



# NEWSLETTER

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## EDITORIAL

### Muslims in Diaspora and Nigeria's Socio-Economic Development

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

One of the issues that always become a point of discussion among Nigerians is the situation back home. Nigeria is a country that is blessed with both human and natural resources. It has always been a centre of attention when the world is facing crises especially in the supply of oil. In the early 1970s Nigeria witnessed the oil boom, which provides an opportunity for the development of infrastructure, investment in education and human capital. Similar trend occurred in the early 1990s due to the gulf war. From 1999 to date, when the country returned to civilian administration, the revenue generated from oil further skyrocketed. Yet in the last two cases there is virtually nothing to show for it.

Oil is not the only resource Nigeria is endowed with. There is a vast and fertile land for agriculture. The population of the country can withstand the challenge of economic development. Yet, the citizens of the country continue to swim in the ocean of poverty, illiteracy, and a drastic failure of leadership. Even within the country, the Muslims suffer more from the challenges of economic development.

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## Defining some of the Most Urgent Socio-Economic Problems of Nigeria

By Dr Hadiza Isa Wada [Part I]

### Introduction

Today, I intend to do what people generally do not do. I just pray that you have the patience to follow me with an open mind. I intend to talk from both sides of my brain and my inner conscience, to address the problem at hand. By that I mean, the creative and the divine; the academics and theology. I believe, to be sincere to ourselves and at the same time effectively ponder the problems, we have to address the issues from both parts that made us who we are as a creation, the physical and the spiritual.

One of our main problems today, and this is global by the way, is we have been so carried away by the academic, scientific and technological developments of our times, as if in and of themselves they can free us from our daunting problems. We do that in utter disregard for what is ethically and morally right. The ethical and moral are the domain of spiritual development, and the divine orders. The development of these two aspects helps to counterbalance our conduct as physical beings.

The Academics, Science and Technology are the tools, and man is still supposed to be the master of those tools, always directing them toward what is good and right. He moulds and shapes them in the direction that benefits everyone. Furthermore, with the right intention, through that application of knowledge in resolving his fellow humans problems, he gains a reward that keeps reproducing itself (Sadaqatul Jariyah), blessings (Barakah) in his wealth, and probably professional development in the likes of promotions and recognitions if he is interested in that.

But that is not the general direction the application of such knowledge today takes. We have in existence today, a 'disconnect' situation between knowledge and its application for "true advancement" because such tools have been misused. I will give you a typical example. Nuclear energy could be used to supply uninterrupted electric power to millions for rapid socio-economic development; while at the same time it could be used to produce weapons of mass destruction to annihilate people; but unfortunately the world has preferred to mostly put it into use for the latter. Satellites could be positively used to pry our globe for better production of food, water supply, location of natural resources including how much is available underground for effective planning, use and distribution. These services have the potential to eliminate hunger, diseases, neutralize tensions between nations up in struggle for control of meager resources, and provide alternatives for better use of such resources. But it can also be used to spy on nations providing spy reports and distributing it to nations of the world to start wars, and escalate those already in progress. The world has chosen the latter in most occasions.

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I hope you will forgive me then, if I venture off the normal track that conferences such as this usually dwell on, and pry into what I believe are our most serious problems. While doing so, we will try to assess them, and provide some recommendation.

### **The Premise**

Every nation has its unique set of prospects and problems. Nigeria is one of them. In order to address them effectively, we have to originate our own research, diagnostics, experiment with applicable solutions on a sample level, and choose the most effective means of dealing with it. We must have the courage to implement those solutions no matter how bitter it may feel in the short term. If we truly want change to usher in prosperity and development on a mass level, we have to realize it may not be easy.

Many Professionals, Agencies and Well intentioned Citizens, have attempted what we are doing here today, but the problems remain. What then is the hindrance? Some of the major reasons behind the failure to make any impact in that direction could be categorized into three major areas (a) The commitment to solving the problems was lacking (b) those in whose hand the resources of the nation are, who enjoy the status quo, may not be willing to commit it to workable solutions that may ultimately shake that status quo; (c) and even if they do, those entrusted to implement the promising and well thought out recommendations, fall into the same past practices they were entrusted with funds to eradicate. The question then is: Do we have hope that Nigeria can really find its way back to solid ground?

