



NAFEST NEWS

NAFEST...the festival that unites the Nation

• Vol.3 • No. 6

• Thursday October 15th, 2009

• FREE

'NAFEST Re-emphasizes Our Oneness As A People And Our Creative Potentials For National Growth' - *Turai Yar'adua*

Full Text of First Lady's Speech @ NAFEST 2009



Hajjiya (Dr.) Turai Umaru Yar'adua, First Lady, Federal Republic of Nigeria

ADDRESS BY HER EXCELLENCY, HAJIYA (DR.) TURAI UMARU YAR'ADUA, FIRST LADY, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 23RD NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS AND CULTURE (NAFEST) 2009, AT BAKO KONTAGORA MEMORIAL STADIUM, MINNA, NIGER STATE, TUESDAY, 13TH OCTOBER, 2009

PROTOCOL:

It is my pleasure to share this very great moment with you at the official Opening Ceremony of the 23rd edition of the National Festival of Arts and culture (NAFEST) 2009, holding in Minna, the beautiful capital city of Niger State.

I have been informed that NAFEST, tagged the Unity Forum, draws its participation from the 36 States of the Federation and the FCT, as well as related governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations across the federation.

It provides a platform where stakeholders from diverse background interact and showcase their rich cultural heritage in a creative, friendly and celebrative mood. Such interactions lead to the building of bridges of understanding, harmony and peace which is very dear to us in our efforts to grow as one strong and indivisible nation.

I am very pleased to know that NAFEST in recent times is used as a major channel for re-emphasising our oneness as a people as well as highlighting our creative potentials for optimum national growth.

In our capacity we shall continue to welcome and support all efforts aimed at promoting peace and security which are panacea to good governance, as it is only in an environment of peace and security that government can deliver services to its citizens.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to state that the theme of this year's NAFEST entitled: "Culture and the Challenges of our time: Cultural Industries and wealth Creation" is apt and serves a platform towards reawakening our consciousness on the need to look inwards with a view to mitigating some of the challenges of our time.

This perspective is a welcome development as the festival in addition to providing entertainment is being repositioned to contribute in actualizing the 7-Point Agenda and the Vision 20, 2020 development strategy of the Administration towards building a greater Nigeria.

Towards this all efforts must therefore be on deck to support the lofty ideals of the festival which are geared towards harnessing our cultural resources in our quest at developing the economy and generally to uplift the quality of life of Nigerians.

On my part, through my office and in collaboration with the wives of the Executive Governors of the (36) States of the Federation and the FCT, we will be disposed at encouraging all efforts geared towards tapping from our creative industries in designing women and youths empowerment programmes.

Let me at this juncture commend our artist(e)s who are excelling in their various fields of endeavour, especially in the areas of crafts and the film industry. Your skills and expertise in this sector are doing this country proud. As today Nollywood ranks among the 3 biggest Film making Industry in the world.

Similarly our beautiful embroideries, textiles, batik, leather designs, glass and bead making, bronze and brass works among others are becoming more popular especially at the foreign scene. This is a great achievement which needs to be sustained and further promoted for the positive socio-economic impact on our dear country. Therefore there is need to call on investor especially the private sector to take advantage of our creative industries which are not fully tapped and developed. This sector has great prospects as it has the potential to alleviate poverty, diversify our revenue base, empower our people and generate wealth to our teeming unemployed rural populace.



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE (NCAC)

The Voice of Arts and Culture in Nigeria

Con't. of First Lady speech

In the light of this, I urge our creative and vibrant artist(e)s not only to use their God-given talents to put in more efforts, but to also use their industry to project our culture in a positive manner, in the light of the fact that our cultural heritage depicts the virtues of honesty, hard-work, loyalty, being our brothers keepers, respect for rule of law which we must not allow to be eroded by other foreign influences.

To conclude my remarks, I congratulate the Hon. Minister, Senator Bello Jibrin Gada, the Staff and Management of the Ministry as well as the Board and the Management of the National Council for Arts and Culture for collaborating with the Government and good people of Niger State towards packaging this unique festival that has relevance to the vision of the present administration. This demonstrates the fact that our culture has great potentials for promoting peace, national integration as well as a source for job creation and economic development.

