

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF POLICE SERVICE COMMISSION 2010 BIENNIAL RETREAT ON REPOSITIONING THE NIGERIA POLICE TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF POLICING A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY IN THE 21ST CENTURY AND BEYOND

PREAMBLE

The Police Service Commission organised a three day biennial retreat on the theme: ***“Repositioning the Nigeria Police to meet the Challenges of Policing a Democratic Society in the 21st Century and Beyond”*** at Le Meridian Ibom Hotel, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State from 1st -4th November, 2010. The retreat was organised to provide an avenue for the Police Service Commission, the Ministry of Police Affairs, the legislature and the Police hierarchy to learn, understand, reflect and proffer solutions to the challenges of policing in a democratic society.

The retreat was declared open by the Executive Governor of Akwa Ibom State, His Excellency, Obong (Dr.) Godswill Obot Akpabio, ably represented by the Deputy Governor, Engr. Patrick Ekpotu who also delivered the keynote address. The opening ceremony of the retreat was chaired by Mr. Fidelis Oyakhilome (Rtd DIG); and attended by the Honourable Minister of Police Affairs, Alhaji Adamu Maina Waziri, OFR, the Honourable Minister of Interior, Capt Emmanuel Ihenecho, the Chairman, Police Service Commission, Mr. Parry Osayande (Rtd DIG), the Inspector General of Police, Alhaji Hafiz Ringim ably represented by DIG Abubakar Sardauna, Chairman, Senate Committee on Police Affairs ably represented by Senator Tanko Ayuba, Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Police Affairs represented by Hon. Shuaibu Gwanda Gobir, Members and Staff of the Police Service Commission, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Assistant Inspectors General of Police, Commissioners of Police and resource persons including Professor E. O. Alemika, Professor of Criminology, University of Jos, Dr. Otive Igbuzor of the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy & Development, Dr. Mohammed Auwal, Prof. Chidi Odinkalu of the Open Society Justice Initiative (OSJI), Professor Femi Odekunle, Prince (Dr.) Amen E. Oyakhire, AIG (Rtd), OON, NPM, Dr. Ehimika A. Ifidon of the Faculty of Arts, University of Benin and Mr. Oluwafemi M. Onyeobu of First Point Consulting.

Several papers were presented during the retreat including:

1. History and Context of Policing in Nigeria
2. Strategic Oriented Policing
3. Community Policing
4. Improving Police Service Delivery and Public Safety and Security through Enhanced Accountability- Partnership Model for Police Service Commission.
5. Problem Solving Oriented Policing
6. Proper Organisation and Management of the Police
7. Respectful Policing and Law Enforcement in a Democratic State: Nigeria
8. The Use of ICT and Other Scientific aids in Policing

OBSERVATIONS

Following the presentations, debates and discussions, the retreat observes as follows:

1. Peace and Security of life and property are a necessary condition for progress and development of any society.
2. All over the world, the principal agency charged with the responsibility of internal peace and security of nations is the Police.
3. The history of the Police in Nigeria indicates that the various forces were established, organized and maintained by colonial and post colonial governments primarily for order maintenance that engenders repression, a culture of impunity, corruption, incivility, brutality, lack of transparency and accountability.
4. The powers and duties of the Police are very clear and provided for in the Constitution and relevant laws. They include among other things the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property, the due enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged and military duties within or outside Nigeria as may be required of them.
5. During the 30 years of military rulership, the Nigeria Police Force was abandoned and neglected by successive governments. There was acute shortage of office and barracks accommodation, salaries were meager and allowances were not paid. There was no logistic support like transport and communication equipment, and the police welfare was generally poor, and above all, there was abuse of fundamental rights of citizens with impunity.
6. Despite the recent increase in the salary of police officers, the police in Nigeria are the least paid in the West African sub-region.
7. Policing all over the world is undergoing constant and rapid changes especially in terms of type of government and technology. Policing under military rule is different from policing in a civilian and democratic dispensation. Policing in a democratic society must be subjected to the rule of law embodying values respectful of human dignity, rather than the wishes of the leader or party in power.
8. Policing in a democratic society requires a close working relationship with the community (community policing), adopting proactive and preventive methods (strategic oriented policing), dealing with the causes of crime (problem oriented policing), respect of the rights of citizens (respectful policing) and the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and other scientific aids in policing.
9. The challenges facing the Police in Nigeria include poor funding of the police, increasing crime wave, the need for training and re-training, corruption within and outside the Police, community policing, public relations/image of the police, inter-service and agency co-operation, conditions of service and welfare of police officers and the need for a paradigm shift in policing.
10. There are a lot of Police Officers in the Nigeria Police Force who are honourable, patriotic and hardworking.

