



# NAFEST NEWS

NAFEST...the festival that unites the Nation

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## NAFEST serves as a veritable Index for Cultural Exchange - Senator Gada

Full Text of the Minister's Speech @ NAFEST 2009



### 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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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

NAFEST 2009 is designed towards re-awaking 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, Hajiya (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.



**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE (NCAC)**

*The Voice of Arts and Culture in Nigeria*

## 'NAFEST CELEBRATES OUR CULTURAL SIMILARITIES, CEMENTS OUR FRIENDSHIP AND ONENESS' - Chief Babatope, OFR



**Chief Ebenezer Babatope, OFR**  
Chairman NCAC Board

*Full Text of his Vote of Thanks*

VOTE OF THANKS BY CHIEF EBENEZER BABATOPE OFR, CHAIRMAN, GOVERNING BOARD NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 23<sup>rd</sup> EDITION OF THE NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS AND CULTURE (NAFEST) AT BAKO KONTAGORA MEMORIAL STADIUM, MINNA, NIGER STATE, FROM 10<sup>TH</sup> 18<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2009.

**Protocol**

I stand here at the Bako Kontagora Stadium to thank all of you who have come to make this year's NAFEST a success. I cannot start without paying adequate tribute to the memory of my friend and fellow politician Alhaji Bako Kontagora who died some years ago. I am emotionally moved talking about a man who was my prison mate in 1984. May his soul rest in peace.

Once again, NAFEST has brought us together not only to celebrate the unifying features of our diverse cultural heritage but also to highlight those areas of our cultural similarities with a view to harnessing such areas into structures that can further cement our friendship and oneness as a nation.

In the light of this, I wish to most sincerely thank Mr. President, Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, GCFR for his vision for the country, as encapsulated in the 7-Point Agenda and the Vision 20,2010 development strategy and the reform programmes driven through the principles of rule of law.

It behoves on all of us from our various efforts of endeavours to render our support to Mr. President and members of his team such that we can collectively move Nigeria to greater height. Again I want to express my sincere thanks to Mr. President for all his wonderful support which the sector is receiving under his administration.

We cannot but give special thanks to our country's First Lady Hajiya (Dr.) Turai Yar'Adua who is the Special Guest of Honour at this festival. She is a woman who has exhibited in many ways her love and devotion to the cause of good things in Nigeria. No one will close his or her eyes to the fervent nationalism that Her Excellency Dr. Turai Yar'Adua has presented. We are proud of you.

We must in a special way extend our thanks and gratitude to the Governor of Niger State, the Chief Servant, Dr. Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, Talban Minna, a seasoned civil servant, a well informed and experienced technocrat, a lover and forefront promoter of our cultural heritage, for placing at our disposal excellent facilities required for staging this festival. Your Excellency, your keen interest and concern in the planning and execution of this festival stands you out as a great and enduring patron of arts and culture in our dear country. We therefore urge those in similar leadership position to emulate the exemplary efforts of Governor Aliyu such that we can collectively bequeath a strong cultural legacy to younger generations.

Similarly, our gratitude goes to our hardworking Hon. Minister of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation, Senator Bello Jibrin Gada for his drive and tireless efforts towards re-positioning the cultural sector and the NAFEST towards addressing our present day needs. He has been a pillar of support for all cultural activities of the Ministry since his inception as Minister.

Our sincere appreciation also goes to the distinguished members of the National Assembly, for their interest and unflinching efforts in moving the sector forward. Of particular mention and are here with us, are Senator Dahiru Bako Gassol, and his counterpart Hon. K. G. B. Oguakwa, Senate Committee and House Committee Chairmen on Culture and Tourism respectively, we acknowledge their presence with pride.

Our thanks also go to all the Hon. Commissioners and members of your delegations and artists(e)s from the 36 States of the Federation and FCT for all your excellent presentations at the march past. Similarly we thank all our invited guests, officials, academicians, students and other stakeholders for your role in the success of this great event.

Importantly, I wish to also express my profound gratitude to Hon. Umar Muhammed Nasco, Hon. Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure and Chairman LOC and his able team who have worked round the clock in ensuring that we have the best of facilities and hospitality of the good people of Niger State. They have all shown what life should be in a state where service to the people represents the cardinal principle of governance in the administration of the Chief Servant, His Excellency Governor Babangida Mu'azu.

Significantly also I must commend the efforts of all the members of the Festival Technical Committee, the member of the Governing Board, Management and Staff of the National Council for Arts and Culture for a job well done.

Furthermore, we commend the members of the fourth estate of the realm for effectively mobilizing the people and giving the Festival accurate and adequate publicity through their various media organisations. I further urge and request that you continue to ensure that you give us the maximum cooperation throughout the period of the festival and beyond such that our arts and culture are given the pride of place by all and sundry.

I enjoin you all to take advantage and enjoy this great festival whose potentials are immeasurable towards our march to growth and prosperity.

I wish to thank all the artistes that entertained us last night. I also wish to thank the Minna Choral Group and others for their exceptional performance.

**Minna is home of cultural creativity. Minna is home of cultural rejuvenation.**

Thank you the Chief Servant Governor Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu.

Enjoy the Festival and enjoy the hospitality of the Government and warm people of Niger State.

Long Live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.