, the expectant mother from the onset, is cut off from antenatal care services. Therefore, may I appeal to the authorities concerned to provide more rural access roads, so that even when medical complications arise for remotely located delivery patients, intervention could be secured early enough.

As for me personally, my meagre earnings attract a critical appraisal with a view to boosting it and I also want to be assisted with modern tool to do my job. I leave you in peace.

24. Adamu Jibrin (Animal Rearer)

Peace be to you all; together with the mercy and the blessings of Allah. My name is Adamu Jibrin, from the hamlet of Kaceka Malam Madori, in Malam Madori local government. I am here representing all those engaged in animal husbandry or rearing of all types of animals, be they of Fulani, Hausa or Bamange stock. I wish to speak about the relationship between the animal husbandry man and the farmer they are like senior and junior brothers, where the farmer is the younger and the animal husbandry man the older. Our relationship is not good and something needs to be done about it.

25. Yan Biyu Mai Kifi (Fisherman)

I am 'Yan Biyu Mai Kifi, from Kiri-kasamma local government, in the village of Matarar Ganji, in Hadejia emirate. Indeed throughout Jigawa state whenever Hadejia is mentioned, what comes to mind is the fish produced there. But even Hadejia knows the fishing prowess of Kiri-kasamma. We are the ultimate in techniques, tools and tricks of fishing and the business that follows, and we are counted amongst the top in the whole of the 19 Northern states of Nigeria. Just to illustrate, everyone in Hadejia emirate even if he does not know Matarar Ganji, might know my father's grandfather, the famous Magujin Kifi. It is there we use raffia grass based fishing nets and a fishing technique called *sankiya*, but in Kano dialect it is called *suruwa*. This fishing grass-mat is the key to our traditional fishing technique. We cut the raffia grass (*kaba*) from the forest, then we harvest *kari* palm-fronds and take about a week weaving both into the tool. When the water is calm, in the company of our children and all our male family members, we go in and set up the grass fishing nets. We may spend about two weeks or ten days, harvesting the fish from the water. We then deal with the logistics of handling our catch. This way of life has been handed down from our grandfathers to our fathers and to us. But our children are running away from what they see as a difficult vocation with poor income.

We believe the construction of the Tiga Dam, on River Hadejia, has negatively affected our vocation. Although it was intended for beneficial purposes, it has nevertheless

reduced water flow downstream of river Hadejia. It has also resulted in breeding water hyacinth. All the talk of solving the problem has not had any positive outcome and we believe that whatever funds are allocated to clearing the weeds are simply wasted or stolen. We are faced with a choice of either migrating *en-masse* to Cameroun where there are rich fishing grounds, or we remain in these dire circumstances. Being poor, if we say we want to migrate to Cameroun, promises will be made to us poor fishermen, to clear our problems, to enable us salvage our vocation we are still faced with this problem. The choice remains either the problem is rectified or we migrate. We strongly appeal to the authorities of this listening government to tackle this issue urgently. I leave you in peace.

26. Hajiya Altine Umar (Representative of Local Roadside Food Sellers)

Greeting of peace to everyone, my name is Hajiya Altine Umar, and my vocation is running a restaurant in a local roadside shed. I will trace how I got into this vocation because I did not inherit it. It all started with the death of my husband, who left six children as our joint offspring. I had no income to cater for these orphans, nor did I have relatives who could take them off my hands. After some thought, I settled on running a local food shed.

I started by cooking half a measure of grain a day and from that we feed, I and the children. Later I increased it to one measure, and one and a half later. I make a gain of up to 300

to 400 naira daily. With this income, we pay for rent and food but there is hardly anything left to pay for school related expenses. In case the children fall sick, we feel helpless, not knowing where to get affordable treatment, in which case we resort to herbal treatment instead of going to a medical centre. If Allah in His Mercy cures the child we thank Him, if the child dies we pray for Allah's forgiveness for his or her soul. This is how I have brought up the children without the benefit of modern education. We therefore appeal to governments, local, state or federal, to find ways of assisting us mothers of orphans to make higher income from our vocations, so that we can train our children in modern skills from modern schools, as well as Qur'anic knowledge. We also want to afford to take them to hospital. We hope the NGOs and development partners here will kindly look into our plight as worthy of their attention and intervention, all of us engaged in small scale business or vocation. May Allah reward you all abundantly.

27. Ahmadu Magaji (Traditional Barber/Surgeon)

I start with a greeting of peace. I am Ahmadu Magaji Wanzami from Roni local government. This is a family career from great-grandparents down to our parents, and we solely depend on it for livelihood. When we practice, we offer services that range from hair-cut, blood-cupping, tribal/facial marks tattooing and cutting off the epiglottis in infants. There has been a change in attitudes; there are many services people no longer ask for like blood-cupping. Most other occupations have rates they charge for their services

except the traditional barber. In our vocation we go to a client's house, we spread our mat; the client brings his child for a hair-cut and we give a facial shave to the father, doing all that without knowing what the payment would be for the service. The fees they pay, between ten and twenty naira, we accept with a grateful heart. In a day we make about 300 to 400 naira, with which we feed our parents and our own families. Seeing the inadequacy of this, we plead with the local and state governments to assist us, so that our vocation will bring more income and its value raised to modern standards. We know there are modern tools powered by electricity for hair-cut and other services; we see them in modern barbing salons with their small generators. But the traditional barber is left to forage with his traditional *zabira* (toolbag) at public gatherings like wedding and naming venues or the markets. Our subsistence income is inadequate to purchase these modern tools required by all the traditional barbers in all our local governments, to raise their services to modern standards. We need to be assisted to hire or own shops, so as to be able to charge fees that would uplift our standard of living. We wish to finally express our gratefulness, we ask, in the name of Allah, for assistance. I leave you in peace.

28. Malam Tasiu (Mechanic)

I am Tijjani Tasi'u, an official in NATA, an organization for motor vehicle and motorcycle mechanics here in Dutse. I learnt to repair motorcycles in Kano, but out of patriotism

and the desire to see my locality progress, I relocated to Dutse. Since the early days when Dutse was sparsely populated, we started with a simple shed, where we even taught many youths the skills of the trade. But things have become so bad now that I personally do not want my son to follow me into this vocation. Although I have been in this vocation for 18 to 19 years, I have not recorded much material progress except marginally. For instance, when you repair motor cycles for a junior staff or executive, the moment he gets promoted and owns a car he takes it to a company for repairs, ignoring us sitting under trees. We believe with the native intelligence given to us by Allah, we can understudy any type of vehicle or motorized transport, even though we are not witnesses to its manufacture, and from that experience render effective repair services on them.

