

**AN ADDRESS BY DR AHMED MODIBBO MOHAMMED,
THE DIRECTOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE
NATIONAL TEACHERS' INSTITUTE KADUNA, AT THE
WORKSHOP ON INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES OF
TEACHING THE CORE SUBJECTS, ORGANISED FOR
PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SOKOTO STATE;
AND HELD AT THE BAFARAWA INSTITUTE SOKOTO;
10TH JULY 2006.**

**His Excellency, the Deputy Governor of Sokoto State,
The Secretary to the Sokoto State Government,
The Hon. Commissioner of Education and members of the
Executive Council,
The Executive Chairman of the State Universal Basic Education
Board,
Distinguished Guests,
Members of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**I wish to first of all express our profound thanks and gratitude to the
Almighty Allah for making it possible for all of us to be here to witness
the opening ceremony of the workshop on Innovative techniques of
teaching the core subjects, organized for primary school teachers. The
workshop is one of several workshops aimed at enhancing the skills of
primary school teachers in the state.**

**This is an important development because it indicates that the re-
training of teachers is now recognized as an important dimension of**

teacher quality and classroom performance. Indeed there is growing research evidence that suggests that a key element in teacher effectiveness and students' learning outcomes is the extent to which teachers are given the opportunity to update their knowledge of subject matter and improve their teaching skills. This workshop is therefore a welcome development and it is hoped that it will be a regular feature of our educational system.

Today's workshop is on the teaching of the core subjects in the primary school curriculum i.e. English Language, Mathematics, Primary Science and Social Studies. The objectives of the workshop are to:

- 1 enhance the participants' knowledge of the content of the four core subjects;**
- 2 significantly enhance their professional skills so as to engender greater learning achievement among their pupils;**
- 3 provide a forum for the sharing of ideas and experiences on how to teach the four core subjects effectively; and**
- 4 provide an opportunity for the continuing professional development of teachers.**

Its delivery methods will include lectures, discussions, group work and problem-solving and it is hoped that participants will acquire some

relevant knowledge and skills that will enable them improve their professional practice. I most sincerely wish to urge the participants to devote their time and energy to this workshop and see it as a rare opportunity for self-improvement and professional development.

The Continuing professional development of teachers ought to be an issue of central concern to all those who care about the quality of tuition in our primary schools. Research on teacher education has consistently stressed the need to regularly provide opportunities to teachers to improve their knowledge of the subject matter they teach and the teaching skills they learned in the pre-service courses they attended.

Unfortunately not much importance is attached to continuing professional development of teachers in Nigeria. For most teachers, training ends as soon as they graduated and very little opportunity exists for updating their knowledge and skills by attending seminars, conferences and workshops that will enhance their knowledge and skills and ultimately their classroom practice.

It is in recognition of the importance of continuing professional development of teachers and its impact on the quality of teaching and learning that the Federal government through the Universal Basic

Education Commission, allocates 15% of its UBE grants to state governments for the re-training of teachers. I wish to congratulate the Universal Basic Education Commission and indeed the Obasanjo administration for this bold initiative. This attempt by the federal government to boost teacher quality through re-training of teachers is a challenge to other levels of government to not only be partners in this noble initiative but also to sustain and institutionalize it by making adequate budgetary allocation every year for the regular re-training of teachers. If they do so, teachers will be more adequately prepared for the current and future challenges and realities of our classrooms in the age of increasing globalization. In this regard, I wish to suggest that at least 10% of the annual budgetary allocation for education by each state should be devoted to the provision of more opportunities for continuing professional development for primary and secondary school teachers, so that the nation can succeed in providing Universal Basic Education of high quality to all its children.

Another important challenge which should be addressed immediately is the issue of teacher upgrading. As we all know, the National Council on Education had over a decade ago directed that the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) should be the minimum qualification for teaching at

the primary level. Unfortunately the problem of unqualified teachers at the primary level has persisted in many states. In some states in the North East and North West geopolitical zones, 30%-40% of their primary school teachers are unqualified, in the sense that they do not possess NCE. There is therefore the urgent need for these states to enroll these teachers in upgrading courses offered by the Institute and other teacher training institutions.

The National Teachers' Institute will continue to play a key role in all attempts aimed at improving the knowledge and skills of teachers and has indeed been directed by the Federal government to re-train 145,000 primary school teachers before the end of this year under the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) project. The project will be funded by the Presidency and will be coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Education and the Office of the Special assistant to the President on the MDG.

States have already nominated their teachers for the re-training exercise and several government agencies and civil society organizations such as the Universal Basic Education Commission, the National Commission for Colleges of Education, the Teachers' Registration Council and the

Nigeria Union of Teachers will be part of the monitoring team to be constituted for effective monitoring of the project and ensuring that the objectives of the workshops are attained.

I wish to thank the government and people of Sokoto state for inviting us to be partners in this onerous task of enhancing the knowledge and skills of our teachers. I also wish to thank the distinguished guests who have graced this occasion, especially our resource persons for accepting our invitation. In addition, I must thank the ladies and gentlemen of the Press for their support and cooperation.

Finally, I wish to urge the participants to see this workshop as a rare opportunity for improving their professional competence and call on them to actively participate in all the activities of the workshop.

May the Almighty Allah Bless and Guide us.

Thank you.