



# NAFEST NEWS

NAFEST...the festival that unites the Nation

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• FREE

## 'We Are A People of Common Heritage And Destiny'- Chief Servant Full Text Of The Chief Servant's Speech



L - R Chief Servant of Niger State, Chief Servant and Executive of Niger State, Dr. Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu (Talban Minna) and Gabriel Suswam, Executive Governor of Benue State at the Official Opening Ceremony of NAFEST, 2009

Protocol,

It is my great honor and privilege to welcome, on behalf of the Government and entire people of Niger State, the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Hajiya (Dr.) Turai Umaru Yar'adua to Minna, our capital city and to the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST 2009). Ma, you have been described as displaying an air of inclusion. You depict a picture of a mother, not a mother of a few but mother of all. You are welcoming to everybody, very humble, very accessible and you say things as they are. The description went further to say and I quote "Turai's overriding guiding principle is weaved around her obvious antecedent that women could gain a lot developmental mileage if and only if they could focus on qualitative family life, have charity and a strong faith in the almighty God. In this, she has exhibited a high sense of simplicity, humility and love for humanity..."

I must congratulate you on your ground breaking launching of the International Cancer Centre, in Abuja recently and the commissioning of numerous projects across the country. Indeed, your courage and vision are a source of pride and encouragement, and an inspiration to many of us who believe that the education of our children, especially the girl-child is our moral responsibility, which we shall account before our creator, Allah (SWT).

It is not surprising that our President is making giant strides in providing purposeful, visionary and transparent servant leadership to the people of this country at this historic period of our national development. You are truly demonstrating that beside every successful man there is a hardworking, patient, understanding and successful woman. May Allah continue to give you the wisdom and courage to continue to support President Umaru Musa Yar'adua in the discharge of his duties; amen. Ma, whoever has a pious and courageous wife has a peaceful family and whoever has a peaceful family has a comforting background and strength of character to discharge his duties. Mr. President Umaru Musa Yar'adua has all these and many more. We thank Allah (SWT) for His mercies and blessings. We should endeavor to make it possible for Nigerians to live everywhere or in any community without let or hindrance. Nigerians must feel and believe that they are Nigerians in every street and every corner of this country.

We are particularly excited to have you in attendance at this year's NAFEST because it demonstrates that you are a well cultured and nurtured lover of our norms and values. We believe that events like this can further strengthen the bond of love and unity amongst our diverse peoples, and your presence therefore symbolizes that you are an ambassador of peace and unity.

We must continue to nurture peace, unity in our diversity for a solid national integration and development. We must continue to respect the norms and nuances of our diverse population by towing the line of moderation and tolerance.

I believe one of the objectives of NAFEST is to provide a common platform for the promotion of national unity through the exhibition of our shared cultural elements and values. It enables us to appreciate the fact that we are a people with a common history; common heritage and common destiny; which we must all cherish, protect and promote. This is also one of the ways to make other people understand and appreciate our ways of life and the fact that Nigerians are a united and peaceful people. I will like to use this opportunity to congratulate Mr. President on the successful implementation of the Amnesty programme that will guarantee peace and progress in the Niger Delta and beyond. We call on all stakeholders in the Niger Delta and indeed all Nigerians to rally round Mr. President to ensure that the implementation of the amnesty programme is taken to its logical conclusion for the overall benefit of our country.

Importantly, in Niger State we believe we have the capacity to be in the league of the top three economies in Nigeria by the year 2020 (our Vision 3, 2020), because of our abundant arts and culture as well as eco-tourism potentials, which we are determined to fully harness for the transformation of our State and people. Niger State is home of culture and traditions, and indeed tourist and historical sites, including the famous Lord Lugard's amalgamation headquarters and colonial ruins at Zungeru, Baro Empire Hills, Bida Brass and Glass works, and beautiful durbar traditions. Much of these potentials will be on colourful display during the NAFEST to the admiration of the world.

Your Excellency, the First Lady, it might interest you to note that consistent with the national Vision 20, 2020 we have put in place the institutional frameworks to reinvigorate the critical sectors of our State economy and to attract quantum private sector investment. Central to our economic regeneration agenda is our commitment to Agriculture and agricultural production, where we are taking advantage of our natural endowments, the incentives and stewardship of the federal government in laying a solid foundation for our sustainable growth and development through increased food production and food sufficiency.



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE (NCAC)

The Voice of Arts and Culture in Nigeria

**Cont. of Governor's Speech**

We are equally taking advantage of the centrality of our location and our proximity to the Federal Capital City, Abuja to embark on the development of the Minna Airport City (MAC) Project to serve as a business and commercial nerve-centre for the economic regeneration of North Central Nigeria and indeed the West African sub-region. We believe that the MAC project has the capacity to be self-sustaining given our natural advantages of our expansive landmass, good road, rail and air transportation networks, and especially the Baro Port, which we thank Mr. President for making it a reality 43 years after. We pray that Baro Port will take its rightful position as a critical player in the attainment of Vision 20, 2020 and the 7-Point Agenda very soon. We are therefore using this opportunity to invite the private sector and other relevant stake-holders to come and participate in this gigantic and promising venture, which we believe will yield huge returns on investment. Ma, we are also soliciting for your assistance towards the dualization of Abuja-Minna-Tegina Road and the rehabilitation of Lambata-Mokwa-Jebba as well as Birnin Gwari-Tegina-Mokwa roads to enhance our economic viability and unity of our people.

Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen, this year's festival and its theme, which is "Culture and the Challenges of Our Times: Cultural Industries and Wealth Creation" has come at the nick of time against the backdrop of the urgent need to

diversify our economy and seek for more sustainable alternatives to oil as the major source of our national income. We must take advantage of our huge cultural endowments to lay the solid foundation for our sustainable economic growth and development. We must borrow a leaf from countries like India, China, South Korea, Singapore and Malaysia amongst others who have leveraged on the potentials in their cultural industries to put their nations on the path of progress and development, to the admiration of the world. This event should also be seen as a positive reminder of the need for the continuous appreciation of our dress systems and modes. We must always project the Nigerian dress culture in the positive light in our efforts to rebrand the nation. We must equally pay attention to the upbringing of our children so as to steer them away from social vices and all forms of anti-social and irresponsible behaviors, if we must realize our national aspirations.

It is our hope that the arts and culture industry will continue to be a credible avenue for redirecting the boundless energies and talents of our youth into productive ventures that will drive economic growth and development. We pray that we shall have hitch-free celebrations and healthy contest in the competitive events. We are once again honored with the presence of the First Lady and all of you distinguished Nigerians, Ladies and gentlemen.

At this juncture, it is my honor to respectfully invite the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to deliver her address and to declare NAFEST MINNA 2009 open.

I thank you all.

**NAFEST Is Proper use of Allocated Funds - Senator Gassol**

The Chairman Senate Committee on Tourism and Culture, Senator Dahiru Bako Gassol has lauded the efforts of the organizers of the National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST) '09, describing the cultural package as a proper use of allocated funds.



Senator Dahiru Bako Gassol, Chairman Senate Committee on Culture and Tourism at the NAFEST 2009 Colloquium, Hydro Hotel, Minna

Senator Gassol who chaired the Colloquium session of the festival, held at Hydro Hotel in Minna said: In the preparation of the 2008 and the 2009 budget, my Committee took into consideration the words and wishes of Mr. President on the need to reduce waste and focus on critical sectors that would help the economy to grow and realize the objectives of the 7-Point Agenda.

**Colloquium Theme Designed to Re-awaken Our Consciousness - M. M. Maidugu**



Mr. M. M. Maidugu, Executive Director/CEO and Festival Director NAFEST 2009

The Chief Executive of the National Council for Arts and Culture and Festival Director, Mr. Malgwi Maidugu has disclosed that the theme of this year's NAFEST, "Culture and the Challenges of Our Times: Cultural Industries and Wealth Creation", was informed by the Council's resolve to highlight the potentials of our cultural industries. The NCAC boss while welcoming guests to the Colloquium said the nation can tap from its abundant cultural assets to attain economic growth and development. Citing the experience of China and India that have explored their cultural wealth in their quest for self sufficiency, he called on participants to take advantage of the intellectual content of the festival in their various socio-economic endeavours. He pledged his Council's readiness to synergize with all stakeholders in the sector to raise the profile of the fast growing sector.

**TOMORROWS MENU (Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2009)**

- 10:00am - **Traditional Dance/Music continues, Venue: UK Bello Arts Theatre, Minna**
- 12noon - **Traditional Wrestling continues, Venue: UK Bello Arts Theatre, Minna**
- 2:00pm - **Exhibition of Nigeria Dress Culture/Live Presentation  
Venue: UK Bello Arts Theatre, Minna**
- 1:00pm - **Official Opening Ceremony of Cultural Market/Food Fair  
Venue: UK Bello Arts Theatre, Minna**
- 4:00pm - **Official Opening Ceremony of Traditional Circus  
Venue: UK Bello Arts Theatre, Minna**
- 6.30pm - **Moonlight Games continues, Venue: UK Bello Arts Theatre, Minna**

For Details Contact

Tel: Anne - 08065656641, Denja - 08023017406

**NAFEST '09 Colloquium, Most Remarkable - Ambassador Segun Olusola**

The Special guest at this year's Colloquium, Chief Segun Olusola, mni, described the intellectual content of NAFEST '09 as the most remarkable given the prominence it received in the hands of the organizers.

Ambassador Olusola noted that though previous outings of the Colloquium contributed immensely to the cultural package, he however maintained that the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition was well attended.

"This is unlike those days when the Colloquium was hidden and left to professors alone", he said. He also commended the adoption of traditional dresses by most members of the National Assembly as their dress code. This he said marks them out as true representatives of the nation as they promote the culture sector and boast economic activities in the sector.