

Courtesy Call To The Presidency

In a bid to mobilize the whole country and create more awareness on IYV2001, the National Committee had a major breakthrough on 31 July 2001 with a courtesy call to the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of The Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Mathew Okekiola Aremu Olusegun Obasanjo.

The immediate objective was to request the president to act as the Special Guest of Honour and Father of the Day during the forth coming National Launching of IYV 2001, billed for Abuja.

The Delegation to the Presidency was led by the Chairman, IYV2001 National Committee, Professor Adabayo Adedeji. There were twelve other Members of the Launching Sub-committee among whom were Her Excellency, Mrs. Oluremi Tinubu, Chairperson, Launching Committee, Joe Oji, IYV2001 Focal Point and Representatives of Nasarawa and Plateau states.



Members of the Delegation with the President



Professor Adedeji decorating the President



Her Excellency, Mrs. Tinubu doing same

In his address, Professor Adedeji informed the President that the major objectives of the courtesy call were to:

- i) Brief the President about IYV2001 activities in Nigeria.
- ii) Appeal to the President to personally attend the forth coming National Launching of IYV2001.
- iii) Seek Federal Government assistance on all three tiers of government.

Professor Adedeji continued his address by giving a detailed account of the role of volunteers in National development in the past. He regretted that the spirit has suffered severe set backs in recent times. IYV2001, he affirmed is an attempt to revive the spirit. He informed the President and his Assistants that the West African Consultative Conference that held from September 26-28 in Lagos brought many stakeholders in the Sub-Region together. Eventually, the Nigerian National Committee embarked on the creation of IYV2001 Chapters at state level. Fifteen (15) are currently in existence with eleven (11) more in the pipeline.

He rounded up his address by appealing to the President to personally grace the National Launching of IYV2001, as this will further consolidate the profile of IYV2001 in Nigeria. This will also encourage other stakeholders such as the LGAs, the Donor Community, the Private sector etc to assist in achieving the objectives of IYV2001 in Nigeria and also in the Region.

In his response, President Obasanjo who all through listened with rapt attention and took notes informed the Delegation that he considers himself a volunteer par excellence, having been involved in UN assignments. While agreeing that lots have been achieved in the past through voluntary efforts, he affirmed that “the greatest honour that any person could bestow on him/herself is rendering service to fellow human beings”.

And then the big one; “I will promote volunteerism any day” said the President to a thunderous applause from the Delegation.

The President however said that due to pressing official matters he would not be able to personally attend the forth-coming National Launching billed for 11th September 2001. HOWEVER, he suggested that the date be changed to enable him personally support IYV2001. This suggestion was readily accepted by the Delegation. A new date will be arranged with the help of the Chief of Staff of The President.

The high point of the courtesy call was the decoration of President Olusegun Obasanjo by Professor Adedeji. He was decorated as the Nations Number 1 Volunteer. He was also given a Briefing note on IYV2001 programme of Activities 2001-2003 for Nigeria.

Professor Adedeji addressed State House Correspondents on the outcome of the successful courtesy call. This was followed by a press conference during which the NUNV, Joe Oji, the UNVPO, Peter Mugane and Her Excellency, Mrs. Tinubu joined Professor Adedeji in providing answers and clarifications on the objectives and vision of IYV2001 It was indeed IYV2001’s day.