

**IF I AM THE**  
**PRESIDENT**  
 **OF**  
**NIGERIA**

Dreams for my Country

A beautiful Country

The land of our birth

Our Shame and Our Pride

Our Hope for Future Generations

**OKEE ONWUKA**

*...let's dream together*  
*One day, our dreams may just come true!!*

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*Where there is no shame, there is no honour.*  
**African Proverb**

*When brothers fight to the death, a stranger inherits  
their father's Estate.*  
**African Proverb**

# IF I AM THE PRESIDENT OF NIGERIA

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This is about my dream. My dream for our beautiful country. Our country Nigeria. A dream country. A land of warmth and laughter. A land of unbridled optimism and passion.

This is about the great values that abound from breaking the walls of tribalism and prejudice that have kept us apart and stagnated our growth as a people, a country, and a nation.

The thrills that come from being liberated from the mind-sets that accentuate differentiation when integration is a more positive practice, a more powerful social culture.

It is written as my contribution on the thoughts for a functional, dynamic and beautiful Nigeria. The land and country of my birth.

In my view, the contents and my dreams are very applicable for consideration in any multi-ethnic, multi-tribal country in Africa.

And for any part of the world where the challenges posed by ethnicity and tribalism needs to be overcome!

Sports clubs, teams, companies, organizations, and countries that have embraced, practiced and lived the principle of unity of purpose, integration and cohesion have reaped enormous rewards. It is the time-honoured principle of united we stand, divided we fall.

I know this from history: unity is best achieved when a group feels a deep threat to their survival, their ego, their dignity, their

livelihood. This threat can come from the environment, from enemies, or from external forces. The threat can come from a combination of many factors. The bottom line is, anytime the threat is perceived to be strong enough, barriers such as language, ethnicity, and religion are shredded to join forces. And the force of unity is often strong enough to overcome any challenge.

My dream is simple. Living my dream or seeing my dream come to fruition may not be as simple. But the dream would not die. It cannot die. I will continue to dream.

The vision that my dream reveals is too beautiful to let go.

And so, my dream continues.

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## BACKGROUND

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Sometimes, when one rides in a taxi, you want the peace and silence to pass through the times. At other times you simply want to sleep. But, every now and then, one cannot enjoy a taxi ride in silence, or in some peaceful state. In Nigeria, it could be the bumps on the road, excruciating traffic, or a driver who chooses to 'entertain' you with all kinds of stories, from how Adam was not the first man created to how he is convinced that the Naira will soon crash to N1, 000 against the US dollar. Some drivers play the music of their choice hoping you'd like the songs. Some others would ask for your preference before selecting the song or music to play.

I particularly dislike radio shows with call-in features from the public. This is not because there are no good ones, but some callers really get to me. Some will start and continue with mundane greetings for each of the show hosts, co-hosts, presenters and sometimes for the owner of the station who may not even be on air. They'd ask after their families, their spouses, their health condition, marital status, cell phone numbers, house rent, anything but the topic on hand. After what would seem like an eternity, they start on the primary issue and by this time, it is either the poor network disconnects the call, or the host tells him or her that the allocated time per



caller is up. This happens so often that call-in shows have earned my total dislike.

However, on this day and time, sometime in December 2016, I was in this taxi and there was a call-in program on the radio. It was about company and enterprise growth. And the guest consultant was sharing his views on this topic. Suddenly, he said something that caught my attention. The consultant used a bible reference, in Genesis Chapter 11, to illustrate the power of unity in a business. As he read it out, I was transfixed.

***“And the Lord said, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.”***

Did I hear right? This was for me a mind-blowing moment. As I pondered over the import of this statement, a startling reality hit me. This is it. This must be ‘it’. This must be what has been hindering the development and growth of Nigeria as a Nation. When I got home later in the day, I searched through the Bible to read the text in more detail, understand the background to it and the real significance in the aspect it was applied to. Yes, I had to get to my hard-copy Bible because I don’t use a smart phone or tablet phone. I’m sort of old school and the several negative effects of cell phone radiation on people are more than enough justification for me to stay clear off smart phones.

Back to the point, this statement in the Bible was in recognition of the amazing progress that the people had made in constructing the *Tower of Babel*, designed to rise from the earth to the heavens. I’m not sure that physically they could have

achieved such a feat, given what we know today about the planetary system, the orbit and space, but the point is clear:

***A united people present a force too powerful to hinder, limit or resist in whatever they plan to do.***

Because the people had one language and one voice, unity of purpose, trust and harmony was a lot easier to achieve. Different languages and tongues led to the different tribes and peoples all over the world. This is not surprising, given the intense distrust and often deep-seated hatred among different tribes or clans of people in the world.

How come I did not realize this before? But way back in primary school, we were given the illustration on power of unity by the phrase, ***“United we stand, divided we fall”***. And one teacher then demonstrated this by showing how easy it was to break a broom stick and how impossible it is to break a whole broom.

The bible passage is extracted below from the NKJV

**GEN 11** *Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.*

<sup>2</sup> *And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.*

<sup>3</sup> *Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar.*

<sup>4</sup> *And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”*

<sup>5</sup> *But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.*

<sup>6</sup> *And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; **now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.**"*

<sup>7</sup> *Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."*

<sup>8</sup> *So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.*

This implies that when any group of people, a football team, a club, a company, a business group, a nation or country, are united, it is difficult to withhold from them anything they propose to do. And as the reference shows, originally, all of mankind had one language. Hence mutual trust and agreement was relatively easy to achieve, with the common language serving as a strong binding force.

Differences in language and tongues create a fertile platform for instant distrust and sometimes hate. *Deep raging hate.*

If only Nigeria and Nigerians can find a way to bridge the gap of tribe and tongues to become united, then we are on course for greatness. How often have we heard that Nigeria is blessed with abundant natural and human resources, yet we remain backwards and under-developing? Sometimes, we have been described as developing backwards.

Without unity and unity of purpose, no amount of talent, natural resources or gifting can overcome this debilitating challenge to foster sustainable success for any group, team or nation.

It is impossible to expect 180m people in Nigeria to become united overnight, or even become united on everything. It may even be difficult to get 100 people to agree on any issue. Unity is difficult to achieve. However, it is very possible, easier, for unity of purpose to exist among some select group of people, at any level. In the political elite. In social groups. In corporations. This unity may stem from the vision and ideals of one individual. Or a few people with a common goal, ideal or philosophy. This is founding principle of many companies and businesses. So, it is not romanticism to expect to find the right leader or group of leaders to emerge in Nigeria or any African country. Or anywhere in the world. There are many good and great companies in Nigeria and Africa. A nation may also be viewed as an enterprise, a business.

The hope, the prayer, the dream is that one day, this one person, these select group of leaders, people gifted in political skills and abilities would lead the country. These leaders would drive for unity and abhor disunity. They shall use their political might, their vision, charisma and will, to integrate the country rather than disunite us. They shall not be Northerners, Easterners, Southerners or Westerners. They shall simply be Nigerians.

The leadership would drive the wider-scale unity of purpose and the results would show. It will always come down to leadership.

## WHAT THIS IS ABOUT

---

On one hand, this book could be a dream. A vision. A hope. A wish. My dream. My Hope. My wish.

My dream for my fatherland. My dream for my country Nigeria. I am already dark skinned. And I am much darker than the average Nigerian or African. If there is power failure in the night, only my teeth can make it a little easier to recognize me, that is, if I have my lips open. Or maybe I wear some light-coloured clothing.

I have realized too, that even if I become the citizen of any other country in the world, Nigeria remains the land of my birth. My birthplace. My country of origin.

My country, Nigeria is a beautiful place. A gifted country. A land flowing with great laughter, happiness and sweetness. Nigeria is blessed. Africa is blessed and gifted.

Africa and Nigeria have the best weather in the world. We have all year summer. Our lands are very fertile. Physically, we are strongly built. We are a happy people. We are home to wonderful music and musical talent. We have an abundance of natural resources. Gold, diamonds, limestone, bauxite, copper, aluminium, oil and gas. We are spared damaging hurricanes and typhoons. We have greenery and the sun in abundance. Africa, and Nigeria can easily be the tourism destination of all humans on earth on an all-year round basis.

Technically, we can live out our lives in the sunshine and the trees, at home with nature and still be fulfilled. Yes, we may have to battle it out with the wild animals, but we were never under any danger from them. It would seem like we all have the settings of retirement from when we are born. I have not been able to understand how to cope with cold and winter, so I truly appreciate being born an African. And would never wish it was any other way.

The many languages of Africa and Nigeria add to the beauty of our landscape. This would re-enforce the case of Africa being the original birthplace of man. My personal hypothesis is that, only a few people could have successfully migrated out of Africa, across the seas, and mountains to settle in diverse cold regions all over the world. Scientists and Anthropologists may want my scalp for this, but I am open to more discoveries.

To navigate through seas, oceans and winter to survive, man must by default, evolve to beat these elements and remain alive. These forces helped to shape the instincts and thought processes of the more technologically advanced world, as survival is no longer guaranteed by natural forces. That fewer languages exist in places outside Africa further buttress this hypothesis.

Personally, I am a firm believer in the statement; ***necessity is the mother of invention***. Thankfully, the surviving human species in other continents have used the adversity of weather and nature to make the world a much better place to live in via scientific breakthroughs. The society is much better in terms of

travel, medicine, housing, communications, and entertainment. This, we can only be thankful for.

Many have also theorized the case for weather and environmental factors being responsible for sharp disparities in community development with opponents of this viewpoint citing cases of underdevelopment in people living extreme environments.

Our peaceful environment and natural settings have however come with some negative side effects. We have become generally more complacent than others. And as a result, we have allowed our various tribes and tongues, together with our non-challenged environment, to make us look backward in the eyes of the rest of the world. Our tribes and languages remain the barriers to our rising to build more functional societies.

The barriers have remained because we have not yet woken up to the extreme damage that our complacency has wrecked on our image as humans, globally.

Although corruption is not an African or Nigerian language, it would appear corruption has become an African trademark. But this is not true. ***Corruption is practiced in many other parts of the world. The main difference, the uniqueness of the African corruption model is the focus on direct monies in cash. Some more sophisticated parts of the world practice corruption but by deeper strategies such as trade-offs, deal making, or collaborations that do not involve direct cash, but benefit-exchange occur, regardless.*** Interests are satisfied across transactions.

This is about my dream and my thoughts on how Nigeria can become proud again. As a Nation. As an African country.

*If I am the President of Nigeria*, presents in written form, the simplified description of what I would plan to do if I had the position to influence government action. And my basis for taking these steps. I have no political ambition and do not desire to contest for the office of the President of The Federal Republic of Nigeria. All who know me, know I have zero political interests.

This book may also be seen as my contribution to the political space of ideas on moving our country forward, as a people. It has been written in simple language for ease of communication.

I have used a simplistic approach that does not pretend to know the intricacies of politics, democracy or government. My hope is that these concepts, if worked into politics in a democratic setting would enhance the possibilities for societal development and progress.

Some research data have been added in relevant chapters to buttress some aspects of the considerations. But no attempt has been made to overload the reader with data and professional jargons or lingo. Supporting data is readily available on the web, media and publications. Where no supporting data exists, there would always be a first time.

No data is required to prove that Nigeria and black Africa has not been at par with the rest of the developed or developing world. We remain a reference case for dysfunctional, laid back,



non-cohesive people providing comical relief to the rest of the developed world.

## WHAT THIS IS NOT ABOUT

---

There are a few things this book is not about. And I find it important to make these clarifications early.

This is not about castigating Nigerian or African leaders for corruption or ineptitude. It is not about casting blames on politicians or public office holders. It is more of a realization that collectively, we, as a people, have fallen behind in social order and cohesion. No one is exempt from culpability, if one is to go that route of blame.

The Nigerians living in other countries who criticize Nigeria, do so as they see and feel the stark contrasts in functionality and quality of life in our country compared to where they live. They have run away from the problem. They have chosen the easier route to an easy life, in an environment built by others.

The INEC chairman who postpones an election a day, a few days to the election, or on the morning of the election, is not displaying an isolated case of incompetence. It is the same incompetence that pervades the land. The INEC chairman is not bothered about the billions lost from the action. The cancelled flights, international and local, the lost businesses, the social trauma, cancelled social and corporate events, and lost revenues count for little or nothing.

The president or ruling party who use the position of power, the machineries of state security forces and public funds to

manipulate the election results for self-victory is as guilty as any Nigerian. And worse, as his or her office is dishonoured.

The party in power ensures that the electoral process remains inefficient to ensure the optimal opportunities to rig elections are retained. This is an example of not knowing what the true calling of leadership is. And it is not an isolated case.

It is no different from the tailor who disappoints his client on the eve of his or her wedding, and not care about the hurt and anguish he has caused. He or she repeats the same thing and simply expects a simple apology will erase the damage.

The striking lecturers who frustrate the Nigerian educational system are not bothered with the huge costs to the nation. They do not look into the future to see how their actions have made us a laughing stock. The government who refuses to fulfil commitments are no better. The indignity that Nigerians suffer at the hands of foreign embassy officials for those seeking alternative education overseas mean nothing. Our insincerity makes officials ask for ridiculous documents, showing they don't even need our patronage.

The government who spends without an approved budget is a simple extension of societal incompetence.

The incompetent engineer who bears the title of "Engr" but is too lazy to challenge the frontiers of knowledge is guilty.

The incompetent architect who refuses to design energy efficient housing unique to our environment is complicit.

The doctor who induces fear in patients for higher revenue procedures is no better than other corrupt Nigerians.

The president who practices tribalism in office but conveniently forgets the fact that tenures start and end. And remains unmindful that presidents from other zones would do the same thing when they come into power. A cyclic action that bodes no good for the country. The president and the party in power, however, believes that with firm control of the election process, the control of the INEC, the security forces, polling centre personnel, only persons they endorse can take over power on expiration of their tenure. This however remains a myopic view as history clearly demonstrates that no hegemony lasts forever.

What do we say for the student who fails to study but pays to get a certificate and accuses the government of corruption and incompetence for not providing jobs for the uneducated 'educated' youths?

What of the mason who does not realize that straight walls or edges must be perfectly straight yet calls himself a mason and expects to be paid for a horrible job?

The relatives of the president who become power brokers overnight. And accuse another regime who practice the same thing of nepotism and incompetence.

The lawmaker who does not make laws.

The mechanic who removes the good part in a car he has been given to fix and replaces it with a bad part for quick gain and does not think about the future danger of his act on the driver. He does not consider the possibility of mechanical failure, an

accident and fatality. The wickedness of his action is lost on him.

The Nigerian who bypasses the electricity supply meter to use power and not pay for it.

The manufacturer of fake drugs who do not consider that the same fake drug could kill his relation. It is okay if it kills other Nigerians. How do such people act differently when they become governors or presidents?

The lawyer who would rather go for the easier life than push the society towards better accountability through defending the cause of the masses or pushing for corporate accountability.

The Nigerian middle and upper class who will rather not vote but complain about poor leadership non-stop.

The parents who force rather than guide or mentor career choices for their children.

The Nigerian who evades or avoids the harder life to success yet complains about the government. It takes the same will to work hard towards higher goals in personal life as it takes people in government to go the extra mile to govern better.

The teacher who does not teach but collects wages.

The coach who takes bribes for team member selection.

The journalist who claims to defend the truth but writes a skewed report based on financial inducement.

The Nigerian who will be readily satisfied by average effort and never bother to push self to do more. When we accept that anything goes, how can our leaders be different?

The Nigerian that accepts his or her brother or sister can steal from government yet complains of corruption when others in power steal.

The lawmaker who switches to the ruling party yet retains his seat and expects to be trusted. He thinks nothing of the betrayal of allegiance and feels entitled to more terms of office.

The party that accepts renegades have no depth of philosophy to recognize that renegades would always be renegades. And that renegades have no business in public office. And the Nigerian who votes for a renegade is no better.

The militant who bombs oil pipelines to push his anger or annoyance forward but is somewhat oblivious of the extreme damage to his environment. And the health and future of his community.

The Nigerian who loves foreign goods yet makes no effort to encourage local production. The Nigerian that loves living large, give lavish parties regularly, live lives akin to hedonism yet accuse the leadership of ineptitude.

The tribalistic Nigerian who expects others to be detribalized.

The religious leader who misinterprets the religious books for personal gain or interests turning to accuse the Nigerian leaders of corruption.

The Nigerian who worships money yet accuse lawmakers and politicians of corruption.

The Nigerian who travels with a visiting visa to foreign countries and intentionally overstay, choose to remain overseas, has cheated or deceived the foreign country. And he or she is unaware or uninterested in the resulting shame and credibility loss to Nigeria and Nigerians as a whole. He or she is not interested in how other Nigerians with noble plans are refused visa for the flimsiest of reasons. The same Nigerian holds high grounds when accusing the country of underdevelopment and corrupt leadership.

The Nigerians who educate our children overseas because we can afford it as we fold our hands and watch our educational system decay towards total collapse.

The parent who will not question their children's unexplained sudden source of wealth.

The musician who glorifies wealth and money in songs and videos. The musician that fails to use his craft for societal development but glories in the attainment of cash wealth.

The movie directors that show money and money rituals as common movie themes and rarely do movies that honour character, scientific breakthroughs, discipline and commitment.

The school proprietor who helps students cheat to score straight A's in many subjects and advertise the fake performance to induce more enrolment into the school for extortionist fees.

We teach our children to hate, to cheat and to dislike people from other tribes, yet complain of incompetence in leadership of the nation.

We dishonour our calling in office yet would never honourably resign for failing the people and still have the guts to accuse the executive of incompetence, or corruption.

Who is not as guilty as the INEC chairman? Or the incompetent government? Or the corrupt politician? Who is not complicit in our collective failure? Who is better than the leadership in contributing to our backwardness? Who is better than his or her neighbour in Nigeria? And in Africa.

What of those who collect cash or “bags of rice” to vote? Who manipulates the votes for the powers that be? Who complains about it all, all the time yet take no action?

We are all guilty. Without exception.

Leaders in any society come from the society. A great society produces great leaders. When the societal mind-set changes, leadership changes. This book recognizes that corruption is not the root cause of the African story. Mutual distrust among the many tribes together with a lack of impetus to unite above the divides of mundane tribal differences create this chaos. The colonial masters used division among us as a control tool.

The political elite or cabal in Nigeria, stoke the same ethnic sentiments to keep the country split, so no cohesion is ever achieved to challenge their control on the country's vaults. On the surface, it would appear the ruling class represent their tribal interests but a closer look will reveal a shocking truth.



Extreme poverty pervades the regions where the 'leaders' claim to represent. In effect, the ruling class primarily represent themselves to the detriment of the whole Nigerians who are too blinded by mundane tribalism to unite and make it extremely difficult for any leader or politician to take the whole nation for granted. Nigeria is now being re-colonized by Nigerians.

Fortunately, education (which is enlightenment of the thinking process and not mere certificates), and formal public education provides the platform for a common language of communication among Africans. With this common language of state, communication is enhanced, and mutual distrust should recede.

