

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE
CHAIRMAN, POLICE SERVICE COMMISSION, SIR
(DR) MIKE MBAMA OKIRO CFR, NPM, mni
INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF POLICE (RTD) AT THE
POLICE SERVICE COMMISSION 2014 BIENNIAL
RETREAT ON 28TH JANUARY, 2014 AT ROYAL
CHOICE INN MAKURDI, BENUE STATE**

**TRANSFORMATION OF THE NIGERIA POLICE
THROUGH EFFECTIVE REFORM**

PROTOCOL:

It is with profound honour I wish to welcome you all to this retreat of the Police Service Commission holding here at the Royal Choice Inn, G.R.A. in Makurdi, under the theme: **"Sustaining Nigeria Police Reforms"**, and a privilege to address this august gathering on the sub-theme: **"transformation of the Nigeria Police through effective reform"**.

The Nigeria Police force is no stranger to reforms. Over the years, successive civilian administrations have expressed deep concern over the declining fortunes of the Force and made spirited efforts towards reversing this trend. These had culminated in the inauguration of several Police Reform Committees, all of which had made far reaching recommendations in their respective reports

to the Federal Government on the way forward. Most of these recommendations were approved through appropriate Government "White Paper(s)", but ironically the nation is yet to witness a significant turnaround in the service delivery of the Police. Against this historical background, the **transformation** of the Nigeria Police through effective reforms becomes imperative.

For the proposed transformation to be effective, it will involve the cooperation of other government agencies and stakeholders to partner with the Commission in developing the necessary tools and put in place relevant structures required to strengthen its **mandate** as well as advance its **vision of efficient service delivery of the Police.**

A retreat is a type of group getaway in which members of an organization take out time to form bonds with one another, contemplate their purpose and motives and work on one or more specific goals. Contrary to popular opinion, it is not a jamboree. It is a condition that retreats must be held at some place peaceful and away from one's usual setting, which is why our choice of Benue State is quite apt. **The major benefit of a retreat is that it allows staff to step back and re-examine goals, objectives and activities in a new light. It equally helps organizations like ours, the Police Service**

Commission, to re-energize and refocus especially when confronted with strategic planning.

There could not have been a better time for this retreat than now that a new administration has just come on board at the Commission. This retreat, therefore, has been organized to provide a platform for the Legislature, the Ministry of Police Affairs, the Commission, the Police top hierarchy, relevant stakeholders and indeed every participant here present **to interact, learn, understand, reflect and proffer solutions to the challenges of policing a democratic society as ours.** It therefore should provide a veritable opportunity for the appraisal of the Commission's vision, mission and mandate as well as an avenue to cross-fertilize ideas with the aim of bringing about the change we desire in the Nigeria Police Force.

OVERSIGHT ROLE OF THE COMMISSION:

The Nigeria Police Force exist as the primary organ of Government responsible for maintenance of law and order, detection of crime and enforcement of laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as well as performance of quasi-military duties whenever it is required to do so. In securing these responsibilities, the Police exercise enormous powers which, as it were, need to be checked and balanced. This is not intended to eliminate or undermine these powers, but rather to control it from becoming an instrument of abuse, exploitation and

repression, and to ensure that power is exercised in a transparent manner, and in accordance with the law.

The overriding reason for oversight is to subordinate the Police to civilian authorities, in keeping with democratic tenets. The necessity to oversee the affairs of the Nigeria Police is underscored by the desire for fairness, objectivity and accountability. It is to this backdrop the Police Service Commission owes its existence.

The Police Service Commission is vested with enormous responsibilities, translated as functions, which are clearly spelt out in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Section 153 (1)(m)) - as one of the Federal Executive Bodies. The Constitution in Part one of the third schedule, paragraph 29 sub-paragraph a-b also provides for these functions, which are more elaborately set out in S.6 (1) (a-g) of the Police Service Commission Act, 2001 as:

- a. Appointing and promoting all officers of the NPF (other than the Inspector-General of Police, IGP).
- b. Dismissing and exercising disciplinary control over the same category of persons
- c. Formulating policies and guidelines for the appointment, promotion, discipline and dismissal of officers of the NPF other than the Inspector - General of Police.

- d. Identifying factors inhibiting and undermining discipline in the NPF
- e. Formulating and implementing policies aimed at **efficiency** and discipline within the NPF
- f. Performing such other functions as, in the opinion of the commission are required to ensure optimal efficiency in the NPF; and
- g. Carrying out such other functions as the President may from time to time direct

The Commission has since inception kept faith with these functions in spite of numerous challenges. While the first three functions are routine, it is the objective of the Commission under my watch to revive the last four functions as well. This is the major impulse for this retreat.

REFORM OF THE NIGERIA POLICE:

Being an integral part of the public sector, the Nigeria Police has a general and ultimate responsibility for rendering essential services affecting the lives of citizens and other nationals within the country. Hence, it is expected of it to provide services which meet high ethical and professional standards, in a transparent manner, in line with International Best Practices. In contrast however, the decline in its general state of affairs could be traced to ineffective institutional governance, poorly developed human capital, lack of motivation and systemic corruption, and obstacles external to the organization.

The cumulative effect of the above deficiencies has been an institution with low morale, incapable of carrying out its statutory functions effectively.

