

4th January 1999

His Excellency,
Chief Emeka Anyaoku
Secretary General
Commonwealth Secretariat,
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX

Your Excellency,

We are writing to thank you for all the Commonwealth of Nations was able to do for Nigeria and her people during 1998. In particular, we wish to congratulate you for your prompt attempt to resolve Nigeria's many problems following the sudden demise of General Sani Abacha on 8, June 1998. We are pleased to inform you that the Democratic Alliance of Women(Men) of Nigeria (DAWN) was actually in Nigeria at the eventful time. We were privileged therefore, to witness the jubilation and celebration by Nigerians in response to the otherwise sad event.

Unfortunately, we are sad to inform you that the expectations of Nigerians were quickly replaced by disillusionment. **NIGERIA IS NOT FREE. As you know, FREEDOM can never be attained on a "Platter of Gold" as Nigerians had hoped.**

We have pointed out in the past to both the Commonwealth and the rest of the international community, that the late General Sani Abacha presided over a very corrupt, fraudulent and demonic regime, sustained in political power by a group of unprincipled and self-centred political contractors. People blinded by their personal desire to create mountains of wealth. Thus, the single event of General Sani Abacha's death is realistically insufficient to liberate Nigeria and her people.

NIGERIA'S POLITICAL PROSPECT UNDER GENERAL ABDUSALAMI ABUBAKAR

The Democratic Alliance of Women(Men) of Nigeria (DAWN) congratulate Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar for releasing some of Nigeria's political prisoners on his assumption of political power in June 1998. We wish to remind him however, that there are more Nigerians in jails across the country that should not be there.

The General uncovered a small amount of the inhumane looting of the people's wealth by some officers of the late General's regime. Highest on the list of looters is the Sani Abacha's family.

THE FAILINGS OF THE ABUBAKAR'S ADMINISTRATION TO DATE

DAWN is concerned that whereas the General has the political power to start the wheel of political and socio-economic change that is so desperately needed in

Nigeria, he appears to lack the will to exercise his unlimited powers. By the unexpected demise of late General Sani Abacha, a window of opportunity was presented out of Nigeria's many problems. DAWN is saddened by the fact that such a wonderful opportunity was lost to Nigeria and her people through the General's inaction. History is presently being rewritten, it therefore remains to be seen how future generations of Nigerians perceive the failings of the current General.

General Abubakar is using late General Sani Abacha's political players in a fraudulent exercise. The Abubakar's Military Administration failed to BAN from politics, the players of the five political parties, whose campaign for self succession of the late General Sani Abacha as Nigeria's "President for life", endangered the existence of Nigeria as a Nation. Thus, exposing them as being unsuitable for Political Office in Nigeria. It is a fact that the players of the "Abacha for President" Political Parties are the same players in the current political dispensation. Thus, exposing the weakness of the Abubakar's transition programme.

DAWN has no doubt that the General will hand over political power at the end of his transition programme for he appears to be anxious to please the international community. The major fear is how sincere is the General.

Nigeria's political history show that since the 1966 Military coup, Nigeria's Military has alternated political power between itself and its civilian counterpart (i.e. civil politicians) Between them, Nigeria's political and socio-economic structure has suffered great damage. With this tradition in focus, and given the shortcomings already inherent in the present programme, it is impossible to expect the Abubakar's transition programme to lead to a genuine and enduring democracy in Nigeria.

THIS IS THEREFORE, NOT NIGERIA'S LAST JOURNEY TO DEMOCRACY.

Although General Abubakar appealed to Nigerians to join his administration in finding lasting solution to the country's many ills, DAWN is unhappy to inform you and the international community, that the Administration has failed to accept the contributions offered by the Democratic Alliance of Women(Men) of Nigeria (DAWN). Efforts channelled through the Acting Nigerian High Commissioner here in London failed to attract a response from the Military Government in Abuja. As a follow up, DAWN was in Abuja for eight days trying to make a contribution towards the enthronement of genuine democracy in Nigeria. The experience in Abuja, left a lot to be desired of a government eager to assure Nigerians and the international community of its sincerity of purpose. We are enclosing correspondence with the Presidency for your information.

Apart from efforts being made by DAWN to contribute efforts towards the survival of Nigeria, our stay in Nigeria between May and September 1998, brought to our awareness, the fact that Nigerians are very anxious to participate in Nigeria's political future. With the view to providing an alternative leadership in the country. A leadership emerging from the people, instead of the present leadership alien to the people (a made believe leadership). As expected, the people of Nigeria have not benefited from the efforts of genuine Nigerians to steer the country out of the dangerous ground we have found ourselves under the present set up.

As the world is witnessing, Nigeria's politicians assisted by the present Head of State General Abdulsalami Abubakar is entrusting Nigeria's democracy to the **ability to buy votes**. DAWN was privileged to meet with the Executive Committee of a Political Association venturing to challenge the Nigeria's Yesterday Men. Sadly for the people of

Nigeria, their prospective leaders were swallowed up by the Abacha-Abubakar MoneyBags. Money looted from an enslaved people.

THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY UNDER GENERAL ABUBAKAR

The General Abubakar's Administration is yet to direct its attention to the economy with a view to arresting the long-standing decay resulting from long term mismanagement and looting enterprise of previous administrations. Thus, there is no recognisable economic activity going on in the country. There is mass unemployment of the majority of the country's active population. Individual efforts, towards gainful self-employment are further hindered by the chronic shortage of petrol, as Nigerians queue endlessly to buy petrol. This is a situation that has characterised Nigeria, as a country in constant chaos amidst her oil wealth, for which the people of the Niger Delta are paying a heavy price.

Nigeria's history has shown that all in-coming Military regimes, have all cited the inability of civil politicians to manage the Economy as their reason for taking over political power. This being the case, DAWN is certain that, although General Abdulsalami Abubakar will hand over political power in May 1999, within a short period of time, another group of Military officers will return to Nigeria's political landscape citing the ruined economy for their action. And when that happens, the majority of the civil politicians now buying votes under the disguise of DEMOCRACY, will form part of that Military Regime.

FRAUD AND CORRUPTION UNDER GENERAL ABUBAKAR:

It is highly embarrassing but true, that for many Nigerians, crime has a way of life as many are forced to seek their own survival through all means; "hook or crook". While successive governments concentrate on self-enrichment acts, Nigerians engage in personal survival strategies. Of course, no one has a magic wand with which to change any society over night, but it is necessary to recognise these serious problems with a view to correcting the situation.

The question that we at DAWN are asking now is that; if fraud and corruption can be up to its present height under a military regime, how is it expected that the in-coming civilian government will be able to cope to correct the situation? It is very doubtful that the civilians will be able to solve the problem of fraud and corruption in Nigeria.

SECURITY AND SAFETY UNDER GENERAL ABUBAKAR:

Just like the embarrassing story about fraud and corruption in Nigeria, that of security and safety is even more of concern. Every now and then valuable properties, and even lives, are lost to armed-robbers and 'hired killers' who terrorise most Nigeria's cities, towns and villages. Every effort purported to be introduced for combating this evil that plague the country always turn out to be ineffective. This has a direct link with the problem of fraud and corruption as the security agents themselves who suppose to carry out the combat are corrupt. Over the years of military corrupt misrule, security and safety of people and their property have become neglected to the present level. In a civilised community as of the 20th century, the matter of a country's security and safety is ultimately the responsibility of the military.

On the other hand, the military use oppression or suppression to rule the people and the innocent citizens are the culprit, not the criminals. Again, this poses the question of how

the civilian government will be able to correct what supposed to be part of the functions of the military, which they have deliberately neglected?

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ABACHA'S ADMINISTRATION AND ABUBAKAR'S:

Although General Abubakar released some of the political detainees incarcerated by General Abacha immediately on assumption of office as the new Head of State, as of now we can easily see some similarities in both administrations apart from the obvious fact that this is a continuation of the previous administration.

The Ogoni killings including their leader, Ken Saro Wiwa, was the direct effect of the naked brutality of the Abacha regime. The recent Jesse Fire tragedy was also the direct effect of a prolonged raping of the predominantly Nigeria's oil wealth producing area of the Niger Delta area.

It is a fact that, whereas oil bearing pipes in the civilised world are buried underground for protection, security and safety of the environment and people, Nigeria's oil, (including refined petrol) is carried on the ground surface. This is endangering the lives of inhabitants of the oil producing areas of the Niger Delta and all other places through which the pipes run.

Before the tragedy, there was no evidence that these "inappropriate" oil bearing pipes are well maintained to ensure that the risk of oil spillage is minimised. As such, it is no wonder that from time to time, there is oil spillage in various parts of the Niger Delta endangering lives, environment and means of livelihood of the people of the Niger Delta.

The Jesse Fire tragedy represents an indictment of the General Abdulsalam Abubakar's regime as it highlighted the inhumanity and insensitivity that is characteristic of most military regimes.

Nigeria is a country where inhumanity reigns supreme. That is the only country where VICTIMS are portrayed as VILLAINS. For as the world watched in 'HORROR' the fire destroying lives and properties of the entire village, General Abubakar's response was: 'Oh! Forget them, these are petrol thieves therefore, they deserve to die'.

DAWN condemn a government that failed to protect its citizens and demonstrate insensitivity, inhumanity and irresponsibility at the face of such gross tragedy.

The Jesse oil fire tragedy confirmed the fears of the late Ken Saro Wiwa: a tragedy which he and his Ogoni tribespeople campaigned to prevent, yet he was brutally executed together with other fellow activists for this justifiable cause.

For the fact that the General Abubakar's regime failed to investigate the obvious cause of the disaster with a view to preventing such tragedy in the future and exhibiting an attitude of insensitivity highlights an obvious DANGER facing the people of the Niger Delta. A people 'sitting on a Time Bomb'.

It is the responsibility of a government to protect its citizens. The Abubakar's government is failing to protect the citizens of Nigeria as security and safety is being neglected with prevalence of high wave of armed-robbery, hired killings in many places, oil spillage/fire disaster particularly in the Niger Delta area; despite the fact that the greatest part of the wealth of the nation is produced in that area.