It is not impossible, because we have seen countries that were like Nigeria years ago, revolutionized their attitude towards nation building and community development and made great strides. Today they have become a force to reckon with worldwide. Nations of Asia are an example, such as Japan, and in most recent times, China, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The situation for Nigeria then is; are Nigerians and their government willing to; (a) commit to the solutions (b) ultimately sweat it through. I assure you all that it will not be easy. Ask management Professionals who have been working continually on designing and implementing changes in their organizations, a simpler entity, compared to a complex society like Nigeria. But as I say, it is NOT impossible and actually I am optimistic that with the right government dedicated to the good of all, we can launch and sustain such an undertaking, and make the most of it.

### **Hindrances to Socio-Economic Development in the case of Nigeria**

The Nigerian system has been handicapped by many problems. They are not insurmountable however. But because they have been so much entrenched it will take a mass campaign for an attitude change and a commitment from the people and their government to eradicate it. This is because as heinous and as reprehensible as these problems are, they have gradually become acceptable practices. And mind you, they have become acceptable practices not because people do not have what we call in Islam Fitra, the inborn compass designed by our Creator to internally alert us about the wrong and the right way (of God's universal law), but because people chose to ignore that compass by forcefully violating God's law, reprogramming their Fitra to their personal desires, and end up wronging their own souls and jeopardizing others. They therefore do that intentionally. In Nigeria, it does not stop there however.

As people corrupt themselves and their souls; they force such practices onto others, including their subordinates, and ordinary Nigerians too. The subordinate

is forced into a choice of either implementing his superior's corrupt and ethically bankrupt practices on others, or being shown the door to unemployment. As experience shows over the years, many will not make the righteous choice in such a circumstance.

As for the ordinary citizens in the private sector, how does that affect him also? I will give you a typical example. Imagine an average farmer with a simple problem from remote village; or else a poor Fulani herdsman rearing herds of cattle coming to the city to find solutions. Mind you these together form the economic breadbasket of the nation. Together they form one of the most important alternatives to Oil in developing the country's socio-economic development base. The person's problem calls for interaction with his elected representatives or governmental official. He comes into town in need of help and support for a problem associated with his profession which he cannot deal with in his village because the means to solving them are not there.

When he has to deal with government officials, he is first neglected and kept for hours in the waiting room, if not days. And when and if he finally makes it to the official in charge, he is forced to pay bribe before he receives a service he is entitled to by right. What is wrong with this picture? Any public office is a trust; that is a reality. You have been entrusted to serve the people and bring them much good, but the opposite is happening - where you not only oppress them and force them to serve you, you also steal from them. What is wrong with that picture? Please forgive my being so frank and practical. Can I be real with you today? Are we ready to face the truth?

Those grossly unjust and inhumane practices by people in elected governmental positions, appointed and also private positions, when they started years ago, were not checked. Gradually they became acceptable ways of doing business. As time went by, people's attitude towards running official positions changed. To the ordinary

Nigerian today that is how a government works. Those practices, as reprehensible as they are, were seen as no big deal, to the extent that a citizen of Nigeria will pay his way from a remote area to the city for medical treatment, fall on the hospital floor and die while waiting to be served. The hospital employees have simply neglected him. People around the person will just cover his head, step over the corpse to continue their businesses as if nothing has happened. When accidents happen on Nigerian roads today, people rush towards the vehicle, not to help victims though, but to steal the valuables from them as they lie dying.

To make matters worse, by contemporary Nigerian Psyche, the herdsman who by the way feeds hundreds of people annually through his profession and hard work, and the rural farmer who does likewise, are inferior in status by far to the city dweller. We tend to forget that every piece of meat from the daily meals of all 120 million Nigerians is raised and reared predominantly by the much underrated and undervalued herdsman. Most city dwellers however work easy unproductive jobs. Many contribute nothing professionally to their country's economy, but vain talk, gossip, slander and idleness; only to walk into an office and with the connivance of an official of the government, walk out with millions of Naira from people's money through concocted and non-existence contracts meant to enrich that person and the official. The twisted scenario described above makes no sense; but to date it continues to become acceptable societal norm. Only a lost people, who have lost a sense of what value is, will accept that culture, but it thrives in Nigeria.

