

**LAUNCHING DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE OF
WOMEN (MEN) OF NIGERIA (DAWN):
AN AGENDA FOR POLITICAL CHANGE
AND EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN.**

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**“In post-colonial phase of developing country,
only Political movements devoted to the Politics
of change have relevance.”**

Michael Manley

“Any Political Party that does not change will die.”

Tony Blair.

BACKGROUND

The Democratic Alliance of Women (MEN) of Nigeria (DAWN), wish to address the politics of dogmatism that has prevailed in Nigeria since independence. And which, if left unchanged, will continue to propel the country into oblivion and hence disaster.

History should guide us, so that past mistakes are not repeated. But where the mistakes of the past become the benchmark for future actions, those engaged in re-enacting such mistakes, stand accused before future generations. We must therefore start learning from past mistakes as history dictates.

Michael Manley in his book “The Politics of Change”, states “ an analysis of the legacies of colonialism suggests a degree of social deliberation together with economic malformations so grave as to make the politics of tinkering within the status quo, irrelevant to our condition.”

Nigeria on attainment of independence in 1960 enjoyed the status of a post-colonial era for six years, after which, there was a military intrusion into politics. Thus, in 1966, the first military coup took place, which saw the killing of some of Nigeria’s post-colonial leaders. However, it can be argued that by that military action and intrusion into Nigeria’s politics, the political change from colonialism to independent self government was adversely affected.

Civilians and military officers have governed Nigeria in rotation since independence. The majority of these people lack the vision and aspiration of those who fought for an independent Nigeria. However, the achievements of both systems, suggest the politics of “tinkering within the status quo” which Manley argues is irrelevant to the development of Nigeria and hence Africa.

Nigeria being one of the most populous nations in Africa, owes it to itself to assist in the liberation and development of the continent and positively influencing change in the “real “ sense. A country turned against itself, can never survive. In other words, a country that would not change socio-economically and politically will die. (Mr Tony Blair the Prime Minister of Britain).

GOVERNMENT

The government of a nation is carried out by a group of individuals who are elected as representatives of the people to implement a set of policies through the governmental departments to which each representative is appointed as head. This group of people form the highest decision-making body of the government.

Through the various departments, policies geared towards the provision of vital services to the population are implemented. Thus, the Government is the executive arm of State.

Along with the Executive arm of State are the Legislature and the Judiciary. The Legislature is the law-making organ whilst the Judiciary interprets laws made, and protects the liberty of citizens and ensures that the Executive does not act in excess of its powers as provided for by the Constitution.

Thus, the rule of law is the basis of every human society without which, there is bound to be abuses of the people's rights. For, it may be argued that human beings by nature are imperfect and corruptible, to the extent that unless society is subjected to the rule of law, man would exist in a state of brutish, warlike anarchy, pursuing his own selfish interests through "force and fraud." The observance of law and order therefore, ensures that man is protected from his own brutish nature.

SEPARATION OF POWERS

The concept of Separation of Powers refers to the independence of the three arms of State. The Legislature must have absolute power in making Laws governing the citizens of the country, as dictated by the Constitution and Justice.

The Executive must govern according to the laws so made by the Legislature without interference from the other arms of State. While the Judiciary must interpret laws made by the Legislature and as contained in the Constitution. Adhering to the principles of Justice, protecting at all times, civil liberty. Not only must justice be done always, it must be seen to be done.

POLITICS.

Some people have a desire to control the lives of their fellow human beings. Political activity offers the chance to exercise such control. Politics is therefore, about the decision making process involving the implementation of **agreed policies**. Every aspect of man is governed by political decisions and process.

The nature of the political system is crucial to the protection of human rights and the development of the country, for, needs translate into rights, such that, where the political system satisfies the needs of the citizens, the issue of the abuse of those rights will seldom occur. All rights are indivisible and interdependent, and they establish the parameters for meaningful human existence. Civil and political rights cannot be exercised fully unless social and economic rights are satisfied.

To a large extent therefore, to be in a political decision-making position, is to be in the position of “POWER”, whereby the quality of life for the entire population depends on you. Power corrupts and indeed absolute power corrupts absolutely, hence the need for the rule of law to prevail on decision makers who **must** be subject to the dictate of law and order. The dictum that if all mankind minus one person had the power to suppress that one person, mankind would have no more right to persecute that one individual, than if the individual would have the right to persecute mankind.

