



SCDDD
SAVANNAH CENTRE
FOR DIPLOMACY DEMOCRACY & DEVELOPMENT



**DEMOCRACY
DAY DISCOURSE**
22 JUNE 2021

**OUTCOME PAPER &
PRESENTATIONS**

ORGANIZED BY

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FOREWORD

It gladdens my heart to read the outcome papers and presentations of this year's "Democracy Day Discourse". The year 2021 makes it 22 years of democratic practice in Nigeria. For any human being born 22 years ago, a journey into adulthood has begun. Some learning processes must have taken place and a renewed commitment to face the future must be made. June 12 being the designated national democracy day is an apt day to reflect and chart a positive way forward. This year's theme "Deepening Good Governance in a Network Society" has been a thought provoking one for all of us. We need to interrogate the question of good governance and the role. Nigerian political institutions can correctly play to advance our democracy. The Nigerian democratic institutions have not been deepened enough to allow the citizen to own the democratic processes.

How can political parties be managed in a way that godfatherism, dictatorial tendencies and poor decision-making may not mar democracy as we move forward. I feel also impressed that the issue of our Foreign Policy thrust has been brought on board discussion. Are our post-independence foreign policy principles still relevant till date? How can our foreign image improve through citizen contributions in a world where government no longer hold monopoly of information management. The issue of conflict management in a pluralistic society like Nigeria is a huge challenge. Is it possible to have elite consensus on National issues? Can we engage in political debates

without acrimonies and heating the polity? These issues have been addressed by experts who have given great insight into these needed democratic pathways. I hope that Nigerians shall benefit from the outcome of this discourse. I enjoy the historical excursion into our political party formations and the urge for all of us to put hands on deck to “democratize our democracy” a phrase I find very amusing. But beyond enjoining readers to enjoy the work, I urge individual action in promoting good governance in our pluralistic society.

This is the first in an annual series and it is hoped that the Centre shall sustain this event annually not just as an academic discourse but a practical way of examining the milestones of our democracy. As I write, there are disturbing coup saga in Mali, Guinea Conakry and some rumblings on Sudan. Democracy requires eternal vigilance and I hope Savannah Centre shall continue to be at the vanguard for the protection of democracy through timely evaluation of our practices. I congratulate all those who made this possible and look forward to future editions



Malam Abidu Yazid

Chairman Board of Directors,

Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development,

September, 2021

DEMOCRACY DAY DISCOURSE 22 JUNE 2021

OUTCOME PAPER

INTRODUCTION

The Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development held a one-day Maiden Democracy Day Discourse on the 22 June, 2021 to discuss twenty-two years of democracy in Nigeria. This anniversary, as in every other in the past, Nigerians have had the cause to interrogate its democratic system mostly through public lectures, conferences peaceful protests on the streets. All these aim at improving the democratic governance in Nigeria. The Centre chose to bring together scholars and practitioners to examine the state of Nigeria's adherence to democratic tenets since the return to democracy in 1999. The theme for the discourse was "**Developing Good Governance in a Network Society**". One perception prevalent and persistent in the polity has been the dominance of government institutional structure in the democracy, denoting that beyond periodic elections, government and policy making revolve around the executive branch, the legislature and the judiciary, the latter being prominent only for electoral adjudications. The involvement of civil society organizations in governance and the full citizen participatory democracy in the period under review have been less than satisfactory, hence the need to interrogate the frictional factors in the nation's democratic practice and to recommend practical ways of institutionalizing democratic governance, including social auditing in a comparative network society like Nigeria.

DECONSTRUCTING THE THEME

2. In deconstructing the theme, “*Developing Good Governance in a Network Society*,” three key areas were identified for interrogation:

a) Democratizing Democracy: Twenty-Two Years of Democracy in Nigeria. This topic sought to establish, among others, that:

- i. political structures have been dominated by a few leaving the masses out of power politics;
- ii. frustrated marginalized interests keep shifting bases from one political party to the other with little or no commitment to the primacy of ideology in political parties;
- iii. party politics provide the environment for the mobilization of people's will,
- iv. oligarchic practices symbolized by “godfatherism” can be eradicated;
- v. the imperative of entrenching a culture of debate where agreements and disagreements can become a norm devoid of hate, profiling and acrimony; and
- vi. democratizing democracy will ensure politics of inclusiveness, transparency and accountability, hence “good governance” which is necessary for durable peace and sustainable development.

b) Nigeria's Foreign Policy: A Citizen-Centric Approach. The

Centre notes the axiomatic expression that “the foreign policy of a country is a reflection of its domestic policy” and thus observed that there was the need to examine and change the principles which have guided the conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy in its twenty-two years of democracy from State to Citizen-Centred, including the need to harness the human resources of the Nigerians in Diaspora for national development. The guiding principles of Nigeria foreign policy are:

- I. Maintenance of friendly relations with all states including peaceful co-existence;
- ii. Respect for territorial integrity and independence of all states;
- iii. Sovereign equality of all states;
- iv. Pacific settlement of disputes;
- v. Non-alignment;
- vi. De-colonization based on the principles of self-determination;
- vii. Respect for the principle enshrined in the UN Charter and promotion of Pan-African solidarity and African unity.

c) Conflict Management in a Pluralistic Society: In the last twenty-two years of democracy in Nigeria, conflict had become a constant feature in the polity. The Centre noted that although conflicts of interest inherent in democracy were normal, especially in a pluralist society



jostling for advantage, managing such conflicts have been a big challenge for Nigeria. This is evident in the agitations for secession, insurgency and violentz extremism being witnessed in different parts of the country. Globally, non-state actors possessing enormous resources intervene in governance to the extent that governance may be impaired. This is applicable also in Nigeria. Confronting the crisis of democracy and good governance in Nigeria was therefore recommended for discourse.

THE RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

3. The Centre's rapporteur documented the event at the Maiden Democracy Day Discourse where all the important issues and discussions made were put together. The paper presentations by the lead speakers are attached. The contents attest to the competence of the speakers while the discussants' critical analytical contributions added to the depth and quality of the presentations captured by the Rapporteurs as follows:

NIGERIAN POLITICAL PARTIES: THE CASE FOR DEMOCRATIZING DEMOCRACY

4. Professor Jibrin Ibrahim, a political scientist and columnist, who runs a column in the Premium Times, an online news outlet, has used his column to discuss “deepening democracy in Nigeria” extensively. In his opening remarks, Professor Ibrahim stated that Nigeria's previous republics had very short life span due to military interventions, and therefore did not allow for democracy to mature and did not allow the political class to learn from their errors. However, he observed that although the democratic dispensation had lasted up to twenty-two years, the reality was that the citizens had not yet seen its dividends. He thus addressed the challenges facing democracy in the Fourth Republic by tracing its history from the preceding ones:

- a) The First Republic** political parties were characterized by ethnic hegemony where the elites used political platforms to commit massive electoral fraud to establish their ethno-political powers. He explained that the

military, fearing a return to ethno-politics exerted influence on party formation to reflect “Pan-Nigerian”, hence the recognition by the state rather than by the people became the condition for the existence of political parties;

- b) **The Second Republic** had some semblance of ideology, notably, that of the five popular parties, two, namely Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) were leftists while the other three- the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP) and the Nigerian People's Party (NPP), were of the right. The Second Republic political parties also introduced factions and fierce infightings that often resorted to the courts to confer legitimacy and recognition;
- c) In the **Third Republic**, two political parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC) were established by the state. This republic was short lived and the election of 1993 was nullified by the Military Regime. At the commencement of the Fourth Republic, only three parties were recognized. However, following supreme court judgment, the political space was opened to give room for the eventual emergence of 63 registered political parties by 2011. Electoral laws provide for de-registration of parties by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Nigeria's Political Party System

5. The lead speaker stated clearly that:
- a) the current phenomenon in the political party system was that which the President and State Governors tightly controlled political parties and party leadership at all levels thus holding the party leaderships at their beck and call;
 - b) the general situation was that virtually all the Nigerian political parties lacked internal democracy, party discipline and ideological orientation;
 - c) party activities were not driven by a membership that had the sense of agency and purpose; and
 - d) party elections did not follow rules thus candidates were simply imposed at party conventions, if held at all.

Reasons for the Underdevelopment of Political Parties

6. Professor Ibrahim identified the following as part of the main reasons for the underdevelopment of political parties in Nigeria:
- a) Party dictatorship, impunity and exclusive membership had frustrated members' participation in the party's decision making and leadership selection/election processes. He cited an example where the national chairman of a party dismissed all its members with impunity;
 - b) Admission to membership was at the pleasure of barons and godfathers who owned and financed the parties;

- c) Dependence on electoral fraud made membership irrelevant;
- d) Unbridled defection from one party to the other made membership and leadership insignificant;
- e) Politics of exclusion and lack of civility. The use of violence and the monetization of party politics and processes of leadership selection/election became disincentive to decent people, women in particular. The belief in some quarters that women did not commit to the development of parties created the basis for exclusion; and
- f) Lack of Internal Democracy: Although INEC had the powers of supervising political parties' activities, including primaries, several mechanisms were being adopted by party Chieftains to manipulate party decisions and electoral processes and procedure in their favour. These included imposition of candidates, zoning techniques, use of thugs and disregard for authentic election results.

Building the Democratic Capacity to Promote Parties

7. In order to promote democracy and build capacity in political parties, Professor Ibrahim offered the following suggestions:

- a) Inter-party forum to dialogue over all related bad practices;
- b) Building loyalty to party leadership and commitment to party ideology;

- c) Blocking the use of state funds by leaders in privileged positions for elections;
- d) Encouraging ownership of political parties by members through crowd funding;
- e) Building of strong legal framework to regulate political parties and the shameful cross-carpeting by those seeking elective/appointive offices and pecuniary gains; and
- f) Adopting and promoting the politics of inclusion where women, the youth and people living with disabilities/special needs are actively engaged in the party's activities and decision making processes.

Improved Elections and the Return of the Popularity Principle

8. Concluding his presentation, Professor Ibrahim posited that for popularity principles to prevail and improve party politics in Nigeria, the following are necessary:

- a) credible and authentic Voter Register and the introduction of biometric ID card were key elements that could induce positive change;
- b) votes and the integrity of elections should be protected as they would improve behaviour of party and attract committed membership;
- c) membership and collective ownership should be made more relevant in political parties as major pathways to deepening democracy; and
- d) entrepreneurial politics should be replaced with a more

democratic approach by eliminating patron and clientelism.

Discussions and General Contributions

9. **Ambassador M K Ibrahim** led the discussion. He was supported by other eminent participants including **Dr. Usman Bugaje, Reverend Father George Ehusani, Ms. Ayo Obe and Ambassador Layiola S. Laseinde**, who joined virtually. Their contributions attempted to define **democracy** as 'choosing and replacing governments through free and fair elections where the will of the people count' and **good governance** as 'the act of meeting the needs of the people guided by inclusive participation, human rights and the rule of law through strong democratic institutions like the electoral commission and the judiciary.' They observe that all these could only happen under strong and patriotic leadership; where citizens are mobilized and empowered to express their choices freely; that political parties are important in a democracy, but if not properly managed could derail democracy. Inclinations like ethno-religious biases, personal identities, intolerance and lack of ideologies are bad characteristics of party politics. They argued that these problems could be solved by:

- a) Imbibing democratic behavior from the primary and secondary schools where the youth are taught to practice democratic ideals by electing their class prefects and school executives;
- b) Ending 'primitive' federalism and differentiating between

- the regime in power and the country;
- c) Ensuring that the security apparatus works for the people and the state rather than for the state and powerful politicians/groups;
 - d) Ensuring that there is strong elite consensus to drive and sustain good and effective participatory governance for durable peace and sustainable development;
 - e) Mobilizing the people, especially the women, youth and the physically challenged, for effective participatory governance, bearing in mind that democracy is 'government of the people by the people and for the people';
 - f) Empowering unbiased electoral institutions for transparent voting system and a leadership recruitment process that has integrity;
 - g) Making constitutional provisions for independent candidatures for elective posts in government;
 - h) Discouraging money-politics; and
 - i) Bearing in mind that participatory liberal democracy in liberal network societies like Nigeria, is always work in progress. There is always room for nurturing it to maturity and improvement.

NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: A CITIZEN-CENTRIC APPROACH?

10. Ambassador Bulus Lolo, a seasoned diplomat and former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, led the discourse on this topic. He deployed his practitioner's point of

view in ways that connected all the conceptual issues relating to the topic. While being mindful of the main topic, he began by presenting his perspective on “good governance” and “network society”. These terms relate very well with domestic affairs which affect foreign policy formulation and implementation. He posited that if one got the domestic policies right, one would be getting the foreign policy right. He then proceeded to state the elements of good governance which included accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, justice, judicious management of resources, fundamental freedom, human rights, inclusiveness, participation, rule of law, security and transparency in the domestic politics. That put together, these attributes of good governance would translate to the requisite tools for the effective delivery of citizen-centered domestic and foreign policies.

11. Ambassador Lolo stressed that the end goal of good governance was the satisfactory delivery of public goods and services. The result of failure to meet the needs of the people which included guaranteed public safety and wellbeing is bad governance, the manifestation of which included corruption, social and political agitation, instability and loss of faith in government. On the other hand, he explained that the network society was one that draws from community, interest groups and non-governmental organizations to operate. Thus, for good governance and a responsive egalitarian network

society, there was no room for ethnicity, nepotism, parochialism and other vices that often frustrated the deployment of the best available tools for the effective delivery of public goods and services. He said that all these had negative impact on the formulation and implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy.

