

Roundtable on Canada & Nigeria

Founders College, York University

September 8, 1997

Executive Summary

The Ad Hoc Committee on Nigeria organized the Roundtable, with the support of the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development. There were 30 participants. (See below for list of participants). Ayo Obe, Aaron Gana and Femi Falana were invited as Nigerian resource persons under the CIDA-sponsored Nigerian Visitors Program. Unfortunately Femi Falana could not attend due to security reasons; however, he sent his remarks which were distributed. The workshop was chaired by Kathleen Keating, Commonwealth Lawyers Association.

The purpose of the meeting was to review Canadian policy towards Nigeria and suggest policy options for both the immediate and long term. The meeting was timed to inform Canadian policy options in the upcoming Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group meeting [September 12th] and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting [October 24th - 27th]. Among others, the following recommendations were made: support for human rights and pro-democracy movements in Nigeria and those outside, support for Radio Kudirat as part of larger communication strategy in Nigeria, continuation and expansion of the Democratic Development Fund, monitoring of Abacha's transition program, support for in-Canada education and advocacy work, targeted sanctions on oil equipment and the freezing of the accounts of the military junta and their families and collaborators.

The Agenda follows:

OPENING Opening Remarks: John van Mossel, CUSO, Ad Hoc Committee on Nigeria
Welcome: Prof. Patricia Stamp, Master, Founders College, York University
Objectives of the Roundtable: Kathleen Keating, Chair

SESSION ONE

Update on Canadian Foreign Policy: Dan George, Joe Stern, DEFAIT

SESSION TWO

Update on Current Situation and Assessment of the Transition Program: Ayo Obe, CLO

SESSION THREE

Support for Democratic Movements at the International Level: Usman Akano, COHDEN

Support for Democratic Movements at the National Level: Ayo Obe
Other International Linkages: The Hon. Flora McDonald, pAC

SESSION FOUR

How to Assess and Strengthen Democracy in Nigeria: Aaron Gana, Centre for Democratic Governance, Ayo Obe, Paul Puritt, CLC, Kenna Owoh, ICA

SESSION FIVE

New Options and Ideas, including the Role of Canadian Civil Society: Evan Potter, Carleton University, Tim Shaw, Dalhousie, Diana Barikor-Wiwa, MOSOP

CLOSING Summary: Kathleen Keating

Thanks: Kole Shettima, University of Toronto

We were joined at lunch by Dr. Lorna Marsden, President, York University