

WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR MUSEUMS AND MONUMENTS, YUSUF ABDALLAH USMAN ON THE OCCASSION OF THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION TITLED 'NIGERIA 100 YEARS AGO THROUGH THE EYES OF LEO FROBENIUS AND HIS EXPEDITION TEAM' ON THE 9TH NOVEMBER, 2010 AT CYPRIAN EKWENSI CENTRE FOR ARTS AND CULTURE, ABUJA.

PROTOCOLS

It is with great pleasure and honour that I welcome you all to this important exhibition on "*Nigeria 100 Years Ago Through the Eyes of Leo Frobenius and His Expedition Team*" which is holding simultaneously in Abuja and four other places namely Ile-Ife, Minna, Makurdi and Yola, representing the major cities of areas visited by Leo Frobenius.

The National Commission for Museums and Monuments considers this commemoration significant as it provides us the opportunity to take a look at Nigeria's cultural past, albeit through the eyes of a German ethnologist, Leo Frobenius who was especially inspired by our cultures, defended same to be as genuine as the cultures of other continents at a time when the western world thought we had no history.

Today, through this exhibition of his archival materials we make available to the Nigerian public an invaluable documentation of life in several Nigerian societies as they existed one hundred years ago.

Distinguished Ladies and gentle men, I am highly delighted to inform you that the intention of this exhibition is to make this pictorial testimony, coming from a time when pictures were extremely rare, accessible to the Nigerian public.

Permit me therefore to reiterate that the National Commission for Museums and Monuments will continue to play its role in using the universal language of its collections to create and develop international understanding within a world in which some parochial people talk of clash of civilizations; instead of seeing the unity in our diversity.

We therefore showcase this impactful exhibition to the public at such an auspicious time for a number of reasons, especially in the context of renewed interest of the Federal Government of Nigeria to ensure that Nigeria assumes her position as a cultural giant. Along this line the National Commission for Museums and Monuments is engaging various research institutes and centres including museums to inventorize our diverse heritage resources within and outside the country as a necessary first step to the preservation, presentation and promotion. Such institution, include, the British Museum, Ford Foundation etc.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to the Frobenius Institute Frankfurt for partnering with us to showcase an exhibition that presents an overview of Nigeria 100 Years Ago as documented by Frobenius and his team. My gratitude also goes to our colleagues from the Frobenius Institute here present for their overwhelming support of the initiative and the tireless effort put into realising this project.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I will like to thank you all for being part of this auspicious occasion and pray that the exhibition will leave a deep and lasting impression on you.

Thank you and God bless.