This book is not about creating a national spirit among Nigerians to the detriment of other countries, cultures and clime. My understanding is that, nationalism can sometimes become 'tribalism,' on a national level. This would be unhealthy. Hate of any kind is not advocated. This is more about tearing down walls than it is about building walls.

This book is not about Nigeria developing any nuclear weapons of mass destruction. The world has gone beyond interests in destroying each other through extremes of warfare. The world wars have helped shape our minds towards a more peaceful and united world.

As stated earlier, this book is not about berating any group or tribe in Nigeria or Africa. However, some practical cases and examples have been used to serve only as references for discussion as opposed to being pointers for condemnation.

This book is not about blaming foreigners for the woes of Africa and Nigeria.

This book is not about bemoaning our past failures. Nor about expecting everyone to be saints and sinless.

This book is not about a perfect Nigeria. It is only about what we can do, as a united people to show we can be better than we are.

We all can do better. I can do better. Every African can do better. We must push ourselves to do better. And we surely can all do better.

This book does not assume the ideas presented are the best. Or sacrosanct. It is a given that the ideas presented would be attacked. Regardless, there would be one incontrovertible fact: ***A people united on a cause would always be a more positive force than a disunited people.*** Regardless of the reason or reasons that created or forced the unity.

I understand that changes in political landscape could lead to some ideas being rejected, some refined further and yet have some others blended into better options. All that counts is that we take steps to become a more united group

This book is also not a subtle manifesto or campaign by my person to seek elective post in the country at a future date. By this submission, I disqualify myself from ever contesting for elective posts in Nigeria and at any level. This is simply my contribution to those in power. And those who are gifted in politics.

## MY FIRST ACTION AS PRESIDENT

---

There are a few personal recognitions that one must make as the president of a country. These recognitions would dovetail into a powerful mind-set that drives all actions to benefit the whole country.

As the president, these would be my prioritized first steps:

1. **I shall recognize that the task ahead is the toughest in the land. A task that has defied the passions of many great leaders in the past.** This is in recognition of the fact that the changes I will advocate and push for, will not be accepted or loved by everybody. Although the changes shall ultimately transform the Nigerian nation into a united country, I realize that people who may not share in the dream, within and outside, would not fold their hands and watch their means of livelihood taken away from them. Some will attack me with words, some via print and electronic media, and others on social media. Some others may not be so kind.

I know that companies and countries that build electric generators with Nigeria as their main market may not be happy that Nigeria has developed self-sufficient power infrastructure.

I know that owners of businesses built around the sale of diesel and refined petroleum products to Nigeria may not be overjoyed to know that Nigerian refineries are now functional and power supply has become regular all over the country.

I know that owners of companies that manufacture weapons sold to Nigerians in the many violent confrontations would not be too happy to see a United Nigeria without war, violence or strife.

I know that powerful people in the society who make a living through the dysfunctional Nigerian state, the corruption, the nepotism, the tribalism, and the disunity, would go the extra mile to protect their livelihood.

I know that politicians whose main strategy and weapon to power is through tribal or religious hegemonies, would frown at a harmonized, religious-tolerant and detribalized nation.

I know that those who make a living through manufacturing fake or substandard drugs, goods and items would not be happy with a more standard, integrity and quality-based system.

I know that the cabal, the professional politicians who thrive on the flawed electoral process would do all within their means to frustrate the upgrading of the electoral process to eliminate or severely limit the chances of rigging and manipulation. They know the frailty of the human mind and cannot trust their election on the subjective views of the

population, hence electoral reforms would not be attractive options for consideration.

I know I will give my best in trying to achieve a win-win platform where opportunities for alternative businesses and income are explored to cushion the effects of the changes that Nigerians would be making. However, I recognize there will be those who are opposed to any form of change. This is natural and expected.

I can only give my best. Exhaust myself. And enjoy the process. The work. And deriving excitement in the future hope. The Nigeria of our dreams.

I shall put my complete trust in the hands of the Almighty God. I shall trust that if the appointed time for Nigeria to develop, the time to rise as a nation has come, it will happen, and no one can stop it. And I also know that if the designated time has not come, there would be delays. And in either case, I shall be at peace.

I know that no harm can reach me, unless permitted from above for a reason that may be beyond me.

2. **I shall no longer be a citizen of any tribe or clan.** I would simply be, a Nigerian. I can feel the pain and suffering of every Nigerian, from Sokoto to Niger, from Maiduguri to Enugu, from Lagos to Abia State, from Bayelsa to Abuja, from Delta State to Kano. Every Nigerian life counts.
3. **I shall spare no thought for a second term.** This is not in terms of not taking my performances serious enough to merit re-election. This refers to spending more time on

value-adding work as opposed to using close to 2 years of a 4-year tenure on re-election politicking. I shall focus all my energies to establishing enduring platforms, laws, philosophies and practical ideologies over the single 4-year term at such levels that would enable a united Nigeria to select either a new non-tribal leader, based on the progress we have made or re-elect me. Four years is more than enough time, with focus, to deliver on the establishment of a legacy. At least, a starting point. The most pivotal aspect of my tenure shall be unity of all Nigerians as a country, as a nation, as an entity. The proposed political model would drive this change. Particularly, an upgraded electoral process that would make it extremely difficult for brazen manipulation and rigging to occur.

4. **I will know that I am not the president to create wealth for myself. I shall recognize that it is a position of honour.** And of far higher value than all the cash in the world. Already, I know that money is not cash. And so, would not be deceived by the lure of lucre, knowing that no ex-president has ever died of poverty. And because I also know that to be wealthy is to want less than I earn.
5. **I will know that one day I will step down from the office.** And that I want to walk freely among Nigerians, every Nigerian. I do not want to be on the run or be afraid to be probed or investigated by succeeding Governments.
6. **I will know that I am not superior to the least Nigerian.** I shall only see myself to be in a privileged position to serve even the least, the youngest, the poorest and the weakest.

7. **I shall aim to exhaust myself daily as the best preparation for tomorrow.** I shall work hard 100% in all I do, put 0% trust in my hard work but put 100% trust in the Almighty God.

On these 7 principles and awareness shall my time as the president be anchored.

## **ROOT CAUSES OF DISUNITY**

---

Deeper causes that appear in the forms of

*CORRUPTION & INCOMPETENCE*



## TRIBALISM AND TRIBAL DISTRUST

---

In these sections, we share and discuss briefly some common or pervading sentiments across the country.

As a Nigerian who has lived in Nigeria for over 50 years, I have seen several areas where tribal distrust come into play, often with no solid foundation or basis. For instance, two people conduct a business transaction, and one gets defrauded. Rather than consider the cheating party as simply a dishonest Nigerian or individual, the common fall back could be statements such as;

*" Can you imagine how that Ibo man cheated me?*

*" Can you believe how that Hausa man conned me?*

*"That Yoruba man has done it again".*

*"What do you expect from him, he is an Akwa Ibom man"*

*"She is a Calabar woman that is how they are"*

If you take these sentiments into context, vice, crime, "badness" cannot be found in "our" tribe and only in other tribes. Yet, nothing could be further from the truth. Ibos have cheated Ibos. Yorubas have defrauded other Yorubas. The Hausa has defrauded other Hausas. It happens all the time.

In Festac town, Lagos, where I grew up, I know a man who will forgive any driver who bashes or crashes into his vehicle or his

wife's car, if the offender is from his tribe. If, however the offender is from another tribe, he will extract a pound of flesh. He will ensure he gets the offender prosecuted or ensure the police gets involved. This is usually his inclination if the offender's social class is lower than his'. The fury with which he pursues such activities would make one shudder. I keep out his tribal identity, so it does not come across as prejudice.

If the list of footballers invited to any of the national teams, say football team, the super eagles is released, it is not uncommon for people from different tribes to check for how many of the invited players are from their part of the Country. Ooooooh, the Coach is Ibo, and 14 of 22 players invited are Ibo. Calamity. Or the coach is Yoruba, and majority of the selected players are from the west. If more Hausa players are listed, then it must be because of quota or government pressure. However, when Ahmed Musa scored two beautiful goals against Argentina in the 2014 World Cup, every Nigerian rejoiced spontaneously, each time he scored. When the same Ahmed Musa scored two goals against Iceland at the 2018 world cup finals, some social media fans tagged Ahmed Musa as the choice for the next president of Nigeria: *Ahmed Musa for President*.

When Kanu Nwankwo scored the golden goal that eliminated Brazil in the semi-finals of the 1996 Olympic soccer tournament in Atlanta, as Nigerians celebrated, no one considered his Ibo ethnic Origin. He was simply a Nigerian. When Celestine Babayaro equalized for Nigeria against Argentina in the final of the same competition, and Emmanuel Amuneke scored the winning goal for Nigeria, the celebrations

were simply on Nigeria Winning, as a nation, and not as a tribe. It was not about Celestine Babayaro from the North or Emmanuel Amuneke from the East.

When I visited Atlanta in the US sometime the following year, in 1997, in one restaurant I was served a free meal, simply because the operator told me he liked the style of football played by Nigerians at the Olympics. For the first time, I felt proud to be a Nigerian, outside of Nigeria.

The extra security officials detailed to receive Nigerians arriving on flights from Nigeria and the extra scrutiny on Nigerian travellers, is always a sore point. In those days, I could not help wondering how we, as a people, can earn more respect for our Nigerian passport.

When Chioma Ajunwa won Nigeria's first Olympic gold medal, she won as a Nigerian. Prof Wole Soyinka in winning the Nobel Prize for Literature, won as a Nigerian, and not as a Yoruba man.

The late Yemi Tella, who won the Under-17 World cup for Nigeria, was a Nigerian. Sebastian Brodericks won as a Nigerian. Stephen Keshi, as coach of Togo, was the first coach to lead Togo to qualify for the FIFA World cup. He coached Togo as a Nigerian, and not as a Delta man.

How do I even write this book without appearing biased? Regardless of how I put it, some will always find something to say, good or bad. But regardless, this case of unity must be made. I may not always use a complete list of examples that cut across the country, but I'll try to use as many practical

examples as I can to illustrate the case. This is not an academic book but an attempt to connect with the Nigerian, in Nigeria and overseas on the missing link to our development. A prospering and developed Nigeria will be great news and benefit to the whole of black Africa.

## **COMMON BLAME FOR NIGERIAN DISUNITY**

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Over the years, I have heard the British being accused for the problematic structure called Nigeria. They are blamed for bringing together a mixture of very diverse people and cultures into a one country. How can they join the North with their unique ways to the South? How can they join the West with the East? What business does the Easterner have with the Northerner? Nigerian should at least be three separate countries. Lord Lugard must have made this mega-mistake.

I clearly disagree with this view point. For one, it is too simplistic. For another, it is based on a flawed assumption that dividing into three or more countries would have eliminated the problem of dis-unity or tribalism among the people in present day Nigeria.

Take the case of a family. Say a family of seven (7). Mother, Father, five children. These children, of the same mother and same father, are often born with different personalities and characters. Some are born fair. Others are born dark skinned. Some could be tall. Others not so tall. Some are gifted in oratory, others in athletic skills. Some mild mannered, others quick tempered. Traditionally, these children will bear the same surname. We can disregard the case of artists and actors who choose stage names, but we still know who their “mama” and “papa” are. Do siblings not disagree? Do they not argue against

each other? Do they not choose different vocations? Sure, there are exceptions like the *Dafinone family* of chartered accountants! How did they even do it!!!

But seriously, we all know that siblings differ. But strong families are those where, despite natural differences, all siblings remain united and focused on progressing the growth of the family and family values. In such strong families, you cannot perpetrate evil against one sibling through the active connivance of another sibling. Weak families are those where these differences lead to real gaps in bonding that allow enemies of the family to infiltrate and cause chasms and divisions that ultimately undermine family aspirations.

Natural differences in orientation, passion, interests and language does not mean we cannot live together in harmony and peace.

According to Jon Gordon, *unity is key and is essential to get everyone on a team moving in the right direction, regardless of individual personal agendas, egos, politics, power struggles and negativity.*

## THE MANY COUNTRIES OF NIGERIA

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What if it was possible to divide Nigeria into many smaller countries where all the citizens are of same “type” or language? One question would be, if Nigeria was correctly split into 3 or more countries, how many countries should be carved out? What should be the basis for each unique country?

Should it be religion? There are no clear-cut lines of religious divide.

Should it be based on tribes? Or religion? Or both.

Let’s look at the table below that lists the tribes and current states where people of these tribes are located. Even at that, many people of a tribal origin, by virtue of where their parents originate from, have not lived in these tribal locations from birth till adulthood.

There are over 350 tribes indicated. And there are still tribes not captured here as the list is by no means exhaustive, but indicative enough of the challenge of creating countries along tribal lines. What landmarks would create the country boundaries? Would these be easy to implement?

Would there ever be an agreement among all the people on where the boundaries should begin and end?

NO	STATE IN NIGERIA	TRIBE
1	Abia, Anambra, Benue, Delta, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Rivers **	Ibo
2	Adamawa	Bachama
3	Adamawa	Banso (Panso)
4	Adamawa	Batta
5	Adamawa	Baya
6	Adamawa	Bilei
7	Adamawa	Bille
8	Adamawa	Botlere
9	Adamawa	Bura
10	Adamawa	Bwatiye
11	Adamawa	Bwazza
12	Adamawa	Daba
13	Adamawa	Daka
14	Adamawa	Palli
15	Adamawa	Ga'anda
16	Adamawa	Gira
17	Adamawa	Gizigz
18	Adamawa	Gombi
19	Adamawa	Gude
20	Adamawa	Gudu
21	Adamawa	Gwa (Gurawa)
22	Adamawa	Gwamba
23	Adamawa	Holma
24	Adamawa	Hona
25	Adamawa	Ichen
26	Adamawa	Jibu
27	Adamawa	Jirai
28	Adamawa	Kaka
29	Adamawa	Kambu
30	Adamawa	Kilba



NO	STATE IN NIGERIA	TRIBE
31	Adamawa	Kurdul
32	Adamawa	Lakka
33	Adamawa	Lala
34	Adamawa	Ubbo
35	Adamawa	Mambilla
36	Adamawa	Matakarn
37	Adamawa	Mbol
38	Adamawa	Mbula
39	Adamawa	Muchaila
40	Adamawa	Mundang
41	Adamawa	Njayi
42	Adamawa	Pire
43	Adamawa	Sukur
44	Adamawa	Teme
45	Adamawa	Tigon
46	Adamawa	Tur
47	Adamawa	Vemgo
48	Adamawa	Verre
49	Adamawa	Wagga
50	Adamawa	Wula
51	Adamawa	Wurbo
52	Adamawa	Yungur
53	Adamawa, Bauchi	Longuda (Lunguda)
54	Adamawa, Bomo	Margi (Marghi)
55	Adamawa, Bomo, Taraba, Yobe	Babur
56	Adamawa, Borno	Kanakuru (Dera)
57	Adamawa, Borno	Ngweshe (Ndhang.Ngoshe- Ndhang)
58	Adamawa, Borno	Shuwa
59	Akwa Ibom	Eket

NO	STATE IN NIGERIA	TRIBE
60	Akwa Ibom	Anang
61	Akwa Ibom	Ibeno
62	Akwa Ibom	Ibibio
63	Akwa Ibom	Okobo (Okkobor)
64	Akwa Ibom	Oron
65	Akwa Ibom, Rivers	Andoni
66	Bauchi	Bambora (Bambarawa)
67	Bauchi	Banka (Bankalawa)
68	Bauchi	Bara (Barawa)
69	Bauchi	Barke
70	Bauchi	Bele (Buli, Belewa)
71	Bauchi	Boma (Bomawa, Burmano)
72	Bauchi	Bomboro
73	Bauchi	Buli
74	Bauchi	Burak
75	Bauchi	Buta (Butawa)
76	Bauchi	Chama (Chamawa Fitilai)
77	Bauchi	Chamo
78	Bauchi	Dadiya
79	Bauchi	Daza (Dere, Derewa)
80	Bauchi	Deno (Denawa)
81	Bauchi	Ouguri
82	Bauchi	Duma (Dumawa)
83	Bauchi	Galambi
84	Bauchi	Geji
85	Bauchi	Gera (Gere, Gerawa)

NO	STATE IN NIGERIA	TRIBE
86	Bauchi	Geruma (Gerumawa)
87	Bauchi	Gingwak
88	Bauchi	Gubi (Gubawa)
89	Bauchi	Gururntum
90	Bauchi	Gyem
91	Bauchi	Jaku
92	Bauchi	Jara (Jaar Jarawa Jarawa-Dutse)
93	Bauchi	Jimbin (Jimbinawa)
94	Bauchi	Kamo
95	Bauchi	Kariya
96	Bauchi	Kirfi (Kirfawa)
97	Bauchi	Kubi (Kubawa)
98	Bauchi	Kudachano (Kudawa)
99	Bauchi	Kushi
100	Bauchi	Kwami (Kwom)
101	Bauchi	Miya (Miyawa)
102	Bauchi	Ningi (Ningawa)
103	Bauchi	Pa'a (Pa'awa Afawa)
104	Bauchi	Pero
105	Bauchi	Polchi Habe
106	Bauchi	Rebina (Rebinawa)
107	Bauchi	Sanga
108	Bauchi	Saya (Sayawa Za'ar)
109	Bauchi	Segidi (Sigidawa)
110	Bauchi	Siri (Sirawa)
111	Bauchi	Tangale

NO	STATE IN NIGERIA	TRIBE
112	Bauchi	Tula
113	Bauchi	Waja
114	Bauchi	Warji
115	Bauchi	Zaranda
116	Bauchi	Zayam (Zeam)
117	Bauchi	Zul (Zulawa)
118	Bauchi, Benue, Taraba, Plateau	Jukun
119	Bauchi, Bomo	Tera (Terawa)
120	Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe, etc.	Fulani (Fulbe)
121	Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Taraba, Sokoto, etc	Hausa
122	Bauchi, Jigawa, Plateau	Angas
123	Bauchi, Plateau	Jere (Jare, Jera, Jera, Jerawa)
124	Bauchi, Plateau	Kwanka (Kwankwa)
125	Bauchi, Plateau	Limono
126	Bauchi, Yobe	Bole (Bolewa)
127	Bauchi, Yobe	Karekare (Karaikarai)
128	Bauchi, Yobe	Ngamo
129	Bayelsa, Delta, Ondo, Rivers	Izondjo)
130	Benue	Akweya-Yachi
131	Benue	Egede (Igedde)
132	Benue	Etolu (Etilo)
133	Benue	Ufia
134	Benue	Utonkong

