



THE IGBO FORUM

(A publication of Igbo Contact Forum (I.C.F) e.V. Munich, Germany)

... to restore the dignity of man through projecting lights and bringing cultures together.

"A LIGHT THAT DOES NOT BURN, CANNOT SHINE FOR OTHERS."
- LATIN PROVERB

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EDITORIAL

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Information is everything, they say. Ideas and opinions shape the world.

Joining an association than to be a lone ranger has a better contribution, hence united we stand...

The Igbo people pride themselves on self-efforts, craftsmanship and creativity.

The Igbo women (our mothers) are unique women. They continue to showcase to the world their uniqueness.

In Nigeria and the colonial government history, it was the Igbo women who protested in Aba far back in 1929 against the rule of Britain, called the Aba Women's Riots that stopped the British oppressive rule from further excesses. It became a prelude to Independence of Nigeria today. You may Google this to find out more. Note: „Collective



efforts“

The Igbos, a tribe in the Eastern part of Nigeria, believe in self-determination principle.

Today, an Igbo woman had become the first Nigeria woman to be a Trooper—Armoured Tank Crew, which is male-dominated profession. The men know too well,

when they rise up anytime, all the skirmishes around us will come to standstill. Professor Dora Akunyili and Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala are living examples.

Nigeria as a nation has special women. It is still Nigeria's daughter (girl) who with her brother broke educational record in Great Britain. It's guts and impetus.

Rhetorically the Igbos are traders. Interestingly, tra-

ding brought the Israelis to own Pepsi, Colgate, Coca-Cola, nuclear power, etc., Traders children turned into industrialists, intellectuals and professionals. Entrepreneurial spirit is mostly in-born, hence love-hate relationships Igbos get.

The Igbo Forum Newsletter welcomes constructive criticisms, articles, information and advertisements from all, including non-members.

We hope you enjoy the reading.

*Chris O. Nwaorah,
For the Editorial Board*



HARD BUT REAL

Can We ...?

First off all let me congratulate the newly elected ICF Board members and the General Assembly.

If there is anyone out there who still doubts that ICF is a place where all things are possible; who still wonders if the dream of our founders will continue; who still questions the power of democracy, this last election is your answer.

The Board is humbled by the task waiting, grateful for the trust you have bestowed and mindful of the sacrifices borne by all our predecessors. But above all, I will never forget who this victory truly belongs to – it belongs to you.

We have shown that **a government of the people, by the people and for the people** still exist within our community. I know you didn't do this just to have a change or just to have us around. You did it because you understand the enormity of the task that lies ahead.

(Continued on Page 4)



Emeka Nkem

Spotlight

The Kola Nut: As an Igbo Cultural and Social Symbol



Oji:
Kola Nuts

Preface:

On account of the multi-referential nature of Igbo cultural symbols, a number of the earlier scholars on Igbo culture confused the sacred and profane, the religious, social and political. Bishop A.K. Obiefuna testifies to this by saying that "In traditional Igbo life no distinctions were made between the

sacred and profane, fact and fiction, history and poetry, all served the same purpose in a world where the natural and the supernatural interchanged hands..." It is an exaggeration to say that there was no distinction between fact and fiction in traditional Igbo society. Nevertheless, there is a natural union or marriage between the natural and supernatural in the Igbo society; and this phenomenon confirms the truth that religion is natural to man. The fact that most social symbols are associated with religion does not ritualize them or make them become religious symbols. This aspect of the union between the religious and profane makes our work a little more difficult. In some cases there can be distinction between the religious and profane without possible separation of the two. In such cases, any separation does violence to the harmony and tranquility in the people's culture. We feel the absence of the plates and images in the extract and this marks a notable difference between the excerpt and the main work.

Origin:

There is no Igbo cultural symbol that has received an equal attention as the kola nut. Oji Igbo, - cola *acuminata*, has more than two cotyledons or seed leaves which is the material that is chewed. Oji Awusa or gworo, - cola *nitida*, has only two cotyledons. In Igbo traditional rituals and ceremonies, the gworo is not a valid matter: only the Igbo kola, cola *acuminata* is acceptable. The reason for this distinction will be made clear when we treat the oji symbolism.