Our plea is that our vocation should be able to generate the income that could take us out of poverty, because it is the scare of poverty that makes us discourage our children from taking after us. What sort of job is it that you do day after day, yet the moment your child is sick, your savings cannot pay for their treatment? Of what use is our vocation, when your children cannot go beyond secondary education? The expenses involved in anything beyond secondary education are simply beyond us. We have no choice other than tell our kids to stay at home because we can't pay the fees or expenses. It is not that we are unemployed, yet government

says it wants to fight poverty, which we are wallowing in. This is not to talk of those who have no jobs, and no vocation at all.

I want people to know that here in Jigawa State we are capable of repairing any type of vehicle, despite the fact that we do not have the know how to assemble or manufacture it. We can repair anything ranging from Land Cruiser, to those vehicles with primitive engines that have to be manually started, to others that have computer chips controlling their processes. Despite this, many a times we are dismissed as village mechanics, customers are urged to take their cars to modern automated repair shops or dealer outlets. Before, the fact that we are village mechanics was glossed over when the low income workers patronized our services, but the moment they became big men and affluent or achieve top posts they ignored us, that we were dirty and too ignorant to touch their vehicles, and that only a modern company could do their repairs. Therefore we too have decided that our children should abandon the vocation. We will be the last and everybody can patronize the repair companies.

If government wants us to continue, there is something government has to do. It should have pity on us and equip us like the repair companies, with tools that diagnose and locate faults, provide lift for heavy parts and make it easier to work around and inside an automobile engine. So equipped, no repair job will be beyond us. Despite our low

level of education, if you teach us the use of computerized equipment for a reasonable period of time, by the grace of Allah, we can pick up all the skills needed to operate and utilize the tool or equipment. But where only the financially strong companies have these tools, then poverty will never leave us. But thus trained, even our children do not have to aspire to higher education because we can then train them on these machines. We will not force the children of other people, but it is our duty to put our kids on the path of a viable vocation.

I therefore appeal to the government to look at us with pity and advance our vocation by sponsoring the building of a big workshop for us in Jigawa, similar to what obtains in other part of the world, fully equipped with modern tools. We have graduates amongst us and we have non-degree holders, we even have mechanics with Masters Degrees. Therefore when this workshop is built, those educated amongst us will take charge even of the computerized tools. We will be most happy. Our children will also come to be trained. But even if vehicles are taken outside our locality where they use mechanical devices as tools, it is still people that operate them. So if such tools are brought to Dutse, we too can do it. We invite private individuals and organizations, not just government, to accept this challenge of providing us with standard repair workshops, to train our kids and the public. This is the way if really we want to get rid of poverty. If this solution is not implemented, we will remain with the same old problem. I leave you in peace.

29. Hamza Makeri (Blacksmith)

In the name of Allah, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful, I greet you all with greeting of peace. I am Hamza Makeri Danmadai, from Gagarawa local government and I represent all blacksmiths for the purpose of this gathering. This vocation of blacksmithing is a family one, passed from my grandfather to my father, and to me; and the tools, skills and raw materials have not changed. I go to the forest to gather wood, which I burn to obtain charcoal. I then gather my apprentices to set up a charcoal fire, using manual bellows and I heat a piece of iron and beat it into shape with a smith's hammer, holding it by tongs. We do this with sparks of the fire burning us, despite the heat, until we shape and finalise whatever item we want to construct. We can take up to a week constructing an item if need be, be it knives, scissors or farming plow/large hoe.

However when we take it to the market, sometimes there is no demand for the product and one is compelled to sell it at half price to a whole seller, else one has no option but to bring it back home. Yet having bought raw material from an iron monger on credit, what will you tell him when he comes to recover the debt? Nothing. Our children witness this tragic situation and they avoid learning this trade from us; even to convince them to help us make the fire is difficult. Yet, is it not a matter of shame for the blacksmiths and traditional engineers of this land that even the knife we use to cut common okra in our kitchens is made in Japan? Are our governments not ashamed that common kitchen

knife is imported from Japan? But if they had done the right thing and supported local blacksmiths with tools, that reduce tedium and enable us to manipulate objects at ease, the reverse would have been the case. If we have machine tools, this would be an easy product to make. If we have tools for perforating, polishing and perfecting our products with ease, I swear in the name of Allah there would be no need to import metal bowls and other tools for the construction trade, or knives, or a tailor's scissors or large hoe. But lack of assistance from the authorities has left blacksmiths so far behind technologically in their profession. When we make a weekly production and purchase raw materials for the following week, we are unable to buy foodstuff for a week unless on credit.

Remarks by the Master of Ceremony (MC)

At least there have been sufficient narrations to fulfill the pledge of the Governor to have a forum for the *Talakawa* to speak, for it will not be possible for everyone here to speak. The time has gone indeed; it is almost time for the afternoon *zuhr* prayers and yet there are other activities ahead. Therefore those who have not been called to speak should exercise patience, at least a start has been made and everyone here has understood the purpose of the forum, which is to understand the problems of small crafts and business enterprises and to reach a consensus on how to improve them.

The next stage of this process will take place at the Three Star Hotel, under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Governor at three o'clock, where the communiqué and a distillation of the key points made here this morning will be presented and ratified. Let me use this opportunity to extend our gratitude to all those who gave testimonies or narrated their situations in truth, before such an intimidating audience unfazed, and to assure them that their advice and suggestions shall be considered. It is the intention of the government to come up with strategies for the long term with a view to turning things around, instead of engaging in sloganeering. This meeting today will enable the government under Governor Sule Lamido to study objectively the reality of people living in the rural areas, so as to know how to tackle their problems, taking cognizance of their vocations, customs, their social intercourse, and we hope people will also reciprocate.

As we said earlier, this government has an open door policy as exemplified by the Governor personally who listens to the citizens even on the street. Similarly, he is in touch with the local government chairmen, his commissioners and members of the state assembly. This government is one that is sensitive to the conditions of its people, and we thank God the fruits of the alliance between the government and the governed is bearing fruits. We therefore extend our appreciation to the Governor. We also thank the Sultan for sparing his time to be here. After leaving here, the Sultan will go back to his lodging, pray and rest; at three o'clock the

Sultan will go to Gwaram, where he will inspect the new Fagam highway which he appealed to the government to construct, and it has been done. From there, he will return home. We wish him a safe journey. Finally, I would like to invite the Secretary to the State Government (SSG) Dr Aminu Abdullahi Taura, to deliver the vote of thanks.