<b>NO</b>	<b>STATE IN NIGERIA</b>	<b>TRIBE</b>
<b>135</b>	Benue	Yalla
<b>136</b>	Benue, Plateau, Taraba	Tiv
<b>137</b>	Benue, Taraba	Idoma
<b>138</b>	Borno	Dghwede
<b>139</b>	Bomo	Gamergu-Mulgwa
<b>140</b>	Bomo	Gwoza (Waha)
<b>141</b>	Bomo	Kanembu
<b>142</b>	Bomo	Mandara (Wandala)
<b>143</b>	Bomo	Mobber
<b>144</b>	Borno	Chinine
<b>145</b>	Borno	Gavako
<b>146</b>	Borno, Adamawa	Higi (Hig)
<b>147</b>	Borno, Niger	Buduma
<b>148</b>	Cross River	Abayon
<b>149</b>	Cross River	Adim
<b>150</b>	Cross River	Adun
<b>151</b>	Cross River	Agbo
<b>152</b>	Cross River	Akaju-Ndem (Akajuk)
<b>153</b>	Cross River	Anyima
<b>154</b>	Cross River	Bachere
<b>155</b>	Cross River	Bahumono
<b>156</b>	Cross River	Bekwarra
<b>157</b>	Cross River	Bette
<b>158</b>	Cross River	Boki (Nki)
<b>159</b>	Cross River	Efik
<b>160</b>	Cross River	Ejagham
<b>161</b>	Cross River	Ekajuk
<b>162</b>	Cross River	Ekoi
<b>163</b>	Cross River	Etung
<b>164</b>	Cross River	Ikorn

<b>NO</b>	<b>STATE IN NIGERIA</b>	<b>TRIBE</b>
165	Cross River	Iyala (Iyalla)
166	Cross River	Mbube
167	Cross River	Nkim
168	Cross River	Nkum
169	Cross River	Ododop
170	Cross River	Olulumo
171	Cross River	Qua
172	Cross River	Ukelle
173	Cross River	Uyanga
174	Cross River	Yache
175	Cross River	Yakurr (Yako)
176	Cross River, Enugu	Mbembe
177	Delta	Isoko
178	Delta	Isekiri (Itsekiri)
179	Delta	Ukwani (Kwale)
180	Delta	Urhobo
181	Edo	Bini
182	Edo	Esan (Ishan)
183	Edo	Etsako
184	Edo	Etuno
185	Edo	Okpamheri
186	Edo	Owan
187	Edo	Uneme (Ineme)
188	Edo, Kogi	Ebu
189	Edo, Kogi, Ondo	Ebirra (Igbirra)
190	Jigawa	Auyoka (Auyokawa)
191	Jigawa	Warja (Warja)
192	Jigawa, Kaduna, Niger, Plateau	Kurama
193	Kaduna	Attakar (ataka)
194	Kaduna	Ayu

<b>NO</b>	<b>STATE IN NIGERIA</b>	<b>TRIBE</b>
195	Kaduna	Bina (Binawa)
196	Kaduna	Gure
197	Kaduna	Jaba
198	Kaduna	Kafanchan
199	Kaduna	Kagoro
200	Kaduna	Kaje (Kache)
201	Kaduna	Kajuru (Kajurawa)
202	Kaduna	Kanikon
203	Kaduna	Katab (Kataf)
204	Kaduna	Kiballo (Kiwollo)
205	Kaduna	Manchok
206	Kaduna	Moruwa (Moro'a, Morwa)
207	Kaduna	Rishuwa
208	Kaduna	Rumada
209	Kaduna	Rumaya
210	Kaduna	Srubu (Surubu)
211	Kaduna, Adamawa, Bomo, Kano, Niger, Jigawa, Plateau, Taraba, Yobe	Kanufi
212	Kaduna, Kebbi, Niger	Kamaku (Karnukawa)
213	Kaduna, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto	Uncinda
214	Kaduna, Kogi, Niger, Plateau	Bassa
215	Kaduna, Niger	Koro (Kwaro)
216	Kaduna, Niger, Plateau	Gwandara
217	Kaduna, Niger, Plateau	Gwari (Gbari)
218	Kaduna, Plateau	Mada
219	Kaduna, Plateau	Ninzam (Ninzo)

<b>NO</b>	<b>STATE IN NIGERIA</b>	<b>TRIBE</b>
220	Kaduna, Plateau	Nunku
221	Kano	Shira (Shirawa)
222	Kano	Teshena (Teshenawa)
223	Kebbi	Achipa (Achipawa)
224	Kebbi	Danda (Dandawa)
225	Kebbi	Duka (Dukawa)
226	Kebbi	Zarma (Zarmawa)
227	Kebbi, Niger	Kambari
228	Kebbi, Niger	Reshe
229	Kogi	Bunu
230	Kogi	Gbedde
231	Kogi	Igalla
232	Kogi	Ijumu
233	Kwara	Ogori
234	Kwara	Owe
235	Kwara	Oworo
236	Kwara	Yagba
237	Kwara, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Kogi	Yoruba
238	Lagos, Ogun	Awori
239	Lagos, Ogun	Egun (Gu)
240	Niger	Baruba (Barba)
241	Niger	Baushi
242	Niger	Boko (Bussawa, Bargawa)
243	Niger	Gade
244	Niger	Gurmana
245	Niger	Laaru (Larawa)



NO	STATE IN NIGERIA	TRIBE
246	Niger	Lopa (Lupa, Lopawa)
247	Niger	Nupe
248	Niger	Pongo (Pongu)
249	Niger	Rubu
250	Niger	Ura (Ula)
251	Niger	Yumu
252	Niger	Zabara
253	Niger, Kebbi	Dakarkari
254	Plateau	Alago (Arago)
255	Plateau	Ron
256	Plateau	Afizere
257	Plateau	Afo
258	Plateau	Amo
259	Plateau	Anaguta
260	Plateau	Ankwei
261	Plateau	Bada
262	Plateau	Bashiri (Bashirawa)
263	Plateau	Biom
264	Plateau	Bkkos
265	Plateau	Buji
266	Plateau	Burma (Burmawa)
267	Plateau	Bwall
268	Plateau	Challa
269	Plateau	Chip
270	Plateau	Chokobo
271	Plateau	Doemak (Dumuk)
272	Plateau	Eggon
273	Plateau	Fyam (Fyem)
274	Plateau	Fyer (Fer)

NO	STATE IN NIGERIA	TRIBE
275	Plateau	Qanawuri
276	Plateau	Geruma (Gerumawa)
277	Plateau	Goernai
278	Plateau	Gusu
279	Plateau	Irigwe
280	Plateau	Jidda-Abu
281	Plateau	Kantana
282	Plateau	Kenern (Koeniem)
283	Plateau	Kulere (Kaler)
284	Plateau	Kwalla
285	Plateau	Kwaro
286	Plateau	Kwato
287	Plateau	Mabo
288	Plateau	Mama
289	Plateau	Memyang (Meryan)
290	Plateau	Miango
291	Plateau	Miligili (Migili)
292	Plateau	Montol
293	Plateau	Munga (Mupang)
294	Plateau	Mushere
295	Plateau	Mwahavul (Mwaghavul)
296	Plateau	Nokere (Nakere)
297	Plateau	Pai
298	Plateau	Pyapun (Piapung)
299	Plateau	Rindire (Rendre)
300	Plateau	Rukuba
301	Plateau	Shangawa (Shangau)

NO	STATE IN NIGERIA	TRIBE
302	Plateau	Shan-Shan
303	Plateau	Sikdi
304	Plateau	Sura
305	Plateau	Yergan (Yergum)
306	Plateau	Yuom
307	Plateau, Taraba	Tarok
308	Rivers	Abua (Odual)
309	Rivers	Degema
310	Rivers	Ebana (Ebani)
311	Rivers	Egbema
312	Rivers	Engenni (Ngene)
313	Rivers	Epie
314	Rivers	Etche
315	Rivers	Gokana (Kana)
316	Sokoto	Kyenga (Kengawa)
317	Sokoto	Shanga (Shangawa)
318	State	Tribe
319	Taraba	Bakulung
320	Taraba	Bali
321	Taraba	Bambuko
322	Taraba	Banda (Bandawa)
323	Taraba	Betso (Bete)
324	Taraba	Bobua
325	Taraba	Chamba
326	Taraba	Chukkol
327	Taraba	Dangsa
328	Taraba	Diba
329	Taraba	Gengle
330	Taraba	Gornun (Gmun)
331	Taraba	Gonia

NO	STATE IN NIGERIA	TRIBE
332	Taraba	Gwom
333	Taraba	Jahuna (Jahunawa)
334	Taraba	Jero
335	Taraba	Jonjo (Jenjo)
336	Taraba	Kaba (Kabawa)
337	Taraba	Kadara
338	Taraba	Karimjo
339	Taraba	Kenton
340	Taraba	Koma
341	Taraba	Kona
342	Taraba	Kugama
343	Taraba	Kunini
344	Taraba	Kuteb
345	Taraba	Kutin
346	Taraba	Kwanchi
347	Taraba	Lama
348	Taraba	Lamja
349	Taraba	Lau
350	Taraba	Mbum
351	Taraba	Mumuye
352	Taraba	Ndoro
353	Taraba	Nyandang
354	Taraba	Panyam
355	Taraba	Pkanzom
356	Taraba	Poll
357	Taraba	Potopo
358	Taraba	Sakbe
359	Taraba	Sate
360	Taraba	Shomo
361	Taraba	Tikar
362	Taraba	Vommi

NO	STATE IN NIGERIA	TRIBE
363	Taraba	Waka
364	Taraba	Wurkun
365	Taraba	Yandang
366	Taraba	Yott
367	Yobe	Affade
368	Yobe	Bade
369	Yobe	Buru
370	Yobe	Chibok (Chibbak)
371	Yobe	Manga (Mangawa)
372	Yobe	Ngizim

*\*\* Within these states, several areas do not speak Ibo and where Ibo is spoken, there are several dialects. Rivers State is clearly not an Ibo state. This does not however negate the point of the illustration.*

Theoretically, if tribe is to be the basis for country boundaries, there should be over 350 countries created. This would of course not make any sense in today's world. Even if such a condition was achievable, there are further underlining issues to be tackled.

## TRIBAL HOMOGENEITY ISSUES

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Do the Yorubas in Kwara, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Kogi states all agree with each other? Do the Ibos in Abia, Anambra, Benue, Delta, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Rivers states agree? Do the Ibo in Delta see themselves as same with the Ibo in Anambra State? Do the Ibos in Rivers state consider themselves Ibo? Do the Onitsha consider themselves Ibo? One would find that even within the same local governments, clans claim superiority and difference over the neighbouring clans.

It is not uncommon to be travelling through a road in Nigeria, and up to a certain point, the quality of the road is excellent or good. And suddenly, the road becomes terrible. When you ask, you are told this portion belongs to this State, the other part belongs to another State. Yet, citizens and inhabitants of the States make use of both stretches of the road.

There are just so many areas where the enhancement of our differences, rather than a focus on commonalities and unity has hurt us deeply. It is a simple fact the concept of a country of only one tribe or tongue will not take us to the Promised Land in Nigeria or Africa, as the tribes per unit area in Africa and Nigeria is arguably some of the highest in the world.

Politicians who desire more opportunities to occupy political positions canvas for creation of more States and Local governments. These creations, on the ostensible basis of

getting closer to administering localities, further highlight our differences with no appreciable incremental value.

I think we must recognize the high value of unity as a fundamental platform for growth and development. The core objective of the citizens of our beloved country, should be based on unity of purpose, as opposed to self-actualization via differentiation.

Unity is created when people care about the team's goal.

Unity is created when people care about their teammates.

# MOTIVATION FOR IMPROVEMENT AND CHANGE

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## SHAME

As previously highlighted, in some countries or regions of the world, winter, terrible natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and massive floods have forced people to develop and make scientific and social advancements in their communities for the survival of their people. In some others, bloody wars have forced a rethink. Yet in others, the threat of extinction or hunger have forced a call to sustained efforts for development.

Enemies and enemy threats also help create the need for unity among a group of people. Whatever the scenario, a combination of environmental, social and economic threats to the survival of a people tend to breed unity of purpose to deal with the challenge. I would consider anything that tends to negatively affect people's ego, pride or self-esteem to be one example of social threat.

As Nigeria and many African countries are not subject to extreme natural disasters, our survival does not appear threatened by forces of nature or environmental factors.



We can literally sleep on trees all year round and still survive. No one can sleep on trees naked in winter and survive the first few years of life. Sub-Saharan Africans are blessed with beautiful weather, an almost all-year-round 'summer' weather.

Africans have fought wars. There have been bloody intertribal and clan wars over the centuries. Many empires have risen and fallen in Africa. There have been remarkable civilizations in many parts of Africa. It may be noted that these pockets of civilizations tended to occur in predominantly one-language societies except when they expanded to conquer other regions of different language and culture.

We may also note that large regions of the world were conquered or colonized by the mono-language countries such as England, Spain, Portugal and Germany.

As the world has become very global with travel and communications allowing various people to mingle and interact, I believe in these lie the hope for the development and growth for Nigeria. And possibly for Africa. This motivation, I simply call the **"shame" motivation**. Nigeria and Africa are subjected to a social threat that undermines our intelligence, our honesty, our integrity and our ability to function as humans. This threat is probably at its highest levels ever. We are at the state where everything negative about humanity is seen as African. And worse still, our image, as Nigerians have taken a further tumble in the global community.

We feel this shame daily.

Foreign embassies treat us as criminals, fraudsters when we apply for visas. The documents we submit mean nothing. Sometimes, the visa officers do not even ask us any questions. Our applications are rejected, refused and often for no reason. Many of us have defrauded their systems. Nigeria has been the globally notorious for advance fee fraud.

Our genuine business propositions with foreigners are often overlooked or bypassed.

We tend to attract bad press.

If the word fraud is used, and the name of Nigeria appears in the same discussion, the Nigerian is assumed to be the guilty party.

Our schools don't work. High rate of unemployment. Our factories don't work. Our electricity system is very poor. Our roads are pot-hole ridden. Our airports are broken. Our political system is no system. We have no functional management system as a country to plan into the distant future. We live for the moment. The pleasures of the moment.

It is easy for non-Nigerians to incite us against each other based on ethnic differences and thus frustrate our unity.

Our ease of gratification allows us to grow complacent and this is so easy to see and take advantage of.

But we must begin to feel this shame. The shame of the loss of our dignity in the larger world. A nation with no plans for her children.

This shame must be distinguished from the shame typically associated with ignoble or illegal acts that lead to imprisonment.

This 'shame' more closely resembles the shame that people who commit suicide feel. The shame one feels when you feel you don't measure up to your peers. Or you think you cannot do anything that can earn you respect in your society, so you feel less than human. The kind of shame that makes people in positions of authority resign voluntarily, when they feel they have dishonoured their position or failed the people they represent. This shame is more about the individual realizing his failures and feels low in his or her person. This shame would usually result in an action.

The action can be negative or positive.

I am hoping that our response to this shame would be positive action.

That we have become a laughing stock in the eyes of the world is sad. All our failures as a group have contributed to the shame we feel and experience at home and overseas.

The colour of our international passport brings no respect to the owner or holder. Unless we hate our children, our future generations to extreme levels, then we must be motivated by our collective shame to rise above our mediocre living and challenge the frontiers of development and societal progress.

Our shame becomes our snow. Our natural disaster. The threat to our self-esteem. The threat to our survival in a competitive world. The motivation to become somebody. We must feel the

threat to propels us to work harder, smarter, together and steadily to restore our pride of humanity.

In many countries, deep shame lead people to commit suicide. This shows that innately, man desires to be like others, at least in terms of the positive. Or desire to be even better than others for a good sense of self-worth.

I am not advocating that we resort to suicides because the shame on us, is close to such levels, however, mass suicides will not be the way to go.

There must be more to living than partying, clubbing, buying SUVs, buying and buying, sex, eating, dancing, playing music and dying. Easy gratification will get us nowhere. We count for much more than these.

It is no longer enough for Nigerians to be gratified, in having more money, be wealthier than our neighbour, our kinsmen, our relatives. To just “*hammer*<sup>1</sup>” or “*blow*<sup>2</sup>” is not enough target. It is no longer enough to show off to the man on the street. It is no longer enough to think highly of ourselves, in our local setting yet be treated like 3<sup>rd</sup> class people internationally. And locally too.

It is no longer enough for us to feel rich while we are generally classified as corrupt, inept, shallow thinkers, lovers of quick pleasure and dumping ground for all sorts. Corruption is not a term in any Nigerian language, so we cannot own the word or

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<sup>1</sup> A local lingo in Nigeria for making it big, financially. To become rich.

<sup>2</sup> Another term commonly used to describe, making it, financially. Become rich.

practice. It means it is practiced in other countries too, so we must not allow this to be appropriated to Nigeria and Nigerians.

We have Nigerians in almost every country in the world and we travel often, the world is now a global village. If we must show-off, we must have the substance and measure respected internationally. We must have a functional country. A country we can be proud of. A country where things work. Government works. Education works. Transportation works. Industries work. Professionalism and dignity of labour exist and thrive.

We are a proud people. We must earn it. And earn it on an international level.

In these pages, we shall highlight the many faces of shame in our society that appear to have become normal. Shame that no longer feels like shame but a norm. Shame that should be seen for what it is: *An anathema to society*.

Knowledge is power. With this knowledge of facts, of the reality, we gain understanding. We understand how these shameful situations harm us in the near term and in the long term. From the understanding, we apply wisdom to know what to do. We know what to do next. We collectively appreciate and adopt the set of behavioural and attitudinal changes that would achieve our desired results. For ourselves, the community, and the nation for today and for future generations. We shall make conscious decisions, take conscious actions to feed into our insights for our country.

We cannot afford to pretend that all is well. Not anymore.

# **THE SHAME OF MONEY WORSHIP**

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## **“QUICK-MONEY SYNDROME”**

Money and display of wealth as basis for social value and recognition.

## THE PRACTICE

This presents a few practices or mores that characterize the craving or worship of money,

- Money is now seen as the only measure of worth in the society. Hence, quick-money becomes the predominant motive for all action, interest and passion.
- People who steal money from Government and institutions are respected and given exalted positions in Political parties, religious organizations, public gatherings and choice titles in the society
- Fraudsters are no longer ashamed to display their ill-gotten wealth in public
- Yahoo<sup>3</sup> boys aka 419<sup>4</sup> boys and ritualists no longer hide. They flaunt their wealth and the society respects them for their money.
- Parents no longer worry about the source of their children's wealth.
- General loss of patience to develop skills and expertise to create sustainable value in products and services: *quick-money* is the general way to go.
- Our movies focus on themes where the quest is centred on money, quick money and rituals. This indicates a prevailing practice in the land. More money without due focus on the values of hard work. Or the ethical means to generate wealth.
- Fraudsters and yahoo boys using national security officers as body guards and security personnel.

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<sup>3</sup> Yahoo boys: A local term that describes young men who engage in all forms of shady deals to make quick riches. It originated from the practice of sending advance-fee fraud using the yahoo free email some years back. The term is now broadly used for all sorts of 'unholy' dealings for money.

<sup>4</sup> 419. Same as Yahoo boys.

- Lecturers extorting money in exchange for marks or grades.
- Coaches demanding bribes to select players into teams.
- People not willing to do their jobs unless bribed with cash.
- Loss of pride in passion or talent area or fear of expressing passion to friends and family, if one is not rich or 'cashed-up<sup>5</sup>'.
- A prevailing attitude of more money, regardless of how the money is made. *The cash justifies the means.*
- The act of buying votes with cash.
- Nigerian women working as prostitutes in foreign countries.