As I work on this paper, I was captivated by headlines that capture our attention DAILY involving exorbitant amounts of money. One reads "EFCC Probes Health agency over 400million Naira stationery purchase in one month!" (Daily Trust, July 2008). Similar headlines run daily in our papers. This however belongs to the category of robbery by governmental personnel. And then there is another category, private contractors. One such headline reads "Contractors abscond with silos (worth) 11.4 million pounds Sterling (2.7 billion Naira), (Daily Trust, July 2008). For any one such incident that made headlines, only God knows how many others have not yet been discovered. Has anyone sat down to calculate the enormous loss to the economy and citizens of Nigeria in general? At such rate of public robbery, embezzlement and misappropriation, even if Nigerians are individually made of money, they will easily exhaust themselves to bankruptcy.

To return to our premise, by continually neglecting that internally designed compass with a sense of right and wrong (Fitra), the public servant, elected or appointed official in doing so has subverted God's own justice upon which He created and arranged His universal laws. Whether we like it or not, our personal desires, corruption, distorted and misdirected willpower as Nigerians, if pitched against God's fundamental law upon which he created the Universe has no chance. Such actions will not only lead us nowhere, but may become the beginning of the end of our prosperity and development. The Quran says "*Do they not reflect in their own minds? Not but for just ends and for a term appointed, did Allah create the heavens and the earth, and all between them: yet are there truly many among men who deny the meeting with their Lord (at the Resurrection)!*" (Ar-Room, 30:18). Another similar verse from the Quran says "*We created not the heavens and the earth and all between them but for just ends, and for a Term Appointed: But those who reject Faith turn away from that whereof they are warned.*" (Al-Ahqaf, 46:3).

Finally, another verse that says "*We created them not except for just ends: but most of them do not understand.*" (Ad-Dukhan, 44:39)

Many verses clearly state that the backbone or blueprint of the creation of the whole universe, not just our earth is maintaining and according justice to every being. So anyone who thinks he can continue to ride against the tide, contrary to universal laws in existence long before we found ourselves here, is doomed to failure; and mass failure if I may add. Where justice is denied, peace will find no place. And where peace is non-existence, and insecurity is the norm, there will simply be no prosperity.

### **The Problems**

The main and urgent problems could be sub-divided into two major parts. The first is the illness or what you may rightfully call negative underlying causes. The second group comprises of the problems that manifested themselves as a result of those underlying causes.

#### *Causes*

1. Corruption.
2. Loss of values and a sense of who we are (social & ethical problem).
3. Moral and ethical decay powered by greed (self-centeredness).
4. No patriotism, powered by utter disregard for the values that binds us as a community (love of nation and its people)
5. Lack of commitment and non-challant attitude towards important issues of state.

#### *Result*

6. No sustainability (developmental continuity)
7. No accountability (holding people accountable for actions and funds)
8. No adequate research, effective planning, and implementation
9. Applying simple solutions to complex problems.

### **Causes**

We have pretty much covered systemic corruption, though I wish we have more time on that because that is the major

underlying cancer gnawing slowly at the fabric of Nigeria's development and prosperity. Generally, management worldwide connotes two basic ideas. Trying to make productive, a conflicting situation, i. e. diverse employees with differing ideas on the one hand, and lack of resources to adequately implement those ideas on the other. In fact management as a term implies inadequate resources. As far as the disagreements, it consists of; conflict of interests between various units of a ministry or company, differences of ideas, resources and personalities. A good manager globally is he who best "manages" these typical challenges most effectively. In Nigeria however, these challenges are further complicated by a crippling mindset. (a) That resources allocated to an office or its branch are meant to go to the managers pockets, with the crumbs going into the mid- and lower level employees pockets. (b) That government resources are open to waste and embezzlement by those entrusted with it. Government work process is so choked with bribery and kick backs so much so that even to get its statutory allocated funds, a ministry or unit of a larger organization is forced to engage in kickbacks at every level of the process (See President Obasanjo's Inaugural speech of May 1999). The Minister plays along because the mindset is once the money got released; they first deduct what they paid in bribery, and what is left of it personally belongs to them, with no dividend going towards working for the country and its people.