12. The former Permanent Secretary defined 'foreign policy' as the way and manner in which a country deals or interacts with other countries with a view to achieving certain goals or objectives. He further explained "It is, by nature, the projection of a country's domestic policies externally." Suggestive of his support for a citizen-centered Nigerian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century, Ambassador Lolo highlighted the following principles of Nigeria's Foreign policy which he described as outdated: **non-alignment** which he said had become meaningless in a uni-polar global system dominated by western capitalism; **de-colonization and self-determination** which he argued, no longer held water as all colonized African territories had gained sovereign independence, except Western Sahara under Morocco, which he reserved for a future discourse. Ambassador Lolo, thus, expressed strong support for the call to review Nigeria's foreign policy to reflect the interest of the Nigerian citizen. But he interrogated the notion of citizen-centered approach. Would it mean involving citizens in formulating and executing the Nigerian foreign policy or that the country should make its citizens the centre of its foreign policy pursuit? Overall, cognizant of Nigeria's pluralism, the

outdated guiding foreign policy principles, and the burgeoning nationalism in the global system, Ambassador Lolo supported the call for a citizen-centered Nigerian foreign policy.

Challenges

13. The former Permanent Secretary pointed out that the challenges of Nigeria's foreign policy emanated from, among others, the nation's domestic problems: bad governance, money laundering, yahoo yahoo boys, human trafficking and unlawful activities of some Nigerians abroad, resulting in the loss of international respect for the green passport. His perspective, therefore, was a call for foreign policy review. He recalled that there had been two major reviews with the last one in 1986 tagged **Kuru Declaration**. That a new foreign policy agenda that was purpose driven, coherent and relevant to guide activities and interactions in a globalized, digitalized and ICT-driven world was due. He explained that new issues and challenges had emerged in the world that demanded new thinking and attitude, such as the challenges of information technology, ingratitude by most recipients of Nigeria's technical and financial assistance, cross-border security challenges in West Africa and climate change, with consequences of mass migration, called for the development of adequate and appropriate pursuit of foreign policy goals and ways to optimize benefit to our citizens. That Nigeria needed to stop being Father-Christmas and place some conditions on its aid policies. He concluded that it was such

policy shift that could give real meaning and effect to a purpose driven citizen-centered foreign policy orientation.

Discussions and General Comments

14. **Ambassador Bature Lawal**, who led the discussion session, agreed on the need for policy review. He drew attention to what he called 'previous rhetorical attempts' like economic diplomacy, citizen diplomacy etc. He urged that a concrete move be made this time around in line with Ambassador Lolo's recommendations. Other discussants corroborated Ambassador Lolo's position that Nigeria's domestic policy must be right in order to get its foreign policy right. They also emphasized the need to improve allocation for consular services and the welfare of Nigerians abroad and the need for Nigeria to put in place appropriate measures to draw maximum benefits for the citizens from her (Nigeria's) membership in ECOWAS given the fact that she was contributing over 60% of the regional organization's annual budget.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN A PLURALIST SOCIETY: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA

15. **Professor Oshita Oshita**, the Executive Director, Ubuntu Centre for Africa Peacebuilding and Development is a professor of Philosophy and Former Director-General of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution. He opened the discourse by stating that Nigerians owed a collective guilt for conflict in the Nigerian polity. He observed that, whereas

democracy was meant to promote Utilitarian values for generating the greatest happiness to the greatest number based on citizen participation and inclusiveness, twenty-two years of Nigeria's democracy had produced conflicts unprecedented in its history. He argued that the political class had adopted manipulative forces of ethnicity, religion and geographical space to cause conflicts and that primitive politics had become the means for the accumulation of wealth and violence, the instrument to attain power. Professor Oshita posited that a pluralist society needed not to be prone to violence if conflict mechanisms were well entrenched in the system.

16. The philosopher further argued that homogeneity of society did not necessarily guarantee peace as being seen from the example of Somalia. Reflecting on democracy and conflict management in Nigeria, Professor Oshita posited that the major ethnic groups in Nigeria emitted oppositional dynamics that led to the polarisation of the state. He therefore, advised that Nigeria should set a core of national values that resonated with all stakeholders. He recommended that Nigerians should respect their national monuments, resolve the issue of citizen-indigene dichotomy, restore social justice through legal and judicial instruments and recognise peace building frameworks with state and non-state actors. To this end, the National Peace Committee, which midwived the successful peaceful transition of government in 2015, the peace and security forum that

brought civil society groups together for peace mediation were examples to follow. He cautioned that the nexus between peace building, politics and conflict management could be destructive if contaminated by bad politics. Traditional rulers who should be custodians of conflicts resolution and management were being infiltrated and manipulated. He expressed optimism that although all these challenges could be redressed, the poor budgetary allocation for conflict management and the dysfunctional recruitment into the public service system were compounding the chances of success.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. Professor Oshita concluded that in order to have better conflict management in a pluralistic society, he believed that the prevailing but apparently waning inter marriages and peaceful coexistence were helpful. He recommended that more needed to be done in the areas of conflict management, institutional building, improved political and civil atmosphere where focus should be on service rather than profit, capacity development for local communities and the development of strategies for monitoring and evaluation of peace building and processes. He summed up by stating that the aggregate of these would provide the conducive, safe, stable and peaceful domestic polity for the formulation and implementation of the people-centred domestic and foreign policy being advocated for Nigeria.

Discussions and General Comments

18. Dr. Dayo Oluyemi-Kusa, a former Director at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution and a Conflict Transformation expert, opined that there is always conflict in any society but its poor management often leads to violence and wanton destruction of lives and properties. She subscribed to the argument that Nigeria was a country and not yet a nation because many individuals do not see themselves as part of a nation. She lamented the young people's loss of hope in a country practicing politics of exclusion, with gapping unemployment rate, widespread and unresolved violent conflicts across the country and huge trust deficit in the Nigerian leadership which seemed to have no clue or political will in finding lasting solutions to the violent conflicts rocking the country. She would want to see a more transparent recruitment of competent persons into party politics and the affirmative action for the inclusion of more women and people living with disabilities in leadership positions in government. Dr. Oluyemi-Kusa concluded that a new mind-set was needed to transform conflict management for durable peace and sustainable development in Nigeria.

19. It was reiterated during the general discussion that since politics was about who gets what, how and when, conflict was inevitable in a plural society like Nigeria and must be resolved using political approach which should include inclusive policy-making, tolerance for ethno-religious and ideological

differences, transparent leadership and patriotism by all Nigerians. It behoves on the mature political class to make these changes happen where peace and justice shall reign.

THE WAY FORWARD AND SETTING THE AGENDA

20. The SCDDD deeply appreciates the presenters and the discussants for their critical analysis and forward looking recommendations. After due consideration of the presentations, discussions and the recommendations therein, the Centre wishes to highlight the following [recommendations] as the way forward for setting the agenda for ***developing good governance in a network society***:

A. Democratising Democracy

- i. A complete ideological re-orientation of political parties with emphasis on strict party discipline and supremacy in governance, crowd funding and ownership by members, internal democracy, drastic reduction of nomination fees for candidatures into elective posts, and above all, party recognition should not be based on legal recognition but people recognition;
- ii. INEC, should ensure voter registration and voting are people-centred such that legitimate voting applies. The electoral processes, including voting regulations, should be technology-driven for cost effectiveness, speed, transparency and credibility. This will ensure that parties operating with impunity and godfatherism are sanctioned through voting;

- iii. Independent candidacy should be allowed in the system;
- iv. Democratic Institutions, such as the judiciary, the police and INEC should be overhauled to ensure rule of law, and speedy disposal of electoral cases, for 'justice delayed is justice denied';
- v. Security Agencies should clean the political system and the electoral processes of thugs, impunity and violence. This would enable credible men, women and people living with disabilities to participate in party politics and seek elective posts in government without fear or favour; and
- vi. Democratic culture must begin from primary schools.

B. Nigeria's Foreign Policy: A Citizen-Centred Approach?

- i. Cognisant of the dynamics in global politics, a national conference on Nigeria's foreign policy should be convoked as soon as possible to formulate a new foreign policy agenda that is purpose driven, coherent, citizen-centred and relevant to guide Nigeria's activities and interactions in a globalized, digitalized and ICT-driven world; and
- ii. In view of the intrinsic linkages between domestic and foreign policies, one should not be formulated and implemented without due consideration of the other because the citizen's welfare and political stability of the nation are the main focus of any foreign policy.

C. Conflict Management in a Pluralistic Society

- i. Institutions for peace building and conflict management should be adequately funded;
- ii. Local communities, particularly traditional institutions, should be integrated into the conflict resolution and management scheme;
- iii. Citizen-indigene dichotomy must be eradicated;
- iv. Political offices should be oriented towards delivering services rather than profit making in order to eliminate corrupt practices, injustice and impunity;
- v. In all policy processes, inclusiveness and transparency must be cardinal;
- vi. Politics of identity, ethno-religious tendencies, hate speeches and profiling should be made punishable; and
- vii. Civil society organisations operating in Nigeria should intensify their intervention in educating the masses on social auditing and pushing for reforms that would encourage equity, justice, transparency and accountability in governance.

CONCLUSION

21. It was the general consensus that the 2021 Democracy Day Discourse was a huge success and, therefore, should be sustained by the Centre as an annual event with the zeal for follow-up actions for improvement and delivery of the recommendations to the appropriate authorities for implementation or any other action deemed necessary.

PRESENTATIONS

PAPER I

NIGERIAN POLITICAL PARTIES: THE CASE FOR DEMOCRATISING DEMOCRACY

PAPER PRESENTED AT

SAVANNAH CENTRE FOR DIPLOMACY, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT ABUJA, 22 JUNE 2021

By

Professor Jibrin Ibrahim

INTRODUCTION

The First Republic existed for only six years and the Second Republic had an even shorter life span of just over four years. The Third Republic was aborted but the Fourth Republic has had a long-life span of 22 years and still counting. The explanation often offered for the underdevelopment of democracy in Nigeria is that the military never allowed democracy to mature by allowing the political class to learn from their errors by frequently interrupting the process and returning the counter to zero. This time, the expectation is that the quality of democracy should have improved but the reality is that it has not. Citizens have not seen the dividends of democracy; the political class is

crass and self-serving and money plays a larger role in politics than the voice of the voter. In this presentation, I address the challenges facing democracy under the Fourth Republic by focusing on the fetters to democratic development placed by Nigerian political parties.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO POLITICAL PARTY DEVELOPMENT

2. The development of political parties in Nigeria dates back to 1923 when the Nigerian National Democratic Party was launched. This followed the establishment of the Nigerian Legislative Council to provide some political space for the participation of indigenes. Franchise was however limited to two cities - Lagos and Calabar. A more vigorous process of party formation was initiated with the formation of the Nigerian Youth Movement in 1938 and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) in 1944 under the leadership of Herbert Macaulay. The Action Group (AG) emerged in 1948 while the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) was established in 1951. These parties constituted themselves as political expressions of ethno-regional associations with the Action Group in the West evolving from a Yoruba cultural association – Egbe Omo Oduduwa, the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) evolving from the northern cultural association, Jamiyar Mutanen Arewa and the National Congress of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) which started as a national party but later narrowed its social base to a cultural association, the Igbo State Union of the south east. These ethno-regional elite blocs struggled against

each other in configuring the politics of the First Republic as a contest for hegemony by the elites of the major ethnic formations – Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo and the marginalisation of the minority groups. Massive electoral fraud in the 1964 and 1965 elections precipitated a political crisis that led to the collapse of the First Republic, civil war and the entry of the military into Nigerian politics.

3. The military devoted a lot of attention into devising a new type of party system they thought will be more national and less divisive. Both the Gowon and Murtala regimes tried to steer the country towards a zero party or one-party system with the clear intention of establishing more effective state control over the political process. When these attempts were rejected by the political class and civil society, the military used the national unity argument to popularise the idea of the necessity of imposing “Pan-Nigerian” conditions for the registration of parties. The immediate result of this was that the definition of a political party was changed from what it was in the First Republic. Rather than an organisation formed by a number of people to propagate certain ideas and contest for power, it was redefined as an organisation that is “Pan-Nigerian” and so recognised by the state to contest elections. Section 201 of the 1979 Constitution specifically limits the definition of a political party to an organisation recognised by the state to canvass for votes. The law forbids any organisation, not so recognised to canvass for votes. More importantly, both on the juridical and

political levels, parties were no longer considered as popular organisations that aggregate and articulate interests and opinions but as corporate entities that are registered with the state. This meant that the political birth of parties was no longer determined by popular support but by administrative fiat.

4. In the run up to the Second Republic, 150 parties were announced and about 50 of them were fully constituted as parties, but only 18 were able to feel that they had any chance of meeting the new registration conditions and submitted their applications. The state recognised only five of them in 1978. They were the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) and Great Nigeria Peoples' Party (GNPP). The 1979 Constitution banned independent candidates from contesting elections and outlawed regional, ethnic, religious and extremist parties. The transition process encouraged the emergence of one dominant party which was the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), established in 1978 as a coalition of various fractions who had roots in the regional politics of the First Republic. The founding fathers of the NPN systematically waxed a coalition from the segmented and disparate fractions that constituted the Nigerian political class. All the efforts towards building a fully hegemonic party did not bear fruit. The 1979 elections revealed that the political parties retained strong regional bases and ended up sharing the votes without any of them completely dominating the others.

However, ideological politics was strong with the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) on the left while the other three parties were on the right.