## WHY IS IT A SHAME?

We should be ashamed of the prevailing wide-spread quick-money attitude across the nation for many reasons. The reasons are obvious.

- With so many good and hardworking Nigerians, the effects of the quick-money syndrome and the associated skulduggery has created a blanket negative assessment for Nigerians in the eyes of the world. Apparently, every Nigerian will do anything for money. This is so sad and untrue, yet the impact on us all remain real.

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<sup>5</sup> wealthy



- For all the huge monies earned from crude oil as a country, the people of Nigeria remain poor, on the average.
- For all our education, we still fail to understand that no legacy, development or growth can be achieved on the platform of quick-money. It takes a process, a system, a management system, discipline, to create foundations that generate wealth on a sustainable basis. Quick-money processes do not build nations. Or build great people. It may take 5-8 years, or more, to build an automobile plant or factory. But on completion, a new car can be produced every 30 minutes or less. This industrial practice is one example that shows the great gain that comes from diligently pursuing revenues or gain through foresight, patience, planning and focus.
- In the early days, people of ill-gotten wealth were never recognized in the society nor celebrated. Honour was the societal code. This social system gave honest men and women the platform to thrive, the platform to pay the price and etch their names into History. Chieftaincy titles and national awards would never be bestowed on people with known shady past or ways.
- For all the cash Nigerians have, we are still treated with disrespect out of Nigeria. We carry the toga of fraudulent, corrupt people. When we arrive at foreign airports it is not uncommon to find more security personnel deployed to ask irritating questions such as *"How much currency are you carrying on you?"*.
- We collect cash to sell our votes, and we get the leaders we deserve: They steal our dues while in office. Because we lack the shame, we repeat the cycle several times over.

- There appears to be no reward for patience or diligence in the country anymore, hence, people follow a trend that appears more rewarded or recognized.

## **THE DAMAGE TO OUR NATION AND OUR PEOPLE**

The damage to us as a nation, and as a people are severe. There are many good and honest Nigerians. Hardworking, trusting and diligent. Unfortunately, we have cases where the nation hurts from this quick-money syndrome. I'll outline just a few:

- Some lecturers and teachers in Nigerian institutions have prioritized cash over the dignity and joy of the teaching profession. Teachers sell/trade handouts, books, anything for marks or grades. This overshadows the work and image of the many honest and sincere teachers in the country.
- Contracts are awarded, contract monies paid in full and the work is either not carried out or it is poorly finished or abandoned. And no one gets punished or jailed. This is a core facet of corruption that has severely impacted our power, road, infrastructure and other sectors. The primary objective is the money and not the task performance. And many honest hardworking contractors abound in Nigeria.
- Poor job performance in the work space. Workers focus on the pay and not on the work execution leading to erosion of real professionalism and a stunted industrial growth. Companies need to be pushing the frontiers of industrial growth and innovation. The attitude of *"It is*

*not my father's work*" would not help the country, the company or economy.

- Massive drain in the pool of skilled tradesmen, craftsmen such as masons, tilers, and electricians into other trades. The desire for faster, quicker money has led to massive exodus of Nigerians out of these vocations. Many Nigeria builders and developers must now *import* craftsmen from neighbouring West African countries for quality work performance. The pool of comedians and musicians are growing while the pool of top skilled workers is declining.
- We have lost many of our unemployed youths to *Advance Fee Fraud* and rituals for quick-money
- Our successful businessmen and women tend to build expensive Universities with high tuition fees to introduce more '*graduates*' into an economy with no industries to absorb them.
- Our banks and financial sector remain largely focused on short-term funding/finance. No finance for long term, long duration projects that builds nations. Revenue base appear to be more on transactional charges than stimulating economic growth through project funding.
- Predominant interest in trade and quick transactions over long term enterprise or projects that would add more lasting value to the nation.
- A growing trend where people are no longer keen on understanding or performing their job roles to professional standards: Hence, shoddy performance prevails with obvious results to the economy.
- The rush to earn quick money, to acquire the latest in cell phones, cars, and gadgets that flood the country from overseas. These further weaken our naira and

force devaluation when oil prices weaken to depress our forex reserves and foreign exchange earnings.

- Some of our educated people would rather run away to foreign countries to drive taxis, and other menial jobs just to earn dollars and appear 'rich' to families and friends back in Nigeria. This tendency contributes to the brain drain that further impoverish us as a nation.
- Some country embassies in Nigeria treat all Nigerians with blanket generic valuation. Who will blame them when many Nigerians previously assessed as honest and hardworking, travel, overstay their visa validity and never plan to return? We want to reap where we did not sow. We must realize that the functional systems in foreign countries were created by their people for their people and not for Nigerians to emigrate illegally into their economies. We may not be so kind to others who want to reap from the sweat of our ancestors.
- The tendency of some football coaches, sports coaches and managers to collect cash bribes to select players even into National teams. The sad thing about this, is sometimes, we have people selected on merit into teams in their playing days, who now turn to bribe-takers when they get the opportunity to select others. This is very sad. This craving for instant cash allows for sacrificing the greater pursuit of excellence and glory for easy lucre. And the nation or club pays the ultimate price. Exquisite talents waste, as a weakened team is fielded. The belief and trust in the leaders go through the window. Our young people lose faith in the system.

## WHAT I WOULD DO AS PRESIDENT

1. **Open the competitive space in Nigeria, as a global entity, for specialists and specialist companies to bid for National projects (Power, Roads, Rail, Sea, Housing, others) from design to construction and operations.** Experienced Nigerians including those working overseas are encouraged to participate in the rebuilding of our country.  
There is no point attempting to re-invent the wheel. We shall simply adopt and adapt successful models under a functional management system to steward all components to sustainable deployment.
2. **Prioritize provision of stable, enough power across the nation.** We shall declare a NATIONAL EMERGENCY on POWER. This would unlock the entrepreneurial potential of the nation. And save significantly on capital flight, stabilize the Naira and generate more revenue for the Government. More jobs shall be created.
3. **Create multi-Lane National and Inter-state Highways across the country.** *Push for a national policy that appropriates a minimum allocation of annual revenues to continuing road construction and expansion.*
4. **Create a national rail transportation system.** We would canvas for a consortium that would build an integrated power and rail system. Trams and city rail system would be explored for congested cities across the country.
5. **Provision of pipe-born water utilities across the country.** The benefits of this would be expansive and extensive. This shall be treated as a basic human right for all Nigerians.
6. **Develop the frame work to finance these projects.** This would optimize on internally generated funds, reserves appropriation, counterpart funding, community funding and other creative platforms. Some measures include but not limited to the following:
  - i. **Push to create buy-in on the unity of purpose** for us to develop as a nation: a departure from tribal or clan development.

- ii. **Reduce the cost of government:** We must develop our unique system of governance. Consider the use of a part-time legislature, rather than full time career politicians.
- iii. **Improve transparency in the oil and gas industry:** Greater accountability in revenue accounting.
- iv. **Engage in win-win partnerships** in road and rail construction and possibility of tolling the highways as part of the revenue recovery measures.
- v. **Deregulate the power Industry** and allow for unleashing of creativity and entrepreneurship.
- vi. **Expand the power generation** base to include coal fired plants, hydro power plants, solar plants, wind plants, others. Uncouple the clogged power generation and distribution chain.
- vii. **Create a government supported funding for banks to finance** long term national aspiration projects such as interstate road and rail network, national monuments, tourism promotion, others.
- viii. **Strengthen the security and regulatory framework** to stimulate improvement in compliance to international standards for ethics, reliability, operability and maintainability.
- ix. **Appoint Nigerians with proven competence** in professional fields to steward these national projects, using functional management systems. Nigerians educated overseas and with good working experience can come home to contribute to developing our fatherland.

## ON THE SOCIAL FRONT

On the social front, my perspective shall follow along these lines:

I would focus on initiatives that would primarily restore the social dignity and respect for patience, diligence and professionalism across the nation. Primarily, there should be a recognition system that encourages honest endeavours. We shall also communicate to the entire nation, the initiating of long-term projects that would restore national pride.

In 1984, the military government of General Muhammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon, the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, introduced the war against Indiscipline (WAI) program to correct the endemic corruption and restore social order to the population.

Although there were cases of human rights abuse, it was evident that Nigerians self-corrected and people appreciated the order. People became orderly at bus stops. Anyone who attempted to side-track the process was derided in unison. After a short while, order and diligence became the norm. Successive governments were to water down this initiative and the momentum was lost. As a young man in these periods, witnessing these gave me the insight into the inherently good nature of Nigerians. So, I believe that setting the pace is really the catalyst that the country needs.

Specifically, I would target to achieve these:

- a. **Publish names of companies and the directors** who get awarded government and national projects in the media (TV, national newspapers, online/social media) for accountability. Hold contractor companies and stakeholders responsible. This format would make the companies and personnel involved constantly conscious of the scrutiny from the whole country and not just the scrutiny of the contract holder in government.

- b. **Encourage private institutions to do the same.** Particularly on national development projects. NNPC/NAPIMS and other institutions shall publish names of companies handling different projects.
- c. **Institute recognition** awards across the country for outstanding performance in various fields of endeavour.
- d. **Establish a recognition system for heroes** of the society in sports, education, industry, tourism, social platform, trade, finance, etc. They shall be called the *Nigerian Heroes*.
- e. **Promote national awareness** on the dangers of the quick-money syndrome on our today and the future.

## WHAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER AS A PEOPLE

A few realities we need to embrace.

- Nigerians must know that great leaders who have changed the world through effort, science and leadership were motivated more by the beauty or joy of the challenge, the value to the society, community, nation or the world than for money. Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King are notable examples of personalities who embodied this ideology. We can easily forget the richest man in the world at various periods of time, but it is very difficult to forget those who motivated and built societies.

We think of our Nigerian founding fathers, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Dr, Nnamdi Azikiwe, more in terms of how they helped create and shape Nigeria than how we think of their wealth status. I accept there never will come a time when everybody will view money the same way, but when we have a good number of people willing to pay



the price for self-development intrinsic to national development, the force of energy created will propel us along.

- If the Nigerian will perform, work, relate, act and think in exactly how we dream or expect our Leaders in government to be; at home, at work, business, family, local government, state and anywhere we find ourselves, the multiplier effect will be astronomical. Yes, we can criticize but the highest form of criticism is leadership by example.

It is all too easy and expected, for us to criticize others, particularly those in power, public view or perceived privileged persons. Apparently, to be in leadership or some famous position in life is a crime to be punished by criticism from just about anybody and everybody. Presidents, governors, popular musicians, artistes, Nollywood, Hollywood celebrities must have a hard time trying to live like normal people, as the public expectations from them, is probably a higher level of holiness than the expectations from even religious leaders.

Not surprisingly, some presidents or leaders, when in power, tend to devise means, positively or negatively, to either shut-out criticisms, control the freedom of expression or become inured to them. This book is more about self-criticism, an introspection into how we can each improve, in our mind-set, individually and collectively. This is not a detached position of, I am good, they are bad.

- When we each take pride in always carrying out the task before us anywhere, in school, work, and business to the highest levels of professionalism, our nation will take off. Whenever we get to where we always want to constantly do better, become better, refusing the urge to become complacent, then we are on our way.

History has shown that religion has often played a role in shaping the cultures of any society. And Nigeria is largely a religious nation. I would make a public appeal to religious leaders across the country to de-emphasize the recognition of success in customary terms such as wealth, money, cash, buying of new cars, building of a new house, getting a house one did not build, successful visa application to other countries and material things in general.

Yes, we all need shelter, security, food and social recognition. It is the order, the sequence of expectations that can harm or develop the society. It is horrible, when the hunger for material things become so elevated that the concern for how to attain these benefits becomes more important than the concern for common good. How can we be happy when we achieve our goals while the larger gets destroyed, damaged or people get killed, hurt? What happens to our conscience? This mind-set would be a sad case for humanity if it becomes the prevailing attitude in any society.

Emphasis or recognition should be given to adherents who demonstrate significant contributions to societal or national development. We must celebrate these people in our culture and not necessarily people who live in gated estates, drive expensive SUVs, live in big houses, travel every year for summer, have loads of cash to throw around, throw parties often. These are not crimes. But when we celebrate core values, we are stimulating the society to produce even more millionaires in a thriving society with reduced poverty. We must celebrate people who fall into these categories:

- Happy professionals and craftsmen who demonstrate pride and passion in their work.
- Innovative entrepreneurs who change our landscape.

- People who find cures to difficult diseases such as cancer, HIV, Arthritis, Ebola, Lassa fever, or for scientific breakthroughs, success on national initiatives amongst other similar endeavours.
- Architects and engineers who develop the working model for tropical architecture and buildings.
- Musicians, movie directors, and celebrities who motivate growth and development.
- Teachers who embody the philosophy of teachers, who simply love to impart knowledge to others.
- Engineers who lead the way in developing local innovation in facilities, equipment, machines, internet, software, hardware.
- People who excel in various disciplines.
- Lawyers who fight the cause of the downtrodden.
- Legacy champions who build affordable educational institutions for the masses and the under-privileged

Furthermore, we shall drive for these:

- **Citizens shall be encouraged to submit names of people** in the society who they are convinced are deserving of recognition for the heroic or noble role they have played in their community as Nigerians. In the same way that whistle blowers report people with stolen cash, there is no reason exceptional Nigerians should not be '*reported*' to the leadership for recognition.

We shall institute an annual award scheme for the ***NIGERIAN HERO***. Exemplary action by people at all levels of the society, worthy of recognition would merit consideration.

In theory, a Nigeria with more Nigerian Heroes in our population would surely be a growing Nigeria. To drive down the *Nigerian Hero* criteria, we take a few more examples (*This is by no means exhausting*):

- **Teachers and Lecturers who love their jobs** with exceptional passion and diligence. Lecturers who are incorruptible yet diligent in passing on knowledge to students. Teachers who do not sell handouts for marks or who do not violate the code. Teachers that glow with pride when their students excel in life. Teachers who would not betray their conscience for money, sex or position. Teachers who show exemplary humility. Teachers whose ex-students would always re-connect with.
- **Workers who retain exceptional professionalism** regardless of type of work performed. Local government workers, soldiers, police officers, administrators, barbers, hairdressers, construction site workers, pilots, airline crew members, scientists, lab attendants, nurses, medical doctors, others.
- **Students who achieve** extra-ordinary performance in any field. Students who show consistency in scholastic pursuits. Students who shun cultism. Students who show hunger and desire for results. Students who, while in school, identify and proffer innovative answers to needs in the society. Students who themselves extend and push the frontiers of knowledge.
- **Lecturers and academicians** who extend the frontiers of knowledge to advance the cause of humanity. Genuine academicians with demonstrated evidence for leading noble causes.

- **Craftsmen with remarkable skills and character.** Integrity. Passion. Discipline.
- **Innovative Nigerians** making a living through exports or actions that save Nigeria huge sums of money in foreign exchange.
- **People who can be called the FACE OF THE NEW NIGERIA.** People who need to be showcased as mentors to the young Nigerian.
- **Musicians, Movie directors** whose work embody the spirit of the New Nigerian
- **Religious leaders who encourage the spirit** of the New Nigeria
- **Completely de-tribalized Nigerians** worthy of emulation.
- **Nigerians who make various kinds of Scientific breakthroughs** in Medicine, Engineering, Architecture, Physics, Chemistry, others.
- **Encourage parents to discourage kids** from money-by-all-means syndrome.
- **Discourage societal recognition** of people with questionable source of wealth.

# THE SHAME OF INADEQUATE POWER SUPPLY FOR DECADES

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## “NEPA WAHALA<sup>6</sup>”

After spending several Billions of naira, the country of 180 million people, with a land size of just under 970,000 sq. km, Nigeria still produces electrical power less than South Africa, Egypt, Morocco, and Algeria.

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<sup>6</sup> NEPA Wahala- Local parlance for electrical power supply troubles.

## THE PRACTICE

Billions of dollars have been spent on provision of power and power infrastructure in Nigeria over the years with no sign of improvement. The typical home, company, business in Nigeria must provide own electrical power generators at huge costs. Apparently, in Nigeria, electrical power generators that should serve as stand-by power supply, replace regular power source while national power supply serve as back-up.

The 2005 Electric Power Sector Reform Act made The Nigeria's power sector to be centrally regulated by NERC (Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission). This national level regulation of electricity generation, transmission and distribution has created an extremely limited and inefficient system. The result is that the 774 Local Governments across the 36 states of the federation are poorly serviced. And if something is not done, this trend will continue.

Ironically, the Nigerian constitution supports decentralized electricity regulation as it gives federal and state governments the authority to make laws and create enabling framework that would improve electricity generation and distribution. Interestingly, the Act runs counter to the Constitution.

The impact of poor power situation in Nigeria needs little or no discussion or explanation to understand. It is felt everywhere.

## WHY IS IT A SHAME?

There are too many reasons the Nigerian power situation is a mega-shame. I would highlight just a few:

- Our government house is powered mainly by diesel generators. Aso Rock, Nigeria's seat of power, gets a hefty allocation in annual budgets for power plants and generator fuelling.
- Billions have been spent and cornered into private pockets and no one has been jailed or punished for this massive failure, disgrace and waste. The effort and cost to prosecute and punish offenders would probably outweigh the benefits at this stage. We should just move on and make it difficult to repeat the mistakes and the corruption of the past.
- With a population of 180+ million, we generate a mere 28 GWh of electricity, while some countries with much lower population and land mass generate much more. See the table below:

COUNTRY	ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION (GWh)	POPULATION SIZE (JULY 1,2017)	RELATIVE RATIO OF POWER/ POPULATION
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	135,800	9,400,145	1.44466
UNITED STATES	4,281,800	324,459,463	1.31967
SINGAPORE	52,400	5,708,844	0.91787
ISREAL	68,300	8,321,570	0.82076
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	10,300	1,369,125	0.75231



COUNTRY	ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION (GWh)	POPULATION SIZE (JULY 1,2017)	RELATIVE RATIO OF POWER/ POPULATION
LIBYA	35,450	6,374,616	0.55611
MALAYSIA	162,300	31,624,264	0.51321
CHINA	6,495,100	1,409,517,397	0.46080
SOUTH AFRICA	259,400	56,717,156	0.45736
URUGUAY	10,161	3,456,750	0.29395
THAILAND	176,600	69,037,513	0.25580
VIETNAM	190,100	95,540,800	0.19897
EGYPT	193,200	97,553,151	0.19805
ALGERIA	75,200	41,318,142	0.18200
COLOMBIA	75,300	49,065,615	0.15347
INDIA	1,497,000	1,339,180,127	0.11178
MOROCCO	31,600	35,739,580	0.08842
PAKISTAN	123,900	197,015,955	0.06289
GHANA	10,906	28,833,629	0.03782
NIGERIA	28,000	190,886,311	0.01467

- This table shows that African countries such as Ghana, Egypt, Algeria, South Africa, and Libya generate much higher power per person than Nigeria. Of the countries listed, only Ghana has a lower net power generation than Nigeria.
- Nigerian generates more revenue than many of the listed countries.
- Many countries of the world generate electricity from multiple sources i.e. coal, natural gas, hydro, nuclear, wind. 81% of Nigeria's power is from Natural Gas. Our

extensive coal deposits go unutilized. South Africa generates over 90% of its power from coal, China 70% from coal, US, 31.9% from Coal, Malaysia 42% from coal. Why have we all focused on the currently inefficient natural gas fired power plants model?