Since Nigeria's return to civil rule in 1999, various committees have been set up to inquire into, and make recommendations on how the Nigeria Police can function effectively. These efforts are evidenced in the setting up, at different times, of committees on the reform of the Nigeria Police Force, such as;

- a. The Judicial Commission of enquiry into the Apo six(6) killings in 2005;
- b. Muhammed Dan Madami (DIG Rtd) led Presidential Committee on the Reform of Nigeria Police in 2006;
- c. Mohammed D. Yusuf (IGP Rtd) led Presidential Committee on the Reform of Nigeria Police in 2008; and,
- d. Parry Osayande (DIG Rtd) led Presidential Committee on Police Reforms in 2012.

In their separate recommendations to the government, the above committees echoed the need for a restructuring of the Force, training and retraining of personnel, review of training curricula, upgrading of Police Training institutions, increased funding through the three tiers of Government, and enhancement of welfare of officers and men. Most of these recommendations were accepted through respective government white paper(s), with the

exception of the Parry Osayande led committee which "white paper" is being expected soon, yet the state of the Nigeria police leaves much to be desired.

The much talked about reforms of the Nigeria Police are not targeted, efforts are not coordinated and concentrated, and synergy between the supervising organisations towards the actualisation of the reform is apparently lacking.

For reforms to be effective, they must bring about a change or improvement in the *status quo* by correcting perceived faults, removing inconsistencies and abuses, and imposing modern methods or values by causing a result, especially the desired or intended result. **The aforementioned accepted recommendations have not been translated into action by way of an appropriate government policy on the transformation of Nigeria Police, which will lead to the design of a realistic strategic plan setting out clearly defined strategies and work plans to enable effective implementation of objectives, as well as timelines for the achievement of specific and targeted goals. Above all, there must be in place a mechanism for feedback, monitoring and evaluation.** All these require close collaboration among the supervising institutions which include the Police Service Commission, Ministry of Police Affairs and the Committee on Police Affairs and the National Assembly

with inputs from the target organisation – Nigeria Police Force.

In order to ensure commitment of the Federal Government to genuine Police reform, there is a crying need for a Police Reform Policy which will spell out the implementation framework of accepted recommendations by government as well as the specific roles of supervisory institutions.

IMPERATIVE FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE FORCE:

In view of the crying need for a change, transformation becomes imperative. Transformation is a fundamental shift in the deep orientation of a person, an organization, or a society, such that the world is seen in new ways and new actions and results become possible that were impossible prior to the transformation (UNDP-LDP, Cited Asobie, 2012).

For purposes of clarity, it is thus needful to reiterate here that transformation within this context is predicated on an evolutionary process that recognizes the need for a more integrated approach to implement change. This will require a change of form, organizational culture and doctrine. It will involve identifying the challenges facing the Force, designing **strategies** for change, detailed **implementation plan** and finally the **assessment of**

results of the turnaround plan at the end of the prescribed timeframe.

FOCUS OF THE RETREAT:

In rousing ourselves to make this effort, we do not have to start quite from the beginning, but we must set off with renewed zeal and determination to end the pattern of inefficiency in the Force. While the Government white paper on the most recent presidential committee on Police reforms is being awaited, I wish to urge all discussants and participants to use the approved recommendations of the MD Yusuf committee as a guide on this very important task before us.

As you all will observe shortly, the recommendations in the said document are grouped according to the appropriate terms of reference to which they relate as indicated hereunder;

1: Re-organisation, repositioning and restructuring of the Nigeria Police Force (recommendations 1 – 7)

2: Definitive, measurable and practical measures for the enhancement of effective police service delivery including areas of possible assistance from development partners (recommendations 8 – 89).

3: To examine and recommend measures needed for complete transformation of the NPF into an effective and proficient agency or the effective maintenance of law and order in the country (recommendations 90 – 99).

4: To make any other recommendations deemed necessary by the committee (recommendations 100 – 126).

It is my view that these accepted recommendations are studied and analysed into a working document, with detailed implementation plan which allows for assessment of results of the turnaround plan after the prescribed time frame.

Worthy of consideration also is the need for a **national policy** on policing which will ensure continuity from one Police administration to the other. The practicability of this approach and the modalities required could equally be looked into.

Effective policing requires a platform for inter-agency cooperation, especially in the area of information sharing. A practicable and sustainable approach by way of national policies on Criminal Intelligence sharing and inter-agency cooperation also needs to be considered.

In carrying out this momentous task, it is hoped that the commission and the Nigeria Police Force will find a common ground that enables each to effectively and efficiently discharge its responsibilities, than is currently the case.

I wish to state that the outcome of this retreat will form the bases for the **blueprint** of this present administration at the Police Service Commission which I promised Nigerians during the press conference on the occasion of my first 100 days in office.

We shall continue to reach out to all stakeholders and indeed all Nigerians, and obtain their inputs in formulating meaningful **policies** that will enable the Commission bequeath to Nigerians a Police Force of their dreams. **I am certain the time is right to develop a policing concept that will evolve from our unique social, cultural and political system.**

It is my earnest belief that with the active support of all relevant stakeholders, and all Nigerians, the Nigeria Police will do much better in both its service delivery and in the conduct of its personnel. An efficient and effective Nigeria Police will serve as a catalyst for economic growth, stability and sustainable development in the country. This is the rationale behind Mr. President's resolve to **transform** the Nigeria Police Force.

On this note, I wish us all very successful deliberations.

I thank you for your attention.