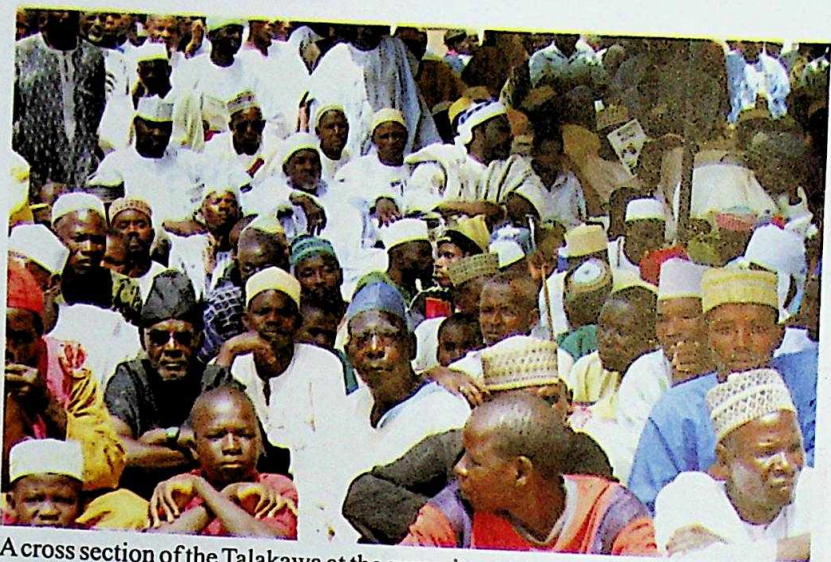
Governor Sule Lamido of Jigawa State delivering his welcome address at the Talakawa Summit



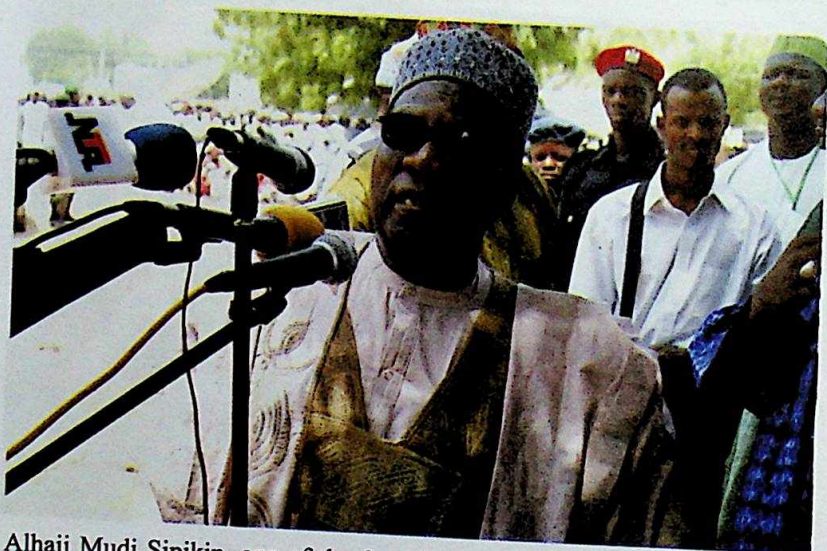
His Eminence, The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar III addressing the summit at Dutse



Alhaji Lili Gabari, a renowned politician making an inspirational comment



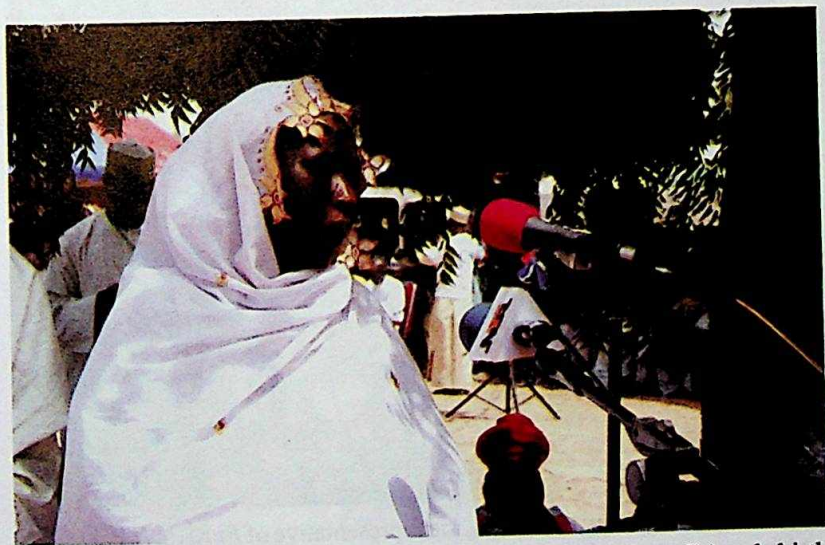
A cross section of the Talakawa at the summit



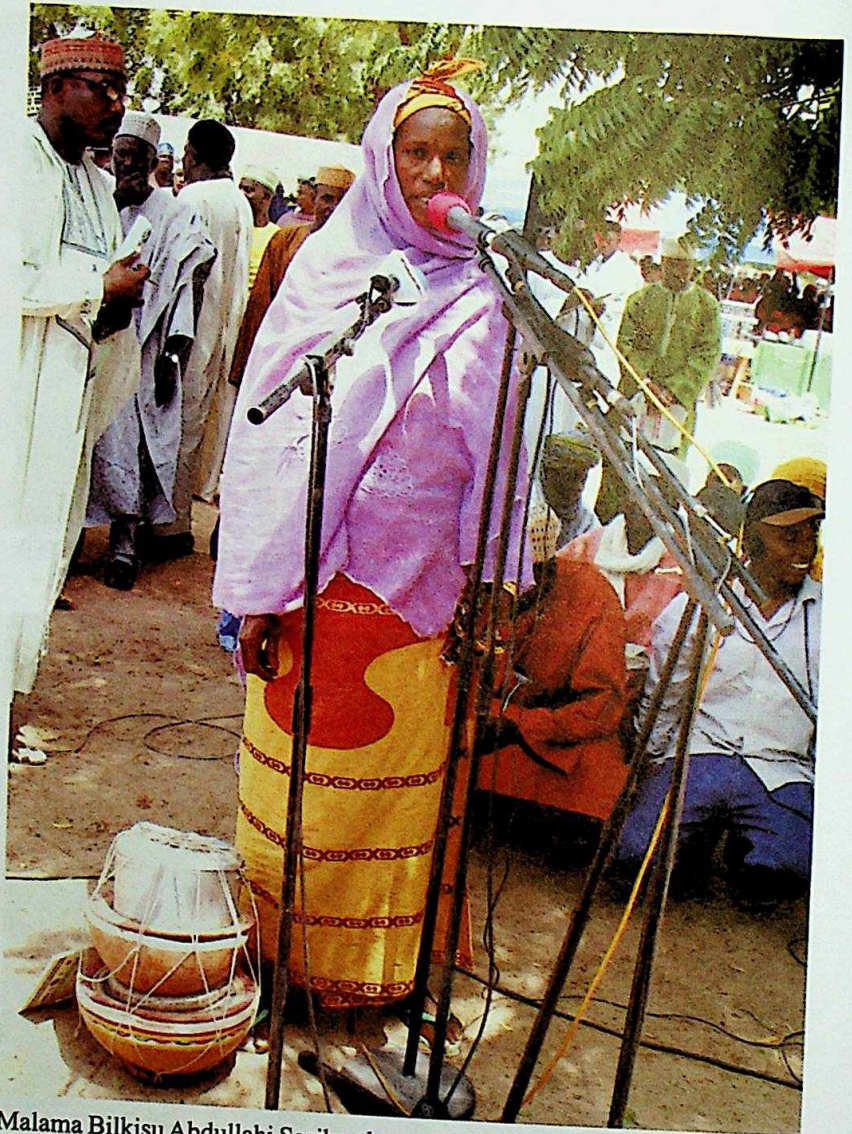
Alhaji Mudi Sipikin, one of the founding members of NEPU delivering a speech