COUNTRY	ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION (GWh)	COAL (%) OF TOTAL 2015	NATURAL GAS FIRED (%) OF TOTAL 2015	SUB TOTAL THERMAL (%)	HYDRO POWER (%) OF TOTAL 2015	NUCLEAR
CHINA	6,495,100	70.3	2.5	73	19.1	2.3
UNITED STATES	4,281,800	34.2	31.9	66.1	5.8	19.3
INDIA	1,497,000	75.3	4.9	80.2	10	2.8
SOUTH AFRICA	259,400	92.7	0	92.7	0.3	5.5
EGYPT	193,200	0	70.7	70.7	7.4	0
VIETNAM	190,100	29.6	33.2	62.8	36.6	0
THAILAND	176,600	19.5	71.4	90.9	2.7	0
MALAYSIA	162,300	42.3	46.6	88.9	9.3	0
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	135,800	0	98.5	98.5	0	0
PAKISTAN	123,900	0.1	25.7	25.8	30.7	4.8
COLOMBIA	75,300	11.9	19.3	31.2	65	0
ALGERIA	75,200	0	98.4	98.4	0.2	0
ISREAL	68,300	45.4	51.6	97	0	0
SINGAPORE	52,400	1.2	95	96.2	0	0
LIBYA	35,450	0	53.7	53.7	0	0
MOROCCO	31,600	55.5	18.8	74.3	6.1	0
NIGERIA	28,000	0	81.8	81.8	18.2	0

COUNTRY	ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION (GWh)	COAL (%) OF TOTAL 2015	NATURAL GAS FIRED (%) OF TOTAL 2015	SUB TOTAL THERMAL (%)	HYDRO POWER (%) OF TOTAL 2015	NUCLEAR
GHANA	10,906	44.3	9.8	54.1	50.9	0
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	10,300	0	99.8	99.8	0	0
URUGUAY	10,161	0	0	0	60.2	0

- It is shameful that we continue to do the same thing, across each government, each party, annually on power with no results to show for it, yet not think it deserves realistic escalation of efforts. That is, if we truly desire a change.
- It is shameful that a simple problem solved by many nations, some bigger, others smaller than Nigeria, in Africa and beyond, continues to beat us. How can we be repeating the same mistakes for decades and think nothing about it? Yet we posture and sometimes see ourselves as the giant of Africa. Self-delusion at its highest.
- It is shameful that Nigeria, Africa's largest oil and gas producer, is a major market for electric generators of all kinds from overseas. And our own goods flood no overseas market.

## THE DAMAGE TO OUR NATION, AND OUR PEOPLE

The damage to the nation is extensive. We highlight only a few here:

- Companies start and close-up due to high cost of generating electricity through diesel powered generators. Cost of support services are also high, due to high cost of doing business in the country. Many industries have packed up. Several high-profile companies have packed up from their Nigerian bases and left the country without looking back.
- Poor power situation in Nigeria is a leading factor in the slow evolution of the enterprise spirit in Nigerians.
- High cost of locally manufactured goods, hence local goods cannot compete on the international market. Many foreign made goods even at the added cost of transportation, customs duties and handling, are still cheaper than the made-in-Nigeria equivalent. This discourages local production, limits export revenue and creates an uncondusive environment for foreign investors who would otherwise build and operate factories in Nigeria.
- High demand for forex needed to import petroleum products that serve not just vehicles but gasoline and diesel power generators for homes companies, industries and establishments.
- Huge drain on the resources of citizens, in powering generators in houses
- Significant carbon pollution into the environment.

- Significant noise pollution: In some neighbourhoods, noise from multiple generators at night time render quality night rest and sleep virtually impossible.
- People have been killed in their homes from carbon monoxide poisoning, emanating from exhaust of generators positioned close to living spaces.

### **WHAT I WOULD DO AS PRESIDENT**

1. Push for the Amendment of the 2005 Electric Power Sector Reform Act to be consistent with the Constitution.
2. Deregulate Power Sector. There is no point empowering a few people to become or stay mega wealthy at the expense of most Nigerians.
3. Split the power projects into distinct zones and get technical professionals to develop the scope, boundaries, and expectations plus deliverables.
4. Invite foreign and local companies to bid for various power projects on a Build-Operate-and-Recover cost basis. Give concessions to companies who currently earn huge revenues exporting generators to Nigeria and those who export petroleum products to Nigeria. They may partner with Nigerian business men who are main importers of petroleum products and generators. This would allow them to generate alternative revenue streams to remain in business, help the employment situation and help the cause of local power supply. We shall strive for a win-win condition. We would need their support, buy in and

collaboration to drive this initiative through. The goal is to develop Nigeria and not to strangulate anyone. It can be done.

5. Allow one company or entity to handle the chain of generation, transmission and distribution per power zone or sub-zone. This shall eliminate the bottlenecks to existing interface between power generation companies, transmission companies and distribution companies (DISCOs).
6. Expand power generation technology to coal, wind and hydro, including mini-hydro power plants. The current natural gas and natural gas fired independent power project system is not working.
7. Payments for contracts shall be domiciled in structures that would have minimal influence by governments to minimize hiccups when governments change. Or through the phases of projects that span across multiple terms of 4 years. A team of professionals shall debate and review this structure and come up with optimal solutions that would give project stakeholders confidence and a sense of security to commit their funds. No investor is foolish enough to want to put funds into high risk, high uncertainty projects.
8. Allow owners of gas and coal for example, to benefit more in the revenues from utilization. The government shall gain or receive revenue from taxes and possibly not from sole ownership.
9. Encourage the creation and building of industries closer to the source of gas and coal. Linking these locations with good roads would be a strong factor in unlocking the

industrialization and revenue generation potential of the country. Collaboration with road construction stakeholders would be explored along with the creation of industrial parks.

10. Allow for community power generation platforms.

11. Provide incentives and rewards for local companies who demonstrate exceptional performance in the power sector.

#### **WHAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER AS A PEOPLE**

As a people, the migration to power sufficiency will come at some costs. Regular power will be more expensive than current power tariffs. The projects from conception to commissioning would take some time. Land would be acquired, and access ways created. The cooperation of all would be needed. Collaboration would be needed in some of these areas:

- Some projects would run across political terms of office. Governments can change hands. All elected officers must commit to nationally signed transactions and contracts. Systems work better when the default mind-set is skewed more towards compliance than towards circumvention. Regulations and rule of law would usually help in enforcing compliance.
- Some measure of patience would be required to see the projects run to fruition. However, the transparency of

government in monitoring and publishing performance data would help allay fears of the populace. Visible transformation can be seen starting from 12 to 18 months into the administration. It may be 4-7 years before remarkable sustainable development is achieved.

- Nigerians should embrace the responsibility of paying for power consumed. This however will not be subjective as power companies shall readily disconnect non-paying consumers. Pre-paid meters would be the default starting scenario.
- Accept that change will have a few pains, but the end would be wonderful. Much better.
- Individuals and companies already making a living through generator importation and diesel/petroleum products, rather than oppose the reforms should bid for participation in the new order projects.



## **THE SHAME OF OUR INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL AIRPORTS**

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The open embarrassment and shame that our airports, local and international have been for ages.

## **THE PRACTICE**

Nigeria's International airport terminal in Lagos was built and commissioned over 40 years ago, in 1978 although it was officially opened in March 15, 1979. The airport facilities have been renovated several times, but it remains way behind other international airports in terms of quality, aesthetics and efficiency. If our International airport in Lagos is this poor, you can imagine how the rest of our airports are. The Port Harcourt International Airport appears to be forever undergoing reconstruction and renovation. Our international airport at Abuja does not fare better.

## **WHY IS IT A SHAME?**

After travelling around several airports overseas, if you are blind folded on arrival, as soon as the aircraft doors are opened, you can instantly tell when you arrive at the airport, an airport in Nigeria. The hot, poorly air-conditioned space is the first thing that assures you that you are back home.

The often-non-functional rolling stairs, the look of the 70s in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are reminders of how far back we have fallen as a nation.

Poor organization, inadequate space or options, poor car park facilities, poor space outlook, and runway limitations are some markers for our shame.

Unionized airport taxi system further limits the use of airport transportation within the country, as their hegemony add to the overall costs of air travel, *pushing* out many potential customers who would otherwise make airline operations more profitable and sustainable.

That our airports are in this state, is not the deepest reason for shame or worry. Some of the deeper reasons for this shame are outlined below:

- All past presidents, vice-presidents of Nigeria, heads of state have travelled out of Nigeria and have seen airports in other countries. They have also returned to the sorry state of our Airports. Yet, we continue like it means nothing. They approve huge budgets for airport upgrades, little is done, and no one is jailed for non-performance. It remains business as usual.
- Many 'leaders' in government, the presidency, senators, members of the house of assembly have also travelled overseas and seen how their airports look. No one has been summoned nor any punished for the show of shame. Huge allowances are appropriated for members of the legislature for personal use while the show of shame continue.
- We expect foreign investment into the country, we expect tourism to thrive, yet we fail to recognize the great value that quality, clean functional and efficient airports will bring to us. The impression that foreigners would have when they enter our country and space is a

key factor. We fail to realize how few people will want to invest their hard-earned cash or funds in a disorderly and dysfunctional state: Airports as first port of entry play a huge role in that perception or assessment. This is sad.

- The government is oblivious of the lost revenue in sales or transaction taxes that accrue from high air traffic. Maybe, only oil and gas revenue seem to appeal to our sensibilities now. Shallow perception.
- All ministers of aviation have also travelled in and outside of Nigeria. They return to the country oblivious of the shame. And life continues. Several billions spent yet nothing to show for it.
- Huge government taxes are charged on domestic tickets in the face of poor if not horrible infrastructure support. Many airlines start and die over a short period, yet life continues. Business as usual.
- A recent trip to Ghana revealed the enhanced state of the Accra Airport. If Ghana can do it, Nigeria should be able to do it. The Ghana Airport has a functional free Wi-Fi for passengers. At least as at the last time I visited. There is no such thing in any Nigerian Airport. And Wi-Fi is now a common feature at even regional airports overseas.
- Nigerians fill up the business class seats on many foreign airlines. Families of more than 5-7 travel full business class. The same applies to our leaders,

politicians, business men and women. We have this level of cash to spend, yet our nation is too poor to fund international quality airports.

### **THE DAMAGE TO OUR NATION AND OUR PEOPLE**

The damage to our nation and our people is significant. Some would be highlighted here.

- Our airports cast a negative image on us as a people. If the first port of entry into our country is this poor, how can any foreigner think we are better, or can be better? Impressions count. Our Airports appear disorderly. How can we expect any foreigner to see us as orderly, structured, functional and credible? How?
- The nation loses heavily, financially also from the limited transactions that severely limited airports cause.
- Loss of jobs. Functional airports would create massive employment opportunities for Nigerians.
- Significant business losses resulting from several schedule disruptions in local air travel. Long wasted hours in hot airport waiting areas.
- Billions are lost when airlines fold up. And jobs also lost. Okada Air Folded up. Sosoliso Airlines, TRIAX, ADC, EAS, AL-BARKA, Afrijet, BARNAX are some of the many

airlines in Nigeria that have closed shop. Arik Airline is currently challenged. Virgin Atlantic has left Nigeria but remain strong overseas. More will close shop if practices are not significantly improved.

- There are not even enough airports in the country. And the few available are often too far from cool tourist destinations. Roads are non-existent. Poor air infrastructure worsens the case for tourism and tourism business.

#### **WHAT I WOULD DO AS PRESIDENT**

1. Create an **Aviation Emergency Task Team** to steward the new program.
2. Develop a master plan for international and local airports across Nigeria. Consider entirely new airports in Lagos, Kano, Abuja and Port Harcourt to minimize interruptions or limitations to simultaneous operations and construction at the existing airports.
3. Advertise bids for developing and operating airports and possibly new airlines in Nigeria. This would be open to foreign and local consortiums. Each bidder would select interested scope of delivery in different zones. Allow for tolled capital and operating cash recovery. Scope would include construction of hotel chains and ground transportation to support the air travel network for

- passenger value. Encourage Nigerian-foreign partnership consortiums by adopting some global best-practices.
4. Create a funding/financial system that allows for easy forex transactions and revenue collection.
  5. Dismantle the stifling airport taxi hegemony at local and international airports.
  6. Review the tax policy on airline ticket-billing system.

#### **WHAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER AS A PEOPLE**

As a people, we can support in several ways.

- Embrace the changes that would create better airports
- Land owners may sacrifice their lands for new airports. Adequate compensations shall be paid. It should be part of the sacrifice for nationhood.
- Unionist should try to avoid antagonizing the process. Current jobs may be lost but better jobs would be created. We can benefit from seeing the bigger picture.
- Nigerian entrepreneurs would be encouraged to partner with foreign stakeholders. Nigerians should avoid the temptation to use the platform to scam potentially good intentioned investors or participators. One scam could easily scuttle the program as the world is now a global village.

- Citizens are encouraged to blow the whistle on potential scam deals that could derail the aviation upgrade and image repair projects.
- Avoid playing politics with the agenda. Constructive criticism would be far better than pessimistic objections.
- Stashing huge monies in foreign banks may add no value to us as a nation. Participating in these projects would not only add value to you as a person and investor, you would be helping to create a better country for the future generations.



# **THE SHAME OF OVERSEAS EDUCATION AS SOCIAL STATUS SYMBOL**

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Waste of scarce foreign exchange. Billions of dollars spent annually.

## THE PRACTICE

Nigeria has many schools: primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. We have private, public and government institutions. Entry conditions and qualifications into primary and nursery schools are defined basically by each individual school proprietor or owner. There is a national common entrance system for enrolment into federal secondary schools. And we have the West African School Certificate exams that all secondary school students must sit for. Acceptance into Nigerian universities consider the WASSCE results and scores in the unified JAMB (Joint Admission and Matriculation Board) UTME<sup>7</sup> exams, and a further university specific entry exam. The choice for each candidate by JAMB regulations is restricted to a few choices.

There are several challenges in our education environment. Some of these include:

- Standard, basic education quality, these days, is somewhat limited to some very expensive schools, meaning that very gifted students with poor parental backgrounds cannot afford the quality private schools. In our days, in the 70s and 80s, public affordable schools were very much available. Many upper-class people in our society today benefited from these affordable schooling opportunities.
- The JAMB system severely limits the dynamism of the competitive space in Nigeria's institutions to compete

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<sup>7</sup> UTME- Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination

for best brains and become self-motivated to advance the frontiers of intellectual pursuit: this scenario grows the institution and the country through competitive drives.

- There is widespread emphasis on certificates over performance or true learning.
- Exam malpractice is strongly indicated. A few years ago, I saw a private secondary school's advert in the dailies, soliciting for new student enrolment. As part of the strategy to induce more enrolments, names and photos of students who scored 8 to 9As in senior WASC exams were published. On this advert, the JAMB UTME scores of the students were also stated. With over 10 Students scoring A's in all 9 subjects, I was shocked to see the highest JAMB UTME score was 243/400. How can several students who scored an average of 90% across 8 to 9 subjects, score a mere 61% in another exam on the same subjects?

I had to ask to know if JAMB UTME maximum score had been reduced to 300 instead of 400. It was then I heard the shocker: *Are you not aware that some schools buy WAEC papers for their students to enhance their scores, but JAMB is difficult to manipulate in the same way.* Clearly, not all schools do this. This should not be done. It should not even be true.

- Frequent labour strikes by university lecturers across the nation's universities have crippled the interest in

federal and state universities by those who can afford alternatives. Inevitably, to have better education and reliable continuity of education without interruptions, those who can afford it choose overseas schools. Even some of those who cannot afford it, would borrow and starve, if need be, to sponsor their children to overseas schools.

- In some states, the average cost to educate children in private primary schools are higher than the average cost to sponsor a university undergraduate in a federal university in Nigeria.
- Living conditions in students' hostels can be difficult to imagine. In some schools, students must stand to take lectures, in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Collaboration between the industry and the universities does not appear to be robust.
- In some schools, the influencing of marks via some cash or side incentives to lecturers is not unheard of.
- Technical and vocation schools that train craftsmen in building construction, wood works, metal works, auto-mechanics, air-conditioning and Refrigeration, etc are no longer functional as before. The preference everywhere is to go for university degrees. The family pride today is more on boasting "All my Children are now graduates".

## WHY IS IT A SHAME?

These practices have root causes. And extensive implications. Preference for overseas education is only one of the many fallouts of our internally weak and poor education system. We should be ashamed of these, for several reasons:

- The number of Nigerians choosing education overseas has been growing over the years. Currently, as of 2018, Nigeria has the highest number of outbound students studying in countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Malaysia and even other African countries of Ghana and South Africa.

According to a report by world education news and reviews, there has been a 164% increase in the number of outbound students between the years (2005-2015). And from *the UNESCO Institute for Statistics*, it shows that about 22,000 students were admitted in total in universities outside Nigeria in 2003. But in 2017, the total admitted in universities outside Nigeria increased to 89,887. This is an alarming 309% increase in the last 15 years. What does this mean for Nigeria?

- In 2017, Nigeria's total budget for education was about \$1.7b (N606b), while Nigerians spent about \$2.7b educating about 89,887 students in foreign countries.
- The tables below show the comparison and the shame of a nation. We are spending billions on less than

100,000 students while spending much less on millions of students.

YEAR	NUMBER OF OUTBOUND STUDENTS	AMOUNT SPENT ON FOREIGN EDUCATION (\$m)	National Budget Allocation for Education (NGN)	National Budget Allocation for Education (USD)
2003	22,000	440.00	232.807	232.807
2004	24,000	480.00	983.858	983.858
2005	27,000	540.00	1,127.273	1,127.273
2006	28,000	560.00	1,609.339	1,609.339
2007	30,000	600.00	1,611.250	1,611.250
2008	34,000	680.00	3,083.983	3,083.983
2009	42,500	850.00	1,525.448	1,525.448
2010	45,000	900.00	1,680.656	1,680.656
2011	49,000	1,446.48	2,027.805	2,027.805
2012	50,000	1,476.00	2,580.115	2,580.115
2013	53,000	1,564.56	2,783.957	2,783.957
2014	65,000	1,918.80	2,900.000	2,900.000
2015	72,000	2,125.44	1,970.854	1,970.854
2016	79,534	2,361.60	1,232.000	1,232.000
2017	89,887	2,656.80	1,806.240	1,806.240

- Many leaders and professionals in Nigeria today, schooled in Nigerian secondary schools and Nigerian Universities. *St Finbarr's College, Akoka, CMS Grammar School, Bariga, Baptist Academy, Igbobi College, Kings College, Queens College, Federal Government Colleges all over the country, Christ the King College, Onitsha, and Hope Waddell Training Institution, Calabar* are examples of top-

quality secondary schools that produced many giants of the industry. The University of Lagos, University of Ife, University of Ibadan, University of Benin, Ahmadu Bello University, Bayero University, University of Jos, University of Ilorin and several others were reputable tertiary institutions.