11. Nigeria Police Officers perform excellently well in international assignments but very poor at home which needs to be studied with a view to improving performance at home.
12. There is corruption in every society and it is widespread in Nigeria. But the corruption in the Nigeria Police Force is unique in many respects. First, while corruption in other agencies is subtle and secretive, corruption in the Nigeria Police Force is openly advertised in road blocks and police stations. Secondly, many agencies including the Nigerian government are actively fighting corruption through various means in terms of laws, mechanisms and agencies. Although there is the X-squad meant to fight corruption in the police, its activities (if any) are not known to the public. Thirdly, in other agencies, failure to engage in corruptible transactions may just mean that you will not have favour or the services required. But with the police, it can come with dire consequences including loss of life as it has been reported several times that drivers and bus conductors have been allegedly killed for failing to pay the “the traditional” twenty naira at road blocks.
13. Courteous, decent and respectful behaviour from the Nigeria Police has the potential of converting the entire public to an auxiliary police service in terms of support to the police.
14. The 21st century is the knowledge century where the advances of ICT are available for full deployment in crime investigation, detection and prosecution.

RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the retreat, the participants resolved as follows:

1. Recruitment into the Nigeria Police Force should be reorganized to ensure that quality people are recruited into the police and that corruption is eliminated in the recruitment process.
2. There should be an attitudinal change in Police administration and law enforcement especially in the way police officers relate with members of the public and the way police authorities react to allegations of Police brutality through denial and/or rebuttal. In addition, there is the need to take action against any officer that acts contrary to force orders and Police regulations.
3. There should be strengthening of Police internal control mechanism and disciplinary procedure as well as effective oversight by the relevant oversight bodies (Police Council, Police Service Commission and the National Assembly).
4. The Police should put in place a comprehensive strategy to fight corruption within the Police force and in the larger society. The strategy should be systematic, comprehensive, consistent, focused, publicized, non-selective and non-partisan. This must be supported with adequate remuneration for Police Officers and provision of adequate logistics for policing work.
5. The Police should improve its image through imbibing the concept of respectful policing, checking corruption and proper management of information and image of the Police.

6. The Police should step up the implementation of community policing and align the adopted model to the culture and tradition of our people.
7. The Police should institute mechanism for measuring its efficiency and effectiveness. The measurement should focus on effectiveness, responsiveness, equity and efficiency and should help the police in problem solving.
8. The Police should reform its structure and management system to ensure that the functions of planning, organizing, deployment, and co-ordination are carried out efficiently and effectively. In particular, police officers should be trained on leadership, supervision, delegation, mentoring, coaching and human resource management.
9. The Police should decentralize its management system to ensure devolution of powers to the zones, states and area commands. This devolution of powers should be backed up with budgetary allocation.
10. The retreat calls on Nigeria Police Officers to ensure that their engagement with the public is characterized with tolerance, civility, good temper and discretion, mildness of behaviour and language, good humour, calmness and propriety.
11. The retreat calls on the Nigerian government to equip the Nigeria Police Force with ICT and other scientific aid to enhance policing. Among other things, the police should be equipped with up to date computers, finger print machines, forensic laboratories, computerized crime centres and camera systems including CCTV. In addition, the laws should be updated to make electronic data admissible in court.
12. The retreat calls on the National Assembly to complete and pass the Police Act to meet the challenges of policing in the 21st century.
13. The retreat calls on all relevant agencies (Nigeria Police Force, Police Service Commission and Ministry of Police Affairs) to judiciously implement Government White papers on Danmadami (2006) and M.D. Yusuf (2008) reports on Police Reforms.

The Retreat appreciates the Ministry of Police Affairs and the people and Government of Akwa Ibom State for their hospitality and support in hosting the retreat.

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Chairman, Police Service Commission