These kinds of activities cripple genuine development and productivity. It seeps deep down eating away at the motivation of competent

employees willing to come up with ideas to deal with genuine challenges that faces the country, be it electricity generation, adequate water supply or simply producing or encouraging the production of enough food by our farmers. Nigerians are smart, but they cannot put their intellect to use in such a setting. As daunting as these problems are, anyone who comes out with the genuine issue behind the problems he knows exists is looked upon as the person who betrayed his colleagues by divulging their secret system of personally enriching and milking both the system and ordinary citizen. Nigerians otherwise compete in Schools and colleges worldwide coming home with trophies in terms of ability to analyze and come up with solutions to problems in all professional areas.

Unfortunately as smart and intelligent as Nigerians are in their string of degrees from various national and international universities, they seem at a loss when they visit their colleagues for seminars and conferences in comparable offices abroad. The reason is not problem solving or disparity in intellectual capability, but that the delusional and intentional crippling of their own system at home made them appear daft and unresourceful as they tour foreign facilities. And even after spending resources for them to learn how other countries confront similar problems, they generally lack the willpower and motivation to initiate a change in their home offices afterwards. So ultimately, Nigerian managers find themselves obtaining a failing grade in the field of effective management not because they are daft and unresourceful intellectually, but by personal greed and systemic complications prevalent in their home communities.

The next issue is the loss of values, dignity and a sense of worth. This is an important point. Long gone are the days when people are proud of who they are and the values they hold. The general mass of the people today, approximately 70-80 percent of the population who do not belong to the elite i.e. the educated managers in appointed positions or elected ones have been made either

deliberately by design or by the contemporary value system prevalent in Nigeria today, to think that they cannot (a) think for themselves; (b) they cannot effectively figure out what is going on or going wrong with their government; (c) That power, positions, government decisions, and government processes are so complicated for them to understand or do something about. The result is a passive citizenry and working class with no self-esteem or motivation to rise up to the challenge and proactively work towards ensuring justice, peace and prosperity for themselves.

The mindset described above has to be urgently reversed. It does no one any good at all. Before the breakdown of our value system, there was much peace, order, tranquility and security. You cannot even begin to compare those days 60s – 70s to what has become of the country. The underlying value system then stresses respect for elders in the community and home, parents, grandparents etc. The family is knit together, the community and ultimately the country at large bond with each other. These people may not have acquired formal education, but they are smart, wise and gifted with a lot of wisdom (Hikma). They can sit anyone down and relate to them the seeping problems unfolding as they observe them, and also the best way to go about solving them. They can analyze possible pitfalls with each and every decision they give you. Instead of working together with them, today's generation feel they are inferior, old fashioned, and cannot think wisely because they have no formal education. The result is a disconnect between generations that has hurt the country bad.

Their counsel as to what is morally and ethically right is neglected, so much so that more and more people today continue to move away from long held values sanctioned by universal laws of righteousness and good conduct that breeds community building and progress. In fact the people with long and proud history of community building and order align themselves

today with communities that do not have such background in order to learn from them the art of scamming, cheating and acquiring ill gotten wealth overnight regardless of how one does it. Please excuse my being real today with the facts unfolding in Nigeria. If we want change we have to identify the root causes and deal with them.

The decaying value system runs smack into the next underlying cause, i.e. lack of patriotism. By that we undervalue the important values that bind us as a community. In fact the last few years after fighting hard to restore democracy and the rule of the majority, different sectors of the country try to hammer divisive issues, mostly based on greed. They do that in political, economic and social arenas. The call for sovereign conference at a time when elected officials took office for the first time after many year of struggle to restore democracy is one example. How one could neglect an elected government and prefer that delegates be nominated to discuss any agenda that determines such very important issues of the nations is an enigma only those who spearheaded the call know.

Lack of Patriotism is also fanned by many of the articulated problems. When people despair of their leaders and their motives, sometimes patriotism is the culprit. It is hard for individuals sometimes to maintain patriotism for any reasonable period when they are embarrassed almost always by news of what either their elected leaders or those in position of representing the image of Nigeria to the world are engaged in. When the name of the country is dragged in the mud, it affects how people feel. It does hurt them, but gradually as human behavior shows,

people tend to distance themselves to any persistent cause of grief. Improving and taking actions to jumpstart and sustain the solution to Nigerian socio-economic problems, should help boost its acceptance in patriotic terms by the general public.