Interestingly, and without shame, many leaders of today would not even risk any of their children attending these same schools. I am guilty too, in this regard. I am complicit. We have allowed the schools to decay and we resort to schools built by other countries. I was schooled at Shamsudeen Islamic School, Ojuelegba, Lagos, then the St Finbarr's College, Akoka before the University of Lagos. I feel this shame already as I write these.

We collectively should do better.

The elite send their offspring's overseas, pay heavily for the education and have our best brains develop other countries. Why are we not ashamed that we cannot develop or at least maintain the institutions that nurtured us and instead prefer to reap from the efforts of other nations, and at great cost?

- Frequent strikes by university lecturers under the aegis of ASUU (*Academic Staff Union of Universities*) contribute in no small measure to the loss of confidence in our Nigerian universities. The strange thing about the strikes, for both the government and the striking lecturers, is the recurring theme or basis for the strike actions. The table on the next page show that failure to

implement agreements have been the core reason for repeat strike actions. Why have we allowed this ugly trend to continue?

S/N	YEAR	DURATION	REASONS
1	1999	5 months	Review of salary and poor funding of universities
2	2001	3 months	Reinstatement of 49 sacked lecturers
3	2002	2 weeks	Failure of the Obasanjo administration to implement the previous agreement.
4	2003	6 months	Non-implementation of previous agreements, which covers poor funding and disparity in salary
5	2005	2 weeks	Non-implementation of previous agreements, which covers poor funding and disparity in salary
6	2006	1 week	Non-implementation of previous agreements, which covers poor funding and disparity in salary
7	2007	3 months March- May	Same as before.
8	2008	1 week	Improved salary scheme and reinstatement of the sacked 49 lecturers.
9	2009	6 months: June - October	The strike can be rooted in several agreements signed between the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN)



S/N	YEAR	DURATION	REASONS
			and ASUU in 1981/82, 1992, 1999, 2001, 2005 and 2006, which were not faithfully implemented by the Federal Government. Improved terms of work for academics, which is legitimate, but also for the defence of the right of workers to collective bargain as against unilateral determination of terms of work by the employer.
10	2010	5 months July 2010-January 2011	Failure to Implement the agreement signed on developing the university system in year 2000.
11	2011	59 days December 2011- February 2012	Failure to adequately fund universities and failure to implement the 70-year retirement age for professors.
12	2013	5 months 15 days July - December 2013	Government's failure to review the retirement age for professors from 65 to 70 years; approve funding to revitalize the university system; Increase the budgetary allocations to the education sector by 15 -20 per cent among other demands.
13	2017	5 weeks August - September 2017	Unresolved and contentious issues with the federal government.
14	2018	Ongoing: from November 2018	Poor funding of Nigerian universities, an alleged plan by the federal government to increase students' fees and

S/N	YEAR	DURATION	REASONS
			introduce an education bank, and non-implementation of previous agreements.

- Certificate worship & exam malpractices. When schools help their students to cheat, they are not only shameless, they debase the foundation of education. When you start young ones out with cheating, you are not only robbing the young minds of the chance to develop sound reasoning and mental strength, you are creating an increase in the pool of people who have certificates but are not educated. Education differs from acquiring a certificate. Certificates only indicate or show what you are supposed to have learnt. But when we cheat or buy certificates, we have cheated ourselves the more. How can any society grow without thinkers and innovators? How can teachers, school owners who traditionally hold up the moral anchor in the society be the ones destroying it? Luckily, not all Nigerian institutions are complicit in this shame.
- Universities and higher-level research work support industrial development and growth. When our institutions are busy going on strike, and research is not funded or advanced, how can we expect growth without paying the price?

## THE DAMAGE TO OUR NATION, AND OUR PEOPLE

The damage to our nation is huge. We highlight just a few:

- High rate of overseas education places a huge burden on the value of our currency, the Naira. The increase in forex demand to support our education in foreign lands is a factor in the periodic devaluation of the naira.
- Our children are expected to get an education and use this to develop our society. This development shall help create a better country for future generations. Unfortunately, a good number of these expensively trained young adults stay back in the countries where they got the education. They can no longer feel at home in Nigeria. They become used to functional societies. Even when they come home, their knowledge base is so advanced there are no local industries or institutions that can mentally challenge them or remunerate them to the levels of the cost of their education. Why do we lose both ways? Or lose in so many ways? High personal cost, high national cost, then still lose our talented children to foreign lands?
- Fake certificates and exam fraud create a very poor and unproductive pool of educated illiterates in Nigeria. These group are called graduates but are mentally incapable of thinking like graduates. As a result, industries suffer. They are not even employable. And they are also *graduate-arrogant* as they would hardly

settle for anything they consider beneath their 'standard'.

- Cheating schools help create a pool of citizens who lose faith completely in the country or the value system. When parents are actively involved in buying papers and certificates, how can these parents ever motivate the children into competitive enterprise?
- Young adults grow up with a mind-set of the-end-justifies-the-means!! Standards and processes are bypassed at will.
- Our poor education system has enriched institutions across Africa, Europe, US and Asia to the detriment of Nigeria.
- We do not even have enough industries to provide the many students in our universities the space for industrial experience. *This may not be a worry, as those who should be bothered, have their kids studying overseas.*
- The lecturers' focus on more money contribute to eroding the value system, as the interest in core professionalism fades.

## WHAT I WOULD DO AS PRESIDENT

1. JAMB will be scrapped. It has outlived its value. Each university would compete for candidates. Every candidate should be free to apply to many universities of his or her choice. Each university would set its own entry criteria.
2. Federal Universities shall become autonomous but partly subsidized for a duration. At the expiration of the partial support period, they shall become self-funding. Universities shall be encouraged to partner with companies for win-win value sharing.
3. ASUU shall be dissolved. I shall move for this amendment. Some people may be affected negatively initially, but over time, the gains would shine through for all.
4. There will be an annual or bi-yearly competition among universities to show-case their contribution to industrial development in Nigeria. This competition shall form part of an annual ranking system for Nigerian universities. University fund allocation will be based on relative performance on annual competition. This should unleash the natural competitive spirit in the education sector.
5. Whistle blowing incentives shall be given to report school owners who engage in exam malpractices. Appropriate penalties including jail terms shall apply. Historical malpractices shall be forgiven. Future performance and conduct shall come into strong scrutiny.
6. There shall be no more waivers or forex incentives for overseas education.
7. There would be a national program to revive craft schools for the building, construction, auto-mechanics, carpentry

and wood work, air-conditioning & refrigeration plus other fields.

8. There will be another award-giving competition for craft schools and polytechnics. The different role of polytechnics in our society shall be communicated for understanding by all. Polytechnics, unlike universities, are specialized institutions that offer programs more focused on improving the practical and technical skills of the students. Diploma or certificate courses that can be completed in shorter durations are awarded. I would say that Nigeria is currently lacking in practical and technical skills. Our polytechnics may not be sufficiently equipped to offer current levels of practical skills and knowledge.
9. Foreigners shall be encouraged to open new universities and possibly secondary schools in Nigeria. They shall compete and cross-pollinate with Nigerians. The ethical standards that foreign institutions would bring into the country would be a stimulant for growth as competition between Nigerian institutions would intensify.
10. Our government shall create a competitive environment that attracts the best professionals from all over the world. On Emirates flights, it is always heart-warming to hear crew announcements proudly stating, along these lines,

*“... on this flight, the crew have members from 13 countries and speak 15 languages...and we are here to make your flight enjoyable...”*

If such structure works and Emirates airline remains a UAE corporation, why would Nigeria not consider adopting a similar model?

11. The Government shall tax schools and universities set up by religious institutes who charge high school fees when compared to privately run schools. Reason for this is that private schools generate capital via free enterprise while religious bodies generate revenue via voluntary donations and offerings. *Taxes shall be much higher when the religious bodies build schools with untaxed donations from members and the general public.*
12. Religious bodies shall be encouraged to subsidize education by following the models of missionary schools as previously set-up.
13. We shall ensure that grading and relative positions are restored at all levels of education. When children and young adults know their standing in a class, the natural competitiveness in humans would motivate students to give their best. And to challenge themselves to do more. This way, people who may have remained indolent may rise to become academic geniuses at some point in their lives. We never know how good we are until we competitively give our best.
  - a. Those who don't rank at the top of the class are not failures. They simply know their ranking on academics. They could rank top in other endeavours or fields in life. They could become top sportsmen, salesmen, entrepreneurs. They can excel in many other fields.

- b. The developed world where non-ranking has been removed in schools can afford this because they have achieved significant development already. We cannot copy this without calibration. We need our competitive minds to be awakened. Life is competitive. If you can't compete, someone eats your lunch.
- c. The market place is tough. If you are weak, others afford and buy what you crave for. The strength of a currency is tied to the balance of trade. If you import more than you export, your currency weakens. If we export more, our currency strengthens.
- d. If we can't create good schools in our country, foreigners reap the advantage and generate their livelihood from our sweat.

### **WHAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER AS A PEOPLE**

As a people, to support the new initiatives on education, I would campaign for these social consciousness and activities.

- Our administration would encourage the movie industry to create movies that show or demonstrate the gains and rewards of an ethical, innovative, thinking-oriented education system with attendant rich rewards. These movies shall help demonstrate that education goes much deeper than paper certificates.



The themes shall show that education is more about developing an analytical mind-set, a thinking process, a questioning mind, a creative mind. This partly explains why some graduates of engineering and sciences have made excellent careers in accounting, banking, tourism, finance and other non-engineering disciplines. Some medical doctors have also excelled in non-medical fields.

- School owners and stakeholders would well know their schools would be closed and be publicly castigated whenever their institutions are proven to be complicit in exam malpractices. Malpractice may include hiring unqualified teachers or lecturers. Awarding of fake certificates, aiding students to cheat and possibly outright selling of certificates?
- We cannot stop people from choosing to school overseas. And the intention is not to eliminate the practice. The idea is to ensure that the primary reason is not because of the failed state of our in-country educational system. Our people who are wealthy enough to finance overseas training, these privileged Nigerians, shall be encouraged to look inwards towards contributing to developing quality education in Nigeria.

We should recognize, that, if only our biological children are given overseas education and they have access to easier lucrative careers, jobs and wealth, these privileged few may be insecure in an impoverished society. They may not all want to return to Nigeria at the

end of their expensive training. We may know we risk losing our children to foreign countries.

If we lose our top brains continually to foreign countries, who will develop Nigeria? Who will continue our Legacy? Who will help to elevate our lot in the committee of nations? Who shall carry on our names in our communities? Are we truly wealthy when our brothers and sisters are living in abject poverty?

Yes, we can boast and flaunt it in social circles that our son or daughter is living in the US, UK, Canada, Germany, China, France, Spain. Can we also boast of the values this brings to our fatherland? How does our country Nigeria benefit from our flaunting that we attended their weddings in the US, Canada, UK or a European country? Nothing is wrong with holding one's wedding event anywhere in the world. My point is that, this should best remain personal choices as opposed to where it becomes a societal target or objective.

I think, anything the privileged class do to support the development of a functional Nigerian education system will be, should be seen, as a Nigerian Hero initiative.

- Religious bodies should recognize the moral burden of establishing schools with donations from members and then charge high school fees. More religious bodies would be encouraged to build non-profit educational institutes to benefit children of underprivileged parents as one tenet of deep religion.

- Parents are encouraged to understand the true meaning of education. A foreign certificate is not even an education if you cannot use the knowledge to transform self and the society. When we talk about education in the society, we should be referring to acquiring knowledge, developing the habits of thinking. And we cannot claim to be educated when we have a dysfunctional society. Education should create awareness and knowledge used to create order and functional management systems. Anytime we are disorderly, we should know we are exhibiting illiteracy. If we have this awareness, we can then be able to pass it on to our children.
- Successful businessmen and entrepreneurs, who build universities in the latter years of their lives may do better to create world class institutions that would leave a legacy. They may partner people from across the globe to help drive the standards.
- Parents are encouraged to help nurture the creative spirit in self-discovery and expression in their children. A university education is not the only path to fulfilment in a child. Nor is a degree in the field of the parental preference. A university degree may well provide the academic background for deep thinking, but the certificate may not enhance the expression of certain talents.

Sports, theatre arts, music are some areas that are helped by a university degree but is not necessarily

mandatory for career excellence. A degree would help in many areas, including quality of professionalism, self-confidence, multi-skills expression, managing finances and working with people, or the quality of life after sports. Some kids would make excellent careers in wood work, tiling, masonry, electrical works and more. The society needs people at all levels and skills. People can become millionaires doing what they love to do. A university degree, on its own, is not a guarantee for amassing wealth.

# THE SHAME OF TRIBALISM

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## Tribalism and religious bigotry

See tribalism, religious bigotry and nepotism as deep root causes for sectionalism, corruption justification and losing cohesion in the country.

The bane of Africa and retrogression.

*“I hate race discrimination most intensely and in all its manifestations. I have fought it all during my life; I fight it now and will do so until the end of my days.”*

**Nelson Mandela**

*“There is almost no country in Africa where it is not essential to know to which tribe, or which subgroup of which tribe, the president belongs. From this single piece of information, you can trace the lines of patronage and allegiance that define the state.”*

**Christopher Hitchens**

## THE PRACTICE

Tribalism in Nigeria and Africa needs no introduction. Our many languages and clans make the practice very widespread and it needs no elaborate discussion to know its impact. However, we shall simply outline a few examples of tribalism in action in our country.

- Presidents appointing mainly people from their tribes into government positions and government-controlled institutions.
- Presidents awarding inflated contracts to people from his tribe or zone.
- Presidents favouring his constituency in allocation of assets such as mineral licenses: Oil, Gas, others
- Company directors appointing or employing more people from their tribes or region.
- Religious leaders practicing tribalism in religious positions and appointment.
- Favours and preferences skewed along religious divides.
- Government favourably treating people from their tribes who commit infractions or violate the law: different laws for people from different tribes.
- Recruitment officers using tribalism as core, unwritten recruitment policy. My tribe is good. All other tribes are bad.

- Hatred for members of other tribes. Fierce hatred. What is good for your tribe, must not be desired by people from other tribes.
- Voting skewed along tribal lines: Candidates playing the ethnic cards to win votes where it favours them
- Governors favouring people from their clans, tribe or zone.
- People forming regional groups based on tribe to advocate for tribal or regional interests. Some groups often resort to violence to entrench their positions. Or use violence as a tool to push or force their son or daughter into power.
- Companies, groups, or individuals showing preference for members of their core tribe over others in social, corporate and even religious roles.
- Relative ease with which people can kill members of other tribes, sometimes with little or no provocation. It would seem as if members of other tribes are animals or beasts.
- Violence against people from other tribes appear normal. At least, normal to the people from the ruling tribe, when the violence is inflicted on other regions.
- It is fine, if your tribe holds onto power. Any other tribe aspiring to power is seen as unnecessary ambition.

- Constant agitation for tribal benefits over national interests.
- Anguish over the belief that the colonial masters were wrong in putting together people with wildly conflicting and different traditions and cultures.

### **WHY IS IT A SHAME?**

Tribalism is already highlighted as a very negative and debilitating mind-set or attitude. Yet, tribalism continues to thrive in Africa and Nigeria. The act of tribalism, particularly the heightened form of tribalism with extreme consequences is real cause for shame. The basis for the shame stems from the ignorance of not knowing, or not being aware, that the very things we desire and hope to achieve through tribalism, are often damaged or limited by tribalism. Tribalism works counter-productive to our innate desires, particularly on a sustainable basis.

We shall outline a few reasons why tribalism remains a shame for core adherents. At least, for the Nigerian scenario.

- It is shameful when a governor of a state practices tribalism in his state and turns around to accuse the president of tribalism. He acts oblivious of his own failings on the same ill.



- It is a shame that millions of Nigerians practice tribalism at work, in Churches, Mosques, in sports, in local governments, on the streets, in business, on company boards and yet expect the political leaders not to do the same. Tribalism in religious institutions is probable the worst form of tribalism.
- It is a shame that the tribes that make up Nigeria compete against each other, *only* in terms of what they can collect and share from Nigeria. But we never compete on what we can contribute to the country and be proud of it. This is a perfect example of ignorance or poor application of wisdom. It is very clear and needs no elaborate explanation to know that, if all Nigerians live for, is to share Nigeria or share national revenues without replenishing the revenue base, there can never be enough to go around. There will never be enough to satisfy the greed of everyone. We tend to grumble about not getting enough of the national cake. Concerted efforts needed to bake enough cakes for the nation is lost, resulting in over-dependence on oil revenues for sharing among all.

We should all cover our faces in shame.

The groundnut pyramids of Kano have disappeared. Our coal and other mineral deposits remain untapped. Foreigners cart away some of our minerals for peanuts because we simply don't care. We must get our share of crude oil revenue. Our tribes must benefit more. For how long must this continue for?

- Politicians who practice tribalism while in office forget that tenures expire, and they need votes across the land to win again. The cycle of tribal politics is an ill-wind that bodes no good for the country. Malaysia gained independence from the British in August 1957, Singapore gained independence from Malaysia on August 9, 1965. Malaysia and Singapore have long resolved their ethnic differences to forge united entities. At least to better degrees than Nigeria as their comparative development indicates. The ethnicity in Nigeria is still at the 1960 levels. Brazen tribalism and disrespect for the genuine aspirations of others is a shameful level of ignorance of arrogance.
- Tribalism is an act or mind-set that often assumes the superiority of one tribe over another. Unfortunately, in the Nigerian case, in the face of foreigners, there really is no difference between one tribe and another. Is it not shameful that we do not know that the parent of the child born in Kano, has no different expectation or aspiration from the parent of the child born in Lokoja, Onitsha, Nembe, Enugu, Maiduguri, Lagos, Abeokuta, Calabar, Idoma, Ijaw, Aba, Ife, Yola, Ilorin or anywhere in Nigeria?

We want security, safety, food, shelter, sunshine, development, education, success for every one of our children. Today and for future generations. Is it not a shame we would desire all the good things for ourselves and deny others the right to even think of the same thing? Or worse, in our minds, that others should even dare to aspire to the same things we want for ourselves. We think it is OK when

tribalism favours us but think it evil, when tribalism gets us stuck to the losing position.

- ***"No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main,*** is a well-known quotation from English metaphysical poet John Donne (1572-1631). And this beautiful quote has been validated all through history. These facts should make us know that our biological children must each find expression, find safety, find comradeship within the community we live to be truly happy and safe. A child who alone is rich and successful among extreme poverty, would scarcely know the true meaning of safety and peace of mind. Community wealth enhances individual wealth.
- Every Nigerian or African educated to a high school or secondary school level must have heard of the adage or saying, ***"United we stand, divided we fall"***. Our teachers would use broom and broomstick analogy to illustrate the principle. This adage or wisdom is not restricted to any field or application. There are many African proverbs and adages that demonstrate the power of unity.