MILITARY- POLITICS

The military institution by the nature of its profession is war-trained and engages only in conflict and the use of force, so that, when the military became involved in Nigeria’s politics in 1966, the stage was therefore set for a total breakdown of democratic evolution and respect for human rights.

Colonialism was achieved and sustained by military force. Thus, when the military killed Nigeria’s democratic leaders and imposed it on the people of Nigeria, the dream of a **free** Nigeria was killed and neo-colonialism was introduced. Of course, the use of constant force begets terror, insecurity and distrust from which the brave may at first attempt to escape. The Nigerian civil war, which cost over a million Nigerian lives can be said to stem from that attempt. The failure of the civil war to achieve its political objective, which was the desire to escape through secession can be said to be a factor responsible for the prolonged military dictatorship in Nigeria. For, it can be argued that with so many lives lost in vain, the “will” to confront continued enslavement of the population of Nigeria was crushed. Thus, military governments appear to have unchallenged access to Political Power.

DEMOCRACY

Democracy in an environment of tyranny has failed to achieve real independence for Nigeria. As such, although civil politicians have had a few opportunities to govern after military intrusion in 1966, they have been unable to move Nigeria forward and away from repeated military interruptions in Nigeria’s politics.

Another factor, which could be cited as responsible for the failure of civil politicians to restore democratic rule in Nigeria, is the lack of an environment conducive to democratic process. There have not been institutions geared towards the development of a democratic system of government. It could be argued that civil society has never been exposed to the operation of a true democratic process. Electorates hardly know their political rights. In fact, with the uncertainty, which has surrounded civil politics in Nigeria, the word “politics” has become a taboo. With the lack of democratic institutions, coupled with lack of political awareness among citizens, civil politicians have not been able to hold on to power in the face of military agitation to return to the political scene. The take-over of the present military regime from elected politicians on the 17th November 1993 is a case in point. The people’s elected representatives were unable to resist the “military comeback”.

History has shown beyond reasonable doubt that the military can never be trusted to return to the barracks and to stay there. This unwillingness can be said to stem from the fact that government in Nigeria has become centred round what can be termed as the “Politics of Power”, and power in the Nigerian sense means the ability to manipulate national resources. Thus, “self” replaces “Nation”, a situation that ultimately gave birth to present day Nigeria.

Nigeria has experienced a power system of government which appears to corrupt absolutely; a tragedy which has multiplied across the Nigerian State and beyond its borders, securing a reputation and title of one of the most corrupt countries of the world. This state of affairs obviously, is a sure indication that an urgent change is needed if Nigeria’s contribution towards Africa’s socio-economic and political development is to be accelerated.

To desire a system is certainly not enough to obtain and sustain such a system. In other words, to desire a democratic system in an environment of tyranny will not achieve a democratic government capable of sustaining itself and keeping the military-politicians in their barracks. **A democratic environment must be created and maintained.**

**“Freedom is the expression of the creativity in life.
It is neither an inherent right nor a hard-won value.
It is law of being, lacking which, there would be no
Evolution, no progress, no civilisation. Only primal
Chaos set in permanence.”**
Norman W. Manly

**“Chance has never yet satisfied the hope of a suffering
People. Action, self-reliance, the vision of self and the
Future, have been the only means by which the oppressed
Have seen and realised the light of their own freedom.”**

Marcus Gravy.

Following prolonged period of military domination in Nigeria, to achieve an environment conducive to an enduring democracy, efforts must be made to address the people’s psychology of dependence. A condition resulting in the inability of Nigerians to seek a leader with probity and sensitivity to the decision making process, and the ability to manage a government to which all will contribute talents and effort for the good of the nation. In effect, the average Nigerian appears to have a tendency of looking to the other person to provide leadership. Civil society looks on to a few individuals who have been actors in the political scene since 1960 for leadership. Whilst those politicians therefore, of opportunism, look to the military-politicians to provide leadership through force and terror of the gun.

The game of cat and dog being played on the political platform, will lead the country to total destruction unless intercepted through conscious change. For, whilst this cat and dog game goes on, the most vulnerable members of the Nigerian population bear the brunt of the diseases resulting from this interplay of dependent forces.

Neo-colonialism

As colonialism made its victims its defenders, and hence the conquest of Nigeria is said to have been the work of Nigerians themselves, so too, the military institution which is a colonial institution is making its captives its defenders. Thus, it is not surprising that civil politicians of opportunism are the same people the neo-colonial masters are using to hold the rest of civil society captives. Some members of civil society are actively engaged in a campaign for continued dictatorship in Nigeria.