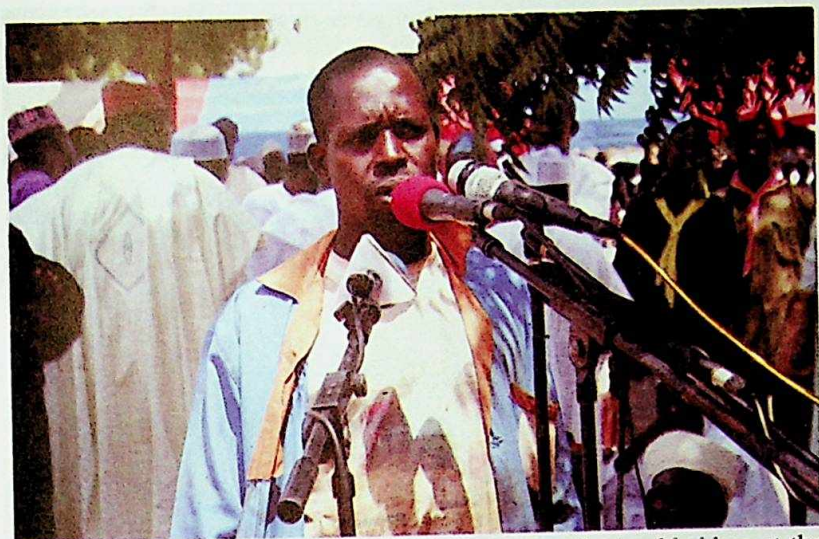
Alhaji Tanko Yakasai, OFR, an elder statesman giving an inspirational speech



Malama Gambo Musa Babura, the representative of traditional birth attendants commenting on her situation as a commoner



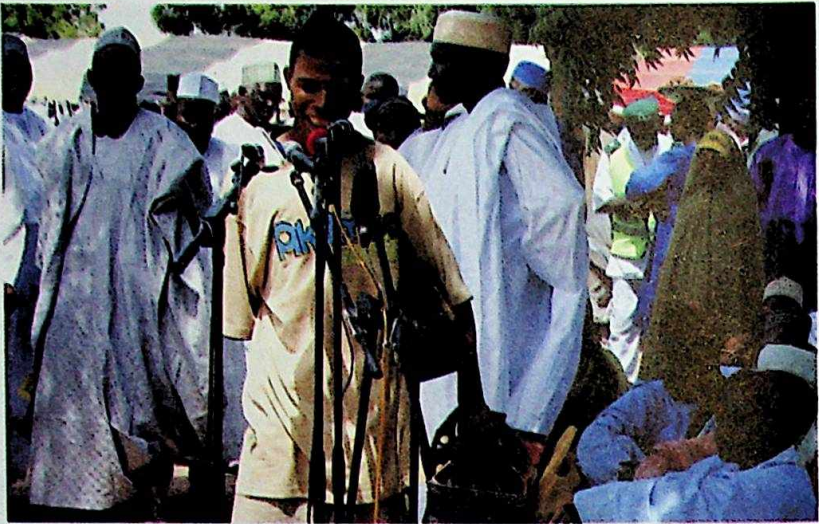
Malama Bilkisu Abdullahi Sasika, the representative of Fura da Nono sellers making a comment on behalf of the people she represented at the summit



Malam Tasi'u, the representative of the mechanics sharing his ideas at the summit



Malam Hamza Makeri, the representative of the blacksmiths speaking on their behalf



Malam Salisu Shehu, the representative of the shoe shiners sharing his feelings at the summit



Dr. Aminu Abdullahi Taura, the Secretary to the State Government, Jigawa State giving his vote of thanks at the summit



Governor Sule Lamido of Jigawa State and Hajiya Amina Ibrahim, Special Adviser to the President on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and also the representative of the Federal Government at the summit

Section 3: Appendices

Appendix 1: The Summit Communiqué

THE JIGAWA STATE *TALAKAWA* SUMMIT Communiqué of the *Talakawa* Summit Dutse, October 18, 2008 (20 Shawwal, 1429 AH)

1. Background

Jigawa State has been declared the poorest state in Nigeria. This has made it the focus of many discussion forums on poverty eradication in the country. Since 2007, there has been realization and commitment on the part of the state government to build a multi-stakeholder coalition to tackle poverty and related issues in the state. The commitment of the state government had been demonstrated by a pioneer social security legislation that entitles the physically challenged to a monthly allowance of N7,000, which is above the one dollar a day poverty level.

Guided by its philosophy of popular participation and involving the people in policy making, the Sule Lamido administration has since inception committed itself to the convening of a *Talakawa* summit. Citizens have shown concern on the continued implementation of several poverty alleviation programmes and initiatives by previous regimes, which have not made any impact on their lives. It is the belief of the Jigawa State Governor, Alhaji Sule Lamido that no such programme can be credible without the full consultation and involvement of the *Talakawa*, to hear their

situation, their worries and their suggestions on how to solve their problems. This had been the consistent stand of the late Malam Aminu Kano and all NEPU/PRP activists. The *Talaka* is the pillar of democracy; he has the power of the vote and therefore deserves to be served by elected leaders. He who wears the shoe knows where it pinches.

Against this background, the Jigawa State Government convened the Jigawa Talakawa Summit on 18th October, 2008, at the State Library. Present at the summit were representatives of the poor across 51 vocational groups of the state, which included rice farmers, groundnut oil producers, food sellers, traditional birth attendants, cart pushers, the physically challenged, pomade makers, carpenters, tailors, farmers and fishermen. Others present include traditional rulers, community and religious leaders, political leaders, national and international NGOs, MDAs, development partners and more than 20,000 *Talakawa*.

The Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence Sa'ad Abubakar III in his speech expressed solidarity with the objectives of the summit and read out the Poverty Pledge, which urges consistent and unalloyed commitment to fighting poverty by empowering the poor and promoting justice rather than providing charity.

Elder statesmen who had been involved all their lives in the struggle for the emancipation of the *Talakawa* through the

instrumentality of NEPU/PRP gave inspirational speeches, reminding those at the helm of affairs that they are enjoying the fruits of decades of sacrifice and martyrdom. With the war against political domination and oppression won, it is time to launch a renewed war against poverty and want. They called on the *Talakawa* to challenge their elected representatives to prevent siphoning of public funds. They condemned any form of oppression of the *Talakawa*.