There is a popular but cheap etymology of the kola nut, Oji: O = Omenala (custom); J – Jikotara that unites); I Igbo. Thus oji means "Omenala jikotara Igbo", that is, "Custom that unites the Igbo".

There is a popular but cheap etymology of the kola nut, Oji: O = Omenala (custom); J – Jikotara that unites); I Igbo. Thus oji means "Omenala jikotara Igbo", that is, "Custom that unites the Igbo". Cola *acuminata* and cola *nitida* are both regarded as having

the same symbolism in general and private cases except on occasions like serious traditional ceremonies like marriage and sacrifices where only the Igbo Kola is used.

Eze Silver Nnanyere Ugo Ibeme Ugbala, Eze Ugo III of Okporo in Olu made a revealing research on some aspects of Igbo culture, and oji symbolism featured prominently in his exercise. The Kola nut and the tree are regarded as the first tree and fruit on earth. The sacredness of the kola is by nature, for example,

Kola with four cotyledons is called "oji udo na ngozi", that is, "kola of peace and blessing". It is the normal kola.

the dry wood of the tree is not used as fire wood.

The kola is a symbol of life, and for this reason, many profound and mysterious interpretations and formalities are accorded it. The Igbo kola is always accompanied by wine or drink because the Igbo say that "Onye nyere agbara oji ga enye ya mmiri o ga eji elofe ya" - "One who gives a deity kola has to give him water with which to assist him swallow it".

Igbo Interpretation of the Kola Nut:

Kola with one cotyledon is a dumb kola or Oji ogbu. It is called oji mmuo, that is, kola of the spirits. It is not eaten. Kola with two cotyledons is equally a dumb kola and it is not eaten. This is the main reason why the Igbo do not use the gworo or cola *nitida* for rituals or in serious traditional celebrations.

Kola with three cotyledons is called oji ike, oji ikenga, that is, kola of the valiant. Only warriors or brave men and consecrated or ordained persons are permitted to eat this kola, as a matter of principle.

Kola with four cotyledons is called "oji udo na ngozi", that is, "kola of peace and blessing". It is the normal kola. Igbo

symbolism of the number four will be well treated in chapter four. The number four is very sacred among the Igbo.

Kola with five cotyledons is "oji ubara mmadu, omumu na ukwuoma that symbolizes increase in procreation, protection and good luck.

Kola with six cotyledons indicates communion with our ancestors, that is, "oji ndi mmuo na ndi mmadu jiri gbaa ndu". The smallest part or cotyledon is not eaten but is thrown away for the ancestors to eat. In like manner, kola with one cotyledon is not eaten by man, that means that it is not broken during ceremonies because it belongs to the ancestors, an attitude reminiscent of the direct link between the living and the dead in Igboland.

Author:

Rev. Fada

Jon Ofoegbu Ukaegbu,
Ph.D.

(Culled from Ahiajoku Series)

To be Continued...

Do you have a burning issue in your mind and you want to speak out?

Or,

Do you have an opinion or Article to share with the public?

Contact us at:

igbos_in_munich

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Opinions:

MUST I JOIN IGBO ASSOCIATION?

Culture starts with the learning of language of a people. In Germany foreigners start same way. This forms the part of what one confronts daily on the street of a foreign land. Unlike in Africa, people say 'welcome to strangers, in Germany, for example, it's often 'where do you come from?'

Once upon a time, Europe fought war with each other. The value of peace would be less appreciated if there is no test of tentacles. It's much more valued when the audit of agony, hatred and rancour is prepared. If the outcome becomes a winning strategy for advancement, a society feels at its best and embrace priceless peace.

Sequel to this, I wish to add the statement of the inventor of Ford Motors:

Coming together is the beginning

Keeping together is a progress

Working together is success.