*Unity is strength, division is weakness. ~ Swahili proverb*

*If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together- African Proverb*

*A single bracelet does not jingle. ~ Congolese proverb*

*Cross the river in a crowd and the crocodile won't eat you.  
~ African proverb*

*If I am in harmony with my family, that's success. ~ Ute proverb*

Whatever the reason is, whenever our actions elevate tribe or tribalism over the national or common interest, the nation weakens. And when the nation weakens, the individual tribes ultimately weaken. Nigerians must see Nigeria as the family, our family, our bigger family. That we speak many languages do not make us enemies.

Nigerian leaders have mostly come from relatively schooled people. The only reason leaders practice tribalism is either a poor appreciation of knowledge or a lack of vision to see the bigger picture. Or a disinterest in taking the bold step that could put the leader at crossroads with the godfathers or core power team members. I must admit that tackling tribalism in Nigeria and Africa is no walk in the park.

However, in my view, any person in an elected position who practices tribalism, cannot be described as or called a leader. He can be anything but not a leader. He or she is not a leader of the whole people he shepherds. He or she may be the designated President, Governor, Managing Director, Minister, Team Lead or any other title, however, tribalism would render such titles of weak or zero value.

- Examples abound of multicultural and multiracial countries who have found a way to tap into the forces of ethnic diversity for progress. Although this is predominantly not in Africa, have Nigerians not travelled enough to witness the

power of unity of purpose to guide us into sustained positive leadership?

- If there is truly one God, would religious leaders and practitioners, religious adherents who believe in ONE GOD be so hateful of others? I, for one, believe in one God. And it baffles me to see the level of hatred and anger that people have against others in the name of religion. I don't understand it and will never understand it. I suppose, only God understands this. This is not a Nigerian thing. It has existed throughout the ages from the foundation of the world. History books show it all. If we can control and manage tribalism and religious bigotry, hatred would be conquered.
- Tribalism breeds incompetence and a lack of shame. In Nigeria and Africa, we witness many acts that should be shameful when carried out, but tribalism makes us, do things that make us look foolish to the outer society, outer world, while we appear like heroes to our smaller clans or tribe. Shamelessly, we display incompetence, be corrupt or tribalistic yet we gloat at our own childishness. We ignore basic needs of others yet satisfy needs of a smaller group from our tribe, openly. We remain incompetent, secure in the knowledge that our person, the president, the governor, the director, the minister will protect us.

## **THE DAMAGE TO OUR NATION, AND OUR PEOPLE**

In simple terms, the damage from tribalism to our country, or any country, are entrenched mediocrity, incompetence, corruption and deepened ethnicity that has increased agitation for separation or movements for self-determination. The incompetence results in perennial stagnation of the society.

The heightened sense of tribal pride to the detriment of others is one root cause for insecurity, violent agitations, team ineptitude and overall inefficiency in units, companies, parastatals, government, manufacturing, Oil & Gas asset exploration and production, states, constituencies, oil community confrontations, and many other areas.

Specifically, tribalism hurts the nation in many ways, but we outline a few below:

- Mediocrity in appointments and employment leading to underperformance across various sectors of the country.
- Demotivation of more talented or qualified personnel, contributing to more losses in productivity.
- Mutual distrust across the tribes in the country weakening bonds and structures that would otherwise have energized the nation towards development in many fields. This is a major contributor to our inability to build functional management systems required for sustainable growth and development in the country.

Mutual tribal distrust would inevitably break the bonds of corporate enterprise and truncate project or business objectives, regardless of how wonderful the objective is. What we see in the developed countries where we travel to for our vacations and education: ***constant power, functional transportation system, networks, social security and others***<sup>8</sup> are all by-products of a management system. *A system where everyone involved understands his or her role and executes this role with focus, dedication and regularity, regardless of tribe, race or ethnicity.*

- There are many tribes and ethnic groups within each of the 36 states of Nigeria. As highlighted, there are over 350 tribes in total in Nigeria as a country. Tribalism within the states inhibit the growth of the states and the tribalism across the country ultimately weaken the nation.
- Boko Haram<sup>9</sup>, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB<sup>10</sup>), OPC<sup>11</sup>, Niger Delta Militia i.e. Niger Delta Avengers<sup>12</sup>, IPOB<sup>13</sup> and several others are all by-products of tribalism and sectionalism. As it is now, apparently, violent agitations have come to the fore as a tool for power grabbing.

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<sup>8</sup> Deliberate emphasis.

<sup>9</sup> Boko Haram is a militant group that operates from the Northern part of Nigeria.

<sup>10</sup> MASSOB, A separatist group that seeks to create a Sovereign state of Biafra out of Nigeria.

<sup>11</sup> OPC- The Oodua People's Congress (OPC) is a Yoruba nationalist organization in Nigeria

<sup>12</sup> The Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) is a militant group in Nigeria's Niger Delta

<sup>13</sup> Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a separatist organisation in Nigeria.

Would there be enough Nigerians to feed the bloodthirsty fuelled by tribalism and religious hatred, if wisdom and good faith does not prevail? Would there be a future what bequeathing to our unborn children, the Nigerian child, when we consciously feed this monster of violence?

- It is so easy to keep us under-developed and to support the agenda of other nations on Nigeria by stroking and inciting tribal sentiments among us. This is and has been the cheapest route to cutting the ropes that bind us and fostering under-development in perpetuity. Can we see the light in our coming together for the good of the nation? Foreigners can easily work with a united and progressive Nigeria and Nigerians. All foreigners do not have negative interests or agenda. A united Nigeria will benefit the world. We are a peace-loving people.

Yes, we are!!

## **WHAT I WOULD DO AS PRESIDENT**

1. Abolish or modify the use of State of Origin in corporate and business documents in Nigeria to mean the state of birth or any state where a Nigerian has lived for 10 or more years. State of Origin shall no longer be a representation of tribe. In the current practice, many Nigerians born in different



states still claim their tribal birthplace. This modification would help erode the primordial concept of tribalism. It would be replaced with **State of Residence or Birth**.

2. We shall make some simple yet significant changes to the political structure.
  - a. *No governorship candidate in any state shall be from that state. The position of a governor and deputy governor in all states of the federation shall be contested for, in each state, by non-natives. And by non-natives, it will exclude Nigerians whose parental origin are from that state. The candidates must not come from any of the tribes or clans in that state. He or she would be a Nigerian from other tribal descent and state.*
  - b. *This would allow candidates to campaign and be elected on merit as administrators. The new structure would have several advantages:*
  - c. *Significant reduction in campaign and election costs. The traditional model allows for people from the communities to pressure candidates for one gratification or inducement. Candidates find themselves having to part with monies on regular basis before elections to 'buy' their support. This sort of campaign expense structure can drain the pocket of billionaires yet offer no guarantees. This model creates a strong incentive for corruption when elected for fund-recovery. To some degree, this should reduce the tendency for corruption in politicking and in office. Politicians seeking election*

*into these offices may raise campaign funds from the people of the state who buy into their visions and experience.*

- d. It will be difficult for a non-indigene governor to be brazenly corrupt. Governors would be more conscious of transparency and scrutiny.*
- e. Even when a governor is impeached, he can only be replaced by a non-indigene.*
- f. Only candidates who have the experience, skill and passion as administrators, those who are confident in their capacity to steward a state to progress would bother competing. This will open the gates for Nigerians who are competent but otherwise scared of politics to seek elective office. Career politicians may not thrive under this structure, so it is expected that they may vehemently oppose this idea. Many will argue it has not been done before. Or seek for evidence for where it has successfully been deployed. But such arguments would not suffice as there will always be a first time for anything in life. And if the world fears trying new things, then innovation will die. Fortunately, innovation and testing of new ideas is the way the world has embraced, and we are all beneficiaries of this. We see new discoveries and solutions daily in our personal lives and in the society.*

*This idea is not entirely new as Nigerians have experienced non-indigenes in charge of state affairs. This happened the Military regimes where*

*military officers were deployed as Military Administrators of different states of the federation. While corruption was possible in these situations based on the military ruling over civilian population, the same impunity would not apply in a democratic setting.*

*Commodore Ndubuisi Kanu (1977-1978), Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe (1978-1979), Mohammed Buba Marwa (1996-1999) were past military governors of Lagos State. Colonel Datti Sadiq Abubakar was military governor of Anambra state from 1978 to 1979, after John Atom Kpera (1976-1978). Rufai Garba was Military Administrator of Anambra state from 1996 to 1998. Victor Ozodinobi was Military Administrator of Borno State from 1996 to 1997.*

*The political structure across the developed world is never the same. So, it is counterproductive to advocate one model of leadership as the only way to redemption. We can grow our unique style to solve our unique problems.*

3. The same rule for governors shall apply to senators and house of Assembly members. Local government chairpersons shall be indigenes and they shall help in language barrier issues and in the administration of their communities. The governor and the senators shall remain non-indigenes and they shall focus on governance.
4. Inter-tribal marriages shall be encouraged by the government with some incentives.

5. The government shall consider strategic political collaborations that has worked in other countries such as Malaysia for adoption in Nigeria. A conference shall be organized solely to develop a de-tribalized framework for moving the country forward. A conference terms of reference shall be crafted to make for a transparent and open deliberation anchored on the golden rule principle.
6. We shall create a platform that reduces the economic or financial power that accrues from political offices. We shall consider a reduction in the size of government. We shall consider part-time membership of the Legislature.  
We must not adopt the exact models of political structure from economies already advanced but investigate options that would work for our stage of development. We shall recognize tribal difference but only so the nation shall tap into the strengths of each tribe, or the more endemic strong attributes from each tribe or social culture for nation-building.
7. Support our movie Industry to create movies that project into the future demonstrating the great values and benefits of a detribalized nation. Government would provide some support for movies of this genre.
8. In the *Nigeria Hero* recognition program, the ***detribalized Nigerian*** shall be an award category. This is hoped would encourage the emulation of such attitudes.
9. We shall develop a mass media education strategy that communicates the values of accepting Nigeria as an entity we can all be proud of: ***as we accept our birth by our parents.*** We have or had no hands in selecting our

biological parents, yet we make the most of it. The sooner we accept that we are together, one family, one country and in unity work towards our common objectives of security, health, food, shelter and social wellbeing, the faster would our nation grow. And when we grow as a nation, our individual lot would fare better.

Unity is universally validated as a powerful force that drives many positives.

10. In a similar way to how the world now treats racism, our administration shall outlaw tribal based comments in the social media and social circles. There would be penalty for offenders. You may have the thoughts deep inside of you, but you can no longer be free to make open derogatory comments in public based on tribe. It would become a public shame for people to make negative sectional or tribal comments. But more than the shame, there would be a price to pay by the law.

The ills of tribalism and religious bigotry far outweigh the cumulative ills of racism. The world knows that all black skinned people originate from Africa. And regardless of how you or your parents got into the developed countries and became citizens, the colour of our skin is an immediate pointer to our African origin. And we are insulted because our Africa is very backwards compared to the rest of the world. The point is, racism is what others do to us to

hurt our self-esteem based on the colour of our skin and the linked heritage.

But tribalism is what we do to and against ourselves that stunts our collective growth and development. Our backwardness is what racism reminds us of, and yet, we feel bad. How can we feel bad when we are racially abused, considering that our inherent tribalism has ensured we are not united enough to build better societies that would give us a pride of place in the world? If we can abuse and denigrate fellow Nigerians, fellow Africans, who we are not better than in any way, is it not hypocrisy we expect people from the developed world not to racially insult us? How often do Africans complain of racism in his or her own country? Has anyone ever wondered why few cases of racism are reported by Caucasian white people? Is it because Africans and other races do not make racist or negative comments against whites?

I think we are more prone to racism when benefitting from the functional environment created by the forefathers and people of the developed world. The basic instinct of man is to feel superior, want to feel superior, and feel a deep sense of worth. And this feeling often comes from knowing or thinking you are better than other people. And people with lower self-control often voice things that show their thoughts over others. Racist comments and tribal comments are quick signs of a superiority complex

displayed by weaker minds. Such comments, you may agree, would come easier, when you see 'strangers', people of clearly different races in your community, your environment. The community you are proud of. The society your ancestors had painstakingly built. Through hurricanes, floods, winter, extreme natural disasters. And now you see people leaving their origins, their more backward origins to come live among you. I think it takes the highest level of maturity, comradeship and love, for people not to be racist or make resist comments. Africans are not even so kind to fellow Africans from other tribes.

Enjoying the hard work of others may come with some price. I am not in support of racism by any means but only those who are completely de-tribalized may have any moral right against racism. I feel tribalism is a far worse crime against humanity than racism.

#### **WHAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER AS A PEOPLE**

The things we should consider as a people are simple. I would outline just a few:

- Apply the golden rule in all we do: Do unto others as you would want others to do unto you. ***You cannot be tribalistic and expect others not to be.***
- Recognize that you have no moral right to accuse the president, the governor, or any leader of tribalism if you practice tribalism yourself.
- Recognize that our leaders come from our people. The more people we have whose daily lives are clean from tribal sentiments and values, the higher our chances of electing the ***Nigerian Hero*** as president.
- Refrain from the easy route of making tribalism-infused comments to feel superior. You may be running against the law.
- Parents should teach their children tolerance and love for others, rather than perpetrate the hatred and bitterness against people from other tribes. When someone offends you, try to resist the urge to narrow it down to tribal origin. There are good and not so good people from every tribe. One may have been offended by another from a different tribe, but it does not make everybody from the tribe to be evil or bad. To err is human, to forgive is divine.
- Appreciate the beauty in other people and their cultures. If we all cook the same foods or meals, dance in the same way, make the same music, do everything the same way, would it not be too boring?



- Religious bodies should never be found wanting in the area of tribalism. I don't know how it should even be an issue in religion. Sadly, it is.
- Recognize and accept that a united Nigeria is more powerful than a section of Nigeria. With 180m plus Nigerians, every Nigerian has access to a market size of 180m without bother restrictions, customs and associated tariffs and bottlenecks. We can enjoy the many tourist attractions all within our country. Going into smaller sectional countries may appear appealing but there is no guarantee that division into the 6 Geopolitical zones as separate countries would eliminate the ills of tribalism. Even in individual states, tribalism is practiced. Within tribes, clannism applies. And in families, within the same family, children differ in attributes and lifestyle. Unless we find a way to live together and reap the rich rewards, constant agitation for separation will offer scant consolation. Personally, I will never support any separatist agenda or movement.
- You may not be in power today. But you may become the governor, the president tomorrow. Do not forget the sentiments on the streets as you ascend the power podium. And spare a thought to the possibility you will live with the people when you vacate the seat of power.
- Remember, that as you kill or plan to kill, based on tribal hatred or whatever reason you may have, know that you, your family, or loved ones will feel the same pain when similar violence is unleashed on you or them. The world

is now a small place. Know that no individual or ethnic group has the monopoly on violence and that we should not allow ourselves to be incited by anyone into violence. See every Nigerian as your brother, your sister, mother, father or relation.

We all desire the same things in life.

Peace and happiness.

## **THE SHAME OF “I MUST LEAVE NIGERIA OR TRAVEL AT ALL COSTS”**

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The desperate measures Nigerians take to either travel overseas or leave Nigeria to become illegal immigrants in American, European and Asian Countries: And the impact on our image and integrity as a people.

## THE PRACTICE

Foreign embassies in Nigeria are constantly bombarded by Nigerians seeking to travel. And there are many reasons for the high rate of application for entry visas to the US, UK, Europe, Asia, UAE and several other countries.

Some reasons for these travels include but not limited to:

- Genuine travel for corporate business needs and transactions.
- Business men and women with genuine interest to travel, conduct their business transactions and return to Nigeria.
- Honest families who genuinely want to travel for tourism and return to Nigeria. This is a natural inclination. People would always want to see other climes and cultures.
- High integrity investors and bankers, finance people who need to meet with their foreign partners.
- Nigerian students and the parents of students who are schooling overseas.
- Nigerians seeking medical treatment overseas.
- ***Pregnant Nigerians who want to have babies overseas and give birth to “citizens”.***
- Pregnant women who can afford it but need the more advanced medical facilities overseas and plan to return to Nigeria after having their babies
- Nigerians who crave overseas travel as a social status symbol, regardless of expense. These group must travel

every summer and the social media is excellent platform to showcase their social status with photos that validate that they were 'there'! Family members and friends must see their 'arrival'.

- ***Nigerians who have given up on the country and plan never to come back to Nigeria and would do anything to get a visa. These group can go to any length to falsify travel documents and will naturally overstay visa duration. Working and jobless Nigerians are involved in this travel-to-relocate-overseas-syndrome. Some may already have a relative living in the foreign country.***
- Nigerians who plan to seek asylum overseas. Political or ***feigned***.
- ***Nigerians with the goal to engage in illicit businesses overseas: drugs, prostitution, internet fraud, cult activities, illegal trades, anything and everything to eke out a living. They may or may not plan to return to Nigeria. They either extend their local cult network or start new ones overseas.***
- Politicians who simply love to travel and spend time overseas.
- Nigerians who shop overseas. Only foreign made luxury goods can titillate their sensibilities.

## WHY IS IT A SHAME?

It is not a shame that Nigerians want to travel overseas. Not by any stretch of the imagination. People all over the world travel to other countries. Americans travel for tourism. English people travel. Europeans travel. Asians travel. Africans travel. Nigerians travelling or wanting to travel is no shame at all.

The shame concerns the fundamental issues that fuel the high demand for travel visas and the associated consequences on us as a people. Some these I shall outline below:

- The activities of **desperate** people who want to travel **at all costs** have created a general negative impression to foreign countries about Nigeria and Nigerians. Apparently, we have attained a blanket, default assessment that every Nigerian applying for travel visa is either fraudulent, would not return to Nigeria, a criminal or have some other negative intent. Genuine Nigerians who want to travel for the first time often get rejected with no cogent reason. And the reasons given can be very laughable and sometimes demeaning.

The embassy visa officers may assess or judge incorrectly and with prejudice, while genuine, honest and respectable Nigerians are made to look like fools. It is their country. And we cannot judge them for their practices. We have only ourselves to blame for selling our pride and dignity so cheaply.

Nigerians may also look into how our embassies in foreign countries treat others seeking visa into Nigeria.

- It is shameful that many Nigerians have become so desperate, that travelling overseas have become a life ambition. We give up on our country Nigeria and some Nigerians deceive foreign embassies to get visiting

Visas and intentionally overstay with no plan to return. These Nigerians do not care for the effect this have on other Nigerians as long as they achieve their personal goal. A deeply selfish mind-set. There are many other people from other countries who do similar things to get into the US, Canada, UK and Europe but I don't know why Nigerians appear notorious on this issue.

- It is shameful that we abandon our country, even with our college degrees to become taxi drivers and cleaners overseas, just to send dollars back to Nigeria. We undertake menial jobs we would not even do in Nigeria and accept to be less than second class citizens in a country developed by others. If we all abandon Nigeria, who would develop Nigeria?
- It is shameful that we engage in many illicit businesses overseas strictly for personal gains and not care for how this impact on other Nigerians. Our people, our families, who have supported and even show deep pride on having family members overseas regardless of the type of business they do are co-conspirators in this shame on our fatherland.
- Our politicians and leaders have also contributed to the frenzy of overseas travel as frequent foreign trips appear to be the default practice.
- Is it not a shame to take pride in frequent overseas travel for summer and vacation when locally, we have little to show for our contribution to developing Nigeria? When we have many untapped tourist locations in Nigeria.

