

**COMMUNIQUE ON THE REFORMS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: THE CASE OF KWARA STATE AT A SYMPOSIUM ORGANIZED BY MUSTAPHA AKANBI FOUNDATION HELD ON THE 12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2011 AT THE AFRICA PEOPLES HALL, ILORIN.**

The Mustapha Akanbi Foundation, a non-profit, non-governmental and non-partisan organization committed to promoting education inter alia, floated a symposium to discuss the “Reforms in the Public Education in Nigeria; the case of Kwara State” at the Africa Peoples Hall, No. 34, Onikanga street, Ilorin, Kwara State on the 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2011.

The Lead paper was delivered by Mr. Bolaji Abdullahi, the Honourable Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, Kwara State. The discussants were Dr. Rashid Aderinoye, the Deputy Executive Secretary (Services), Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), Abuja and Dr. Ayo Hammed, Head of Department of Guidance and Counseling, University of Ibadan. The Moderator for the symposium was Prof. Shehu Jimoh while the Chairman of the occasion was Prof Ishaq Oloyede, Vice Chancellor, University of Ilorin, Nigeria represented by Dr. Mrs. Olasehinde Williams, the Director, Centre for Peace Studies, University of Ilorin.

The congregation which was made up of a cross section of stakeholders in the educational enterprise noted the following:-

- That the purpose of education is the training of the mind for positive values, attitude, habits, character and for acquisition of useful skills,
- That public education has degenerated to such a low ebb that the generality of the public has lost confidence in it and has taken solace in Private Schools,
- That for long, governments have been making reforms but they have yielded very little.

The missing link is traced to lack of integrity which deals with the totality of all that is called goodness or excellence, honesty, trustworthiness, fairness and the marching of words with actions. The soul of any reform therefore is first and foremost to develop all children into “Omoluabi” or good knowledgeable and responsible citizens with relevant skills so as to be useful to themselves, the society and God the creator of man. A lot was found wrong with our education.

The need to overhaul the educational decadence called for the Kwara State reforms. There was need for access and quality reform. As they were being addressed, roadblocks and obstacles came from very strong quarters.

These notwithstanding, the congregation noted and resolved as follows:-

- i. Corruption in high and low places must be eradicated or drastically stemmed down.
- ii. In all sectors of education, only technically best brains and qualified persons should be employed or appointed.
- iii. Quality assurance must be entrenched
- iv. Facts, principles and applications must be taught in schools.

- v. Conducive atmosphere, integrity and culture of excellence must be built into schools.
- vi. Incompetent teachers and staff should no more be employed in schools while those already in service should be continuously trained.
- vii. In all situations, all officers should stick to and insist that the right things which ought to be done are done.
- viii. Policies which will last should be put in place and must be well defined to the understanding of all by involving all the stakeholders in the formulation of policies.
- ix. In all educational issues, fairness, transparency and accountability should be the order of the day.
- x. If education is going to be standard, we must do the right thing at the right time. The be-it-all and end-it-all agreement arrived at is that education must be salvaged.
- xi. Clear cut definitions of responsibilities and terms of reference of the Ministry of Education viz-a-viz all other parastatals should be well defined and stalled to avoid overlapping and duplication of activities.
- xii. The Ministry of Education through the leadership of the Honourable Commissioner should put in place a code of conduct through which the work ethics, performance and qualities of all people working in the ministry, parastatals and schools could be objectively measured.
- xiii. There is dire need for the society to be carried along in all educational reforms through proper enlightenment.
- xiv. Principals and Headmasters should be empowered to stem down the tide of indiscipline right in their schools.
- xv. Incentives for motivation should be given to teaching and non-teaching staff posted to rural areas.
- xvi. There is the need for the Universities to relate effectively with the immediate communities.
- xvii. State governments should provide the counterpart funding to access their huge funds waiting in the UBEC/FGN.
- xviii. All in all, everybody must know that the outcome of any reforms is joint responsibility.
- xix. The momentum of eradicating 'quiet corruption' in education must continue.

**Dotun Akanni**

**Director of Programmes**

**Mustapha Akanbi Foundation**

#### **COMMUNIQUE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

1. Chief S.O. Aboyeji (Former Chairman of ANCOPSS, Kwara)- Chairman
2. Chief Y.A. Adeoye (Retired School Principal ) - Member
3. Alhaji R.O. Ajala ( Former Chairman of ANCOPSS, Kwara ) - Member
4. Alh. Aliu Muritala (Deputy Registrar, Kwara Polytechnic) - Member
5. Mr. Omoniyi J.A. (Principal, Ebenezer Baptist Model Sc.) - Secretary