



STATEMENT OF THE NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON AT
THE RECEPTION HELD ON THE OCCASION OF THE NIGERIAN
NATIONAL DAY AT CORAL BEACH HOTEL BEIRUT,
ON 1ST OCTOBER 2007

The Distinguished Representative of President Emile Lahoud, His Excellency, Ambassador Fawzi Salloukh, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants;

The Distinguished Representative of Speaker Nabih Berri, Honourable Anwar Khalil, Member of Lebanese Parliament

The Distinguished Representative of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, Dr. Omar Nator, Director-General, Ministry of Justice.

Distinguished Colleagues in the Diplomatic Corps,

Honourable Members of the Lebanese-Nigerian Community

Respected Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to this celebration of the Forty-Seventh Anniversary of Nigeria's independence. Your presence at this point in time is a clear demonstration of the abundant goodwill, which you have in stock for our country Nigeria. I would wish to seize this opportunity to thank you all for your cooperation and friendship over the years. In the first place, I should express our appreciation to the Government and people of Lebanon for being worthy hosts to the entire Nigerian community in Lebanon and for maintaining, deepening and consolidating the friendly relations which exist between Lebanon and Nigeria.

The celebration of the Nigerian National Day this year is coming at a crucial moment in the history of Nigeria as a nation. The reintroduction of democracy in the past nine years, following three

decades of military rule, has unlocked the potentials of our people to create a politically stable, economically prosperous and socially harmonious country. The seven point agenda of the administration of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua, which underscore on-going reforms in the area of agriculture, human and infrastructure development, land tenure and security, are aimed at transforming Nigeria into one of the twenty largest economies in the world by year 2020.

On the regional plane, Nigeria continues to contribute to the socio-economic agenda of Africa through the African Union, the successor organization of the OAU, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The various regional links are also being consolidated to ensure that peace and security reign supreme on the continent; notable among these is the creation of the Co-prosperity Alliance Zone (COPAZ), which focuses on joint socio-economic projects in the West African sub-region.

On the global scene, Nigeria's contributions to the peace-keeping role of the United Nations are evident in its active and numerous participation in peace missions in Africa and beyond, manifesting thereby its unalloyed support for the maintenance of peace and security in the world.

On the bilateral plane, Nigeria and Lebanon have continued to nurture their people-to-people approach to the development of bilateral relations. The citizens of the two countries have worked tirelessly to ensure that relations between Beirut and Abuja are consolidated in all their facets, including socio-cultural and economic fields. They on their own have continued to dictate the pace of the relations between their two countries and this has made these relations enduring, mutually rewarding and exemplary.

وفى هذه المناسبة، أود أن أسجل امتناني وشكري الجليلين لكل ما قام به اخواننا فى المجتمع النيجيرى اللبنانى فى سبيل انجاح مهمتنا حياى تقوية العلاقات التاريخية بل العريقة القائمة بين لبنان ونيجيريا. كما اغتئم هذه الفرصة لأشكر الذين ساهموا فى دفع التجربة الحديثة التى تتمثل فى انشاء جمعية الصداقة اللبنانية النيجيرية من أجل ايجاد محفل وآلية مناسبة لاحياء التراث الثقافى والاجتماعى

الحافل للشعبين اللبناني والنيجيرى الشقيقين .

أنا سوف نعمل سويا لجعل من علاقاتنا موزج العلاقات
ما بين الشعوب اكثر من كونها بين الحكومات ذلك لأن
العلاقات التى تقوم بين الشعوب هى التى تدوم .

وفى الختام وبينما أهنيء أخواننا بمناسبة العيد
الوطنى لنيجيريا أتمنى لشقيق لبنان السلام
والاستقرار الدائمين كما أتمنى لقادة البلاد هداية الله
وتوفيقه فى مساعيهم الجليلة لاستعادة الأمن والاطمئنان
فى الدولة وكذلك أسأل العلى القدير مزيد من الرخاء
ورفاهية لشعب لبنان الشقيق .

فلتحى العلاقات اللبنانية النيجيرية وكل عام
وأنتم بخير .