5. The 1979 constitutional provisions set in motion the process for weakening internal party democracy and weakening party competition. The fact that parties were parties because they were recognised by the state meant that party leaders were party leaders not because they were popular with their grassroots members, but because they were so recognised by the state. During the Second Republic, many politicians started changing their political behaviour. They started taking the short cut of simply seeking to expel their rivals within the parties, for so-called anti-party activities, rather than the route of persuading them or conceding to the principle of accepting outcomes of primaries. The role of party officials became more important than that of party members because they decided on nominations for electoral posts. Factions developed in all the parties, and the state then became the arbiter that decides on which faction was the "genuine" representative of the party. The state, however, acting through the courts, and the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO), was often less than neutral in their decisions. In the GNPP and PRP factional crisis, for example, the factions that represented the majority of party members and the elected legislators of the parties were declared illegal and the minority factions were recognised (Ibrahim, J. 1991). Many popular politicians were thus denied the right to contest in

elections. The logic of democratic politics is that parties try to get popular candidates to improve their electoral chances. The level of electoral fraud in the 1983 elections when the National Party of Nigeria tried to eliminate the other parties from the political arena was so massive that conditions were created for the return of the military three months after the elections. General Muhammadu Buhari, who carried out the coup d'état, did not last long and was replaced by General Ibrahim Babangida.

6. The Third Republic that never was, witnessed a flurry in the establishment of new parties that were subsequently banned by the Ibrahim Babangida Government. His Government then established two political parties: Social Democratic Party (SDP) – “slightly to the left” and National Republican Convention (NRC) – “slightly to the right”. When elections were held in 1993 and M. K. O. Abiola of the SDP won, Babangida annulled the election, thus precipitating the collapse of the Third Republic before it took off.

7. The Fourth Republic was initiated through the 1999 Constitution. For its first elections, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) recognised only three political parties – the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), the All Peoples' Party (APP) and the Action for Democracy (AD). Following a Supreme Court judgement on the case Balarabe Musa v INEC, conditions for registration of political parties were liberalized.

Subsequently, Nigeria's political space witnessed an unprecedented opening with the emergence of 63 registered political parties by April 2011. Prominent among the new parties are the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Political Change (CPC) and the People's Progressive Alliance (PPA). In addition, many small parties took advantage of the liberalization of the political space to register parties that have proven to be unviable, but had served as vehicles through which prospective candidates who had no access to nomination in their own parties could come and get a ticket at a price.

8. In order to promote credible elections with the existence of strong political parties, section 78(6) of the 2010 Electoral Act provided INEC with the power to de-register any political parties that failed to win any executive and legislative seats in elections. Only ten parties won seats in the 2011 elections. On 18th August 2011, INEC de-registered seven political parties that did not contest for any elective office in the 2011 elections. They were the Democratic Alternative, National Action Council, National Democratic Liberal Party, Masses Movement of Nigeria, Nigeria People's Congress, Nigeria Elements Progressive Party and the National Unity Party (Daily Trust, 19/8/2011, page 3). INEC also announced its intention to de-register more parties as soon as the numerous court cases by some of the parties were determined. At the end of 2012, an additional 31 political parties were de-registered, leaving only 27 registered political parties.

NIGERIA'S POLITICAL PARTY SYSTEM

9. Nigeria operates as a two-party dominant political system in which the ruling and main “opposition” party, currently, the former ruling party controls enormous resources compared to the others. At the beginning of the Fourth Republic, only three political parties were registered, but the Supreme Court decision allowed for the liberalisation of the regime and many more parties were registered. There are three categories of political parties – the two dominant parties, parties with parliamentary representation and the other small parties most of which were established as possible platforms for important politicians that lose out in the bigger parties or to access nomination for elective posts. The President and State Governors tightly control political parties and party leadership is at the beck and call of these executives who can change them at will. The President is the leader of the dominant party although a party chairman exists and state governors are the leaders of their party at that level. This system is replicated in other parties that have state governors. The general situation is that Nigerian parties are not fit for purpose, they do not stand for anything in terms of the ideological spectrum and their activities are not driven by a membership that has agency.

¹ Some of the parties that had been refused registration by INEC went to court to challenge their non-registration. The matter went right up to the Supreme Court which ruled that INEC had imposed additional conditions not known to the Constitution for the registration of parties. INEC was therefore ordered to register all parties that meet the basic conditions spelt out in the Constitution.

10. Competition in Nigeria's party system is very intense within the ruling and main opposition parties and less so between the other political parties. This is due to the fact that since 1979, Nigeria has developed the tradition of major blocs of the political elite coalescing into a main political party conceived as a hegemonic party. In elections that are relatively free and fair, namely, the 1959, 1979 and 1999 elections, the parties that had the highest votes, the Northern Peoples' Congress, the National Party of Nigeria and the Peoples' Democratic Party failed in their desire to be hegemonic or dominant through the polls. In the subsequent elections of 1964, 1983 and 2003, they all abused their incumbency powers to transform themselves into dominant parties. In essence, they used electoral fraud to boost their control of the political process and weaken opposition parties. Competitive party politics is thus weak as the ruling parties have often falsified the electoral game while the parties in opposition have too narrow a political base and insufficient resources to effectively compete for power.

11. The transmission of power from the ruling PDP to the opposition APC in 2015 has not led to significant change in the country's party dynamics. The greatest challenge facing Nigerian democracy is the absence of a real and functional party system. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has complained repeatedly that many parties have been operating with invalid national executive committees whose tenures had expired or were not reflective of the federal

character as required by the Constitution. It would be recalled that Sections 222(a-f) and 223 (1&2) of our Constitution stipulates clearly that registered political parties must have a functional national headquarters address in Abuja. Furthermore, members of the national executive committees of the parties must not only reflect federal character but also have tenures that are renewed at intervals not exceeding four years. The Attahiru Jega INEC had de-registered a number of parties for not adhering to these constitutional requirements and for not winning seats in any elections but the courts have always been lenient and permitted parties to continue to have legal existence even when they do not meet the constitutional requirements. The current Mahmoud Yakubu-led INEC has pursued the same actions.

12. Virtually all parties have very little respect for internal party democracy. That is to say that they do not conduct their internal affairs based on the principles enunciated in their constitutions and rules. Party officials and candidates for elections are not elected in accordance with the rules of the game. Party conventions become occasions in which governors and godfathers simply impose candidates of their choice rather than people voted for by members and delegates. The lack of internal party democracy weakens the internal coherence of most political parties and creates a situation where the judiciary becomes the arbiter of who the candidates are rather than delegates.

PARTY REGISTRATION AND DEREGISTRATION

13. As we explained above, Nigeria's political space witnessed an unprecedented opening with the emergence of 63 registered political parties by April 2011. Many of them were small entrepreneurial parties created to search for wealthy potential candidates that could pay bribes to party officials to get nomination for elective positions. The position of INEC has always been that registered parties should be sufficiently strong to contest for and win elections. They had never supported that idea that small parties could grow and develop over time and eventually reach the stage of winning elections. It was for this reason that INEC lobbied for and obtained the insertion section 78(6) into the Electoral Act providing INEC with the power to de-register political parties that fail to win any executive and legislative seats in elections. As only ten parties won seats in the 2011 elections, INEC de-registered many parties that did not contest for any election office in the 2011 elections leading to the reduction of registered political parties to only 25.

14. The reality on ground however, has been that the hands of INEC have been tied since the Supreme Court judgment in Balarabe Musa and others versus INEC prohibiting the electoral management body from imposing extra-constitutional measures to bar parties whose national executive committees have been properly constituted. The attempt to weed out parties that fail the test of winning elections through the amendment of the Electoral Act could not work because the

liberal ruling of the Supreme Court made it easy for these parties to simply re-apply for registration knowing that the hands of INEC are tied and it has a legal obligation to register them. It was for this reason that the legal basis for deregistration was escalated to the Constitution.

15. Arising from the fourth alteration (No. 9, Act, 2017) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which commenced on 4th May, 2018 certain amendments were made with regard to INEC's control of political parties. Specifically, Section 225A of the Constitution, which is part of the alteration makes provision for the power of INEC to register and deregister political parties, thus:

POWER FOR THE DE-REGISTRATION OF A POLITICAL PARTY

225A: The Independent National Electoral Commission shall have the power to de-register a political party for:

- a) Breach of any of the requirements for registration;
- b) Failure to win at least twenty five percent of votes cast in:
 - i. One State of the Federation in a Presidential Election; or
 - ii. One Local Government of the State in a Governorship Election;
- c) Failure to win at least:

- I. One ward in the Chairmanship election;
- ii. One seat in the National or State House of Assembly Election; or
- iii. One seat in the Councillorship Election

16. In February 2020, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) used this power to prune the number of registered political parties from 92 to 18. The decision to axe 74 political parties was justified on the basis of their poor performance in the 2019 election. The increase in the number of our political parties to 92 had created a lot of confusion in the minds of the electorate. For voters, it was often difficult to distinguish between similar symbols or emblems of the parties. The Electoral Commission faced a huge challenge printing very long ballot papers that could contain the list of all the contests. In addition, the huge bulk of the voting materials created a transportation crisis as many of the materials were too wide to enter the hold of small aircraft. The reduction of numbers is considered as a first step towards creating the conditions for the development of capable political parties that could grow in popularity based on a growing membership and a good programme. The problem however is that the de-registered parties could always re-constitute themselves and apply and obtain a new registration. Indeed, in May 2021, INEC announced that about 40 new parties had applied for registration.

(UNDER)DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

17. The core problem of Nigerian parties is that virtually all of them are not real membership parties. This means they do not really seek to recruit members and those presented as so-called party members have virtually no say in party affairs. Parties, small and big, have godfathers who control their affairs as Abubakar Momoh has argued:

The influence and power of godfathers have continued to shape and reshape the nature of internal democracy within political parties and this continues to play a significant role in understanding the crises in political parties in Nigeria. Not only do godfathers influence politics within their parties but they have also sought to influence other civil societies that could become instruments in their bid to perpetuate their political powers (Momoh, 2014:91).

18. He draws attention for example at the way in which the leadership of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) have become tools of godfathers in doing the heavy lifting of controlling political parties at the local level in certain parts of the country. The practice therefore is for godfathers and party barons rather than members to run parties through clientelist networks that are used by the party barons to

“deliver” crowds for rallies and party congresses. Indeed, parties tend to treat their members with disdain and utter disrespect. Consequently, the political relationship within the parties is essentially one between patrons and clients and the clients are mobilised on pecuniary, ethnic, religious or regional basis.

19. The clearest demonstration of this disdain for party members was in 2005 when the then ruling party dismissed all its members. According to the party: “The People's Democratic Party (PDP) is full of members who fraudulently obtained their party membership cards” – Tribune, 23/11/2005. These were the words pronounced by Col Ahmadu Ali, Chairman of the then ruling People's Democratic Party to justify the decision of the party to dismiss all its members in November 2005. For weeks, the PDP enjoyed the distinction of being the only ruling political party in world history without a single member. Following the dismissal of all the party members, a thorough process of screening was developed to ensure only the right type of people are re-admitted back into the party. Among those refused registration were the then Vice President of the country and numerous state governors elected under the platform of the ruling party. Party godfathers took over control of the screening process to ensure that all those who pose political risks to their authority were not allowed back into the party. Was it not a tragic story, it could have been comical as party godfathers and barons deployed armed policemen to “protect” the party and its offices from its

erstwhile dissolved members. Atiku Abubakar who was a founding party member and at the time the Vice President of Nigeria led protestors in a national campaign insisting that as a foundation member of the party he must be re-registered. In a rare moment of magnanimity, the President ordered the party to register the Vice President. They obeyed. The party leaders had all been imposed in congresses where the party constitution was set aside and party leaders were appointed by presidential fiat rather than elections.

20. In trying to understand why a party would dismiss all its members and make it difficult for them to re-integrate, we need to understand the relationship between parties and elections in Nigeria. Nigeria has a long history of incumbent parties rigging elections to retain power. This happened in the second-round elections of 1964 – after the relatively free and fair election of 1959. It was repeated in 1983 after the relatively free and fair elections of 1979, In the Fourth Republic, the 1999 elections were relatively free and fair but the elections organised by incumbents in 2003 and 2007 were considered the most fraudulent elections in Nigeria's political history. Fraudulent elections have a direct impact on political parties – they destroy the popularity principle that guides the actions of political parties in democratic political systems. In democratic systems, political parties devote themselves to recruit members and supporters who would promote the party and vote for it during elections. When seeking candidates to contest in elections,

parties would accept the people who secure the highest votes in primaries because such people have shown themselves to be popular and could therefore win elections. When political parties however know that they would win elections through electoral fraud, they do not require popularity from members and supporters. What they require are state power, arms, thugs and money to rig the elections.

21. In order words, such parties are not about democracy and elections. The report of experts prepared by the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies just before the 1983 elections, correctly predicted that the elections could not be conducted without massive electoral fraud because the parties in power were not ready to allow others to come to power (NIPSS, 1983:3). The report also showed that only the 1959 and 1979 elections were held without systematic rigging and that those two elections had one point in common: they were held in the presence of strong arbiters, the colonial State and the military, who were not themselves participants in the elections and who desired free and fair elections at those instances. Indeed, it has been observed that rigging is almost synonymous with Nigerian elections (Kurfi, 2005:101). Are elections doomed to the machinations of fraudsters who frustrate the democratic aspirations of the Nigerian people? I do not think so and as we shall see substantive changes have occurred over the past few years. Citizens cannot be perpetually frustrated in terms of their democratic aspirations

that candidates they vote for in the majority emerge as flag bearers of their mandate.