..... (Henry Ford)

ICF, Munich had had its share of shirking, ups and downs, but the members had shown more than before and steadily their determination to forge ahead. The value of a union is not only a communication platform, but a place to work to find solutions to the issues bothering them.

I have heard from some Europeans that Brussels: the honourable Seat of European Union (EU) is ineffective and non-performing. This is myopic. I cite some of the above quotes, ending it

with the EU success story.

Before this, I had at some-time being unconsciously less informed, unexposed and insensitive to think same way that ICF may not be necessary, and all Igbo people must not be a member, until one of my brothers, asked me intelligently: 'what does the Nigeria Bar Association (Association of Nigeria Lawyers), the Nigeria Medical Association, (NMA - the union of medi-

Education that does not assist human beings, nation or community is a wasted education.

cal doctors), the United Nations, the Onitsha Main Market Traders Association (OMATA), der Deutsche Akademikerinnen Bund – German Academic Ladies Union, the Certified Public Accountants (CPA) of United States, etc. etc. give or do for their members? Yet almost all their members attend meetings, pay their responsibilities and abide by the code of conducts and promote the association.

Funny enough, none of these associations paid school fees or help students read or pass their examinations, yet members are obliged to join and abide by the rules.

One thing is clear; it is a place of networking. It is a place where you know who to co-operate with and who you may not. It is a place to socialize. It is useful for those relocating to meet someone interesting. Google the people or like professions, you land near home. It is a place to share ideas. It is a place to filter characters and unconsciously learn tolerance and civil courage. It is a place to add decorum to your life. It is a place to update information you may not come across elsewhere. It is Identification. Common interests, collective efforts and pleasantries are developed and exchanged. Germans say "Auf Wiedersehen" – See you again, and so on.

Must I join Igbo union? People with questionable characters avoid unions often times to avoid being exposed, or they start one of like-minds. Others are members, but with hidden agenda. Some do not even know that such union exists. Many do not care, but for financial profit, they are ready to fight to finish to gain control at all costs. Some are simply not needed to be a member. Some are suspended or terminated for one reason or the other. Of course, rules and regulations must apply. Some wish to be the leader and not ready to accept anybody to lead them. Some are greedy and good at unconstructive criticisms, and vice-versa. Some knowledge is sought after. Some wish to be part of the union but circumstances do not warrant them. Some are members but happy or unhappy at the state of affairs of the union, while some are committed. Some lost ideas in fact.

These varieties make the world coloured and a beautiful place. These species are good, else it may be boring.

Education that does not assist human beings, nation or community is a wasted education. It's crystal-clear that Africa's solution to problems lies on African elites and their friends – said Gerhard Schroeder, ex-German Chancellor in one of his speech. Friends wait for the concerned to wake up first before they offer help.

Of other reasons, I believe for oneness, love and care, we all suppose to be our brothers' keeper. We ought to understand that the Igbo association in Munich is a platform for all Igbo extraction and their friends to dialogue, receive and exchange ideas. It is an ideal for which we should be prepared to live with. It is equally an ideal for which we should see as 'all important', especially now that we are increasingly making Germany our second home with families joining regularly. Charity they say, begins at home.

ICF – the Igbo Contact Forum could kick-start and execute projects when all hands come on deck. It can only happen if love supersedes personal aggrandizement. The idea one wants the union to showcase, could be the one from you.

Conclusively, join any Igbo union in your area to project lights and continue to restore the unique dignity of the Igbo people. A light that does not burn, cannot shine for others.

The Turkish people being the largest immigrants' group in Germany had led blue prints despite the criticisms that most Turkish cannot speak German language, but they own

Continued on Page 4

MUST I JOIN IGBO ASSOCIATION?

From Page 3

and run Turkish banks, uncountable Döner and Turkish pizza shops, act as lenders, business moguls, have mosques, cultural initiatives, business angels that supports Turkish born business ideas, Turkish Press, Turkish landlords, etc.