The military cannot sustain itself in political power unless aided by civilians, both in and out of government. History contains record of civil politicians who are party to the annulment of the popular June 12, 1993 presidential election. The damage done by that annulment will take a long time to put right.

Thus, for an enduring democracy, civil society must be capable of safeguarding its liberal institutions. And be educated on the morality of not giving in to dictators, lest the very foundation of our society perishes.

The military regime is yet again going over its old mistakes, whilst civil politicians and other members of civil society are incapable of preventing another walk to darker ages.

It is important to remember that the Nigerian military regime took Nigerians through eight years of transition to civil rule before the annulment in 1993. The wound, which that criminal act inflicted, is yet to be treated.

THE JUNE 12, 1993 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

It is important to note that as long as the presumed winner of that election is held captive, the mandate of the people of Nigeria is technically held in obeisance pending revisitation at a later date. One wonders how the dictatorship intends to settle the issue of June 12 as the mandate has become known.

It is highly advisable given that yet another transition to civil rule is allegedly taking place albeit at gunpoint, that the presumed winner of the June 12 is released along with all political prisoners. Thereafter, dialogue is commenced to resolve what will remain a national problem.

On the other hand, Nigeria may appear to move on, in spite of June 12 kept in abeyance, but as long as the bearer of that mandate is held captive, June 12 will continue to represent a “wound” of the nation awaiting effective treatment. Even if the custodian of June 12 is allowed to die in prison, the ghost of June 12 will continue to haunt Nigeria’s political landscape and future generations of politicians.

To pretend that the June 12 mandate is dead without formally addressing the issue with the view of solving it once and for all is to be unrealistic. June 12 will live on to haunt Nigeria’s politics to eternity. With negotiations in an environment of freedom by all concerned, it is possible for the issue to be resolved to the satisfaction of all in the interest of Nigeria.

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

As colonialism transformed into neo-colonialism in 1966, Nigerians became conquered people, and appear to maximise their personal chances of survival and the survival of their immediate families, by resorting to possessive individualism, with no consideration for the societal good.

Thus, the concept of self-preservation creates severe attitude problems. The survival of the fittest becomes the theme for economic endeavour. In the race for survival, the ability of the people to make common efforts towards the general development and socio-economic well being of the nation becomes sacrificed.

As the struggle to preserve self at the expense of the nation and everybody else gathers momentum, every means is devised to gain access to “Power” which is perceived to hold the greatest promise for the actualisation of the individualistic pursuit.

Power translates into wealth and wealth becomes influence and personal success. The quest for power therefore, becomes the ultimate goal to be got by all means. It is therefore, not surprising that in the “Power culture” which has resulted, the Nigerian people should be confronted with agonising experiences alien until now to human imagination and beyond understanding.

As Power is transformed into money and influence, satanic means is sought to secure what has become the “god” of the Nigerian nation. Ritual killing of innocent and helpless Nigerian children and the removal of female genital organs for a trade in human parts, now constitute a modern nightmare for Nigeria. For some obscure reasons, the trade in human organs and parts appear to be gaining momentum in present day Nigeria. A trade which centres round the slaughter of Nigerian children and women threatens without doubt, the security and future of our next generations unless addressed as a matter of urgency. **There is an urgent need for Political change in Nigeria.**

Fraud has become a common feature in Nigeria’s economic activities. An advanced stage, which is now popularly known in Nigeria as 419. Without genuine change, no military Decrees can halt the avalanche of crimes flowing from prolonged bondage, socio-economic strangulation and chronic distress which neo-colonialism in Nigeria has imposed.

Prolonged period of slavery has resulted in the total breakdown of family values and community culture, which before now formed the basis of the Nigerian society. Creating a “new culture” where the average Nigerian has become acutely individualistic; extremely disputatious almost to the point of destructiveness. Prone towards character assassination and mutilation. The average Nigerian appears to be in conflict with everyone around him, so that, he is unreceptive to the views of other Nigerians; insensitive to the feelings of fellow Nigerians, forgetting that no one has the monopoly of ideas. And that politics is the effective exchange of ideas. All these put together, form the tragedy of the Nigerian State. For, without the unity of purpose

and mutual respect, it will be impossible to restore democratic rule in Nigeria, and seek a common way of moving the country forward.

