

National Political Reform Conference

Overview of the National Political Reform Conference

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INTRODUCTION

“We are once again at the threshold of history. History has presented us with the opportunity to reassess, refocus, redefine and redesign our political landscape in a direction that would strengthen the bonds of unity, enhance the process of democratic consolidation, strengthen the structures so as to solidify those values that promote democracy, good governance and good neighbourliness; and open boundless opportunities for all Nigerians to be and to feel that they are part of the evolving political process and socio-economic advancement.”

The foregoing were the words of President Olusegun Obasanjo at the inauguration of the National Political Reform Conference (NPRC) on 21 February 2005 in Abuja, which essentially outlines the purpose of the national dialogue.

The NPRC is part of efforts considered necessary to enrich Nigeria’s political process so as to widen, deepen and entrench democratic principles and practice as well as to facilitate good governance and enhance social justice.

The initiative is part of the process of strengthening Nigeria’s democracy to ensure that political structures and institutions work perfectly or at least much better than they are doing at present.

The NPRC has since its inauguration settled down to address its raison d’être and is expected to complete its work in three months.

BACKGROUND

Indeed, Nigeria has had long experience in constitution making and had initiated series of conferences such as the pre-independence conferences that led to Independence on 1 October 1960.

The post-independence conferences include the pre-1979 constitutional conference that ushered in the 1979 Constitution, the constitutional conference under General Ibrahim Babangida, the constitutional conference organized by General Sani Abacha in 1994/5 and the conference convened by General Abdulsalami Abubakar that gave rise to the 1999 constitution.

President Obasanjo on assumption of office constituted the Yusuf Mammam committee to review the 1999 constitution as well as the Oputa Panel to review cases of human rights violation and reconcile embittered Nigerians after several years of military dictatorship.

None of these diminished the deafening call for a sovereign national conference by several well meaning Nigerians who desired creating a prosperous, stronger and more united country able to address and respond to the grievances of every component unit.

