

December 2, 1994

The President
Commander In Chief of the Armed Forces
Federal Republic of Nigeria
Through:
Honourable Minister of Education
Federal Ministry of Education
Ikoyi - Lagos

Your Excellency,

A LETTER OF APPRECIATION

The education of nomadic groups in Nigeria is my dream come true. It all started in 1974 when the Federal Government indicated its intention to start universal primary education programme for Nigerian children. Government's declaration coincided with the period I was undergoing a Masters Degree in ABU and teaching at the Advance Teachers College, ABU, Zaria. In my reaction to government's UPE declaration, I indicated in an article published in the New Nigeria that such a programme would be universal if the children of nomadic groups were included in the scheme. In support of my suggestion, Professor Ogunsola, the Director of Institute of Education, ABU, in a convocation address in the same year called on Federal Government to ensure that adequate plans were made to include the children of nomads in the UPE scheme.

To actualise my dream, I developed a research proposal to ascertain the attitude of the Nomadic Fulani towards Formal Education in 1975. That research proposal received very little financial support from the Institute of Education, ABU, Zaria.

When I joined the staff of the University of Jos in 1976, the same research proposal was presented to the Senate Research Grant Committee and it received adequate funding. On the successful completion of that research, which indicated that the attitude

of the nomadic Fulani toward education was favourable. Other researches that followed from 1977 to 1980 were:

1. The Constraints preventing Nomads from Benefiting from Formal Education.
2. Strategies for Developing Education for Nomads.

The many publications that emanated from these researches attracted National and International attentions. From 1984 - 1988 two important studies were funded by UNESCO/UNDP and Federal Ministry of Education:

1. The Education of Nomadic Families in Plateau, Bauchi and Gongola States. A UNESCO/UNDP Research Project.
2. Statistical Survey of Nomads in Ten Northern States - A Federal Ministry of Education Research Project.

I had the singular opportunity of leading these inter-disciplinary research projects.

Thus by 1988 when the Nomadic Education was coming on stream, these researches had provided adequate data to back it up. In fact, the data helped in convening governments and individual on the need to provide education for the nomads. The data also helped in the development of appropriate legal documents - the Blue Print on Nomadic Education (1988) and Decree No 41 of 1989 - which created the National Commission for Nomadic Education

In April 1990, I was appointed the Executive Secretary to implement the ideas and theories I had developed for the education of Nomads of Nigeria. I must put it on record that I considered that appointment an honour and privilege. To justify the confidence reposed on me, permit me, your Excellency, to briefly point out some of the achievements from April 1990 - December 1994.

1. An administrative Structure was established to aid operation of the Commission in its achievement of set objectives.
2. School Structures increased from 206 in 1990 to 794 schools in 1994.

In order to reach many nomads with education and ensure a continuity in teaching and learning, mobile collapsible school structure were experimented upon at Dukoshi, Miniati and Daban Giwa in Kukawa Local Government Area in Borno State for a year (1991) . By 1994 sixty-six mobile schools are in use in the twenty-two of the 25 states participating in nomadic education.

3. School enrolment rose from 26,130 in 206 schools in 1990 to 61,862 in 794 schools in 1994.
4. Teaching Staff increased from 880 in 1990 to 2,787 in 1994.
5. Curriculum were adapted and developed to reflect the lifestyle of nomads in eight subject areas - Fulfulde, English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Health, Craft and Islamic Religion.
6. Textbooks were developed in Fulfulde, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.
7. Teachers and Supervisors were given training on the use of the adapted/developed curricula.
8. Training was given to 138 nomadic children at Vom National Veterinary Institute on Animal Husbandry techniques.
9. Animal Husbandry Unit was opened in the Commission and revolving drug scheme was started by the Unit to assist nomads in the field.
10. In service Training was provided for 7 nomadic men and women who are serving in the Commission. Six others are yet to complete their decree courses of training in the Universities.
11. A blue print was produced for the development of distance education programme.
12. Funds were provided to the Nomadic Education Centres located at University of Jos, Maiduguri and Sokoto to perform their roles.

13. Adult Education Programme was developed for nomads by the Commission in collaboration with Mass Literacy Commission and FG/EEC Middle Belt Programme.
14. The Commission continued to involve the nomads in the educational programmes through constant meetings.

These theoretical and practical activities were achieved over these twenty years (1974 - 1994) through determination dedication and sacrifice.

Permit me, your Excellency, to thank the Federal Military Government for giving me the opportunity in making the sacrifice for the improvement of the quality of life of Nigerian nomads through education.

Yours faithfully,

PROFESSOR CHIMAH EZEOMAH
Executive Secretary