Major Issues Emanating from the Talakawa Testimonies

Representatives of the poor from various walks of life raised several issues at the summit. These issues are summarized under the following categories:

Education

- There are no career development plans for graduates of traditional Islamic schools. As a result, many of them end up begging on the streets.
- Many of the *Talakawa* find it difficult to sponsor the education of their children in modern schools

Health

- Traditional birth attendants: There was inadequate training for these traditional health workers. They also lack the necessary tools for the safe delivery of mothers. This does not only incapacitate them from

carrying out their professional duties, but also contribute to the high maternal mortality rate in the state

Agriculture and Rural Development

- There is increasing incidence of conflict between farmers and cattle rearers because of the conversion of grazing land to farmlands and environmental degradation. The consequence of these conflicts has been loss of lives and properties. Cattle rearers from neighbouring countries have frequently destroyed crops and farms, raped women and even killed people on the slightest provocation.
- High cost and insufficient supply of fertilizer to farmers have been undermining the efforts of farmers in food production.

Hunger

- There is a decrease in livestock production as well as a decline in the output of diary products because of reduced grazing fields.
- The drying up of rivers and streams is causing a decline in fishing and irrigation farming. For example, the construction of Tiga dam has reduced the flow of water in the Hadejia River in Jigawa State

- These developments have increased hunger in the land

Economic Empowerment

- Small scale traders and artisans such as sculptors, traditional barbers and blacksmiths cannot sustain their families.
- Rich indigenes of Jigawa State do not patronize products and services of small scale businesses such as furniture, cutlery, shoes, and even groceries.
- Small scale businesses in the State are unable to access government assistance and micro credit facilities because they have no associations.
- Insufficient skills acquisition centres and inadequate training facilities where they exist have led to lack of engagement of the youth in economic activities
- The emergence of modern ways of practicing certain trades such as barbing, has posed a serious threat to the traditional practices in such trades.
- Modern mechanical workshops are forcing roadside mechanics and other artisans out of business.

Employment

- The scarcity of raw materials (like flour, cotton wool) and their prohibitive costs are becoming a major drawback to traditional trades like weaving and bread making.
- The youth are abandoning the practice of traditional trades and businesses because of the difficulties involved in them.
- The people of Jigawa State are involved in seasonal migration due to lack of economic activities at home, more especially with the absence of irrigation facilities.
- Some small scale businesses are finding it difficult to comply with the stringent health and safety measures in carrying out their businesses.
- The opening up of small scale businesses to foreign nationals like Chinese and Indians is squeezing out local enterprises.

Gender

- Most small scale businesses practiced by women such as food vending, cannot sustain the family.

- Women who have acquired skills like weaving and sewing do not have the necessary implements such as sewing and weaving machines.

Popular participation

- The government hardly consults the people in designing empowerment programmes

Infrastructure

- Lack of adequate electricity supply is leading to the collapse of small scale businesses like welding, tailoring, cold stores etc

Governance, transparency and accountability

- Corrupt government officials are undermining government's efforts at tackling the problems of poverty.

2. Policy Recommendations

The following are the recommendations emanating from the testimonies of the Talakawa:

- There is need to establish more vocational centres for the physically challenged and to rehabilitate the existing ones.
- Islamic organisations are urged to introduce and get involve in the training of the physically challenged

and students of the Quranic education schools, as is being done by Christian missionaries.

- Government should be very vigilant in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes especially by closely monitoring the activities of its officials assigned to oversee such programmes.
- Government should construct more feeder roads in order to enhance health care delivery system, to facilitate easy transportation of women in labour to the hospitals and easy transportation of farm produce to distant markets.
- Sellers of perishable commodities should be helped to acquire modern storage facilities, while the practitioners of other occupations such as traditional barbers and birth attendants also require training and modern tools for the occupations.
- More ambulances should be provided in rural areas to convey women in labour to hospitals. There is also the need to train more traditional birth attendants.
- Financial capital and credit facilities should be secured for local artisans to enable them to purchase modern tools and facilities that would help them to compete favourably with companies producing

similar goods and services. Among these are the following: mechanics, fishermen, leather workers, weavers, mat weavers, processed groundnuts sellers, wheel barrow pushers, body lotion makers, shoe shiners, carpenters, welders, etc. Yet some other artisans should be assisted with capital to open modern workshops.

- Government should actively promote animal cross breeding and secure more grazing fields for cattle rearers.
- Government should intensify its security measures toward controlling the incursion of foreign cattle rearers, especially during the period of irrigation farming.
- People should patronize the products of local craftsmen, because given the appropriate support the quality of such products could match that of foreign goods.
- The production of cotton should be enhanced in order to provide sufficient raw materials for weavers.
- Government must confront the problem of power failure seriously.

- The Government should make it a policy for all contractors to employ local labour on their construction sites, rather than bringing workers from other places.
- The government should design policies which would ensure that all monies earned in Jigawa State would as much as possible be spent within the State, in order to boost the economic activities of the State.
- Government should take measures against foreigners taking over major businesses engaged by the people of Jigawa State.

Conclusion

In summary, the issues raised can be grouped into four:

- Declining income
- Competition from modern production
- Lack of modern technology
- Lack of infrastructure like roads, electricity, ambulances and the like

The solutions proffered especially as they relate to small scale industries are as follows:

- Access to modern tools and technology
- Training in these modern tools of production
- Access to capital

- Access to markets for their products

There is also the need to protect local production and bridge the information gap so that the *Talakawa* know which tier or agency of government to take their complaints to.

Dr. Aminu Abdullahi
SSG, Jigawa State,
Chairman

Y.Z. Ya'u
CITAD,
Secretary

Appendix 2: Committee Membership

a. Coordinating Committee

Alhaji Sule Lamido
The Governor, Jigawa State

Dr. Aminu Abdullahi
SSG, Jigawa State

Aminu Ibrahim
Chief of Staff, Government House, Dutse

Otive Igbuzor
Action Aid Internatinal-Nigeria (AAI-N)

Jibrin Ibrahim
Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)

Y.Z. Ya'u
*Centre for Information Technology and Development
(CITAD)*

Tajuddeen Abdulraheem
UN Millennium Campaign

Kole Shettima
MacArthur Foundation

Adagbo Onoja
Special Adviser to the Governor on Media Affairs

b. Communiqué Committee

Dr. Aminu Abdullahi, *Chairman*

Y.Z. Ya'u, *Secretary*

Adagbo Onoja

Dr. Haruna Wakili

Dr. Mustapha Ahmad Isa

Alhaji Garba Isa

Malam Magaji Bashir

Malam Jamilu Abubakar

Dr. Abdullahi Sule-Kano

Malam Yahaya Ibrahim Arobade

Alhaji Mohammed Musa

Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim

Mustafa Ibrahim Chinade

Hajiya Zainab Okino

Hajiya Amina Salihu

Comrade Chijoke Uwasomba

Moddibo Kawu

Malam Isa Bala, *Secretariat*

**Appendix 3: Vote of Thanks by the SSG, Jigawa State,
Dr. Aminu Abdullahi**

All thanks are due to Allah, Lord of Might and Glory, for crowning our efforts with success, for on this day we have seen the government's open door policy writ large on the largest canvas ever. The door has truly admitted the multitude. I am sure people have realized that most of those who spoke here are the sort of people who would not normally be able to use text or call the Governor on his line, to communicate, like many of us here can. We offer thanks to Allah therefore, for the chance to be here and to listen to the people who narrated their stories to us.