22. Precisely because of this history of electoral fraud, elections in the country have often been associated with political tension and indeed violence and crises (Adekanye, 1990:2). The outcomes of many elections in Nigeria have been so contested that the conditions for the survival of the democratic order have been compromised. This sad history of electoral fraud or rigging has serious implications for our democratic future because as long as it does not change, our democratic future will remain risky. Indeed, major political conflicts have emerged around rigged elections over the past five decades (Kurfi, 2005:97). Historically, it was precisely because many elections were not events in which party members and supporters express political choices that a political party would think it was acceptable for it to sack all their members, demonstrating the simple reality that unlike is the case for normal political parties, they do not need the members.

23. This type of attitude has significant impact on the Nation's political process. The Babalakin Commission of Inquiry into the 1983 elections correctly argued that:

The nature of politics and political parties in the country is such that many men and women of ability and character simply keep out of national politics. For the most part,

political parties are dominated by men of influence who see funding of political parties as an investment that must yield rich dividends. (FRN, 1986:348)

24. The history of electoral fraud has severely impacted on the internal culture of ruling parties. Competition in Nigeria's party system is very intense within the ruling party and less so between the political parties. The competition internal to the parties is not about who has the votes of members. It is about those who can use anti-democratic tactics – violence, bribes, illegal use of security agencies and so on to obtain leadership or nomination by force. The test case for this trend of anti-democratic politics occurred with the first case in which an incumbent party was defeated in an election – 2015. The party, the APC became successful partly because it was able to convince many governors of the then ruling PDP to abandon their party and join it. Since the APC took over power, floods of godfathers and barons from the PDP have joined the new ruling party in a process Abubakar Momoh has called political nomadism:

Political nomadism represents the defection(s) or arbitrary movement of politicians from one political party to another, or their formation of completely new party, after dumping their original party of membership. What makes the defection nomadic? This is because first they turn political parties into grazing grounds and second because the rate of defections is so high, arbitrary and sometimes inexplicable. These defections are often on

grounds of lack of internal democracy in the party, godfatherism, highhandedness and usurpation of power and abuse of position. Like is the case with any grazing ground, nomads will return to it or abandon it depending on whether the land is vegetated or barren. Hence political nomads do not mind returning to their initial party of origin, if their interest is best served. Interest rather than principle is the driving force (Momoh, 2014:92).

25. Momoh differentiates between political nomadism and cross carpeting, a lot of which takes place in the National Assembly. While the former does not foreclose the possibility of a politician moving out of a party into another party for a while, and returning to the original party after some period, the latter presupposes that a politician moves completely from an original party to a different party. Such a politician may or may not return to his/her party of origin. Cross carpeting takes place within parliament while political nomadism takes place in the context of the political party.

IMPROVED ELECTIONS AND THE RETURN OF THE POPULARITY PRINCIPLE

26. The 2011 Elections was a turning point in the history of Nigeria's democratic development. That was the first time in our post-colonial history when an election organised under the auspices of a hegemonic party in power was considered freer and fairer than the previous election. The trend started to

change because while 2003 was worse than 1999 and 2007 was worse than the 2003 elections, 2011 election was better than the previous one. The emergence of Professor Attahiru Jega as INEC Chairman was a critical factor in changing the trend because of his competence, determination and leadership skills. Significant improvement to the compilation of the voter's list and the introduction of a biometric ID-card were key elements that induced change. The subsequent introduction of the verification machine was another element. Meanwhile, citizen's experience of mandate protection measures and their deployment of civic action to protect their votes had been growing since the 2007 elections. President Goodluck Jonathan, who appointed Jega, was also less willing to engage in brazen political manipulation to favour his party. All these combined to provide the outcome of improved elections. Once the integrity of elections begins to improve, they are supposed to have an impact on the nature of political parties. Specifically, the popularity principle is supposed to return and parties with more popular candidates should begin to win in response to the stimuli.

27. There has however been no clear indication that parties had started to change their character because the nature of elections was changing. Nonetheless, the evidence from the field should have provided clear guidance to the parties. The party of the leading opposition party in the 2011 election – Congress for Progressive Change, led by Muhammadu Buhari's

provides a good example. Buhari had left his previous party, the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), which he considered was being manipulated by dishonest godfathers. He therefore established the CPC as a different type of party where justice and fair play would reign and rules would be followed. Buhari was massively popular in the North East and North West of Nigeria and his supporters considered him to be a man of integrity. The CPC was therefore expected to be a different type of party by his supporters.

28. Political pundits expected that the popularity of Buhari in the two zones would create a political tsunami that would lead his party to win at least six gubernatorial seats in the North East and North West. The CPC ran primaries that were hotly contested and many gubernatorial aspirants contested the primaries with the popular ones believing they would succeed because this was a party that was really committed to justice and fair play. Following the elections, analysts were surprised that the CPC did not win gubernatorial seats in the North East and North West. They produced only one governor, in Nasarawa State, which was not considered to be a stronghold of the party. This unexpected outcome requires some reflection.

29. The CPC had serious crisis because there were widespread accusations that their primaries were conducted and winners emerged undemocratically. In many of the states in the zones in

which the party was most popular, the names of those who had emerged as victors in the primaries were apparently substituted by other names that were alleged to have bribed CPC party barons. It is difficult to determine whether these allegations were true. What is known however is that in many States such as Bauchi, Kano and Katsina, there were litigations on alleged substitution of names of winners and losers in primaries and it affected the CPC because in many cases, voters did not know the name of the real candidate until a day or two before the election. The most important issue however was that supporters of Buhari believed that party officials had betrayed “Mai Gaskiya” – the truthful Buhari, received bribes and imposed unpopular candidates. Voters in the zones therefore voted for the CPC in the presidential election and voted for other parties in the gubernatorial elections. In other words, party supporters punished their party by refusing to vote for their candidates at all levels except the presidential one because they believed that the CPC, like the other parties, had nothing but disdain for its members. This was a huge lesson for all political parties that they needed to change their ways and respect democratic party processes to win elections. The experience of the CPC is important and should be studied in more detail.

30. There is however little evidence that political parties have learnt any lessons. In the 2015 primaries and the subsequent primaries for gubernatorial and legislative elections that have taken place since 2015, it remained business as usual.

Godfathers continue to manipulate the process and impose their candidate at will. What this tells us is that those who control the political parties are not convinced that political culture has changed and that therefore the improvements that have occurred in terms of elections becoming freer and fairer would be reversed. This is an important lesson to democratic forces. They need to intensify the battle for credible elections or all the gains in terms of improving the integrity of elections could be lost.

31. The current INEC Chairman, Professor Mahmoud Yakubu has shown a clear determination to pursue the path of sustaining the trend of improving the integrity of elections in the country. Many of the national and state commissioners of INEC are also known to be competent election managers but also people committed to working for free and fair elections. The challenge for all democratic actors is therefore to work with the electoral management body to ensure that our elections continue to improve. The strategic objective in this regard is not just to have better elections but to create the knowledge in the political system that parties that wish to do well in future must develop an attitude of recruiting members, but above all, respect their members by strictly adhering to party constitutions and rules, which is the proof that they respect party members. In other words, party godfathers must be made to understand that if they continue to impose candidates who are not popular on the party, then the likely outcome would be that the party

would lose the election. In other words, Nigerians have to make it clear to godfathers and barons that their era is over and the future is for parties to recruit real members who decide on the conduct of party affairs. We must begin to mould our parties to become key players in democratic politics.

DEVELOPING PARTIES FOR DEMOCRATIC POLITICS

32. It is clear that the pathway to deepening democracy is to engage with political parties to make party membership less ephemeral and more real. Nigerian political parties need members not patrons or clients. The attachment of people should be to political parties not to patrons or godfathers who pay for their engagement in the political process. The mode of participation in political party activities, which is currently mediated by political bosses to whom people owe allegiance, should change. This research and earlier studies have shown that in general, party life is most active around election time and patrons and godfathers engage in party activity to obtain nomination and elections for themselves or their surrogates. When they fail to obtain the position, they tend to move out with their clients to other parties in search of new opportunities. In Nigeria therefore, both for the patrons and their clients, adherence to political parties is very fluid and opportunistic. It is also true that at the grassroots, many people own multiple party cards as they seek to be invited to as many party congresses as possible, because the tradition is to pay participants for their support and votes. Such people therefore move from party to

party in search of opportunities. This is the entrepreneurial approach to politics, which should be replaced by a more democratic one. It is important to build a new political ethos based on principles and issue-based approach to politics.

IDEOLOGY AND ISSUE-BASED POLITICS

33. The ideology question and the left/right divide have largely disappeared from Nigerian political parties so party conflicts are focused on issues of personalities, ethnic groups, religion, geopolitical zones and the control of power. And yet, ideology matters in Nigeria. Nigerians are profoundly opposed to the liberal economic policy packages supported by the Bretton Woods institutions. Political parties can therefore articulate this vision, but they do not. The Constitution requires that all political parties draw their programmes and manifestoes from Chapter Two of the Constitution - Directive Principles of State Policy. That section of the Constitution places a lot of obligation on the state to provide for the welfare of citizens. It is virtually a social democratic manifesto. Party manifestos however elicit little interest or debate because the parties simply provide them to satisfy a constitutional obligation. The key challenge for political party development is therefore to bring issue-based politics back to the agenda. During the Second Republic for example, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) was known for its commitment to free education, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) for its housing policy and the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) for its opposition to taxing the peasantry. It is difficult today to

associate any issue with any political party. The motivation for engagement in party activities in Nigeria today is simple – power and money. The motivation for political contest is dominance and control not ideology of issues.

LACK OF CIVILITY AND EXCLUSIONARY POLITICS

34. Civility is one quality that is largely absent in political party life. The most important aspect of the internal functioning of political parties in Nigeria since 1978 is that they have a persistent tendency to factionalise and fractionalise. As people go into politics to seek power and money, the battle for access is very intense and often destructive. Thugs, violence and betrayal are often the currency for political party engagement. Indeed, the period leading to each election is marked by the assassination of party leaders and contestants for various offices. The reality in the political field is that political 'godfathers' who use money and violence to control the political process essentially operate many political parties. They decide on party nominations and campaign outcomes and when candidates try to steer an independent course, violence becomes an instrument to deal with them. The result is that they raise the level of electoral violence and make free and fair elections difficult. Although parties have formal procedures for the election of their leaders, these procedures are often disregarded; when they are adhered to, the godfathers have means of

² This section draws from the interviews and focus group discussion but also from my chapter "Introduction: substantially from my Chapter: "Engaging Political Parties for Democratic Development" Obafemi Olu, Egwu Sam, Okechukwu Ibeanu and, Ibrahim Jibrin (Eds) *Political Parties and Democracy in Nigeria*, National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, 2014, Abuja.

determining the outcomes. The level of violence, thuggery, and monetization of Nigerian politics provides a significant disincentive for women to take part as candidates, and the monetization aspect also makes young people less likely to influence politics in an effective way due to their lower level of access to resources.

LACK OF CIVILITY AND THE FEMALE POLITICIAN

35. The female politician is a major victim of the lack of civility in the political process. She suffers from various modes of marginalisation, many of which are hurtful and full of invectives. In general, party officials refuse to take the candidature of female aspirants seriously. Ironically, one of their main reasons was the affirmative action policy adopted by some of the parties waiving nomination fees for female aspirants. Party executives in most constituencies set out to label women as aspirants with less than the required commitment to the party. Party barons at the local level repeatedly argue that by convincing the national executives to remove nominations fees for them, women have demonstrated a lack of commitment to the development of the party. This argument was used to make declarations that male candidates are more committed to the party because they make their financial contributions willingly and that commitment should be recognised and rewarded. Such officials therefore succeeded in labelling women aspirants as “anti-party” people and thereby created the basis for their exclusion. It is worthwhile recalling the analysis of Geof Wood on

the role of labelling in the elimination of competitors:

“The authors of labels, of designations, have determined the rules of access to particular resources and privileges. They are setting the rules of inclusion and exclusion, determining eligibility, defining qualifications... The authors of labels successfully imposed on others are powerful.”

36. Once a negative label has been successfully imposed on an aspirant, it is easy to exclude the labelled person irrespective of the formal rules and procedures established, because the person's legitimacy has been eroded. A second negative labelling strategy used to exclude women aspirants has to do with the cultural deviant label. The way the arguments is presented is that Nigerian culture does not accept assertive, or public, or leadership roles for women. The 1979 Constitution introduced the concept of indigeneity into Nigerian public law as an equity principle to guaranty fair regional distribution of power. Over the years, the principle has been subverted and used to discriminate against Nigerian citizens who are not indigenes of the places where they live and work. Women who are married to men who are non-indigenes of their local governments suffer systematic discrimination. While women suffer greatly from the large repertoire of techniques used to eliminate people from political party primaries, less powerful men also suffer.

37. Given the general lack of civility in party politics and the prevailing culture of violence and invective, the Babalakin Commission of Inquiry into the 1983 elections stated in clear terms that:

"The nature of politics and political parties in the country is such that many men and women of ability and character simply keep out of national politics. For the most part, political parties are dominated by men of influence who see funding of political parties as an investment that must yield rich dividends." (FRN, 1986:348)

38. The fundamental objective of political party development should be to reverse this trend and get more people with ideas and vision to integrate the leadership of political parties. As Nigeria moves towards the 2019 elections, it is imperative that political parties imbibe the culture of internal democracy as a means of creating harmonious conditions that would not only enhance their performance but also be of help when they eventually win elections.

THE DIFFICULT TASK OF PARTY REGULATION

39. Regulating political parties has become an extremely difficult job in Nigeria. The Independent National Electoral

³ For details, see Ibrahim, Jibrin and Salihu, Amina *Women, Marginalisation and Politics in Nigeria*, Centre for Democracy and Development, Open Society Initiative and Global Rights, Abuja, 2004.

