

**ADDRESS BY OLOFIN APESIN OLODE, OLOTA OF OTTA, AWORI KINGDOM, HIS MAJESTY, OBA PROF. ADEYEMI ABDUKABIR OBALANLEGE, Ph.D, MCIPR, MPRII, FHEA (Lanlege Ekun II, Arole Iganmode) AT THE PRESS BRIEFING ON ODUN OMO IGANMODE 2022 HELD AT OBA ISIYEMI HALL, ENU OWA, OLOTA'S PALACE, OTTA, OGUN STATE ON 2ND DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2022.**

## **PROTOCOL**

First, let me welcome you to my palace and by extension the whole of Ota, the primordial and fast growing Industrial City of Aworiland. This is also a Cultural melting point and the industrial nerve centre of the Gateway State.

2. I appreciate you all for coming to share in our dreams, aspirations and celebration of another “Odun Omo Iganmode”, which this Press Conference formally flags off. We are grateful to God for giving us the opportunity to set out at dawn to play host to all whether indigenes, friends, visitors or settlers on this momentous occasion which is the 30th in the series of this annual event.

3. In the same light, let me appreciate the entire Olotain-Council, our Coronet Obas, Baales, other Traditional and Honourary Chiefs, Distinguished members of the “Odun Omo Iganmode” Central Planning Committee, ably led for the second time by the Otun Maiyegun, Aare Dele Bankole, and all those that have contributed and still contributing to the successful hosting our “Odun Omo Iganmode”.

The yearly turnout at this annual Festival has been on the increase with our sons, daughters, their families and friends coming home to identify with us. Indeed, it is enjoying fast acceptance as a rallying point for ideas that will shape the future of our ancient kingdom and provide a sustainable future for our children and all friends of Aworiland and Ogun State. Undoubtedly, every “Odun Omo Iganmode”, it has been confirmed to me by independent observers, comes with great improvements on the previous ones.

4. A common strand of this annual event is the framing of a Central Theme to guide our programmes in the town for the coming year. The theme of this year, “Culture, Communal Security and Patriotism”, could not have been more apt especially as we, like most communities in the country, are challenged by what now appears to be intractable challenge of security. It has tasked our government and security forces alike and call to question whether we have not lost our sense of community by the weirdness of its manifestations.

5. I am particularly excited that we have always worked on a central theme that lends credence to our genuine efforts at transforming this ancient kingdom. The support, solidarity and goodwill that we get from our corporate citizens also attest to the fact that we are doing something right in the eyes on these corporate citizens who have been fully absorbed into the Otta ecosystem without discrimination on their places or circumstances of their birth.

6. For me, it is in our collective interest to tackle the scourge of insecurity with everything in our arsenal. We cannot look on while our economic, historical and spiritual antecedents and heritage are pillage by a few of our social misfits called armed robbers, kidnappers, cattle rustlers, area boys, cultists and killer herdsmen take us for granted and assault us. They are not spirits and we must fight them to a standstill. We cannot fold our arms and allow them a free rein. You and I have a responsibility to stop them before they stop us. They have already cast a great slur on our unity and a big doubt on our claim to patriotism.

7. But we have not always been like this. There was a time when security used to be everybody's business, when wealth was not a major determinant of status in society. It was a period when people despised questionable wealth and money rituals were scorned at. But nowadays, people celebrate barefaced thieves, land speculators, assassins, kidnappers etc. As a reporter, I used to be disgusted when people refer to a felon like Chukwudumeme Onwuamadike, popularly known as Evans as Billionaire Kidnapper or those who should use their knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) to turn our State to Silicon cities but chose to dupe people as Yahoo Boys! These are common criminals that we should stand in unison against.

8. As a man of Culture, I think we need to reinvent our past. Culture is a strongly underrated element in security policy and architecture. For some time we dismissed the importance of cultural differences, particularly since we seemed to be moving towards a globalized world where such differences were likely to disappear. Wearing trousers without belt that you call "low-waist" was used to denote criminals in the United States. But these differences have come back with a vengeance. Just like the increasing terrorist attacks, killer herdsmen and kidnapping have demonstrated, we have lost an element of our Culture that foster unity, that brings the patriotism in us. Then, we do not profile criminality based on ethnic origin. Today, we seem to be demonizing the Fulanis for all, whereas some of these criminal elements have accomplices and masterminds among people of our ethnic stocks.

9. Globalization has continued, but clashes have multiplied. All the issues separating cultures are still present and have not really been examined, let alone resolved. We entered a globalized 21st century without having developed a clear conceptual clarity and background about living together on our culturally diverse States, Nations, World, where circumstances have fused us together and where we are moving closer and closer together.

10. It is my take therefore that we properly undertake a dissection of culture demands and situate through a strongly interdisciplinary approach that in a world of rapid, almost inexorable information age we will neglect scientific enquiry or intercultural trainings for solution to our security problems at our own peril. Culture is not static, but is an ongoing process. When we use the term in the plural it should be an indication that culture must be understood on different levels. We must look at the culture of an individual, then of the family into which he or she was born. There is also the culture of a city, a region, and a nation. The focus should be on the basics of human existence and social organization, which allows us to develop a comparative theory of culture from its basic elements, the individual and the community.

11. I will not shy away from the debate that we need a plural policing approach. He who lives in a community knows the place better and he who is born in a town will understand the nooks and crannies better. What's more, we already have Amotekun and others security outfits across the length and breadth of the country. So, let the National Assembly do the needful: develop a coherent picture of cultures based on a bi-modal distinction. Closeness and detachment are the key factors of differentiation. They are based on the fact that cultures may either stress the rights and freedoms of an individual or her/ his integration into a community. This key difference affects approaches to security policy, both on the strategic and operational levels, and this forms the fulcrum of my passionate and patriotic submission as an academic and a community leader.

12. Without digress of the season of festivities, let this framework engage all of us: youth, clubs, societies, teachers in schools, administrators at work, the unemployed, employers of labour and parents that we cannot afford to toy with a need for paradigm shift in managing our cultural diversity in this country. Bring back the best in our culture and grow it to become a way of life for our collective security.

13. I want Odun Omo Iganmode to help to remind us that as Awori people our origin is an essential component for stimulating communal understanding, love and unity and for augmenting steady progress, peace and development of the larger Community. This edition is particularly important because of the theme we have chosen. It fits very well into my vision of a unique Awori City with a cosmopolitan outlook that will be the envy of others.

14. As we settle down to celebrate Odun Omo Iganmode, let me appreciate all my brother Obas, our chiefs, the Baales, our Community Development Associations, the Business Community and all those who have elected to come and either live or play in Ota. Together we shall build a peaceful, save and prosperous World Class City where everybody's right to life and to own property will not be at the whims and caprices of a few powerful elements.

15. While I look forward to welcoming you to all the activities for the 30th Edition of Odun Omo Iganmode, my dear colleagues, please accept the assurances of my highest esteem and Royal considerations anytime you choose to visit us in Ota and Aworiland.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Ijamido A Gbe Wa o