It has been established that these stem out from Turkish regional associations. A German proverb says that, "Children and Adults need roots and wings to grow and succeed." Our roots lie in the Igbo culture and parents.

Is it a must that I have to join my tribe's union in foreign land? Yes, we should. Barack Hussein Obama was a member of Kenya Union in the United States and he never forgot his home, Kogelo in Kenya.

Join the Igbo union in any part of the world you are!

by

Chris O. Nwaorah,

Munich, Germany.

(ICF General Secretary)

INFORMATION

ICF e.V. Munich: www.i-c-f.net/

Nigerian Embassy Berlin:
www.nigeriaembassygermany.org/

The next Oktoberfest takes place from September 18 until October 3 in 2010. The first took place in 1810(October, 17th) held on the occasion of the marriage of crown Prince Ludwig to Therese, Princess of Saxony. This year will be 200 years of Oktoberfest!

More Info about Munich: www.munich.de

German Laws in English: www.gesetze-im-internet.de, and click translations

German Citizenship Test: <http://einbuengerung.my-guide.org/>

Auslaenderbeirat: <http://www.auslaenderbeirat-muenchen.de>

HARD BUT REAL

Can We ...?

From Page 1

As we are in the midst of crisis, some of our members decided to stay away! But, the majority of us stood our ground to prove our allegiance to our Union and our Resolve to be one.

But as we move on, let us remember that we are faced with a lot of challenges. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But let us not derail my dear brothers and sisters – these challenges will be met.

As members, we have a Call. We have a Duty. And, above all, in the face of these challenges, let us remember what Obama said, "... in this winter of our hardship, let us remember these timeless words. With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future... So let us summon a new spirit of patriotism; of service and responsibility where each of us resolves to pitch in and work harder and look after not only ourselves, but each other ..."

Let us resist the temptation to fall back on the same partisanship and pettiness and immaturity that have poisoned our unity for so long.

In the next ten years and thereafter, what legacy will we leave, what changes will be seen? What progress will we have made?

Now is the time. Do not be left out! Together we stand, divided we fall.

And as Obama once said, "This is our moment. This is our time ... to open doors of opportunity for our kids; to restore hope ... and promote the cause of peace; to reclaim ... our Dreams and reaffirm that fundamental truth – that out of many, we are one; that while we breathe, we hope, and where we are met with cynicism, and doubt, and those who tell us that we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people:

Yes We Can. ,,

Thank you. God bless you, God bless ICF and God bless Ndigbo!

From

Emeka Nkem,

Munich, Germany.

(ICF Chairman)

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EDUCATION

Nigerian-born Twins Set British Record

Nigerian-born nine-year-old twins yesterday became the youngest pupils to be admitted to a secondary school in Britain, timesonline.co.uk has reported.

Paula and Peter Imafidon had already broken world records when they passed A/AS-level mathematics papers at the age of 7. Yesterday, the twins joined hundreds of thousands of other families across the country to find out which secondary school they would attend, despite being two years younger than most of their counterparts. Peter and Paula, from Waltham Forest, northeast London, attend a normal State primary school but have received provisional offers from more than 12 leading secondary schools.

The so-called 'wonder twins', who come from a family of high achiev-

ers, set two world records when they passed A/AS-level maths papers. They became the youngest candidates to pass A-level maths and were also the youngest school pupils to do so, as the previous record holders had been taught at home, the website reported.

A year later they took and passed the University of Cambridge's Advanced Mathematics (FAM) paper, becoming the youngest students to pass the rigorous examinations.

Chris Imafidon, their father, said that the twins would cope well with secondary school despite their age. We are delighted with the progress they have made, he said. Because they are twins they are always able to help and support each other.

Peter and Paula's sister Samantha, 12, passed her maths and statistics GCSEs at the age of 6,

as did the twins. Their eldest sister, Anne-Marie, 20, holds the world record for being the youngest girl to pass A-level computing, at 13. She received a government scholarship to study at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Another sister, Christiana, 17, was the youngest schoolgirl to study at undergraduate level in any British university, at the age of 11.

