

YUSUFU BALA USMAN INSTITUTE

CEDDERT

CENTRE FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH AND TRAINING

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PRESS RELEASE

The 2nd Dr Yusufu Bala Usman Memorial Lecture is scheduled for Saturday 31st May, 2008 at 10am at the Assembly, Hall Main Campus, Ahmadu Bello University, where he taught history from 1972 until he passed away, 32 years later, on 24th September 2005.

The lecture will be immediately followed by the foundation laying ceremony for the Yusufu Bala Usman Institute which is being established to promote and advance scientific research and training for the purpose of providing immediate and long-term solutions to the problems of the democratic, community, and national, development of the people of Nigeria, the rest of Africa and the African Diaspora

The topic for this year's lecture is **Corruption and National Development** and will be delivered by two renowned scholars – Professor **Samuel Aluko** and **Shiekh Abubakar El Miskin**.

- **Special Guest of Honour:** Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar Adua (GCFR), President and Commander in Chief, Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- **Chief Host:** Arc Mohammed Namadi Sambo, the Executive Governor, Kaduna State.
- **Chairman of the occasion:** Alhaji M.D Yusufu

A selection of Dr Yusufu Bala's writings on corruption will also be released to mark the occasion. Widely acknowledged for his fearless and consistent engagement in major public discourses of his time and the struggles for the promotion of justice and the freedom and development of Nigeria and the African continent, Dr Yusufu Bala Usman, identified corruption as one of the major obstacles to development in Nigeria. Thus, he maintained that,

“Corruption is one of the most important problems which the people of Nigeria have to tackle and overcome, if they are to make any significant and sustainable progress in the 21st century.”

According to Dr Usman,

... Corruption means much more than public officers taking bribes and gratification, committing fraud and stealing funds and assets entrusted to their care. Corruption...means the deliberate violations, for gainful ends, of standards of conduct legally, professionally, or, even ethically established, in private and public affairs.

These gains may be in cash, or, kind, or, it may even be psychological, or, political, but, they are made from the violation of the integrity of an entity and involves the subversion of its quality and capacity.

During his life time, he consistently maintained that no economic growth or political stability is possible unless the cancer of corruption is tackled and overcome. Among Dr Usman's many prescriptions for achieving this is that holding public office should not be an avenue for private accumulation of wealth. While acknowledging that legislation and its effective implementation is a useful starting point, for the simple reason that it at least de-legitimises corrupt practices, he was unequivocal in affirming that it is not enough. His fundamental prescription for dealing with corruption was that the

people of Nigeria, and the political activist and leaders, at all levels, have to get down to the arduous task of promoting and defending public interest, building public organs, reviving and reconstructing the public service, and upholding the integrity of other public institutions. Political parties, trade unions and professional and other civil associations are crucial here. The fight against corruption has to involve, at its core, the building up of these organisations nationwide and combating all the divisive, sectional politics of ethnicity and religious and regional rivalries and animosities.

The on-going disclosures about the massive corrupt practices of public office holders, and their negative effects on otherwise laudable policies meant to move Nigeria forward, show how endemic corruption still is in our polity. Thus the search for solution for this cankerworm is very critical for the future of Nigeria. It is for this reason that the Centre for Democratic Development Research and Training, (CEDDERT), decided to publish some of the key articles by Dr. Yusufu Bala Usman on corruption.

The publication is made up of six articles written by Dr. Yusufu Bala Usman, between 1976 and 2001. These articles reflect the profoundly insightful nature of his understanding of the nature and impact of corruption on Nigerian society. His views on corruption and his prescriptions remain undoubtedly relevant today as when he first expressed them. CEDDERT is therefore offering them as a contribution to Nigeria's search for a way out of the debilitating effects of corruption.

Abubakar Siddique Mohammed
Director