Special thanks to the Governor of Jigawa state, who thought of this idea and saw to its fruition, because frankly many people thought it would not be possible. Certainly people thought some of the issues raised here, by tradition, should not or ought not to be heard by some of the ears that have heard them today. These anxieties informed the skepticism that greeted the idea of the *Talakawa* Summit. We therefore thank the Governor for his steadfastness until the materialization of his vision.

Our special gratitude also goes to the Sultan, who like he did last year, came on a brotherly visit, to assist us discharge the duty entrusted to us, of listening to the people and coming to grips with their problems, as well as discharging the electoral mandate of the citizens. We pray that just as Allah brought him safe, our Lord returns him home safely. Special

thanks also to the *Talakawa* men and women, who have braved the elements and the stage fright associated with addressing crowds, which even I who had been facing many public occasions, would find intimidating; but regardless, they managed to eloquently articulate their problems and bare the secrets of their existence, which had hitherto been between themselves and their Lord, or shared with their intimate friends only. We pray that we have understood their message and we ask Allah to enable us to extend assistance to them. It will not be possible to call the names of all the distinguished personalities who have graced this occasion, for one the time is against us, and the time for prayers is upon us. Nonetheless, our special gratitude would go to the media men and women, some of whom have been on their feet from the onset, taking pictures, recording voices or just doing their job. May Allah reward them and take them home in safety. All security agencies deserve commendation, for the Summit has come and gone without any incident. We also commend the efforts of other organizations that all contributed to the smooth conduct of this Summit, be they voluntary or others too numerous to be mentioned; but they are listed in the programme of events and have all done a good job. We pray that Allah unites our hearts in solidarity and brotherly love. May He also reward them, may He take everyone home safely. I part with you wishing you peace, and the mercy and blessings of Allah upon you all.

**Appendix 4: Expanding the Frontiers of
Democracy in Jigawa State**

**By
Sule Lamido***

His Excellency and my predecessor, Dr. Saminu Turaki,
The Deputy-Governor,
The Chief Judge of Jigawa State,
Members-elect of the National and Jigawa State
Assemblies,
Members of the departing State Executive Council,
Your Royal Highnesses, Community and Religious leaders,
Your Excellencies, from far and near,
Other special visitors of Jigawa State on the occasion
of the inauguration of this regime,
Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen,

I begin this speech with gratitude to Allah, the true and real giver of power. Events of the past few months, climaxing with the elections as peacefully and free as it took place in Jigawa, has given us cause to give such gratitude to Him. But it is not only because there had been elections and a new government is being sworn-in but, more importantly, the swearing-in ceremony in our state is being witnessed by people who have come from far and near and for whom the welfare of the Talakawa has been their life time concern, passion, burden and identity in Nigerian politics. These are men and women who have been the thinkers, ideologues,

party workers and political conveyor belts of the unique stream of consciousness articulated by people like the late Malam Aminu Kano and which has since been the propelling force behind politics especially in the present Kano-Jigawa axis.

It is, therefore, both a matter of pride and humility for us all that the government in Jigawa today is the only one led by political leaders produced by such a strong tradition of politics, whatever the aberrations, distortions, internal squabbles and transformations there might have been in that tendency. Those splits and squabbles are not only typical of radical populism everywhere in the world, they are also part of the dialectics of political progress.

It is, thus, important that we celebrate our achievements at an occasion like this even as we also reflect deeply on the situation of our people in Jigawa, the direction of the world and our place in it, as black people.

RECOGNISING OUR PIONEERS

I crave your indulgence to recognize our pioneers, leaders and distinguished legatees of this radical tradition: The Mudi Sipikins, the M.D. Dangalans, the Ammani Inuwas, the Lili Gabaris, the Sani Gules, M.D. Yusufus, the Tanko Yakasais, the Asabe Razors, the Bola Ogunbos, (Aminu Kano's running mate in the 1983 presidential election), the Uche Chukwumerijes, the Lekan Baloguns, the Ahmadu

Jalingos, the Najatu Mohammeds, the members of the Yusuf Bala Usman and Bala Mohammed Memorial Committees and of course, our luminaries, Abba Musa Rimi, Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa and Muhammadu Abubakar Rimi.

These men and women are distinguished by their membership of the political party most committed to national independence and emancipation of the downtrodden rather than any parochial identity. It is true that many people never agree with them. It is, nevertheless, correct to say that their intervention in any issue at anytime automatically becomes the threshold and the take-off point for others, either in agreement or disagreement.

The process of a New Beginning in Nigeria should reckon with people who have been playing such a role consistently over time. In this wise, we in Jigawa State would not wait for history to celebrate them. We will beat history to it. We would celebrate them now. We would celebrate them while alive and urge them to reorganize and do more. They are the most appropriate individuals and the collective to begin a re-politicization of Nigerians on the imperative of national independence and the emancipation of the Talakawa. Their individual and collective profile in Nigeria means that they can provide that leadership and accomplish so much within the shortest possible time.

This is a task that will rekindle the ideals of our departed leaders, inspirers and comrades like Mallam Aminu Kano, Sa'ad Zungur, Lawal Danbazau, Gambo Sawaba, Bello Ijimu, Yusuf Bala Usman, Bala Mohammed and their class. The labor of these our heroes shall not be in vain.

It is, therefore, with deep humility and a sense of privilege that I, once again, welcome you all to Jigawa.

A CASE OF AN UNUSUAL UNDERDEVELOPMENT

As you all might be aware, our state manifests the worst indices of underdevelopment. I was born and raised here and have spent most part of my adult life in the state. I have also been actively involved in the affairs of the state since my PRP days. Nevertheless, it was the recent electioneering campaign tour that exposed me to the problems of our people in that most pathetic degree. In summary, the campaign tour brought me face-face with the uniquely unmitigated case of underdevelopment called Jigawa State .

This reality was worsened for me by the out pouring of emotions from the elderly, men, women and youths, some of them weeping in many cases. This is something I interpreted as a subtle reminder to me of the material and social hopelessness of their lives. How they came to the conclusion that I can make a difference in their lives baffles me! But I accept it as an invitation and an expression of their

belief that somehow, I can make the difference, that together, we can fight poverty!