Nigeria is indeed on the brink of socio-economic collapse, a total breakdown of law and order. And an imminent disintegration through tribal wars, precipitated by a deliberate policy of “divide and rule” which culminated in the fragmentation of Nigeria into numerous States and Local Government Areas. It is now time for all those concerned about the survival and unity of the country seek urgent means of resolving the many problems facing Africa’s most populous nation.

It is an irony that the Nigerian military Government should be actively involved in spearheading Peace and democracy in other countries, whilst holding Nigerians hostage. Nigerians whose resources are being used lavishly to restore peace and harmony in these countries deserve what is good for other African countries.

Nigeria must survive and move forward; hence the Democratic Alliance of Women of Nigeria (DAWN) is determined to become the platform for the inevitable change so desperately needed.

WOMEN IN NATION BUILDING

Women played an active role in the rejection of colonialism; through various movements set up to address issues, a lot was achieved by women. These included The Lagos Market Women’s Association (LMWA), which emerged in the 1920s to organise market women in Lagos to protest against the imposition of tax against women.

The Nigerian Women’s Party campaigned for women’s right to education, employment and the enfranchisement of women. They attempted also to influence both the colonial government structures and Nigerian political groups organised by male leaders.

The Abeokuta Women’s Union (AWU) in the late 1940s forced the **Alike** of Abeokuta, a traditional ruler who was abusing his power under the indirect rule system out of office in 1949. By 1950, AWU became involved in the more generalised struggle for independence. (**Gender In Third World Politics By Georgina Waylen (Pg 65)**)

In South-Eastern Nigeria, women organised to effect change during the colonial era. The Aba women’s riot comes to mind.

Thus, despite being disadvantaged by their traditional role, many Nigerian women have succeeded in rising above the shackles of oppression to fight for the well being of the Nigerian State and her people.

A woman like Fumilayo Ransome-Kuti led a resistance in her time against male domination, subsequently to be beaten to death by the military.

There are various women organisations in Nigeria today, all of which are making their contributions to the upliftment of women and children of Nigeria.

There is a need to mention among these numerous women organisations, Women In Nigeria (WIN) for her tireless contributions in an environment of brutality and politically motivated killings.

We remember and commend the various Women Associations of Nigeria's Universities, most of who are undoubtedly contributing immensely to the progress of learning.

We remember the market women at the height of resistance against the criminal annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election in Nigeria. The women put their lives on the line as they cried out against tyranny led by Babangida-Abacha's barbaric military regime.

We thank all those brave women who travelled long distances to attend the several Abuja trials of Nigeria's President-elect Chief MKO Abiola. Their sacrifices and commitment undoubtedly encouraged and strengthened the resolve of MKO Abiola to stand firm for Nigeria and her people. Abiola being the symbol of the sovereignty of the people.

We salute all Nigerian women who in their personal capacity have fought and are still fighting for the upliftment of Nigeria's women and children and hence the Nigerian Nation.

We commend all Nigeria's women for standing by their families in the face of socio-economic strangulation. The African woman is certainly a symbol of strength and the corner stone of Africa's liberation and subsequent development.

We congratulate all female Nigerian journalists who have bravely performed their journalistic duties in a country where lies are encouraged and truth locked behind bars.

We call for the immediate release of Chris Ayanwu, Nigeria's journalist serving a jail sentence for an alleged involvement in an alleged coup plot.

We call for the immediate release of all Nigerian women in detention, either for their journalist profession or, as wives and daughters of patriotic Nigerians seeking the enthronement of democracy and subsequent respects for human rights in Nigeria.

We feel the pain in the families of all political detainees held in various prisons all over Nigeria for speaking up against tyranny and massive human rights abuse in Nigeria.

We remember "MEE" Ezekiel of the journalist profession, the person behind the TV programme "MEE and YOU" who passed away following what could have been a "minor operation" to remove Fibroids. The loss of MEE is an attribute of the criminal starvation of medical practice in Nigeria, a situation that has driven the majority of

Nigeria's surgeons into exile to escape the deliberate destruction of Nigeria's Health care.

MEE, before her death through her TV programme and charity, catered for the mental health of her Nigerian audience who were mainly women. Her charity catered for mainly the old. She is indeed a great loss to Nigerian womanhood.

SUMMIT OF AFRICA'S FIRST LADIES

Reports show that following the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, in September 1995, Africa's First Ladies have organised themselves. Thus, a summit of First Ladies was held in Abuja; Nigeria a few days ago. (May 1997). The matters on the agenda as reported, included Peace and women empowerment.