I wish to acknowledge and commend the efforts of the Chief Servant, the Executive Governor of Niger State for his tireless efforts at providing the appropriate infrastructures as well as creating an excellent atmosphere of harmony and peace in the state. Certainly, the concerted efforts of the Executive Governor and the good people of Niger State in hosting the NAFEST is a great initiative in the right direction. Such efforts will by and large bring some immeasurable benefits towards positioning the state to be among the top tourism friendly states of the federation in particular and Africa in general. Once more, I congratulate Your Excellency for your efforts at delivering good governance, which has translated to an enduring peace and harmony in the State. These efforts are highly commendable and worthy of emulation by those in position of authority.

Let me also commend all the contingents from the 36 States and the FCT, artiste(e)s, the audience and the good people of Niger State for your efforts at making the festival to be a great success.

Let us all resolve to continue to project our culture which is the bedrock of our identity and national cohesion. I wish you all a fulfilling stay in Minna and an enjoyable and enlightening NAFEST 2009. It is my honour to declare NAFEST 2009 officially open.

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria and God Bless you all.

NAFEST serves a veritable Index for Cultural Exchange - Senator Gada



Senator Bello Jibrin Gada

Honourable Minister

Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation

PROTOCOL.

It is with great joy and satisfaction that I welcome you all to this great occasion of the official opening ceremony of the 23rd edition of the National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST), taking place here at the Bako Kontagora Memorial Stadium Minna, Niger State. The choice of Niger State to host NAFEST 2009 was informed by the attraction of the historical and cultural antecedents that the State is known for as well as the warmth and the peaceful atmosphere that exist in the beautiful capital city of Minna, under the leadership of the Chief Servant Dr. Aliyu Babangida supported by the well meaning and good people of Niger State.

I therefore extend my thanks to His Excellency for accepting to host and providing the state of the art facilities towards the success of the festival.

The National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST) has evolved over the years as a creativity fair that unites the nation through various manifestations of the rich and diverse cultures of Nigeria. It is designed to serve as a veritable index for cultural exchange, marketing and promotion.

Our cultures in the past have been perceived largely as typifying only dance and entertainment. Some even see it as obscene displays that celebrate nudity and of no value to human and national development.

It is against this background that on coming to office as the Hon. Minister for Tourism, Culture and National Orientation that we began to embark on proactive measures geared towards refocusing and re-engineering our diverse and rich cultural resources to key into our strategies in addressing the needs and aspirations of Nigerians.

It is based on this determination to take advantage of our cultural resources that we have crafted the theme for this year's NAFEST: "Culture and the Challenges of Our Times: Cultural Industries and Wealth Creation".

NAFEST 2009 is designed towards re-awakening our consciousness on the need to look inwards with a view to harnessing and developing our cultural industries as a means of addressing our present predicament of un-employment, crime and youth restiveness. Towards this, NAFEST events such as the Moonlight Games, Exhibition of Nigerian Dress Culture, Traditional Music and Dance, Indigenous Circus, Traditional Wrestling, Colloquium, Book Fair, Cultural Market, Food Fair, Ayo Game, Film Show, Tours and many other side attractions have been lined up for presentation in the next 5-days, classified into Competitive and Non-Competitive Events.

Once more, we need to remind ourselves that the festival is not about songs or dance alone but a serious avenue for skill development, job and wealth creation as well as a platform for projecting the best of our cultural heritage and above all an avenue for national integration and national unity. I therefore urge state contingents to work towards ensuring and maintaining the spirit of healthy competition, such that we can optimally achieve the overall objective of the festival.

With the dwindling resources accruable to the nation from its present mono-economy and the imperative of sourcing for alternative means of sustainable economic development, the time has become ripe to deploy, among others, our creative industries such as the events of NAFEST towards contributing to the realization of the 7-Point Agenda and the Vision 20,2020 of the present administration.

Our Special Guest of Honour, ladies and gentlemen, most of the emerging economies, especially in the Asian world, have leveraged on their cultural industries to advance their economies towards sustainable growth and development. Countries like India, China, Korea, Singapore to mention a few anchored their developmental strategies on their indigenous technology to the admiration of the world.

Nigeria, with its population and diverse rich cultural heritage has a comparative advantage that can be leveraged in our quest towards engaging our people into productive ventures. There is no doubt that with the support we are receiving from Mr. President Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua GCFR, the National Assembly and all the Stakeholders, my Ministry is poised more than ever before towards creating the enabling environment through which we could tap the huge resources that are realizable from our cultural industries.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I will not end this address without expressing my profound gratitude once more to Her Excellency, Hajija (Dr.) Turai Umaru Yar'Adua, First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria who has spared time out of her busy schedule to grace this auspicious occasion. We are encouraged by your tireless efforts in reaching out to the rural populace through your various programmes.