Let me, therefore, at this juncture, state the ideological background of the leadership of this new government. It is firmly anchored on the antecedent of Democratic Humanism as defined and epitomized by its chief exponent, Mallam Aminu Kano. That is the only ideological framework by which this government can satisfy the yearnings of the vast majority of our people whom poverty and misery have reduced to conditions unworthy of human beings. These are the people for whom life has, in the words of the People's Redemption Party, (PRP) "been a sad chronicle of unfulfilled promises, dashed hopes and unrealized expectations".

It is about time government and governance in Nigeria concentrates on eliminating some of the historical nightmares of the Talakawa. That would be the only adequate tribute to the memory of Mallam Aminu Kano for whom democracy is the rule of the common people, the poor and the illiterate.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THIS CONTEXT

Our research has shown the utter difficulty of deciding which of the many nightmares of the common people can be consigned into the dustbin of history at a sustainable financial cost. In resolving this puzzle, one has taken note of

the grim existential reality of those who, in addition to the general material poverty of the majority of our people, are physically challenged. Needless pointing out the degrading extent to which these people go to barely keep body and soul together, such as begging.

The moment of truth should, therefore, start with these people. The Government of Jigawa hereby announces an automatic monthly survival allowance of N7000.00 for every physically challenged indigene of the state. A draft bill to this effect will soon be forwarded to the State Assembly. An immediate stock taking of those who fall within this social category will also commence and be concluded this week. This documentation which will form the basis of the legislative and budgetary framework of this policy will involve the active participation of institutions such as the traditional authority, the Council of Ulama, the Ministry of Social Welfare as well as the leaders of the various physically challenged groups including the lepers, the crippled and the blind.

It is expected that after one year, there will be no beggars in Jigawa State. This stipend and the programme of inclusion of physically challenged persons in the impending industrial regeneration will take care of that. The essence is to make Jigawa a model of the prospects and possibilities of the theory and practice of fair trade. Fair trade, in this context, refers to the re-positioning of poor people in such a

way that they can produce and such products will be bought in an international market arrangement at a price advantageous to them. Jigawa State Government will pursue this with all the energy at its disposal.

In fact, the implementation of the inclusion of the poorest of the poor will be the first task for the Jigawa Development Delivery and Intervention Corps (JIDDIC), a volunteers' scheme that will be put in place immediately under the personal supervision of the Governor to facilitate delivery of services on a rapid response basis. The imperative for this scheme resides in our recognition that a fundamental problem of governance has been the gap between promises to deliver and the delivery of promises, particularly to those who need the benefits most. There must be as many reasons for this sad gap.

One of such reasons is the institutional mechanism for translating policies into benefits. While I endorse the civil service as an irreplaceable vehicle for governance, I am tempted to accept that our present situation justifies an additional development delivery and intervention mechanism. This would, however, be made up of volunteers who can execute a rapid response approach to delivering development to people who have been taken for a ride for too long.

Additionally, the culture of a volunteer scheme is necessarily a great investment in leadership in the sense that

the volunteers are young people who would acquire the nobility of service to community at very little cost to the government.

In the next one year, the FOUR most urgent and lifesaving services that government must deliver in line with the Irreducible Minimum declared by the PDP will be handled by this scheme. These services would include;

- (1) The deliberate and urgent mobilization of critical sections of our society, particularly women and children, against certain attitudes towards personal and environmental hygiene, maternal and child health care, girl education and agricultural productivity techniques, among others.
- (2) Mobile medical emergency services for immunization, maternal and child health care, afflictions like TB, blindness, etc.
- (3) Comprehensive rehabilitation of primary and secondary schools, clinic and hospitals that must be undertaken immediately. Our traditional Islamic schools will also be part of this programme. We shall consult the Council of Ulama on how best to go about this.
- (4) Massive re-forestation and tree planting campaign aimed at restoration of nature throughout Jigawa

State. This particular programme would enable us use our youths to restore our natural green environment. It will also enable our children to grow with green such that the environment forms part of their being again. In this connection, the state government intends to invite the Nobel laureate, Professor Wangari Mathaai, with a view to benefiting from her expertise, thereby giving our own programme here a comparative African breath.

The design and coordination of these programmes will still reside with the respective ministries and agencies traditionally responsible for them but JIDDIC would be the implementing body.

The emphasis on a rapid, mobile minimal health care delivery component of the Irreducible Minimum of our party is such that the state government must quickly organise a crash programme for community health workers. A special meeting of the relevant agencies of government which would work out the details of this crash programme will hold immediately to put this into action.

While the strategy of an immediate stipend to physically challenged persons and direct development delivery system are adequate interim responses to the most severe cases of poverty in our society, they do not sufficiently attack the

system that reproduces poverty on such a pervasive scale. To address that system, we must look at both the structural foundation and the many layers of differences it produces. In our society here, one of the most observable layers of such difference is the exclusion of women. Believing that it is about time to begin to reverse some of such elements of the system, it is important to address the question of girl education. One way and the best way that this has been done else where and must be done here is to use state power to create and widen access to education, for example, for our future mothers. The strategic role of women in the society demands no less. The Government of Jigawa is, therefore, conducting an immediate, special review of the situation with a view to providing free and automatic education for all girls of school going age in the state at all levels of education. It should be possible to commence the implementation of this policy by next October when a new school calendar begins. The next key issue in the social group positioning is how to recover our artisans. In those days gone, the society had well trained, qualitative and dignified artisans in terms of plumbers, electricians, mechanics, bricklayers, masons, blacksmiths and a host of them.

Today, that is not the case as the society has lost its soul and stopped emphasizing the functional essence of education. There is the absolute need to recover the artisans because there is a gap they alone can fill in our ambition to

industrialize. Towards this end, the Jigawa State Government is equally conducting a special review of the situation with a view to re-equipping selected vocational training institutions or opening new ones to provide this unfortunate missing link as from next October.

Closely tied to that is the crisis of agricultural production as they relate to food security and income stability in the rural economy. All the statistics show conclusively that more than 70 per cent of the population is engaged in subsistence farming. Hunger, either at the level of the quantity of food produced or the quality of food, particularly protein intake, has been a permanent feature. The application of fertilizer which could have mitigated this has, ironically, been turned into an annual nightmare in terms of access to it by this category of farmers. Once again, something must be done, both from the point of view of social justice and collective survival. In this wise, the government hereby declares an Agricultural Emergency whose core is a massive subsidy on fertilizer and direct access to it by every active farmer in the state.

The exact amount of the subsidy is already being worked out but the cost of a bag of fertilizer will be affordable in the real sense of the word, even by the poorest of the poor and this is with effect from this farming season which is very much at hand.

AGRO-INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMATION

The real challenge, even in the short-run, is transforming the economy into a modern one. The only way to do this is through industries which, in turn, means bringing in investors.

Jigawa State is clearly a goldmine in goat farming and the leather products therefrom, salt mining, Gum Arabic and dairies. The issue is the lack of industries that would process these into industrial goods thereby guaranteeing employment, income stability, foreign exchange earnings, food and human security, all at once.