Commission (INEC) has powers under the Electoral Act 2010 as amended to be present at conventions, congresses, conferences or meetings of political parties, as observers. The Electoral Act provides that parties shall give the Commission sufficient notice of any convention, congress, conference or meeting convened for the purpose of electing members of its executive committees, other governing bodies or nominating candidates for any of the elective offices specified under this Act. The Commission may with or without prior notice to the Political Party monitor and attend any convention, congress, conference or meeting, which is convened by a political party for the purpose of electing members of its executive committees or other governing bodies or nominating candidates. The reality however is that INEC has had great difficulty in getting parties to keep to their own rules and the laws establishing them. The Electoral Act is ambiguous:

- i. It requires parties to conduct primaries and conventions to elect candidates and party officials and it is categorical that only those who win the most votes shall be deemed elected;
- ii. At the same time, it says that the persons elected are those whose names are submitted by the party leadership.
- iii. Party leaderships have developed the practice of deciding who they want rather than who has received the most votes.
- iv. The judiciary has tended to support party leaders in their

⁴ G. Wood "The Politics of Development Policy Labeling" *Development and Change*, Vol. 16, 1985, page 352.

judgments there reinforcing the tradition that party leaders can do what they want.

40. This is the underlying logic that leads to the process of continuous internal party crisis in the country. Party bosses of godfathers are not ready to allow internal party democracy and this leads to frequent conflicts and the underdevelopment of political parties as popular organisations. Indeed, these party bosses have over the years developed comprehensive techniques for eliminating popular aspirants from party posts and from being nominated for elective posts. We draw from Ibrahim and Salihu (2004) below to draw attention to such techniques.

POLITICAL PARTY TECHNIQUES FOR THE ELIMINATION OF POPULAR ASPIRANTS

41. Political parties in Nigeria have developed a large repertoire of techniques used to eliminate people from political party primaries. They include the following:

- a) Declaration by powerful “party owners”, party barons, state governors, “godfathers,” etc that people must support one candidate and others must withdraw. As these people are very powerful and feared in their communities, their declarations carry a lot of weight.
- b) Zoning is another technique, which is usually used by party officials. Zoning and other forms of administrative fiat are used to exclude unwanted aspirants by simply making the

- party zone out the seat or position in question to an area where the aspirant being excluded is not an indigene.
- c) Violence and the use of thugs or security personnel are often used by candidates opposing the godfather's candidates.
 - d) Money is of course a major factor in party primaries and is used both to bribe officials and encourage voters support particular candidates. Since in general, the godfather has more money than the “independent” aspirants trying to enter the political fray, many are eliminated because they simply could not match their opponents – Naira for Naira.
 - e) One of the most disturbing techniques used to aspirants is what Nigerians call “results by declaration”. This means that an aspirant would win a nomination or election and polling officials would simply disregard the results and declare the loser to be the winner.

42. Given this history and vast armoury of sophisticated techniques for eliminating women from democratic political spaces, a huge challenge before the agenda of party reform is that of democratising the internal processes of parties.

43. Internal democracy in all of Nigeria's political parties is limited. While there are rules on primary and internal party elections, parties often ignore, twist or otherwise subvert the rules to arrive at candidates through processes of selection, negotiation, or manipulation. The principle of zoning, in terms of

providing equal opportunities by geographical area, sometimes serves to disenfranchise candidates who might otherwise contest.

BUILDING THE DEMOCRATIC CAPACITY OF POLITICAL PARTIES

44. To build the democratic capacity of Nigeria's political parties, the following issues must be addressed:

a) Inter-Party Initiatives:

- i. To increase civility between political parties, and to encourage political parties to address electoral issues in a constructive forum, it would be useful to **promote an inter-party dialogue forum that consists of the parliamentary parties**. To be effective, this forum needs to bring all the parliamentary parties together at the table, and ensure that both the ruling party and the opposition parties agree to take the issues raised at the forum seriously. Such a forum could help reduce electoral and political violence, develop an agenda for electoral reform and improved elections management, and build a culture of trust, tolerance and acceptance of diversity in Nigeria's charged political climate. To ensure that the inter-party forums are adequately representing all Nigerians, parties should ensure that their delegations include significant numbers of women, youth and persons with disabilities. The agenda for dialogue forums should also be inclusive to address electoral- and party-related concerns of

particular interest to women, youth and PWD;

- ii. To reduce excessive “cross carpeting” and begin to build party loyalty, it would be important to strengthen legal provisions **that limit the ability of political leaders to switch allegiances frequently between political parties.** Although care should be taken not to restrict excessively ability to change party loyalty, the following reforms might support a process by which increased party loyalties can be built over time: 1) a law restricting the ability of party leaders to switch parties once elected, forcing them to resign their seats if they switch party allegiances. Such a law would both limit defection and discourage party leaders from switching parties just to find a party that will make them a candidate on its ticket; 2) a law restricting party leaders who stand in one party's primary and lose from standing in another party's primary during the same election cycle. Such a law could prevent strategic defections and would help build party loyalty and party discipline. It might also build pressure for greater internal democracy within parties, and freer and fairer primary elections; and 3) any other legal reforms that would discourage frequent switching of party allegiance without unduly constraining individual freedom of association;
- iii. To improve the competitiveness of the party system and create a more level playing field for players, it is important

to develop **mechanisms that ensure that state resources are not used to the advantage of the incumbent in elections, and that all candidates get equal access to the media as stated in law. Reflections on mechanisms to guaranty access necessary;**

- iv. To build greater consensus on a legal framework for regulating parties, and support legal reforms to achieve a better legal framework, civil society and political parties should engage in **dialogues and reform initiatives on areas including: party finance, party regulation, party internal democracy, proportional representation electoral systems, affirmative action for women, youth and PWDs in parties, and party regulatory options.** The UNDP should also consider supporting campaigns that advocate for reforms that can provide for a more democratic framework for parties to operate and for citizens to use parties as avenues to participate in democracy; and
- v. To address the challenge of lack of participation by women, youth, and persons with disabilities in leadership and decision-making in the party system and as candidates, there should be **support for working groups on gender, youth and disability issues to advocate for reforms such as:** legal changes mandating affirmative action in political parties and among lists of candidates fielded by political parties; Providing reserved seats in national and



local assemblies for marginalized groups; Development of agreements among all parties to engage marginalized groups at certain levels and based on certain principles; Adoption of non-discrimination and empowering policies by parties towards marginalized groups; Adoption of key policy issues of each marginalized group by leading parties in the party system; Public information campaigns to generate awareness on issues related to participation of marginalized groups in parties and politics, to generate support for initiatives.

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PAPER II

NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: A CITIZEN-CENTRED APPROACH?

Being Paper Presented on the Theme:
“Developing Good Governance in a Network Society”
in Commemoration of 2021 Democracy Day

By

Ambassador Bulus Lolo

At

SAVANNAH CENTRE FOR DIPLOMACY, DEMOCRACY AND
DEVELOPMENT

ABUJA, TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021

I would like to express my profound gratitude to the Savannah Centre and more especially, my brother and friend, Ambassador Sani Bala, the Executive Director of the Centre, for inviting me to this year's annual Democracy Day programme. It is gratifying to note that the Centre has taken upon itself to mark Democracy Day in Nigeria annually. It is also a thing of joy to see the calibre of persons who have been invited either to make presentations or be discussants today. This goes to show that Savannah Centre is truly living up to its objectives of being a think tank, facilitator and capacity builder. The choice of this year's theme of “**Developing Good Governance in a Network Society**” is commendable, poignant and timely.

2. To the amazement, and I dare add, chagrin of some, democracy has endured and remained stable in Nigeria for a little more than twenty-two (22) years. This is remarkable for a diverse country with multiple fault lines and a chequered political history. Given the disappointment of the failures of the early political experiments following independence, few people would have believed when this journey began in 1999 that Nigeria will record more than two decades of uninterrupted civil rule. Yet, we are here today to mark twenty-two years of continuous civil rule punctuated with a clean peaceful transition of political power from a ruling party to a party that was in opposition.

3. I have been asked to speak on the topic: **“Nigerian Foreign Policy: A Citizen-Centric Approach?”**. I need not remind that my topic is situated in the broader context of the theme of *“Developing Good Governance in a Network Society”*. The first speaker has already laid the foundation for the discourse. With a view to putting ideas in their proper perspective, I will like to briefly add my comments on the concepts of “good governance” and “network society” before going into the substance of my assigned topic.

4. As appealing and popular as the concept of “good governance” is, I should point out that its definition is not straightforward. This is because “good governance” is best measured contextually. What is understood and interpreted to

be good governance in one context may fall short in another. For instance, a financial development specialist would see “good governance” more in the light of how economic institutions work, management of resources, efficiency and effectiveness of regulatory frameworks, transparency and accountability. On the other hand, a human rights specialist would put more emphasis on access, inclusivity, equity, fundamental freedoms like freedom of expression, association, belief and choice. Equally too, an environmentalist would see “good governance” from the prism of preservation and sustainability. Unless we put the concept of good governance in a specific context, we will find some analytical contradictions because what may amount to be an adequate and appropriate measure of good governance in one setting may not be so in another.

5. I therefore, agree with the view that good governance “means different things to different organizations, not to mention to different actors within these organizations (to make matters even more confusing), governance experts also routinely focus on other governance – global governance, corporate governance, IT governance, participatory governance and so on – which may be related only peripherally to the governance agenda vis-à-vis domestic politics and administration”. Therefore, it is necessary for me to readily acknowledge that “good governance” is “a great example of a poorly specified concept”.⁶ Consequently, its use

and application, I should reiterate, must be context specific.

6. Mindful of the challenges inherent in the use of the expression “good governance”, I intend to speak on good governance in the context of the characteristics or features of accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, judicious management of resources, fundamental freedoms, human rights, inclusivity, openness, participation, rule of law, security (human and physical), sustainability, transparency and so on as they relate to domestic politics. These basic elements of good governance, incidentally, are cardinal to a functioning democracy. When they are absent however, it will be problematic to classify or regard a system as being democratic. I will be looking at Nigeria's foreign policy in the context of our domestic politics and particularly, the processes, procedures and practices in the administration and management of our public institutions and systems.

7. The end goal of good governance is to produce public or common goods that serve all and sundry regardless of class, ethnicity, religion, political persuasion and personal life. The primary responsibility of government is to meet the needs of people, protect their dignity, guarantee their safety and well-being and provide opportunities for enterprise in a fair and equitable manner. Where there is good governance, institutions and systems function well and services are not only adequate, but are also effective and efficient. In such a setting,

hospitals, roads, education, jobs, security and utilities to mention a few will be adequate. The quality of life and well being of the people will be assured. Indeed, in such a setting, there will be no reason for people to engage in widespread criminal activities or migrate in droves to other lands where they engage in horrendous criminal activities. On the other hand, where there is bad governance, corruption will be rampant; there will be no respect for the rule of law; systems will breakdown; insecurity will be high; basic services will collapse; social and political agitations will be rife and the people will lose faith in themselves and their government. Any society that exhibits these features of bad governance will be manifesting the finest failure in governance, which is, failure to serve the people.

8. With regard to a “network society”, there are two concepts joined in one. First, the notion of “network” according to the Webster's New Century Dictionary, is “an arrangement of intersecting lines; a group of people who cooperate with each other; a chain of interconnected operations, computers etc”. This definition of a “network” is very important because it will help to properly situate a society that is networked. Second, society, according to the same dictionary, means, “the social relationships between human beings or animals organized collectively; the system of human institutional organization; a community with the same language and customs; an interest

⁵ See Rachel Gissequist, What Does “Good Governance” Mean, United Nations University, 2012.
www.unu.edu/publications/articles/what-does-good-governance-mean.html, accessed June 19, 2021

group or organization; the fashionable or privileged members of a community; companionship". While this definition is undoubtedly loaded, it connotes principally community, relationships, interests and organization. A "network society" thus, is one that draws from and taps into other intersecting links to operate. In a network, the individual links do not exist in isolation.

9. Now, in trying to understand how to develop good governance in a network society, as the organizers of today's event seek to do, it is important to emphasize that good governance cannot be a one-off event; it must be a continuous process. It cannot also be left to the whims and caprices of people in government or politics to do what they like; repeat the same mistakes and expect different results. Good governance has no room for ethnicity, nepotism, favoritism, parochialism, religious bigotry or any other negative consideration. It thrives on meritocracy, competence and capability. Good governance requires that the best available tools and resources be deployed for the accomplishment of the most challenging tasks or duties. Against this backdrop, I should stress that developing good governance in a network society must be the collective effort of the government and the governed with each playing the expected role for the attainment of a desired purpose (common good).

⁶ Webster's New Century Dictionary, Gramercy Books, New York, 2001

10. Having said the foregoing, let me now turn to the substance of my topic. In simple terms, foreign policy is the way and manner in which a country deals or interacts with other countries with a view to achieving certain goals or objectives. It is also by nature, the projection of a country's domestic policies externally. Nigeria, like all other countries, has a foreign policy that is defined by certain objectives and principles. The principles of Nigeria's foreign policy have remained the same since independence in 1960. As the Concept Note has identified, these principles are:

- a) Maintenance of friendly relations with all States, including peaceful co-existence;
- b) Respect for territorial integrity and independence of all States;
- c) Sovereign equality of all States;
- d) Pacific settlement of disputes;
- e) Non-alignment
- f) De-Colonization based on the principles of self-determination.
- g) Respect for the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and
- h) Promotion of Pan-Africanism, solidarity and African unity.