The initiative is highly commendable, but one wonders if really the peace being sought is the same peace, which Africa so desperately need, especially since Abuja is the Federal Capital of Nigeria where the masses are labouring under a dictatorial regime headed in part by Nigeria's First Lady. And where mothers labour under poverty; live under bridges and roads; A life of degradation, intimidation and fear.

Nigeria has over seventy thousand political detainees scattered all over Nigeria, all of whom are held at the pleasure of the Head of the military junta and his wife. One feels therefore, that Nigeria's first lady should be the last person to discuss the empowerment of women, nor, to host such a summit.

However, it is possible to take the gesture as an indication that Nigeria's First Lady can be relied on to assist in restoring peace in Nigeria.

DAWN therefore, wish to remind the first lady of some of the commitments made at the Beijing Conference forming which concluded with a Platform for Action as the world prepares for the Year 2000.

Firstly, the Conference signified world concern for the abuse of women's rights globally. And advanced the principle of women's rights being human rights, and the need to take action to curb all forms of violence against women.

It is important to remind the first lady that by participating in the Conference, Nigeria committed herself to implementing the Platform for Action.

Amnesty International stated thirteen critical areas of concern, which were analysed to form the basis of action to be taken by governments. They include: -

Women and poverty, which the first lady will agree has become a public issue in Nigeria.

Education and training of women; Certainly, the first lady will agree that Nigeria's score in this area is zero. Really, how does the military lady expect to empower

women, when her military constituency has deliberately destroyed the educational system?

Women and health; the lack of affordable medical care in the country has forced medical doctors and nurses out of Nigeria, for lack of recognisable medical provision. To the extent that, a one day old baby girl was discovered in Lagos in the pool of her own blood with the head missing.

Violence against women; The first lady knows that due to socio-economic strangulation on going in Nigeria, violence against women is prevalent. Most worrisome is ritual murders taking place, as some Nigerians take to trading in human parts particularly female organs.

The first lady will recall that before the 7th O.A.U. All African Trade Fair began in Kaduna recently, the headless body of a teenager was discovered near the Fair Complex; another example of decay and degradation to which Nigeria has fallen.

Undoubtedly, a country where women are held in detention for an alleged involvement in an alleged coup plot violates the human rights of those women. Also, there is hardly any justification for arresting and detaining wives and daughters in place of their husbands and fathers. This taking of wives and children as hostages is a disgrace and an affront to human dignity.

The release of Mrs Olorunyomi from detention recently, after being held in place of her husband, is proof that wives and children being held in this manner are criminal and uncivilised. DAWN therefore; call on the military through the first lady to release all such prisoners, being “prisoners by association”.

Women and armed conflict, Nigeria presently can be said to be in a state of armed conflict, regardless of the fact that it is one-sided armed conflict, in which the military and the security forces take on unarmed civil society.

The first lady is also aware of the great threat, which armed robbery poses for Nigerian womanhood. One wonders where robbers get their sophisticated weaponry.

Women and the economy; The on-going economic strangulation in Nigeria has forced many mothers into prostitution both within Nigeria and abroad, particularly Italy, where Nigerian womanhood is on display in exchange for the means of feeding hungry children “back home” in Nigeria.

Child prostitution is also taking place in Nigeria. This amounts to an abuse of the rights of the child. And represents a limitless source of supply for Nigeria’s human parts traders.

Women in power and decision making; the first lady will recall that the decision of who attended the Beijing Conference was made by her humble self, those women who needed to attend were denied the opportunity. It will be agreed therefore, that to empower women, there is a need for the first lady to accept that Nigeria has a multitude of women capable of making such decisions as whether to attend the Beijing Conference or not. The first lady has arrogated unto herself, the power to

represent Nigerian women in any capacity. In fact, she has become a co-commander-in-chief with her husband. This situation is highly regrettable, and a degradation of Nigerian womanhood, as Nigeria is not the military commander's household.

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; there is a need on the part of government to establish the machinery for the advancement of women in Nigeria.

The Platform for Action by government also includes: -
Human rights of women;

The women of Nigeria and indeed Africa certainly need empowerment, to enable them fulfil their noble role of nation building. That the African wife and mother is by tradition the pillar of her home and hence her society, applies to the entire female population of Nigeria, and not just military women. .

