

LET THERE BE PEACE

Text of the Address delivered by the Vice-Chancellor, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Professor Is-haq O. Oloyede, on the occasion of the Foundation-Laying Ceremony of the Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies University of Ilorin on Thursday October 22, 2008 at the Auditorium, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.

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Today marks another milestone in the history of our fledgling institution. This is because it is not all dreams conceived that are born but we thank the Almighty Allah that the dream of having a Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies has not remained just a dream but has become now a reality. As the turning of the sod of this potentially great Centre for Peace is being performed, my prayer is: *let there be peace* O Lord, in our troubled world.

This foundation-laying ceremony is symbolic because it centres around an eminent peace-lover, gentleman military officer, in fact, the officers' officer, Lt. General A.B. Danbazzau, GSS, psc, ndc, fwc(+), Ph.D. Here is a man who has made enormous contributions and rendered selfless services to the cause of peace-making and peace-building throughout the world. Here is a man who has paid his due to foster peace and harmony in the world. We at the University of Ilorin thank you sincerely for honouring our invitation.

Just as I said two days ago, the Nigerian Army are one of the best trained armies in the world. The unblemished records and the indelible foot prints of our army in regional and international conflicts attest to this assertion. A major problem with us in Nigeria is that we find it easy to undermine ourselves, our strengths, and we more often than not, exaggerate our weaknesses. I always insist, based on my little experience of being in at least 20 world countries, at one time or the other, that many other nations do not fare better than we are in many areas, but our collective pessimism and inferiority complex do not often make us appreciate what is ours.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, this Centre is one of those established during the last 2007/2008 academic session. It is meant to organize man-power training in the field of peace and development studies, research and documentation and to run postgraduate programmes, including Diploma, Masters and Doctoral degrees in peace studies. Other Centres created alongside it are Centre for Research, Development and In-House Training (CREDIT), University of Ilorin Archive and Documentation Centre (UADC), Technical and Entrepreneurship Centre (TEC) Centre for Distance Education (CDE), Centre for Preliminary Studies (formerly Centre for Remedial Programmes) and National Centre for Hydro-Power Research and Development (NCHPRD). It is our

plan to build all the Centres in the nearest future so that the laudable goals targeted by the University can be achieved.

Distinguished audience, if the question is asked: why Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies? The answer is simple and straightforward. It is because there is an urgent need for peace in our turbulent world. Wars and conflicts, which are often under-reported, are ravaging the world resulting in the death of millions and displacement of several other millions. The whole world appears to sit on a keg of gun-powder as everyone appears to be clueless on how to redeem the situation. We have come to a stage that pressing a single button is enough to reduce the whole world to ashes. And, it is definitely far easier to make war than to make peace, as Georges Clemenceau once observed. But our clarion call is please, *let there be peace*.

At the University of Ilorin, we believe that most approaches to the resolution of global crises and conflicts are fraught with problems. This accounts for the intensity and rapidity of conflicts both here and elsewhere. As our medical doctors would tell us that the prognosis of a disease is a pre-condition to the prescription of appropriate therapy, the pervasiveness of global conflicts is an indicator to the fact that the real issues surrounding crises and conflicts are yet to be fully understood. It is only after such understanding occurs that attempts to build and make peace would be concrete, rather than cosmetic, if not even complicating the issues further.

Our Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, we hope, through intensive research, will be able to chart the way forward. By partnering with the military in peace studies and research and collaborating with them on the development and production of military weaponry, for national development, our University would be contributing its own quota in that direction while remaining focused still on its traditional vision and mission that constitute its mandate. Without peace, nothing absolutely can be achieved. Without peace, all toils and efforts are useless. We all owe it a duty to wage peace so that peace shall reign.

As we have other projects on our itinerary this morning to commission, such as the JKK/UNILORIN Electronic Test Centre, the Kwara State-donated Hostel and Relaxation Centre, the UBA/UNILORIN e-library, the Department of Economics Block, among others, I wish to conclude that as we turn the sod of the Centre for Peace within our Centre of Excellence located in this State of harmony, may peace be upon us all now and forever.