11. With the passage of time, some of the principles of our foreign policy have become out dated and therefore, irrelevant in the twenty first century. To be specific, with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 and its client States in the

Warsaw Pact, the concept of non-alignment has lost its allure and meaning. The world has become a uni-polar system dominated by Western capitalist ideology. There are no political blocs out there to warrant Nigeria's continued adherence to and pursuit of a non-aligned policy in the global arena.

12. Similarly, the goal of decolonization has largely been achieved with regard to geographical territories and peoples. South Africa rid itself of the obnoxious system of Apartheid in 1994. South Sudan broke free from the dominance of the Arab Republic of Sudan in 2011. Overlooking Western Sahara and Catalonia, where there are ongoing demands for independence, one can say that there are hardly other places where there are pronounced demands for territorial independence. This is to suggest that colonial domination as we know it, characterized by the control of one geographical territory over another has almost become extinct. In making this assertion, I am in no way suggesting or inferring that there are no internal political practices and processes, which have the same effects or impact as colonial domination. A situation where one group or section at whatever level of government alienates, dominates and attempts to perpetuate its dominance over others, will be engaging in classic internal colonial domination.

13. In my analysis of Nigeria's foreign policy, I will not delve into the academic bend of our discourse. I will simply reiterate that

foreign policy by its nature, is essentially, the projection of a country's domestic policies externally. In clear and direct terms, I am saying that what a country does at home impacts on its conduct and has consequence(s) abroad. It is a well established fact that there is an inter-play between domestic and foreign policy. Besides, no country is or can be an island to itself. This is where the relevance of the theme of this year's event gains its significance. Nigeria is not an island and cannot conduct its activities in isolation.

14. I have already set the contexts of my presentation. It remains for me to address how good governance and foreign policy fit together and whether it is possible to have a dimension of “A Citizen-Centric Approach” in Nigeria's foreign policy. In doing this, I should point out that there is a little dilemma when it comes to analyzing the concept or notion of a “citizen-centric approach”. What is the real meaning of this amorphous concept? By “citizen-centric approach”, are we talking about the involvement of citizens in foreign policy formulation and execution or are we referring to citizens as the centre of foreign policy pursuit? This dilemma has to be well understood and clarified if we are to avoid confusion in our analysis and prognosis.

15. It can be deduced from the Concept Note that there is a call or desire for the focus of Nigeria's foreign policy to be citizen-centred. The Note asserts that “Critics have posited that

these principles are not citizen-centred and thus must be reviewed". If one's understanding of this assertion is correct, then it means that what is desired is a foreign policy that is centered on the citizens, and perhaps, serves the citizens. Given that foreign policy is the projection of domestic policy externally, it goes without saying that the call for a "citizen-centric approach", is to all intents and purposes, a call for a citizen-centered domestic policy as well.

16. Someone has elegantly described Nigeria's domestic policies as characterized by internal contradictions. This is because the push and pull factors in our domestic political governance have often times tested the country's survival and stability. I noted at the outset that to the amazement and chagrin of some people, democracy has endured and remained stable in Nigeria. I acknowledged that this is no mean feat for a diverse country with multiple socio-political fault lines. But, do all Nigerians celebrate or have reason to celebrate the country's democracy? Nigeria's diversity hangs on the country like an Albatross. It is the country's diversity that has exacerbated its fault lines and it is these fault lines in turn that have thrown up the country's internal contradictions.

17. But what are these contradictions; how do they manifest and why are they contradictions in the real sense? Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and enormously blessed with human and natural resources. There is hardly any field of

intellectual discipline that Nigeria has not produced experts of global renown, who have held their own creditably, and in some instances, even set or broken records. Yet, the country is wallowing in the throes of underdevelopment.

18. The poverty rate in Nigeria is more than 40% or more than 83 million Nigerians live below the country's official poverty line of ₦137,430 per annum. When broken down further to its daily living implications, it translates to this class of Nigerians living on ₦381.75 per day. In 2020, Nigeria earned the sobriquet of being the “poverty capital of the world.” This is a label that does not fit Nigeria's endowments or aspirations. Why should a country with enormous human and natural resources sink to the lowest level of the “poverty capital of the world”?

19. Nigeria is the largest crude oil producing country in Africa and the sixth largest producer in the world. As an oil producing country, Nigeria generates enormous revenue from its crude oil exports. Why should the country degenerate to the level of the “poverty capital of the world”? Why is poverty rampant in the country? Why has the production of oil seemingly become a curse than a blessing?

20. Nigeria generates an average of 4,000 MW of electricity for a population of nearly 200 million people. The country has ample oil, gas, hydro and renewable resources to generate as much as 13,000 MW of electricity. The prevalence of poverty in

⁷Based on the 2019 report of the National Board of Statistics

Nigeria is partly attributable to the abysmally low level of electricity generation and distribution because the electricity needs of individual households and industries are not met. The shortage of electricity is hampering productivity and has in fact, driven some industries either to relocate to other countries or go under entirely.

21. The manufacturing sector contributes less than 10% of Nigeria's GDP and this is dominated by the beverages, cement and food sub-sectors. Other sectors such as textiles are moribund. The implication for the economy is that imports make up the bulk of what Nigerians consume. I normally dub this situation as a weird case of exporting employment and importing unemployment in the real sense given the drain that imports constitute to Nigeria's meagre foreign exchange reserves.

22. Internally, Nigeria is a federation made up of 36 States and 774 Local Governments Areas with three arms of government, but operated as a highly centralized federal political entity. The tensions in the polity are so high that across the country there are agitations for restructuring because some sections no longer want to be part of the federal arrangement. The agitators are unhappy with the present structure and how public institutions are being run. There is cynicism across the land on the demonstrable inability of the government to meet people's basic needs. The failure of government to meet these

needs has fed the culture of corruption, criminality and self-insurance as a way of providing a social safety net.

23. In the 1960s and 1970s, Nigeria was a destination of choice for foreign investors, scholars and others who were in search of greener pastures. From the mid-1980s right up to the twenty first century, Nigeria has been churning out economic migrants who prefer to risk their lives and dignity by embarking on the perilous adventure of migrating to Europe and other destinations through hazardous routes and the Sahara Desert. Human trafficking has also become rampant across Nigeria's porous borders. Once these Nigerians arrive in other lands, lacking legitimate jobs or means of livelihood, they resort to unspeakable criminal activities, thereby tainting the country's image. They are also mostly the group of Nigerians that attack Nigerian embassy buildings and structures.

24. The largest number or majority of Nigerians, sometimes estimated to be as high as 99%, feel left out in access to and the management of resources. So skewed is the system that the very ingredients that underpin Nigeria's domestic politics and particularly, the processes, procedures and practices in the administration and management of the country's public institutions hardly resemble what good governance is about. On nearly each of the indices of good governance, namely, accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, judicious management of resources, fundamental freedoms, human

⁶Borgen Magazine, www.borgenmagazine.com/the-poverty-capital-of-the-world-nigeria/, accessed June 19, 2020

rights, inclusivity, openness, participation, rule of law, security (human and physical), sustainability and transparency, Nigeria's public institutions grossly fall short.

25. The rising incidence of insecurity, kidnappings, ritual killings, terrorism, banditry, human trafficking and other heinous crimes combine to make life in Nigeria to mirror the veritable Hobbesian brutish, nasty and short state of nature. Ethnic and religious diversity that ought to be a source of strength has become a source of vulnerability and weakness in Nigeria. The cumulative effect is that Nigeria has been brought to its knees, desperately gasping for oxygen to stay alive. Some commentators for good or bad have lost hope and are already calling Nigeria “a failed State”.

26. More troubling, Nigeria has suffered from a serious leadership deficit which has stood against the country realizing its destiny and taking its rightful place in the Comity of nations. There is also the added deficit of patriotism in followership and loss of national values. Nigerian leaders and ordinary citizens, at home and abroad, have engaged in actions that are detrimental to the public good. It is the despicable conduct of these Nigerian leaders and ordinary citizens that has brought indignity and lack of respect for innocent Nigerians and the green passport they carry. The activities of Yahoo Boys, drug and human traffickers, 419 and other unlawful actions have not done any favor to Nigeria's image abroad. Instead of coming

closer together, Nigerians are increasingly drifting away from each other. The country is wobbling; its future hangs precariously on the balance. A country that is stable and at ease with itself domestically will largely be at ease abroad. By the same token, a country that is unstable at home will be incoherent, inconsistent and irrelevant abroad.

What Paradigm Shift do we Need in our Foreign Policy?

27. How and why did Nigeria get things so wrong? Why should a country that was destined to be the leader of the continent and the entire black race suddenly go missing from the global radarscope? Why is possession of Nigeria's green passport more of a liability than blessing outside the shores of Nigeria? What about the penchant of Nigerians to attack the country's embassy buildings and other diplomatic posts abroad? How can Nigerians be mobilized democratically to become citizen ambassadors of Nigeria? How can the narrative of Nigeria's image abroad change? How can Nigeria's domestic and foreign policies be made to be citizen-centred? These are weighty questions that are by no means easy to answer. Suffice to say, that Nigeria is an integral part of the global system and therefore, interconnects in the global "network society".

28. New issues and challenges have emerged in the world that demands new thinking and attitude. Africa, a continent once notorious for its wars, famine, diseases and poverty, has witnessed a period of ascendancy. The rest of the world,

notably, new emerging economic powers like Brazil, China and India have turned to Africa as pull centers for their investments and trade. Where does Nigeria fit in all of this and how can the country make its citizens the center of its foreign policy pursuit?

29. In my view, Nigeria's political leaders and elites must carefully think through how they want the country to fit into a highly competitive, dynamic and fluid global space. The explosion in information communication technology (ICT) has further thrown up a new reality where time and space have been skewed and the capacity to spread information across artificial and physical barriers with collateral damage is instant and growing rapidly. In the face of the ever shrinking global space, Nigeria must find her niche. Secondly, Nigeria must recalibrate its foreign policy objectives as they relate to West Africa, Africa and the world at large. Thirdly, Nigeria must deploy adequate and appropriate tools for the pursuit of its foreign policy goals. Fourthly, Nigeria will need to objectively assess the adequacy and effectiveness of its available material and human capital for foreign policy implementation. Fifthly, Nigeria must find the way and means of optimizing the benefits of its membership of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

30. I have been an indefatigable advocate of foreign policy review in Nigeria. It should therefore not come as a surprise if I use this forum to reiterate my advocacy and call for an urgent

and comprehensive foreign policy review conference that brings together the whole strata of the Nigerian citizenry to deliberate and chart a new predictable foreign policy path for the country. The last such conference took place in 1986 in Kuru, Plateau State. The Kuru conference came out with a Kuru Declaration that served as a roadmap for Nigeria's foreign policy. In the thirty-five years that have elapsed since Kuru, the world has changed dramatically. New issues and global players have emerged; throwing up new opportunities and challenges.

31. It will be necessary and prudent for Nigeria to define a “New Foreign Policy Agenda” that is purpose-driven, coherent and relevant to guide its activities and interactions in a globalized and digitalized world. To this end, Nigeria must identify a concise objective that underpins her exertions in West Africa and the continent at large. The country must find a way to mobilize its citizens at home and abroad to always rally round to support the policies of government. The implementation of these policies must, of necessity, engender accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, fairness, judicious management of resources, fundamental freedoms, human rights, inclusivity, openness, participation, rule of law, security (human and physical), sustainability and transparency in order to win people's trust. Nigeria's institutions, and in particular, the executive, judicial and legislative arms of government must work and be seen to be working for all rather than a few Nigerians or one section of the country.

32. It would be wrong, in light of current realities and particularly, with the emergence of new formidable continental players for Nigeria to continue to perceive Africa as a weak child whose burden she must bear. It will serve our foreign policy better for Nigeria to firmly consolidate her grip on West Africa's impenetrable backyard while seeking to extend her reach as Africa's authentic voice and preferred brand. In the same measure, Nigeria must consciously pursue the goal of turning ECOWAS into its effective foreign policy instrument and regard this as a non-negotiable foreign policy objective. Furthermore, there has to be a deliberate shift to the Nigerian citizen as the centre of focus in our foreign policy pursuits. This must be predicated on the recognition and understanding that there are new economic and political power blocs of consequence in Africa.

33. A shift in foreign policy will impel the adoption of a conceptual framework or theme(s) that should engage Nigeria's attention at all times in West Africa, Africa and globally. In other words, a menu list should be drawn around which, Nigeria's voice will need to be heard. On the issues of peace and security; development (defined by human dignity and human security); democratization (constitutionalism, credible elections, good governance); humanitarian assistance, preventive diplomacy, small arms and light weapons, climate change and terrorism amongst others, Nigeria will need to have a firm and predictable position.

Conclusion

34. If Nigeria is to adopt a citizen-centered foreign policy, and for this policy to be effective, it will be necessary to also put in place the means of measuring the benefits derived from her external exertions and sacrifices. At present, Nigeria offers assistance without any condition or asking for something in return, leading some critics to conclude that Nigeria is a benevolent “Father Christmas”. South Africa, for instance, and by no means the only example, attaches conditions to the assistance it renders to its neighbours and others on the continent.

35. In the final analysis, it will serve Nigeria's interest better to attach conditionality to its aid policy towards its neighbors and other African countries. In this regard, recipients of Nigerian aid should be made to realize that the era of free loading is over. The country must not shy away from pursuing a visible policy of consequence, where, any action that undermines Nigeria's strategic interests will attract reprisals, while acts of cooperation will also attract reward. The treatment of Nigerian nationals and their property within West Africa or anywhere else, must be given center stage. While this should be a calibrated and nuanced policy, its implementation should, nonetheless, be coherent, consistent and predictable. Such a policy shift will give real effect and meaning to a purpose driven, citizen-centered policy orientation.

thank you for your attention.