Finally in the list of causes is a Lack of commitment and non-challant attitude towards important issues of state. Generally, issues of governance, even if they directly affect the welfare of the people, they are not given adequate attention. A typical example is the issue of sustainable power.

As important as the issue is, and as much as the government and people in position to do something about it are trying to convince us that it is insurmountable, we do know that that is a fairly tale.

Countries much poorer than Nigeria, with no financial resources have done it. Furthermore apart from the funds to do it, Nigeria has all the tangible resources for generating electricity e.g. large rivers, coal, gas and oil resources. How can they credibly convince us that they cannot provide sustainable and uninterrupted power supply for their people? Bear with me, in a short while as we go along I intend to point at where some of such solutions lie.

*This is the first part of the paper to be presented by Dr Hadiza Isa Wada, DBA, at this year's Summer Conference on Muslims in Diaspora and the Socio-economic Development of Nigeria, to be held at the Leeds Grand Mosque, on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2008. The second part will be published in the next edition insha'Allah.*

## **My Six Golden Years at ABU Zaria (1971-1977)** **By Professor Osman Ahmed Isma'il**

Allah, blessed be His name, has His ways.

It was in Wadi Sayyidna, Secondary School, north of Omdurman, Sudan, that I had my secondary school education in the period 1947-1951. There and then I met Mr. H.C.F. Smith, who taught history and looked after the school's athletic team. Having been a sprinter I used to meet Mr. Smith both in class and in the play grounds. But then I took my Cambridge School Certificate in December 1951 and left Wadi Sayyidna School to join the then University College of Khartoum (UCK).

Mr. Smith was soon to leave Sudan. In the year 1956 I graduated from the UCK with a B.A. General Degree from the University of London. 1956 was the year of the independence of Sudan, and UCK became the University of Khartoum in that year. I was awarded a scholarship by the University of Khartoum for an Honours Degree at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. By the grace of Allah I completed my Honours

Degree in two years. I then joined the Department of History, Faculty of Arts, the University of Khartoum as a Lecturer in Islamic and Middle Eastern History for two years after which I was to return to SOAS to do an M.A-PhD programme I was to return to SOAS to do an M.A-PhD programme in the field of Early Abbasid History under the supervision of Prof. B. Lewis.

I joined SOAS in October 1960. In 1962 my M.A was upgraded to a PhD, and I completed my thesis by the end of the year 1962, had my viva in February 1963 and was awarded my PhD by the University of London's Senate in March 1963.

It was in this period that I was to meet Mr. Smith my old teacher and coach again in the summer of 1962 at Russel Square. It was a fine summer's day in July. I was relaxing on a bench, sipping some tea when I heard someone call my name and was approaching me. To my great pleasure and surprise that was Mr. Smith.

After the greetings in which I was quick to detect Arabic words and Islamic connotations, Mr. Smith was also quick to tell me that his name is now Abdullah, that he had already embraced Islam, married a Nigerian lady and had Nigerian citizenship. And so we went on to compare notes and talk about our academic work and interests. I told him that I was to specialize in Early Abbasid History to ultimately lecture on the Early Islamic Period and up to Early Abbasid while helping in general courses of Middle Eastern History up to the World War I (1914-1918). Prof. Abdullah Smith spoke at length about what he called the 'Neglected Themes' and 'Forgotten Sources' of African History and the treasures of 'Arabic Islamic Manuscripts' which were being collected, catalogued, and reported in the 'Interim Reports' published by the Northern History Research Scheme (NHRS) in the Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria. Prof. Smith was both Director of the NHRS and Head of Department of History. He did not hesitate to invite me to join his team at ABU in Zaria. Knowing the man, his abilities, his sincerity, and his dedication I thanked him for the offer and explained why I could not accept it at the time. We agreed to keep in touch, not knowing that long hence things would be such as to find me spending six consecutive years with my esteemed teacher and professor, Prof. A. Smith in ABU Zaria.

I kept in touch with Prof. A. Smith and with my friend and former colleague M.A. Al-Hajj (later Prof. M.A. Al-Hajj) who was at A. Bayero College in Kano. Twice I was invited to act as external examiner for Middle Eastern and Islamic History in both Kano and Zaria. That was the prelude to the Six Golden

Years at A.B.U. Zaria, which started in May 1971 and ended in 1977(Festac Year).

