

**CHANCERY NEWS REPORT ON THE LAW  
ENFORCEMENT SEMINAR HELD AT THE  
NIGERIA HIGH COMMISSION, LONDON ON  
THURSDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> OF DECEMBER, 2009.**

**Introduction:**

The Association of British-Nigerian Law Enforcement Officers (ABLE), UK in collaboration with the Nigeria High Commission, London on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> of December, 2009 held a seminar at the Chancery with the objective theme, "Law Enforcement: Engaging the Nigerian Communities in the United Kingdom". In attendance were His Excellency, Dr. Dalhatu Sarki Tafia, OFR, High Commissioner and the Patron of ABLE and other very important participants, notably:

- i. H. E. Amb. Dozie Nwanna, OON,
- ii. The Representative of the Honourable Minister of Information and Communications,
- iii. Mrs. Farida Waziri, Chairperson of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC),
- iv. Mr. Chukwurah Udeh, Comptroller-General of Nigerian Immigration Service,
- v. Mr. John Atteh, Deputy-Controller General of Nigerian Customs Service,
- vi. Mr. Mark Abani, President, CANUK,
- vii. Mr. Alistair Soyode, Chief Executive, BEN TV UK and Chairman NIDOE, Europe,
- viii. Mr. Richard Taylor of Damilola Taylor Foundation,

- ix. Mr. Tony Cox, Representative I of the Metropolitan Police of the UK,
- x. Mr. George Rhoden, Detective Inspector, and Representative II, Metropolitan Police Commissioner of the UK.

### **Proceedings of the Seminar:**

2. The Seminar commenced at 9.30 am with the President of ABLE, Oluwayemisi Jenkins who gave a brief presentation on the charitable nature of the Association and its membership - preponderantly, British law enforcement officers of Nigerian and British heritage. The need to establish ABLE according to her arose from various discussions amongst British law enforcement officers of Nigerian/British heritage who wanted to project more positive image of Nigeria and Nigerians, especially in the area of law enforcement in the UK and worldwide. She disclosed that the Association had been in existence since 2004 and evolved into a key strategic organisation for both the Nigerian and British Governments' law enforcement agencies. She added that it had equally acted as a key advisory body for a host of Nigerian professional, business and socio-cultural organisations in the UK.

3. In his opening address, Dr. Tafida, High Commissioner while appreciating the laudable objectives of the Association stated that a developing nation such as Nigeria must take advantage of every opportunity to seek strategic partnership

with advanced societies like the U.K, particularly in the areas of sharing knowledge and experience and best practices in law enforcement. As a nation, he further opined that Nigeria must continue to explore all means of building state institutions, including, civil society organisations for effective community policing and law enforcement. The achievement of this, he said entailed regular exchange of intelligence on crime prevention and control between law enforcement agencies of the two countries. He commended the efforts of members of the Association for trying to build a bridge between the British law enforcement agencies and their Nigerian counterparts on the one hand and local Nigerian communities in the U.K on the other. The full detail of the High Commissioner's address is already on the Mission's website for those interested.

4. The seminar featured presentations by the heads of some of Nigeria's law enforcement agencies who spoke briefly on their particular perspective of the theme of the seminar. They called for cooperation with ABLE and UK law enforcement agencies. They also commended the organisation initiative and used the opportunity to educate the audience about their various operations, and on-going reforms in the services in line with the Federal Government Seven-point Agenda and the Vision 20:2020 Blueprint.

5. The Chairperson of the EFCC highlighted some challenges of her organization, including the use of undue court processes to delay and frustrate prosecution, as well as lack of cooperation by potential witnesses. Mrs. Waziri

further informed that despite all these challenges, the EFCC had performed well in the past few years and had so far recovered about US \$6.5 billion from financial scam, as well as, money-laundering. The organisation she stated had equally recovered about ~~N~~18billion through the on-going probe of the Nigerian banking sector. The Chairperson concluded that corruption was systemic in Nigeria and that the Commission needed the cooperation of ABLE and other law enforcement agencies to contain its scourge.

6. The Comptroller-General of Nigeria Immigration informed that the service was conscious of the global trends in law enforcement. He stated that indeed it had embarked on computerisation with the successful launching of the Immigration website in 2006 and the introduction of the electronic passport in tandem with international best practices. He commended the rationale behind the seminar and thanked the High Commissioner on behalf of his Honourable Minister for extending to them the invitation to attend the seminar.

7. Tony Cox, the principal Representative of the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, UK while identifying with the initiatives of ABLE informed that there was a deliberate effort to integrate the blacks, particularly Nigerians into the main stream of the U.K police. To this end, he revealed that, 200 Nigerians are currently serving with the Metropolitan Police, while about 1,500 Nigerian/African descents were already engaged as support staff. He re-assured that his

organisation was willing to cooperate with the executive of ABLE.

8. On the role of the media, Alistair Soyode identified lack of effective governmental engagement with the media as a major cause of the pervasive negative information about Nigeria in the international media, as well as, the internet. He suggested the need to take advantage of internet services to update information on relevant Nigerian Government websites. He said that the media needed to be encouraged to assist in the re-branding efforts of Federal Government and that they were prepared to be engaged in this respect. The key to effective Government-Media engagement according to Soyode remained timely and correct flow of information, which he believed were currently not forthcoming from the relevant Nigerian authorities.

9. During the interactive session, several comments, questions and clarifications were made. The substance and significance of that session is summarised as follows:

- i. That the initiative by ABLE be seen as highly commendable.
- ii. That there was the need to properly engage the Nigerian Law Enforcement practitioners in the U.K, particularly in the re-branding project, and that in this respect, the key to effective engagement remained information and publicity.
- iii. That the mass media in the United Kingdom should be engaged constructively, to enhance information dissemination.

- iv. That access to information on Nigeria should be made easier and regular.
- v. That the platform of ABLE could be used efficiently to coordinate future cooperation with Government in law enforcement strategies, including the provision of training needs to law enforcement agencies in Nigeria.
- vi. That Nigeria should consider the establishment of Special Courts to deal with corruption cases, just as South Africa, Ghana and some other countries had done.
- vii. That there was the need to review the Nigerian Constitution to reflect current realities, such as, issues of executive immunity, prosecution and law enforcement, particularly the Evidence Act, which had long become outdated.
- viii. That law enforcement agencies in the U.K and Nigeria should take advantage of the opportunity presented by the programmes of ABLE to advance the cause of law enforcement in both countries, particularly in the area of information sharing and capacity building.
- ix. That the High Commission in collaboration with the Nigeria Immigration Service remained committed to providing all necessary consular and immigration services to Nigerians.
- x. That networking by various law enforcement agencies remained key to developing successful law enforcement strategies.

- xi. That more effort should be deployed to continuously re-train the operatives of border control agencies in line with current realities.

**Evaluation:**

10. The seminar was very successful as discussions were frank and relevant to the objectives and purposes of the seminar. In order to allow for effective follow-up actions, there is the need for ABLE and other stakeholders to carefully reflect on the discussions and use the forum as a bridge for cooperation in the future. The initiative is highly commendable and the High Commissioner as the Patron of the Association should continue to support it by serving as a link and facilitator for the emerging partnership. To this end, the Association should be encouraged to develop an institutional framework and capacity for wider future engagements.

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