PAPER III

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA

By

Professor Oshita O. Oshita fspsp, ficmc

The Task: *“Nigeria has witnessed an explosion of conflict and divisiveness in the country, unprecedented in the last 22 years. Inherent in [Nigeria's] democracy is conflict of interests and power politics. What needs to be done beyond the cry of restructuring to manage conflict in the democratic polity? In addressing this issue, the presenter is expected to explore non-state actor stakeholders, the various fragmentation of the society and how to build a strong and cohesive national social order. Confronting the crises of democracy and good governance in Nigeria should be considered...” - Col. Dr. Lawal*

Preface

I begin by sincerely appreciating the Savannah Centre for the privilege to participate in this important event, aimed at promoting constructive dialogue to interrogate democracy, and in particular, the democratisation processes in our dear country, Nigeria.

*Secondly, I make a very unusual submission that **a majority of Nigerians** ought to acknowledge our individual and collective guilt and*

culpability infueling the stench that has clasped our country - corruption, violence and insecurity, particularly, since 1999, when the overpriced experimentation with liberal democracy recommenced. Indeed, across the sectors, the economy, bureaucracy, the public and private services, business, sports, and above all, in the amphitheater of politics, all have sinned and come short of the glory of the Nation State of Nigeria. In my view, no sector can cast the first stone to the contrary. What transpires in these sectors on a daily basis adversely impact accountability and peaceful coexistence and undermine every genuine effort at building peace and resolving conflicts in the context of Nigeria's plurality.

Introduction

In spite of the fact that democracy was driven by the utilitarian philosophy of generating the greatest good for the greatest number and based on citizen participation and inclusiveness, the 22 years of democracy in Nigeria have perhaps been the most divisive in the country's history. Rather than engage the substantive issues of governance, most political actors in Nigeria thrive in promoting centrifugal forces by manipulating ethnicity, religion, region and geography, to divert public attention from the core issues of utilitarian governance. In this context, *in-group* and *out-group* markers are deployed to promote stereotypes, discrimination and demonizing references that stimulate perceptions of *otherness*. How did politics in Nigeria degenerate to this level and what can be done to liberate political actors from the on-going muddle?

2. One of the classic definitions of politics is who gets what, when and how (Lasswell, 1936). In Nigeria, unfortunately, there are bizarre and inexhaustible means for attaining political ends. Politics is a means to primitively accumulate wealth and violence remains one of the primary instruments and a highly prized tool in the toolbox of politicians across all strata in Nigeria. Individuals, groups and institutions are regular targets of political violence, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Security Agencies, homes, Worship places, the Legislature, Judiciary, critical infrastructure, etc. The judicial ambushing of opponents at the tribunals or law courts is also a significant phenomenon in Nigeria politics. In such a political environment, political actors shun dialogue and ensure that conversations quickly turn intemperate or intolerant as each viewpoint poignantly becomes 'a point from a view' rather than *a point of view*. This situation is worsened by the absence of a robust strategic communication pathway to constructively manage diversity and promote inclusiveness across fault lines. Thus, it is common in the political space that unrestrained partisan voices continue to talk past each other without addressing the substantive issues that bother Nigeria as a State that is rich in diversity.

3. The field of peace and conflict studies offers some theoretical perspectives regarding the drivers of conflict disorders in a society. The human needs theory holds that the denial of basic needs would cause violent conflicts. The interests

and positions approach holds that conflict ensues when people put forward their positions rather than their interests in a situation of contest. For the transformational approach of Paul Lederach, conflict can result in good or bad outcomes, depending on how the conflict is transformed. However, all of these perspectives are forms of generalizations that require the 'all things being equal' [ceteris paribus] proviso. Being that Nigeria is a country that is highly endowed but which is unable to provide for its population, the human needs theory is clearly relevant for the Nigerian situation with the widespread unemployment and poverty persist, particularly among the mainly youthful population.

Conceptualization:

4. In Philosophical literature, pluralism refers to a multiplicity of entities and is the opposite of monism. In the socio-political and economic spheres, pluralism refers to groups and their characteristics, the nature of their co-habitation or lack thereof and relationships and the mutual impact and how these affect the context or environment of existence. Furnivall (1948) argued that the term pluralism approximates cultural heterogeneity, which includes diversity, religion, kinship, education, etc. He further explains the concept of pluralism in reference to those countries where the different sections of the population live side by side and mix but do not combine.

5. A plural society means much more than a multi-cultural one although it is often equated with the latter. In terms of categories, pluralism is broader than multi-culturalism, the latter being conceptually a subset of the former. Plural societies are divided into different linguistic, ethnic, religious or, in some other contexts, racial groups and communities. Literature indicates that the term originally referred to colonial formations of states in the developing world of Africa and Asia, where certain more or less self-contained communities were carved for the convenience of colonial authorities with little or no sense of obligation to the nation state (Furnivall, 1948). In this context, plural societies are those that combine ethnic contrasts, the economic interdependence of the component groups and their ecological specialization (Fredrik Barth). These are societies composed of different ethnic groups or cultural traditions, in the political structure of which ethnic or cultural differences are reflected. In varying degrees, majority of the countries in the world are pluralistic in composition and far from being homogeneous.

6. Kuper and Smith (1971) posit that there are varying degrees of plural societies depending on the subsisting dynamics. For them, there exists a plural society where the pluralism of the constituent groups and interests is integrated in a balanced adjustment that provides conditions that are favourable to a stable democratic government. In this regard, pluralism becomes a source of strength in the sense in which constructive

diversity constitutes energy for state building. However, Otaforlee and regards stability in plural societies “as precarious and threatened by sharp cleavages between different sections, whose relations to each other are generally characterized by inequality” (1981). While Nigeria may have been Otaforlee's vision spectacles, it is important to note that, diverse as the above perceptions and definitions may be, we could infer that plural societies would be competitive but not that they are condemned to be inherently conflict-ridden, turbulent or dysfunctional. Thus, managing conflicts in plural societies may be demanding yet, there is evidence that conflict management in relatively homogeneous societies can be equally very tasking. In Africa, one can easily cite the case of Somalia. The fact that Somalis speak the same language, are all Muslims and of the same race did not stop them from being divided by clan or kinship identity.

7. The milestone 2002 study of ethnic diversity alludes to 'a correlation between countries that are ethnically diverse and that experience internal conflict'. Someone has argued that what I may call 'social pluralism' (multiplicity of ethnicities/diversity) may not lead to ethnic violence but the energies that fuel polarization is what leads to ethnic violence. According to Saideman, “where ethnic groups have distinct areas apart from each other within a country, there is more conflict.” Leadership and governance in Nigeria have done little to proactively deal with this issue. In most towns in Nigeria,

including, Kaduna, Calabar, Jos and Kano for instance, there are specific ethnically concentrated areas for building and renting houses. Such settlements provide secure bases from which oppositional groups can launch targeted attacks against each other. As Saideman argues, this facilitates separatism – Nigerians have settled across geography yet remaining attached to the notion of 'my indigenous land'.

Democracy and Conflict Management in Nigeria

8. While reflecting on the ideas for this Paper, The Washington Post's official catch phrase “Democracy dies in Darkness” adopted in 2017 flashed my mind. On reflection, I thought this provides a convenient entry point for interrogating aspects of the turbulent conflict energies in the democratization arena in Nigeria: Violent Campaigns, Elections, Internal Democracy and Party Activities, Corruption, Gender, Defections, Role of 'bad' Money, Organised Crime, etc. Using the case example of democracy and democratisation in Nigeria, it is my view that it is neither pluralism nor diversity that inhibits Nigeria's progress but the oppositional dynamics emitted by the competition of the WAZOBIA triad to heat and polarise the State.

9. Democracy is not enough unless it resonates with Nigerian institutions. The country should evolve a set of core values that are definitive of the Nigerian character of hard work and resilience, and how this corpus relates to the 'super-culture' of Western liberal democracy. Unless democracy is sufficiently

nuanced to Nigeria's values and ethics it will increase rather than diminish violent conflicts in the country. This is consistent with the claim of Hilliard (1998: 4) that "...all societies have a core; none are a clean slate to be written upon by others"; cut and paste democracy undermines Nigeria and the values that define her essence in Peace making, conflict regulation and management.

10. Other factors relevant to strengthening the memory of peaceful coexistence include:

a) Respect for National monuments: Nigeria's history is partially traced to the Amalgamation of Southern and Northern Nigeria in 1914, which took place in Zungeru, in the present day Niger state. Significant as this event is in the history of Nigeria, the building where this ceremony held is no longer in existence. Regime after regime never bothered about the historical significance of the location where the existence of the Nigerian state was consummated. Political independence came in 1960 and the Nigerian Civil war took place from 1967-70. At the end of the civil war, the federal government under the leadership of General Yakubu Gowon committed to a 'no victor, no vanquished' philosophy to heal the wounds and rebuild the country using the three Rs – reconciliation, reconstruction, and recovery. Some of the conflicts in Nigeria today are still linked to the fact that issues relating to the civil war have not been brought to a full closure. More than 49 years after,

memories have yet to be healed and the politics of ethnic profiling is worsening matters;

b) Citizenship and identity in Nigeria remain confusingly slippery terms in practice as well as in the statute books, including the 1999 Constitution. Nigeria has not consciously designed and followed a nation-building strategy since independence. In the same federation, people can only pick contract jobs in states other than those associated with them. Across geographical states in Nigeria citizenship is not guaranteed and identity is tied to being an indigene of a certain place, a situation that has been responsible for many violent conflicts in parts of the country. This is the origin of the indigene-settler conflicts that have resulted in the death of many in different parts of the country and remain the bane of Nigeria's integration. The Ife-Modakeke conflict is over 100 years but it escalated with the creation of Ife-East Local Government Area and recurs. Also, the Jos conflict escalated in 2001 was triggered by political dynamics surrounding the creation of Local Government with recurrent cycles. Similarly, in 1980, there was the case of deportation of an opposition politician, Abdurrahman Shugaba Darman in Borno State. Alhaji Darman of the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) was deported by the Federal Government under the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), to a village in Chad on the allegation that he was a 'prohibited immigrant'. It turned out to be a political

melodrama aimed at neutralizing a powerful opposition figure. Apart from these more well-known examples, there are countless cases of politically-driven conflicts in communities across Nigeria where targeted exclusion, marginalization and victimization of whole populations continue to fuel violent conflicts;

- c) **Reports of judicial and administrative panels** of inquiry into violent conflicts involving massive destruction of property and loss of lives, including White Papers on them, are not implemented. Thus, victims and survivors are left with their pains and relatives of those who might have died also do not find justice. Unwittingly, perpetrators are encouraged to use self-help and violent methods since there seem not to be consequences for what should have been appalling and reprehensible actions. The logic of the government consistently failing to implement reports that prescribe punishment for perpetrators of violence, including government White Papers, simply affirms the rule of violence at the expense of the rule of law; and
- d) **The perilous conditions of legal and social justice** exclude many Nigerians from enjoying basic human and citizenship rights. Access to justice, legal aid and representation are prized above the means of most citizens and those who can afford it could spend a lifetime or a generation to get judgement. With the shrinking state capacity to curb crime

and apprehend perpetrators, many cases that should be tried by the courts are treated extra-judicially. These include criminal and civil matters. While the judiciary continues to do its best, the public trust in the justice system is steadily diminishing for a variety of reasons. In Nigeria, the blind goddess, symbol of justice and equality before the law, has developed clear sight and she is able to pick and choose who to give what measure of justice.

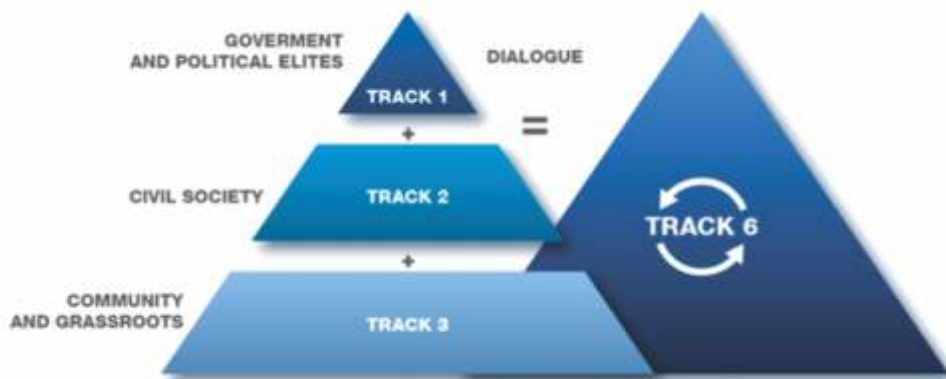
Recognising and Reinforcing the Peace-building Community

11. The peace building community in Nigeria includes professional peace practitioners, state and non-state actors, development partners, civil society organizations, professional associations, religious leaders, traditional rulers, notable individuals and volunteers. We recognize that every institution that works towards good governance is by that process indirectly contributing to strengthening peace. President Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR, established IPCR in the Ministry of Cooperation and Integration in Africa (MCIA), The Presidency, in response to an African Union (AU) Resolution that charged member states to effectively manage conflicts to fast-track African integration.