By that time Arewa House was established. Prof. A. Smith was to go to Kaduna for Arewa House. He left his house in the main campus of ABU Zaria for me to settle in. My duties were to work in the Department of History headed by Dr. Gavin (later Prof. Gavin) and to look after the N.H.R.S. with Prof. A. Smith close at hand in Kaduna. By July 1971 I had my family join me to live in that imposing house. I had two children then, my daughter was six and my son was only two. All went well. There were quite a good number of Sudanese academics all occupying senior posts in ABU's different faculties. Some were deans and one a provost. My work in the department was to everybody's satisfaction. But my mind and heart were with the NHRS and the real treasure of manuscripts which were accumulating. Prof. Ishaya Audu, the V.C. was very keen on the NHRS so the university was very generous with us at that time. Soon I got M.A. Al-Kani (the late Prof. Al-Kani) appointed in the N.H.R.S. to help with the collection and identification of the collected works because the manuscripts although written in Arabic script, some of them used the Ajami script and some were in Hausa, Fulfulde, Nupe and other languages. Al-Kani who was a Sudanese of Nigeria origin spoke Hausa perfectly and was a great asset to the work together with Malam Muhammadu.

To understand the literature collected and what founding fathers of the Sokoto state took to be their model and source of inspiration, the Department of History had to introduce a course on the early History of Islam, the Prophet (PBUH) and the Caliphate. The NHRS had to build up a good collection of classical Islamic sources, well known to the Dan Fodios and their associates and much quoted in their work. Both were done. I had the honour to launch the course and help build up the collection. And soon we had a lecturer in Islamic History. This was no lesser a person than Izzuddin Umar Musa, the now well-known Prof. I.U. Musa who won

King Faisal Prize for a work he completed while working at ABU Zaria.

For myself I joined ABU as a reader in Abbasid History but in 1972 I was given the chair of Prof. of Research in the Institute of Administration because of my work in the NHRS. Soon a chair of Islamic History was created in 1973 and I had the honour to be its first occupant.

It was Allah's blessing and my good luck that I found in my colleagues in the Department, my students, my colleagues at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in general and many others outside the university persons who were enthusiastic and involved in the work of the NHRS. It was in that atmosphere and that spirit that the sources of the NHRS were put to more use by both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Prof. A. Smith's themes were no more neglected, his sources were no longer forgotten. Under-graduates used the sources for their Honour's graduation dissertations. Post-graduates were already using them for their M.A.s and PhDs.

It was also in that period that we began to launch our famous History Seminars, moving from Zaria to Sokoto, from Zaria to Maiduguri, from Zaria to Kano, from Zaria to Kaduna and so on. The first of these seminars was the famous Sokoto Seminar of 1973 out of which came Y.B. Usman (ed) "Studies in the History of the Sokoto Caliphate", ABU Zaria 1979. I was the convener of that seminar which for the first time included amongst its participants Traditional Ulama, most important of whom was the Wazirin Sokoto, Al-Hajji Junaidu. In recognition of the role of these Ulama in the past under present the A.B.U. granted Al-Hajji Junaidu an honorary doctorate Degree in the early seventies.

As a matter of fact, being impressed by the quality, the originality, the diversity, the volume and relevance of the works produced by the Dan Fodios and their contemporaries I invited to ABU Zaria two very eminent professors of Arabic and Arabic Literature. The two were

## NMF (UK) Spring Conference 2008 in Pictures - Manchester

Prof. Mahmud Al-Ghul and Prof Al-Hassan R. Abbas. Both agreed that these works were of such high standard as to count them amongst the best in their fields.

It is with great fondness that I, not only remember, but in my mind and soul relive those Six Golden Years. It is with great fondness that I remember all my friends and colleagues of A.B.U of Zaria, Kano, of Kaduna, of Sokoto of Maiduguri – so many that I do not want to mention the names less I forget some of them. Some have already left us for a better world – may Allah bless us and forgive us all. Some still live like myself, may Allah guide us to the straight path.

Real gold never cease to shine and glitter. So do those Six Golden Years at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria – Nigeria.