Civil society women need to be allowed to contribute to peace and Political stability in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

NIGERIA'S ECONOMY

It is a fact that economic development depends on economic activities by the country's nationals. To deprive Nigerians the opportunity of contributing to the economy of their country, is to deliberately strangulate Nigeria's economic potentials. Particularly, since the heavy involvement of foreign nationals, may mean that Nigeria will be paying salaries in "hard currency".

Nigeria is a blessed country, both in terms of natural and human resources. There is no doubt that Nigerians are contributing immensely to the economies of the countries of their escape, since Nigeria has degenerated to the present level socio-economically.

Nigerians, whose skills and professions are vital to the economic growth of their own country, have had to escape for their lives into foreign countries.

There are over seventy thousand Political detainees in jails across Nigeria for daring to voice their concern for the imminent destruction of Nigeria, all of whom have a lot to contribute to the country's development. There are millions of Nigerians trapped in foreign countries who are anxious to return to their country.

Foreign countries all over the world are facing a worsening refugee crisis; Nigeria has a high level of refugee present in these countries where is known of their plight as a people.

DAWN wish to appeal to all Heads of African countries to make a positive contribution to the realisation of the African dream by condemning continuing dictatorship in Africa and Nigeria.

APPEAL TO HEADS OF AFRICAN STATES

Africa should unite in liberation and socio-economic progress and not in dictatorship and neo-colonialism. There are over seven million refugees of African

origin all over the world according to the UNHCR. It is against this background that the success of the Organisation of African Unity should be measured.

Heads of African States must direct their headship towards the well being of the African people. And unite to condemn individual Head of State who attempts to bring the integrity of African Headship and the OAU into disrepute

The tragedy of Rwanda should be prevented at all costs. The tragedy unfolding in Zaire, should act as a mirror through which all African Heads should reflect, and direct their Headship. For, as the world prepares for the year 2000, the aim for Africa should be finding ways of resolving the many conflicts within countries, caused by military dictatorship in one form or another.

Nigeria has a population far greater than Rwanda and Zaire, so, a failure to find a peaceful solution now, is to encourage and facilitate a human tragedy taking place and continuing in Nigeria.

Nigerians are already showing African Heads and the international community their readiness to adopt the Rwanda method. Some Nigerian States are presently engaged in fighting back with arms. In Delta State of the country, entire villages have been burnt down, killing the inhabitants along with everything moving in them. In a particular village, an 82-year-old woman was tied to the stake and burnt alive according to reports.

It is against this background that African Heads should access the Nigerian tragedy and NOT against the propaganda machinery of the military dictatorial regime.

Nigerians have played an active role in the liberation of African countries. Many thousand Nigerian lives were lost in Liberia through Nigeria's peace effort. The people of Nigeria played an active role in the struggle against apartheid in Southern Africa. Yet, Nigerians are in bondage in Nigeria, waiting to be assisted in their liberation struggle by other African States of goodwill, and international community.

Nigeria's petrol-dollar has been spent in enthroning democracy in Republic of Benin and Niger Republic and yet, Nigerians are being thrown out of the Republics and democracy still remain in a distant dream for Nigerians.

One wonders if the seemingly neighbourly and peace loving efforts of the Nigerian military is not ill motivated and geared towards colonising the sub-region of Africa: A way of expanding Nigeria's borders to enable the dictators extend their military powers over their neo-colonised sub-region.

Nigerians are being hunted through treaties signed in the recent past between the Nigerian military and some governments of the sub-region of Africa. The act of the signing of extradition treaties, threatens the credibility of such States in the eyes of African people and the rest of the world.

DAWN wish to remind the governments concerned of their responsibility to Nigeria's refugees as contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; The 1951 UN Refugee Convention updated by the 1967 Protocol.

Thus, to sign an extradition treaty with dictatorial Nigeria from whom these refugees have succeeded in escaping is to pauperise the sovereignty of those African States. The pride and integrity of Nations should be maintained at all cost, even, in the face of economic difficulties.

The Nigerian tragedy is NOT about African unity. Instead, it is about the liberation and subsequent development of Africa.

To move Africa forward, Heads of African States and the international community MUST unite in the fight against dictatorships.

Take a positive step, by condemning military regime in Nigeria and throughout Africa.

Empower African women; the Beacon lights of Africa's liberation and economic progress.

LONG LIVE AFRICA

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

LONG LIVE NIGERIA

LONG LIVE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE OF WOMEN (MEN) OF NIGERIA.
(DAWN)