12. The Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) was the first official government organ established in February 2000 with the direct mandate of researching into the root causes and patterns of violent conflicts in Nigeria. The IPCR does not only

advise government on the prevention and management of violent conflicts but has the mandate to intervene in resolving them. The standard three-track framing is used by IPCR in conceptualizing the cluster of actors in peace building and conflict resolution in Nigeria:

- a) **The National Peace Committee:** The 2015 general elections in Nigeria were no doubt the most tension-soaked since the onset of the fourth republic in 1999. Then opposition candidate of the All Progressive Congress (APC), General Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, was up against the incumbent president, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, GCFR, of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Apart from the political dynamics around ethnicity and religion the two candidates represented the geographical North West and South South zones, respectively. Two unrelated factors exacerbated fears in the polity: the on-going Boko Haram insurgency and a widely publicized scenario conjecture by the US Council



Source: Interpeace: (www.interpeace.org)

on Foreign Relations, which highlighted conditions under which Nigeria might disintegrate in 2015. These conditions gave birth to the National Peace Committee, a body convened by Bishop Mathew Hasan Kukah and Chaired by former Nigerian Military Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, GCFR. The membership included several eminent Nigerians, with the Director-General of IPCR as a coopted member. The secretariat of the group was hosted by the Kukah Centre with support from the IPCR. The success of the 2019 general elections is significantly attributable to the strategic diplomacy and back-channel communication facilitated by the National Peace Committee; and

- b) The Peace and Security Forum:** The Peace and Security Forum (PSF) was convened by the IPCR in partnership with the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), with support from Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP), a DFID project. The PSF brought together civil society groups, the media and strategic government institutions, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), military, paramilitary, security and intelligence groups. It served as a platform for information-sharing on all issues that would impact the 2019 general elections. The internal and public communication strategies of PSF help to defuse tension among election stakeholders before, during and after the elections. The

group issued media statements condemning hate speeches by politicians and used multi-media approaches in countering the narratives of campaign invectives.

The Nexus Between Peace-building, Politics and Conflict Management

13. The elite factor in Nigeria, which entrusts exclusivity of insight in decision-making to the leaders and people of means, usually partisan politicians and their allies, accounts for the caustic nexus of politics, peace building and conflict resolution. In Nigeria, rich men are the philosophers; they are arrogated all the ideas regarding what *is* and what *ought* to be. For the same reasons they are closer to God (Allah), finance construction of churches and mosques and determine who become Pastors and Imams. Expectedly, most of the prayers in the churches and mosques are for their prosperity; their Thanksgivings nourish the church and the mosque. Material wealth (money) is therefore not just power, it is wisdom, it is also considered as favour from God and hence nearness to God.

14. In many communities, cultural and traditional institutions are so entangled in partisan politics that traditional authorities are mere vestiges of embedded political interests, thereby undermining their central role as community mediators. The once revered traditional institutions have largely become platforms for competitive corruption among the ranks of the chiefs, mimicking the political elite that service them.

15. The Nigerian constitution is designed in a way that traditional rulers are appointed and paid by political office holders (State Governors and Local Government Chairmen). Thus, traditional authorities have been politicised, corrupted, blackmailed and largely demystified. Peace is often the first casualty when the trustees of the values of social solidarity, law and order compromise their guardian roles in the land. Examples abound, including the tempestuous conflict between the former Emir of Kano, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi and Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje of Kano State.

Challenges

16. Peace building and Conflict Management in Nigeria is complex and politically saturated. To worsen this situation, the state, and by extension, the government in Nigeria has progressively minimized its positive presence in the everyday lives of the people since the inauguration of the 4th republic in 1999. The privatization and commercialization saw the takeover of vital government investments by 'capital parasites' fronted by the elite political and business class. Public utilities that formed the basis of loyalty, patriotism and bonding between citizens and government were transferred to private hands with the attendant consequence of costlier and inaccessible services. The catch phrase is that "government has no business with business!" This intensified poverty and increased unemployment thereby creating a form of alienation of the majority of the people.

17. One of the carry-overs from the decades of military rule in Nigeria is the aversion of state actors to partner with non-state actors. Government suspicion of civil society, in particular, denies state actors access to the experience that could add to the attainment of the overall goal of good governance. Worse still, even among state institutions, competition rather than collaboration is the trademark of their relationship. Critical sub-sectors like law enforcement, the military, security and intelligence, legislative and prosecutorial, economic planning and finance, etc., maintain a degree of opacity inimical to system performance. In the midst of all of these, a vision of the common good that is guaranteed the people constitutionally has remained blurred. Being elite-led, the institutions pursue the parochial self-interests of a few against the common good, thereby creating conflicts that simmer and eventually escalate.

18. That the public space in Nigeria is replete with 'governmental non-governmental organizations' (GONGOs) is also of concern, as they maintain incestuous relationship with the bureaucracy, often supported by international development partners. These include groups set up by wives of high visibility political and other public office holders at the national, state and local government levels. The activities of some of these groups contribute to the weakening of the ability of democratic institutions to manage conflicts.

Lessons Learned

19. The main lessons learned include:

- a) The economic development principles in Nigeria are antithetical to any planning or investment in peace building and conflict prevention. The annual appropriation budget lexicon is framed exclusively in the language of physical construction. Peace building, conflict prevention and resolution are alien to the language of planning and appropriation. Indeed, diversity management in Nigeria is often ridiculously reduced to what is called 'federal character', with a whole Commission and a retinue of staff;
- b) The budget system in Nigeria assumes that programmes and projects are framed annually, hardly seeing beyond that yearly cycle. While physical projects may fit this frame of 'touch and go', conflict life-cycles are dynamic and do not terminate like bridge construction, for example. Adam Curle, the Quaker precursor of peace building, posited the idea of funding based on 'decade thinking' to underscore this difference, which Paul Lederach also strongly endorses.
- c) Recruitment is often where the dysfunction in the public service system begins in Nigeria. The best candidates in terms of qualification and skills often do not have a chance unless they are recommended by 'a big man.' Training and capacity development in government institutions are mostly patronage networks designed to meet the



pecuniary interests of beneficiaries. As a result, government institutions are hardly able to optimize the utilization of capacities of trained staff even after huge investments might have been made.

Prospects for Peace-building and Conflict Management

20. Over the years, Nigerians of different ethnicities, religions and cultures have become closely knitted through marriages and businesses. A majority of Nigerians are no doubt comfortable living among people of different cultures, religions, languages and ethnicities. Nigerians of all persuasion require basic social goods, a sense of social justice and safety and security. Having failed to provide these basic needs, and with the increasing inequalities and poverty, the political elite

⁹In a keynote speech marking 40 years of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford, John Paul Lederach urged practitioners to plan programmes within the 'decade thinking' frame of Adam Curle in order to allow for traction and ensure longer lasting dividends of peace and development. See [https://www.google.com/url \(http://www.youtube.com/watch\)](https://www.google.com/url(http://www.youtube.com/watch)). Accessed June 9, 2019.

manipulate the differences into violent conflicts. There are huge prospects for peaceful coexistence if government is able to provide the basic infrastructure to deliver enduring peace and sustainable development in Nigeria. However, as long as government is unable to deliver on smart policy choices, governance would stagnate and social wellbeing and growth become natural casualties.

21. As elite groups simply pattern their lifestyles after the scandalous display of affluence of their predecessors, ending the culture of impunity is central to restoring accountability. This will boost conflict mediation and the prospects of durable peace in Nigeria. Also, the prevailing perception that self-help pays is fuelling impunity at the highest levels in the country. In this regard, unsettled rule of law issues remain a fundamental drawback on the search for peace and security in Nigeria. In addition, a shift would be required in at least five interrelated areas to strengthen the prospects for peace in the country: institutions, politics, capacity building, methodology and monitoring and evaluation:

- I. **Institutions:** The institutions can contribute more to peace conditions if they are focused on a framing and understanding of what the common good of Nigerians is as opposed to the myriads of private interests that are fostered and promoted. This will require a significant erosion of the opacity that currently exists within and between

institutions, programmes and projects that aim towards similar and complementary goals and objectives;

- ii. **Political and civic:** The cognitive framing of the political and civic in Nigeria must be understood beyond the idea of self-benefit and patronage of cronies. When politics and civic participation are focused more on service than profit, then the right people will be motivated to participate in politics in the interest of the common good. The politics of detachment from the needs of the people as is dominant in Nigeria today is what Lederach refers to as 'disembodied politics.'
- iii. **Capacity development:** In the past local communities were bonded by some common values. Additional capacity building will assist local actors to professionally engage in peace work through leveraging the values that bonded their communities in the past. Peace building and conflict resolution in Nigeria will be more successful if local and international interveners try not to "invisibilise" local capacities and resources that are crucial to the contexts;
- iv. **Methodological concerns:** Due to the dominance of oral cultures in a majority of communities in Nigeria, a methodological preference for documentation and knowledge management will be very productive. The process of rethinking methodology should come with a

commitment to objectivity – neutrality and non-partisanship (i.e. ethnic, linguistic, religious, political, class, etc.). The methodological strategy should aim to decolonize Peace practice philosophies/ approaches/models (internally and externally). Such a detoxification does not mean uncritical disregard for approaches and models that come from elsewhere. Rather, it means carefully sifting to recognize what fits to contexts, considering extant knowledge materials that constitute part of the essences of the people, their environment and social ethics; and

- v. **Monitoring and evaluation:** No development model works without a strategy for measuring progress. The weakest link in all development interventions in Nigeria, including peace building, is monitoring and evaluation. This is partly because most programmes and projects are intentionally inauthentic, not designed to achieve the advertised objectives – often designed not to succeed for a certain price! Perhaps it was designed to raise campaign funds! Performance evaluation of people and projects is easily compromised for different reasons. Peace building and conflict resolution will produce greater positive results when monitoring and evaluation is an integral part of programmes and projects at design and inception.

Conclusion

22. The conflicts in Nigeria are not intractable. However, conflict history of the country is at a point where a complete rebooting of the state structures, institutions, policies and processes is urgent to prevent Nigeria becoming a model of a dangerously (un)controlled free state. Occasional tampering with the Judiciary, Civil society and the media are pointers that things could get worse in certain direction, including with human rights and basic freedoms. At present there is palpable threat of revulsion for the prevailing culture of democratic politics in Nigeria. Rather than helping to build consensus and aid conflict resolution, democracy is intensifying violent conflicts, with electoral violence reinforcing the insecurities across the country.

23. For years, government has watched helplessly as the massive flow of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) into Nigeria continues round about her borders. Efforts to stop the inflow as well as mop up illicit arms in the country have been largely unsuccessful despite the resources committed to this end. Besides, the integrity of armouries and holding facilities for retrieved illicit arms remains a thing of serious concern across the country. Illicit drugs also remain a huge problem among the youth constituting not only a security but also a public health menace. Surveys conducted in these areas indicate that the government institutions responsible obviously have no firm grip on these issues for a variety of reasons.

¹⁰J. P. Lederach used the term 'invisibilise' in describing how local knowledge is undermined by conflict interveners who rely on universalizing cognitive frames that assume other contexts were *tabula rasa* upon which must be inscribed knowledge that comes from without.

24. As state/government visibility and presence freezes in-country, the incapacity of government to provide basic social goods even in high profile cities, is tampering with citizen patriotism and loyalty. Armed non-state actors (ANSA) capitalize on this vacuum to perpetrate widespread criminality and brigandage. In some urban and in many rural, hard-to-reach areas, there is on-going transactional, yet vengeful violence in form of insurgency, herders farmers killings, kidnapping, rural banditry, armed robbery, rape, cultism, militancy, cattle rustling, land grabbing, etc. There is an underlying mentality of 'nothing to lose' in the form that violent and criminal groups operate, an indication of the palpable anger in the air.

25. Arising from our earlier assertion of the ubiquitous role of politics in Nigeria, the following syllogism is derived:

Premise 1: Politics is in everything;

Premise 2: Politics is a metaphor for corruption;

Conclusion: Therefore, corruption is in everything.

26. In summary, politicising Peace building and Conflict Management in Nigeria intensifies the insecurity as shown in this syllogism:

Premise 1: If no Peace building then no trust;

Premise 2: If no trust then mutual suspicion grows;

Premise 3: If mutual suspicion grows then security dilemma;

Conclusion: There is Security dilemma, hence Insecurity flourishes.

Recommendations

27. Given the foregoing, the early warning signs across Nigeria call for something decisive to be done to positively alter the course of events in order to prevent the country from ending up where it is sadly headed at present:

- a) Liberal democracy in Nigeria should be conditioned to meet local needs and aspirations. Electoral politics should be issue-based, and not cut-throat, which eventually ends up in the actual throats-cutting; human beings killed in the quest for political power;
- b) Government to deploy Country and Urban Planning tools in checking continued polarization and building social cohesion (cf. lessons learned from the bad e.g.s. of Jos, Kaduna)
- c) Deliberate efforts should be made towards deconstructing the pattern by which political elite see themselves in competition to capture public resources as a mark of power;
- d) Institutions should adopt an integrative outlook and support structures that promote human rights, basic freedoms, and inclusive participation of the people in socio-economic and political processes;
- e) Restructuring and devolution of powers; moderate coordinating centre and strong subnational units (with policing authority) able to superintend over rural, far to reach areas;

¹¹The Pan-Africanist, Professor PLO Lumumba of Kenya recently articulated a similar point at a speech addressed to Ugandans ahead of the 2021 Elections: See <https://www.google.com/url?url=www.youtube.com>; Accessed June 12, 2019.

- f) To avoid social, economic and political implosion, stakeholders of peace, including well-meaning members of the political class, must speak loud enough to challenge the paternalism and patrimonial dominance of the ruling elite that is liquidating the common wealth and driving Nigeria's brinkmanship towards an implosion;
- g) Events have proven the need for a constitutional amendment to guarantee and secure the separation of powers and in particular, independence of the judiciary, as basis for strengthening the fledgling democracy in Nigeria;
- h) Longer term investment to fund constructive diversity management and peace building based on the 'decade thinking' model of Adam Curle is more likely to provide the resources required for supporting peace building and conflict mediation processes in Nigeria.



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