*This is a tribute written by Professor Osman Sayyid Ahmed Isma'il Al-Billi, to the years he spent in Nigeria as well as to his many colleagues and friends.*

*Professor Osman, former Sudan's Minister of Education and Guidance, and President of the National Council for Higher Education (1982 – 1985), also Professor of Islamic and Middle East History at the University of Qatar, is currently the General Supervisor and Director, Centre for Muslim Contribution to Civilisation, Doha, Qatar. He will be presenting a paper titled "The Sokoto Literature and its Relevance to Present Day Muslims in Nigeria and Abroad" at this year's Summer Conference in Leeds, on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2008.*



**Cross Section of Participants – Children and Sisters Section**



**Cross Section of Participants – Brothers' Section**



**Group Photograph taken at the end of the event - Brothers**

# News and Announcements

## Editorial (from page 1)

Recently, the Central Bank Governor, Professor Charles Chukwuma Soludo, said poverty in Northern Nigeria (where majority of the population are Muslims) should be declared a national crisis.

Many Nigerians, especially those living in the Diaspora, find themselves in a dilemma on the best way out. Should they stay in foreign lands, and use the skills they acquired to invest at home and help their families? What about the majority of families who don't have any member of their kin working or studying abroad? What about those who decided to return home, but were consumed by the uncertainties they found there, and ended up being lost in the confusion the country is suffering from? What is the best way out, to stay in the Diaspora or to return home?

Because of the importance of these issues, the Nigeria Muslim Forum (UK) decided to organise a conference that will address these challenging situations. It is hoped that a reasonable position will be arrived at, for the betterment of the Ummah.

## Editorial Board

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## BIRTHS

1. The Family of Mallam Sulaiman Ibrahim of the BBC Hausa Service has been blessed with a baby girl. They named her Aliya.
2. The Family of Mallam Bashir Gwandu (Leeds) has been blessed with a baby boy. They named him Umar.
3. The family of Mallam Dauda Muhammad, University of Salford, Manchester, has been blessed with a baby boy. They named him Yusuf.

May Allah (SWT) enable the parents of these children to bring them up in the right manner, according to Islamic teachings, ameen.

## ARRIVAL

1. Brother Shariff Lawal, from Kano State for a PhD in Computer Engineering at University of Leeds.
2. Brother Mohammed Usman Degereji from Adamawa State, for a PhD in Engineering at University of Leeds.
3. Brother Usman Abdullahi from Kogi State, for a Masters programme in Economics and Finance, University of Surrey.

May Allah (SWT) guide and protect them and give them success in their studies, ameen.

## DEATHS

1. Sister Hindu Rufa'i Waziri of the BBC Hausa Service died after a protracted illness.

This newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Nigeria Muslim Forum (UK). Back issues can be accessed online at: <http://www.nmfuk.org/newsletter.htm>

2. Architect Musa Muhammad Sakaba formerly of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi and senior brother to Aminu Muhammad Sakaba of University of Gillingham has passed away after a motor accident on the Sokoto-Birnin Kebbi Road.
3. Brother Abbas Hassan (Manchester) lost his mother and two sisters in a motor accident along Kano - Jigawa Road.
4. Dr Muhammad Ali Olukade, a renowned Da'iy and a people-oriented Medical Doctor, has died at Ilorin.

May Allah (SWT) forgive them, have Mercy on them and give the family they left behind the fortitude to bear the loss, ameen.

## GRADUATION

The following have successfully completed their programmes:

1. Salim Abubakar Abatcha, MPharm Pharmacy, University of Manchester.
2. Fatima Abba, MPharm Pharmacy, University of Manchester.
3. Modu Lumami, MPharm, Pharmacy, Liverpool John Moores University.
4. Abubakar Aghavi, MPharm Pharmacy, University of Manchester.
5. Bashir Aji Kadai, MPharm Pharmacy, University of Brighton.
6. Ibrahim Baba Shehu, MSc Construction Management University of Manchester.
7. Aminu Ibrahim MPH Public Health, University of Leeds.
8. Murjanatu M Gidado MPH Public Health, University of Leeds.
9. Halilu Hamma has completed his PHD in Civil Engineering at the University of Leeds.

May Allah (SWT) make this achievement beneficial to them, their family and the entire Muslim Ummah, ameen.