"Every child is a genius. Once you identify the talent of a child and put them in the environment that will nurture that talent then the sky is the limit,"

Mr Imafidon said that all of the children had taken part in the Excellence in Education programme, which helps disadvantaged families, and their achievements were due to being nurtured rather than natural "genius".

"Every child is a genius. Once you identify the talent of a child and put them in the environment that will nurture that talent then the sky is the limit," he said.

Peter has ambitions to become Prime Minister of UK while his sister wants to be a maths teacher.

Mr Imafidon said he was confident that they would achieve their goals.

Culled from Thisday

03.03.2010

WORDS OF WISDOM

Obstacles are those things you see when you take your eyes off the goal.

-Hannah More

DO YOU KNOW...?

According to Janheinz Jahn in his book, ("Durch Afrikanische Türen") Onitsha Main market is the biggest in the world.

FOCUS

Meet Gift Nwaobilor, Nigeria's first tank crew(wo)man

"Her performance too has made General Ewansiha to be quick to support moves to admit women into combat training in institutions such as Nigerian Defence (NDA) and the Nigerian Military School (NMS) which have remained "boys only" military training institutions in the country."



Trooper Nwaobilor with an Armoured Fighting Vehicle (AFV)

It was a man's world. And even among men, it was not for the chicken-hearted. It was, indeed, the exclusive preserve of the macho men. It was a path reserved for the tough and only the tough dared tread it.

The toughness had to be such that even the fly that had the misfortune of perching on his forehead would just drop dead on its own without efforts from anywhere.

It was a world whose members were viewed as super-humans. And being super-humans, they were seen as people who were not disposed to the physiological dictates of mere mortals. His presence among people evoked some degree of awe. That was the world of the military, especially in the years of yore.

But here rises a pleasant contradiction; the breaking of a jinx, from a supposedly weaker segment of

the society; a deviant of some sort. She has not only bulldozed her way into the world of the menfolk, but has, within that world, made her mark where some of the 'macho men' dreaded to dare.. It is truth enough that she is wearing the uniform, but she is also deep into the core combat arm. That is the stuff our gifted Trooper Gift is made of.

When at age 19, against initial paternal opposition, Trooper Gift Nwaobilor opted for the army, little did anyone envisage that she would go the way she is going now. But there she is, her smallish physique belying her huge courage heart. And today, at 23, she has not only worn the toga of a "soldier woman," but has, in defiance of popular societal conceptions, pitched tent with one of the teeth arms of the army - the Nigerian Army Armoured Corps. Beyond merely joining the Armoured Corps, Trooper Gift has equally made significant impressions as the first female crewman of the Nigerian Army.

At the Nigerian Army Armoured School, Bauchi, where Trooper Nwaobilor is currently serving, the Commandant, Brigadier General JAR Ewansiha, pointed out that the posting of female soldiers into the Armoured Corps was a recent development. He recalled that when he was posted in as the Commandant, he decided on the best way to engage the female soldiers and discovered that some of them were very strong at heart and could compete favourably with their male counterparts. He said Trooper Nwaobilor was attached to the Vehicles Holding Unit (VHU) from where she was nominated to attend the Basic Crewman course which makes one a professional crewman in the corps.

The Commandant said he observed, to his surprise, that Nwaobilor did very well in the course. Nwaobilor was the only female who attended the course alongside 59 male participants and emerged fifth in the class. In the words of General Ewansiha, "...she was given the highest assessment, because you don't come fifth in a class of 60 just because you are the only female. If she did not do well, my instructors do not compromise standards..., they would have put her where she belonged" .

He added that Trooper Nwaobilor's performance was very good both in the theoretical and practical aspects of the course, stressing, with an air of pride, that "she can handle virtually all AFVs (Armoured Fighting Vehicles) in our inventory. She is very good at that, being her area of specialty."

