

OPENING REMARKS

BY

**DR DALHATU SARKI TAFIDA, OFR,
NIGERIA HIGH COMMISSIONER TO THE UNITED KINGDOM**

ON THE OCASSION OF INTERACTIVE SESSION HELD

BY

**THE RT. HONOURABLE DIMEJI BANKOLE, CFR SPEAKER OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

**HELD AT THE NIGERIA HOUSE,
LONDON, FRIDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2009**

**The Rt Honourable Dimeji Bankole, CFR,
Speaker, House of Representatives of Nigeria,**

**Honourable Abike Dabiri-Erewa
Member, House of Representatives of Nigeria,**

**Honourable Members of the House of Representatives of the
Federal Republic of Nigeria,**

**Dr John George
Chairman, Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation, Europe Region
(NIDO Europe),**

**Dr Mark Abani
Chairman, Central Association of Nigerians in the United Kingdom
(CANUK),**

Fellow Nigerians,

The Rt. Honourable Dimeji Bankole, Speaker of the House of Representatives is here this evening, to engage with fellow country men and women in this country. This is in recognition of the significant contributions of the Nigerians from all walks of life in the Diaspora to our national development efforts. It is also a demonstration of Government's commitment to the deepening of our democracy by encouraging mass participation of Nigerians abroad in the political process.

It is, therefore, with profound pleasure and sense of duty that I welcome the Honourable Speaker, members of his entourage as well as the Honourable Minister of Foreign Minister to this Interactive Session.

Today's event has been put together in close partnership with NIDO Europe. Without doubt, NIDO remains an important vehicle for the mobilisation of the huge resources and potentials of Nigerians abroad, for the task of

national development. It is, however, a platform that is shared with other Nigerian organisations and groups abroad.

This is why the High Commission recognises the important role of organisations such as the CANUK, other professional bodies and socio-cultural groups in the United Kingdom who are also involved in our national development efforts in various ways. An Interactive Session such as this affords us the opportunity to meet with our elected Representatives, to pose questions and issues, exchange ideas as part of the process of democratic governance.

You will recall that the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ojo Maduekwe, CFR held an Interactive Session with fellow Nigerians in this same venue in November last year. A similar Session organised by the National Universities Commission was also attended by Honourable Abike Dabiri-Erewa a month later.

Today's event, which is a prelude to the launching of a global data base of Nigerians in the Diaspora is a reflection of the desire of Government to elevate this process of engagement. It is also intended to promote a deeper sense of belonging to Nigeria on the part of our nationals in this country.

I welcome the Distinguished Speaker and his entourage to the United Kingdom and wish them a safe return journey home.

Thank you for your attention.

May God continue to bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.