



CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion)

THE MOST REV'D NICHOLAS D. OKOH, MA, Fss, Mss, LLD, DD
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN CHURCH) HELD AT ST ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL CHURCH, WARRI, DELTA STATE, FROM MONDAY, 4TH - FRIDAY, 8TH FEBRUARY, 2019.

PREAMBLE

The Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) held at St. Andrew's Cathedral Church, Warri, Delta State, in the Diocese of Warri, Province of Bendel, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and presided over by the Most Rev'd Dr. Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of the Church of Nigeria. In attendance were his wife, Mrs. Nkasiobi Okoh, the President of the Women's Organizations; the Dean of the Church of Nigeria, The Most Rev'd Dr. Ali Buba Lamido, 135 Bishops, 120 Clergymen, 89 members of the House of Laity and delegates of the Mothers' Union. It welcomed many guests including the Executive Governor of Delta State and his wife, His Excellency, Senator Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa and Dame Edith Okowa, His Excellency, Mr. Peter Obi, former Governor of Anambra State, Chief Great Ogboru, Senator Ovie Omoagege, the representative of the Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Dr. Muhammed Lecky, and traditional rulers from the region.

THEME

The theme of the meeting was *The Lord is My Shepherd*, taken from Psalm 23, a very popular Psalm. The Psalmist encourages all to see the Lord God as the faithful Shepherd who provides, protects and delivers His flock even from the valley of the shadow of death. Mindful of God's unfailing loving kindness demonstrated in Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, who does not slumber or sleep, but cares for His own to the point of giving His life for all; the Standing Committee, therefore, calls on all to trust in God in spite of the tension and palpable fear that have permeated the whole land. The Standing Committee calls on political and religious leaders to be faithful in the discharge of their responsibilities as shepherds, to protect and care for those Committed to their charge.

INSECURITY

The Standing Committee notes with utmost concern the lingering state of insecurity in our country, unprovoked attacks, kidnappings by armed bandits. It notes with curious relief the present state of near-absence of the herdsmen menace, praying that this will be a permanent and genuine end to such troubles, even after the elections. It further reminds the Federal Government of the agony that the continued captivity of Leah Sharibu has inflicted on her, her immediate family and the wider society, and urges

the Government not to relent in its efforts to rescue her, the remaining Chibok girls and others in similar captivity of the Boko Haram Islamic sect unhurt. In a similar development, the Bishop of Sokoto, The Rt. Rev'd Augustine A. Omole, reported that his Priest, Rev'd Anthony Idris Jatau, and his family were kidnapped while on their way to a new station on posting; later he reported that the Priest had been killed by his abductors while his family still remains in their custody, demanding a ransom of Ten Million Naira only (N 10,000,000:00).

MINIMUM WAGE

The Standing Committee commends the Federal Government for the increment in Workers' Minimum Wage, particularly for the House of Representatives' passage of the N30,000 minimum wage Bill. It calls on the concerned parties to quickly settle issues relating to this. Above all, it calls on the Federal Government to take pragmatic steps to revive the economy to increase stability and fund generation, as a permanent and more realistic solution in achieving better standard of living for all.

ASUU STRIKE

The Standing Committee notes with dismay the lingering crisis in our tertiary education sector that results in incessant industrial actions by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) with its attendant negative implications on our teeming-youth. There is urgent need for all concerned, especially the Federal Government, to find a lasting solution to this menace, so that our already struggling education system will not crumble. It appeals to the Government to deal with this issue, especially by making appropriate provision in the budget in line with international convention.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The Church appreciates the constitutional provision for freedom of religion and association. It strongly appeals that the multi-religious nature of the country be preserved, and that no subtle attempt or effort is allowed to circumvent it. Rather, religious freedom should be guaranteed at all levels.

2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS

As the General Elections take place, the Church commits itself to continued prayers for peaceful and violence-free elections at all levels. It strongly urges politicians not to compromise the integrity of the elections through hate speeches or acts, or by offering any form of inducement towards vote-buying. It calls on all eligible voters to be guided by clear and good conscience and not involve in vote-selling or any act of political thuggery that could spell doom for the country. It calls on INEC to maintain the position of an unbiased umpire and the Security agents are also called upon to maintain neutrality in the discharge of their constitutional duties.

JUDICIARY

The Church expresses great worry about the current situation that is confronting the Judiciary. While it frowns at any form of corruption at all levels, it calls on the Federal Government and all concerned to follow the rule of law in dealing with matters

affecting the judiciary and any arm of Government. It further calls on the Federal Government not to be selective in obeying court orders so that the sanctity of our judiciary can be preserved

FELICITATION

The Standing Committee gives thanks to God on behalf of the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, for averting the disaster of a potentially fatal air crash, and prays for God's protection for all our leaders.

ACNA and CANA

The Church of Nigeria remains committed to the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) and its mission through the Convocation of Anglican Churches in North America (CANA). The role of the Church of Nigeria in advancing the ministry of the gospel and in upholding orthodoxy in both teaching and practice in the Anglican Communion remains a matter of utmost importance. It pledges, therefore, its continued prayers and support to CANA and ACNA in this joint mission.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) expresses its confidence in the Lord God Almighty as the Shepherd who will provide, protect and deliver Nigeria from every form of evil, and therefore calls on all not to fear; for *The Lord is our Shepherd we shall not want... Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we shall fear no evil because the Lord is with us.*



Venerable Dr. Gershinen Paul Dajur,
General Secretary, Church of Nigeria



The Most Rev'd Dr. Ali Buba Lamido,
Dean, Church of Nigeria



The Most Rev'd Dr. Nicholas D. Okoh,
*Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria &
Chairman, GAFCON Primates' Counsel*