The state government has scheduled a series of meetings and discussions with potential investors and other stakeholders in this endeavour. This is a clarion call to all investors: all roads should lead to Jigawa where the state government is prepared to grant real concessions in this regard.

This same strategy will apply in the case of investors in mass housing units at the fastest speed. This also includes investors in the hospitality industry to come to Jigawa and do so. Dutse, for example, is already a natural tourist attraction with its spectacular scenery. This can be enhanced with functional hotels which could make many to bring their meetings, conferences and other social activities from other places to Dutse, our state capital.

IMPERATIVE OF CO-OPERATION

Being only a State in a Federal Republic of thirty-five others and a federal capital, there is very little we can do. But as a people with a deep consciousness of their progressive and forward looking orientation, there is so much we can do with whatever we get from federal allocations. We can still rapidly transform our society given the availability of land, the good climate and abundance of highly educated and capable human resources. The key requirement is being able to carry everyone along.

Carrying everyone along means that there must be cooperation between those in government and those outside of government. Without such co-operation, progress would be slow, clumsy and perhaps antagonistic. But I do not ask you to co-operate with the government blindly. Rather, I ask you to co-operate based on your appraisal of the situation in which we are in. That situation is one in which a lot of changes are taking place. Our people must understand some of the changes very deeply before deciding whether to reject or embrace some of them. Even when we decide either to embrace or reject, we need moderation because absolutism in any form is simply repugnant to democracy and progress.

MY PLEDGES

On my part, I have already said that I do not see my governorship as a personal victory but as a trust and an opportunity to bring about the system which our people have struggled against many odds in the past to achieve.

Our programmes, pronouncements and actions will bear the unmistakable stamp of the moral and ideological character of the political background we come from. This government will not be wicket to any group or creed or race or class.. Although it will be firm against slot, brigandage and acts capable of threatening order and peaceful co-existence, it would be fair, firm and just in doing that. Nobody or groups would need to lobby to get social, redistributive or allocative justice.

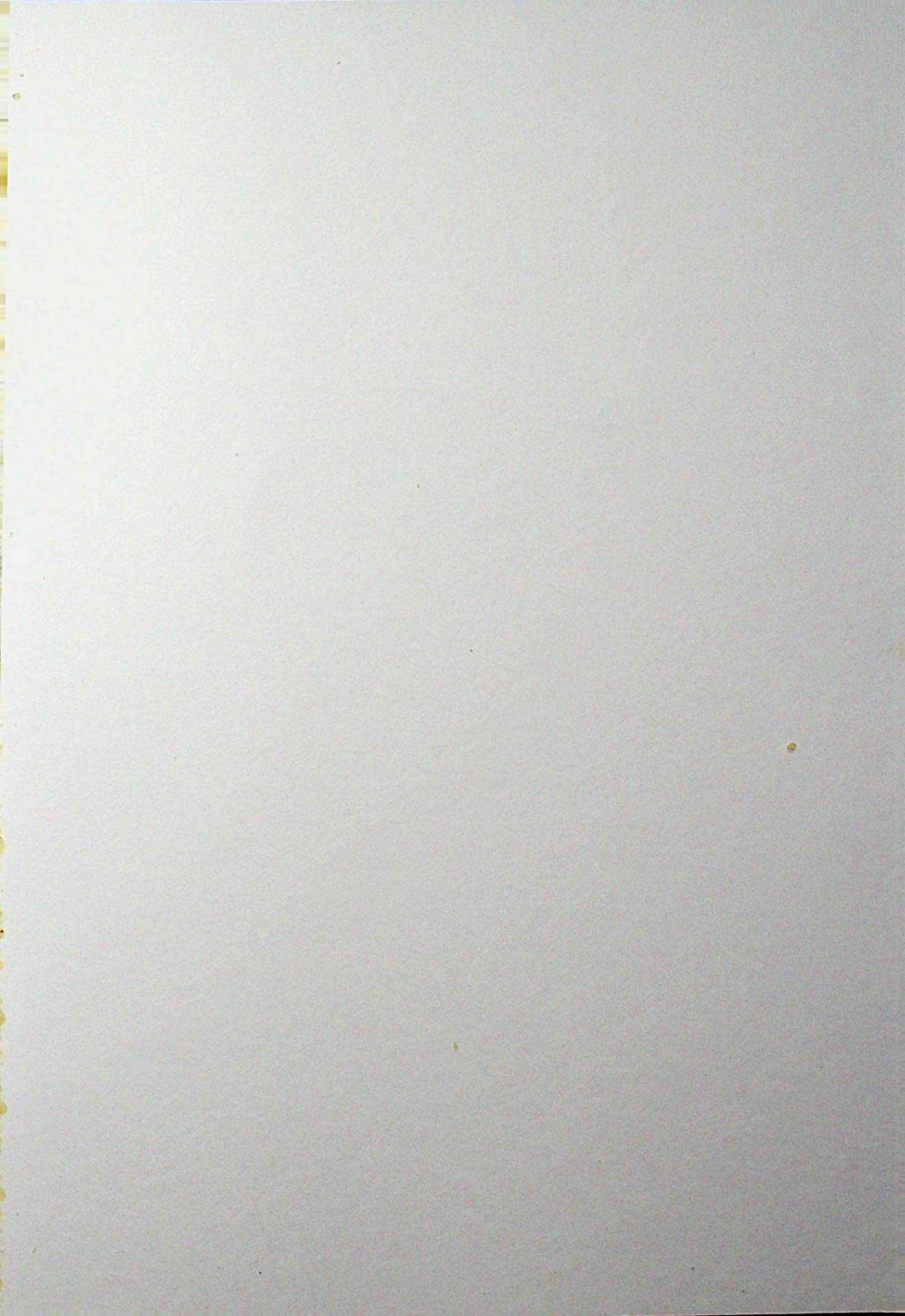
I made this categorically clear while inaugurating the Transition Committee that heralded this regime, that this administration would be strictly guided by the tradition of identifying and selecting into public office, people with proven faith and commitment to serving their own people without making noise about it as a subtle way of lobbying. This is because we reckon with such people to be decent and cultured and as people whose anonymity is an expression of belief in themselves and in the idea of being advertised only by the culture of hard work.

I would strive every day as long as I am the Chief Executive of the state to be the chief advocate, agitator and defender of the weakest groups in the social chain here. Already, there has been designed a Scorecard by which the government would be told the truth unsullied by protocol and bureaucratic red tapism. The whole essence of this is to guard against degeneracy in power and deviation from the

guarantee of social justice, including on my own part. I assure you that where relative inadequacy of resources threatens redistributive and allocative justice, the poorest and the weakest will get their own share before any other set of people in this state.

So, help us God.

***Text of inaugural address to the people of Jigawa State by Sule Lamido after being sworn-in as the Governor on May 29, 2007.**



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