General Ewansiha indicates that "by next year, Trooper Nwaobilor will graduate from her A2 course, being the step following the basic (A3)." He also promised to make the female crewman a shining example to others, adding, "Presently, we also have some two or three more female soldiers doing the same A3 course, because we have seen that Trooper Gift's level of achievement is even greater than some of our own male crewmen... You know, if women believe in something, they do it with more sense of commitment than men.

"Her performance too has made General Ewansiha to be quick to support moves to admit women into combat training in institutions such as Nigerian Defence (NDA) and the Nigerian Military School (NMS) which have remained "boys only" military training institutions in the country.

The Chief Instructor (CI), Tactics Wing, Colonel MA Iro, commenting on the position of the Armoured Corps on Trooper Nwaobilor's feat said: "Well, I think as far as the Nigerian Army is concerned, especially the Armour corps, I will say Gift is a very special gift to us. She is the first crew lady we have in our midst. ..."

That Trooper Nwaobilor was the first female to

have completed the course as a crewman does not also imply that hers was the first attempt that the school ever made at training a female in that field. Feelers around the school indicate that an earlier attempt in that regards did not meet with success as the trainees, unable to meet the standards required of them, were returned to their respective units.

Also, the perception that Trooper Nwaobilor would be a shining example to her contemporaries is not in anyway in doubt. Trooper Josephine Emeka, a female soldier who is currently undergoing the 'A3' Crewman course in the school buttressed this position recently.

Trooper Emeka said, "Trooper Gift is my senior and my role model. Because of her achievements, I am motivated to run this course, and I hope to follow her footsteps and come out in flying colours. I am truly happy for her."

That Trooper Gift Nwaobilor could break all the barriers and even dazzle the menfolk has evoked a lot of curiosity. The curiosity in this case has spanned from her pre-military background to her social environment.

Nwaobilor was born, not with the proverbial silver spoon in her mouth, but was rather born and bred in a family setting where the 'struggle for survival' is the watch-word. Born into the family of Mr. & Mrs. Dick Nwaobilor of

Umuagwulu Amaise, Alaukwu Autonomous Community in Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State on January 3, 1987, Trooper Nwaobilor attended Amaise Central School, Umuobiakwa from 1992 to 1997.

The first in a family of six children four boys and two girls Trooper Nwaobilor proceeded to Alaukwu Comprehensive Secondary School, Umuobiakwa, where she sat for the SSCE and NECO examinations. She also attended a computer training programme with CADTECH Computer Training Institute after which she joined the Nigerian Army in August 2006.

Asked whether she thought she could cope, combining her role as a female tank crewman with that of matrimony when she eventually gets married, Trooper Nwaobilor said she was sure she could, with determination and the grace of God.

As for her relationship to her largely male colleagues, Trooper Gift said "they treat me with respect and regard me as their sister. Sometimes, I go to them for advice and they also come to me for the same reason." Asked whether she would have preferred a corps other than the Armoured, she said, "I have no regrets whatsoever, especially as an armoured personnel. The corps has made me what I am today, so there is no other place for me to go than to stay where I belong and enjoy what I do."

"Trooper Nwaobior reasons that the basic course she had concluded was just the starting point in her career and that she looked forward to running the advanced stages of the course from next year. She says nevertheless, with her present background, she could function effectively, adding that she is psychologically prepared to withstand any situation.

Culled from New Soja Brigadier General.

THE NIGERIAN TRIBUNE December 16, 2009

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KID`S CORNER

No Lion in Nigeria

Being an European, I had as a child learnt in school and believed that Africa is full of animals and wild life.

“Nevertheless my question remains? Are there lions, tigers and monkeys in Nigeria? “

As adult, many of my German and European colleagues at work had holidayed or visited Africa. Prevalent among them are the visitors to Safari in Kenya, South Africa and other East African countries. Few but in recent times many had visited West Africa: Ghana, Nigeria etc. They bring to work pictures of tigers, elephants, zebras, lions, monkeys, etc and

hang them on the wall of their offices. And they tell us many stories of their Africa visit and night life, and waiting in the bush or in their camp sites to snap a good picture of a lion in the National Park.

I have now being fortunate to visit Nigeria. Upon the number of visits, I became surprised of the wrong pictures painted about Africa. I have neither seen any lion, elephant, zebra or such species portrayed. Parents should correctly educate their children born in Diaspora.

I did not even see a monkey or any other animal except goats, cows and chicken in the animal market places. My husband, being an Igbo Nigerian bought some for Christmas for the whole family and for our visitors to eat. They were standing in our compound and I gave them names: Peter and Paul, before they were slaughtered. These living animals later landed cooked on our plates, like in Europe here.

Further, I saw living fish in the river and hotel pool. In the hotel pool, we chose one of them for our dinner. It was well roasted that I liked it so much. Naturally fish is a healthy food.

The other fish I saw were the dry fish exposed at the market places for buying.

May be there were monkeys or used to be monkeys in Nigeria in former times. I suspect this because my mother-in-law used a proverb: Monkeys learn to climb a tree by emulating their colleagues. I asked the meaning: “we learn also by observation”.

What I saw in Nigeria instead of famous wild animals like my colleagues impressed me. Instead of wild life, there were many beautiful fruits like mangoes, pineapples, pumpkins, pawpaw, cashew, coconuts, and oranges and so on. I made pictures of the trees and the fruits. I hang these beautiful fruits of nature on my office wall now. I am happy they're quite different from my colleagues. There were also very bad roads and poor electricity.

Nevertheless my question remains? Are there lions, tigers and monkeys in Nigeria?

Have you seen one of them? If yes, tell me, where they are? Can you write a story of your journey to Nigeria and how you came into contact with the animals over there? This is intended for children to know, and ask their parents questions to get honest answers.

Therefore I believe that Nigeria is a beautiful country where socialization and nature come together. It is not wild animal dangerous at all. The people were also wonderfully friendly.

By Maria Nwaorah, Munich Germany

WORDS OF WISDOM

„ANYI KO MAMIRI ONU, OGBA UFUFU“

Security News from from BMI (German Ministry of Internal Affairs) Homepage

Foreigners may be deported on the basis of factual evidence of a potential threat...

The most important new regulations in this area:

- * The newly introduced deportation order provides for deportation on the basis of factual evidence of a potential threat.

- * If a foreigner cannot be deported because there are reasons for withholding his removal (the threat of torture or capital punishment), then requirements to report to the authorities regularly, restrictions on freedom of movement and bans on communication backed up by appropriate penalties are to be imposed in order to improve security (Section 54a of the Residence Act).

- * If a foreigner is sentenced to imprisonment on charges of human smuggling, this constitutes new and compelling grounds for expulsion.

- * Factual evidence indicating that a foreigner belongs to or has supported an organization which supports terrorism results in regular expulsion. Regular expulsion also applies to leaders of banned organizations.

- * Discretionary expulsion has been introduced for persons who incite hate and violence, such as agitators in mosques.

- * Before issuing a settlement permit or deciding on an application for naturalization, the authorities make a standard request for information on any anti-constitutional activities by the person in question.

The Act to Implement Residence- and Asylum-Related EU Directives includes further optimization measures which are based on findings resulting from the attempted suitcase bomb attacks on regional trains in Northrhine-Westphalia in July 2006. These measures include in particular:

- * Measures to establish and document the identity of all those who apply for a national (long-term) visa by taking their photographs and fingerprints which are stored in line with the same provisions that apply at the European level to the communitarized Schengen Visa;

- * Vetting of all references mentioned in the visa procedure by addressing a request for information to the security authorities in line with Section 73 of the Residence Act to establish whether there are any security concerns related to the visa applicant.

- * in the context of requests for information under Section 73 paras. 1 and 2 of the Residence Act, the security authorities shall immediately communicate any security concerns even after the residence permit has been issued and during the entire period of its validity; 1 and 2 of the Residence Act).

- * the period of validity of residence permits issued for study purposes or for study preparation purposes shall be determined on a more flexible basis.