## THE DAMAGE TO OUR NATION, AND OUR PEOPLE

The damage to our country and our people is significant. Some damages include:

- The activities of corrupt and fraudulent Nigerians overseas and in-country has tarnished our image to the international community. The few Nigerians who engage in these acts have rubbished the millions of good Nigerians with genuine businesses and intents. Our passport carries little respect overseas.
- Foreign Embassies in Nigeria treat Nigerians as crooks by default. Genuine people and families are refused visas for legitimate purposes. This can be massively embarrassing. And can cost a lot in terms of failed business transactions that would otherwise benefit both countries and the stakeholders.
- Some Foreign embassies in Nigeria, do not provide the same standard of waiting facilities for visa processing as applies in their countries for public spaces. Nigerians get treated as second class citizens, even in our own country because we have sold ourselves so cheaply.
- Special security officers are sometimes deployed at arrival gates for flights originating from Nigeria. It would appear as if Nigerians carry a plaque or prime suspects for carrying excess cash on their person.
- Our local tourism industry remains undeveloped in preference for overseas tourism.
- The foreign is better continues to rob the country of the brains that would otherwise help to develop our country.



- Pressure on our Naira as high demand on forex for leisure and non-business-related travel continues to contribute to the periodic devaluation of our currency.

### **WHAT I WOULD DO AS PRESIDENT**

1. Invite foreign automakers to set up factories in Nigeria. The factories can be located close to oil and gas production fields, to enable them access cheap gas for affordable power generation and supply.
2. The government would back up the foreign-Nigerian Partnership by initiatives such as committing to vehicle purchase from Government, forex allocation and any other incentive such as tax rebates. This would create jobs, generate further revenue for gas production and save on pressures on the Naira.
3. Invitations shall extend to the building or manufacturing of high demand local consumables along with the developments in power and infrastructure. Nigerians would find a greater sense of pride in our country again. And optimism would arise again.
4. Invite experienced players in the tourism industry to develop our local tourism based on choice locations such as the Ikogosi Warm Springs, Olumo Rock, Obudu Cattle Ranch, Mambila Plateau, etc. This would not only create jobs but create a robust local tourism market that would

attract foreign tourists, earning forex and reducing the monies spent on foreign tourism. Even if foreign tourism is not affected, as our goal is not to stifle foreign tourism, the latent local tourism potential would be unleashed, creating commerce and value across several chains.

S/N	TOURIST CENTRES FOR FURTHER ENHANCEMENT	LOCATION
1	Olumo Rock	Ogun State
2	Obudu Mountain Resort	Cross Rivers State
3	Enemabia Warm Spring	Benue State
4	Awhum Waterfall, Awhum	Enugu State
5	The Giant Footprint of Ukhuse Oke	Edo State
7	Gashaki-Gumpti National Park	Adamawa State
8	Isaac Boro Garden Park	Rivers State
9	Alok Ikom Monoliths	Rivers State
10	Isaac Boro Garden Park	Rivers State
12	Azumini Blue River	Abia State
13	Osun-Osogbo Grove, Oshogbo	Osun State
14	The Emotan Statue, Benin	Edo State
15	The Royal Palace of Oba of Benin	Edo State
16	Sukur Cultural Landscape, Madageli	Adamawa State
18	Surame Cultural Landscape	Sokoto State
19	Oban Hills	Cross Rivers

S/N	TOURIST CENTRES FOR FURTHER ENHANCEMENT	LOCATION
20	Oke-Idanre Hills	Ondo State
21	Ogbunike Caves	Anambra State
22	Ancient Kano City Walls	Kano State
23	Nana Living History Museum	Delta State
24	Coconut Beach, Badagry	Lagos State
25	Millennium Park	Abuja State
26	Wonderland Amusement Park & Resort	Abuja State
27	Katsina City Gate	Katsina State
28	Eggon Hills and Caves	Nassarawa State
29	Anwase-Abande Ranges	Cross Rivers
30	The Ugele Hills	Ekiti State
31	Orole Hills, Ikere	Ekiti State
32	Amanchore Cave	Ebonyi State
33	Abakaliki Green Lake	Ebonyi State
34	Nike Lake Resort,	Enugu State
37	Gidan Makama Museum Kano,	Kano State
38	The Benin City National Museum,	Edo State
39	Biu Plateau, Plateau	Plateau State
41	Kainji Lake National Park,	Kwara State
42	Wiki Warm Spring	Bauchi State
43	IITA Forest Ibadan	Oyo State

S/N	TOURIST CENTRES FOR FURTHER ENHANCEMENT	LOCATION
45	Slave Masters Lodge, Okopedi, Itu, Uyo	Akwa Ibom State
46	The Calabar Museum,	Cross River State
48	Jhalobia Recreation Park and Gardens	Lagos State
49	The National War Museum Umuahia	Abia State
50	Ulli Beier Museum, Oshogbo	Osun State
51	The National Gallery of Modern Art	Lagos State
52	Kaduna Museum,	Kaduna State
54	The Mambilla	Plateau State
55	Assop Falls	Plateau State
56	Wase Rock, Plateau	Jos State
57	Jos Wildlife Park	Jos State
58	Ife Museum,	Osun State
59	Ikogosi Warm & Cold Spring,	Ondo State
60	Bida Brass Works	Niger State
61	Gurara Waterfalls	Niger State
62	Zuma Rock, Abuja	Niger State
63	Owu Waterfalls	Kwara State
64	Pategi Beach	Niger State
65	Maiyegun Beach,	Lagos State
66	The Iron of Liberty,	Kogi State
67	Verekete Shrine, Badagry,	Lagos State
68	The Agia tree in the Ancient Town of Badagry	Lagos State
69	Slave Trade Relics, Badagry	Lagos State
70	Bible She, Araya	Delta State

S/N	TOURIST CENTRES FOR FURTHER ENHANCEMENT	LOCATION
71	Okomu Wildlife Sanctuary	Edo State
72	Ezeagu Tourist Complex	Enugu State
73	Chief Nana's Palace, Koko	Delta State
74	Abraka-Gordon River Resort, Abraka	Delta State
75	Ososo Tourist Centre	Kogi State
76	Sillicon Hill	Enugu State
77	Lake Chad	Borno State
78	Agbokim Waterfalls	Cross River
79	Mbari Cultural Centre	Imo State
80	NOK Village Settlement	Kaduna State
81	Oguta Lake Holiday Complex	Imo State
82	Ushogbo Hills	Benue State
83	Bassa Hills,	Benue State
84	Ikyogen Cattle Ranch, Benue State	Anambra State
85	Rojenny Tourist Village	Anambra State
86	Ibeno Beach	Akwa-Ibom State
87	Igbo-Ukwu	Anambra State
89	Yankari National Park	Bauchi State

- The development for our medical system shall be dealt with in more detail in a later chapter.
- We shall communicate minimum standards for Embassy designs in Nigeria for visa applicants.
- The Government shall match visible development with media messages to educate our people on the values

of thinking of others, other Nigerians as we seek to make a living.

### **WHAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER AS A PEOPLE**

As a people, we can believe again. We would realize that our destiny is in our own hands. I would encourage us to note a few things:

- As a people, as individuals, as families, in all we do, we should remember, that everything we do, whether we know it or not, it is either contributing to developing Nigeria to become the country of our dreams or under-developing it. By choice, let's explore any opportunity to do any little we can, to help our country. When we do a good job, we are developing ourselves, developing our companies. When our companies grow, they generate more profits. With more profits, there is expansion. More jobs are created. Government earns more in taxes. And more funds are available to grow Nigeria. Your job becomes more secure. And others will get employed too.
- Whenever you are tempted to falsify documents at visa interviews, remember that you are adding to destroying our image as Nigerians. We can live happily in our beautiful country without visas. We should not allow ourselves to be insulted needlessly.
- As we travel, we should remember that the beautiful place you are visiting was created by the sweat of

others, who did not give up on their country. Ask yourself, how you have contributed to making Nigeria the country of your dreams for today or in the future.

- Remember that even when you are a citizen of another country, you may never get your full respects, if your fatherland remains a laughing stock to the international community.
- Remember that if all you have, to show as your value in the society is to flaunt overseas travel, you have shown little. You may try to see if you can channel some funds into more creative development and contribution to the society. It could be the sponsorship of an orphan to school. Or supporting legacy projects as a Nigerian Hero.
- I understand and accept that not everybody would toe the same path or mind-set. However, when we have enough people pulling in the same direction, Nigeria shall make progress. Sustainable progress.

## THE SHAME OF “OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM”.

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Where governors who complete two terms seek and win elections into the senate.

And elected officials on one party platform defect to another party and retain their seats.

And legislators earn the highest wages in the world for a generally poor country.

Election time tables are shifted at will and  
Are sometimes postponed on the day of the election.

*Kikulacho Ki Nguoni Mwako,*  
*(That which eats at you, is within you)*  
*Swahili Proverb on Politics*

In other words, rather than blame foreign interference as responsible for our problems, we must recognize that our issues stem from our internal issues such as disunity and poor leadership.

We must take ownership of our problems.



## THE PRACTICE

Nigeria runs a presidential system in a federal republic system. Based on the Nigerian constitution, the federal government of Nigeria has three (3) arms:

- The Executive Government
- The legislative, The National assembly (*the Senate and the House of Representatives*)
- The judiciary- The courts, including the Supreme Court.

We have a national assembly who provides a check and balance structure against the presidency and the executive arm of government. The federal courts provide the legal checks for the whole country. The Supreme Court represents the highest judiciary arm of the government system.

Nigeria is a multi-party state with a fairly sized government. After decades of military rule, Nigeria appears to have found a somewhat stable democratic foundation as we have now had a continuous democracy for 20 years.

The PDP (People's Democratic Party) is the longest standing party in the country. The All Progressives Congress (APC) is the new party in power, a coalition of opposition parties that wrestled power from the PDP after the PDP government has ruled Nigeria for 16 years. There are many other parties in Nigeria. The PDP and the APC are however the strongest parties currently in Nigeria. And there would be more parties registered in the future.

This is not about a detailed narrative of the Nigerian political structure. The goal is to highlight practices that mark out the system we run.

I would only highlight a few practices I personally find strange.

- We have a somewhat large size of government. The National assembly does not appear very resilient in checkmating the excesses of the executive arm of government. There are some good cases here and there, but the consistency is missing. Members of the national assembly switch to the party of the serving president and at will, for personal goals.
- The wage bill of our legislatures remains some of the highest in the world.
- Governors, after serving the maximum two (2) terms of office, rather than retire or contest for a higher office, contest and win seats into the lower senate.
- An elected officer, on one party, would defect to another party and still retain his or her seat in the government. Apparently, politicians switch parties to either escape anti-corruption probes, or to align with the party in power for favours. This clearly weakens the function of the legislators in checking the excesses of the presidency.
- Extreme difficulty in identifying the core policies or philosophy of any party, at least for the major parties in terms of a consistency of ideology, practice and principle. Apparently, political parties are solely focused on grabbing power, by whatever means possible.
- Political parties often have regional, tribal or religious colouration. This is not applicable all the time, but the inclination exists.
- Parties in power tend not to respect the rule of law. Court orders are flouted at will. Although we are in a democracy, the president of Nigeria has a degree of absolute powers. This makes it virtually impossible for

opponents to defeat a serving president in an election, except in the case of a president who is not interested in holding on to power at all costs.

- A flawed electoral process that creates room for voter disenfranchisement all over the country. This gap is welcome by power-grabbers as it creates room for easy rigging.
- The instability of government, and the potential change of government every 4 years, impact on the continuity of national projects with life-spans of over 3-4 years. This makes it difficult for long term planning. A national 50-100-year plan would hardly be stewarded efficiently when policy continuity remains a challenge. It probably will need a leadership continuity of a few decades or some positive dynamics that minimize the excesses of personal subjectivity to create and drive developments across political tenures of office.
- Preparation and approval of annual budgets have retrogressed to where national budgets remain unsigned well into the New Year.
- Anti-corruption campaigns appear targeted at opposition political party members, rather than open, ethical efforts.
- Political appointments are often skewed along tribal and family affiliations. Serving presidents finding safety more with people from his tribe and clan rather than on more broad-based ethical, professional affiliations.
- Members of the president's family, wife, sons, daughters become instant power brokers in the corridors of power.

## **WHY IS IT A SHAME?**

Why are these issues shameful? I think it is more like stating the obvious.

Many past African leaders and professionals have often advocated for the unity of Africa. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) has helped the drive for African unity. Unfortunately, in my view, this drive or posturing, is not deep enough to gain traction for no fault of the OAU as a body.

Yes, a united Africa would propel for greater development and progress than our current level. But the fundamental, deeper problem is that, seeking national unity among African countries can only be wishful thinking when African countries have not sufficiently resolved tribalism within their individual countries to foist a functional political system. How can two or more African countries be politically united, when their countries remain fiercely divided along tribal or regional lines? How can one sell or preach what he does not have?

My take is this: Any African country that conquers tribalism would play a leading role in helping the continent defeat the monster of tribalism. Then the advancement that Africa seeks would become inevitable. Hopelessness and despair will give way to hope, belief, positive action and sustainable growth.

No longer shall it be easy to pitch one African against another based on mundane tribal insinuations. Or one Nigerian against another Nigerian. North Vs South. East Vs West. North-East Vs North-West. Not anymore.

We shall know that no tribe is superior to another. Together we rise. Divided, we remain down.

For the Nigerian political system, we take a few instances on why we should be ashamed of ourselves:

- The electoral process tends to favour those in power, making it extremely difficult to unseat a serving government, regardless of how poor their performance is. This is gradually changing. Particularly in state elections. Our lawmakers should be making laws to enthrone transparency and equity for the whole country.
- The process of collecting, collating and announcing election results by INEC is an ugly charade to watch. Academic professors make up a good number of INEC top officials and their performance rarely indicate qualities consistent with high level of education. Sometimes, errors in simple addition and subtraction computations further add to the shame on display.
- There is no reason whatsoever for a politician to defect from one party and still retain his elected position. Such an act show that the politician is not worthy to sit on any elected position. He or she has dishonoured the platform on which he was elected and loses the right to lead anyone. At least not on a national level. How can Nigerians or the constitution allow such hollow acts to take place and expect the country to develop?
- If a governor cannot make a meaningful change after 8 years in office as the governor, what values can he possibly bring to the state as a senator? In my view, this is an ignoble practice that should never be allowed. It is understandable when a senator contests for the governor's seat. How does one see a governor moving backwards into a senatorial position? Maybe serving senators at expiration of their tenures can also contest for election into the House of Representatives?

- It is shameful that elected officials should appropriate obscene sums for themselves as allowances in a country languishing in abject poverty.
- How can budgets not be passed on time and the government does not lose credibility completely? How is the government to run without a budget?
- Incompetence on a grand scale would make for shifting of the electoral calendar, sometimes within a few days to the actual election, when we have 4 years to plan for the next election. The interesting thing is this cycle repeats itself and it remains business as usual.
- When a president appoints people from his tribe, his family, his 'people', he is immediately defining where his loyalty lies. He is more of a president for his tribe/family, than being the president of the whole country. The same president would be verbally stating his commitment to one Nigeria, but brazenly show the opposite in his actions. Is this not shameful enough? What is a president who acts in this manner expecting from the next president when his tenure expires?

How can one be openly tribalistic and be preaching one-Nigeria at the same time?

If a president is myopic when ruling the country, how does he expect a broad-based national coalition to thrive?

## THE DAMAGE TO OUR NATION AND OUR PEOPLE

The simple damage to our country is that we continue to be led backwards, retrogressively, into declining state of gross underdevelopment. With all the great quality of people in Nigeria, our mineral resources, a great climate, we have retrogressed from a 3<sup>rd</sup> world country to an underdeveloped country. Tribalism, nepotism, corruption, incompetence, violence, apathy and get-rich-quick syndromes surfeit the land. And we all know we are better than this. Much better than this.

A small number of people in Nigeria have united in their cause to perpetuate themselves in power and retain uninterrupted access to the nation's treasury. A number of these people have military backgrounds. Some others are politicians who jump from one party to another. Renegades in power. No lasting loyalties, only lasting interests.

These powerful and united Nigerians easily achieve their purpose by stoking divisions across the country along tribal and religious divides. And the gullible masses fall for this gimmick. We end up hating and fighting each other while these few take the whole country for a ride. It is the classical colonization of Nigeria by Nigerians. And with all our education, we are fooled into thinking that we are wise in our tribal warfare while the truly smart people remain united as our treasury is looted.

Politicians who seek election into any position resort to presenting a common enemy to people of his tribe or region, as the quickest means to rally their support for his bid. This enemy are Nigerians from other tribes. The tribe or clan of the opponents or main opponent. On one side, the politician postures as representing the whole state or country. On another side, he canvases the support of his ethnic people as their hope for elevation, hope for eradication for poverty. Hope for the end of the marginalization they suffer in the hands of

the enemy tribe. This is practiced at national, state and local government levels.

The politician spends heavily to induce support. Sometimes, it is monies from the national purse that is spent on electioneering. Whatever the case, it is an investment. Election will guarantee more than full recovery. The monies received before election would probably be all the masses get for the duration of the tenure. When the time for re-election comes, the vicious cycle is repeated.

According to the 2016 audit report by Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI, Nigeria earned as much as \$677.9 billion, between 1999 and 2016, a period of 18 years, from the sale of crude oil. This excludes earnings from taxes and other commodities. Is there anything to show that the country earned this much within these 18 years?

If we do not get our acts right, future reports would indicate trillions of dollars earned with the same level of development. The money will still end up in the pockets of a few to the detriment of many Nigerians.

The cycle of repetitive failures would end someday. But only if we have the zeal and will to pull down the walls of tribalism to build a united country. This applies to the leadership and the led.

There is hope when we refuse to be used against each other, kill ourselves while the leaders who incite the division remain safe with their families. When we realize it is really the battle of the political class against the whole Nigeria, the light at the end of the tunnel will shine brighter.

There is hope when the political elite copy the ideals from the developed world. They can use whatever means they want, to rise to power or hold on to power but they should refrain from



diving the country further. They can help themselves with funds but doing this does not prevent them from helping the poor masses. They can still drive the provision of electricity, water, and social security for the people. Gradually, we shall progress to the point of integrity-based leadership all round.

### **WHAT I WOULD DO AS PRESIDENT**

I would take a few actions. I am the first to admit these would not be easy as the many powerful politicians who benefit from the current arrangements would fight to the last. Whatever be the case, I would make the proposals, hope and pray for The Almighty God to grant us favour. The favour to have enough Nigerian heroes to help make these see the light of day. And the minds of the people to embrace the change for collective good.

Specifically, I would:

1. Propose a bill that would outlaw tribalism-induced comments in the public domain. This is applicable to social media, movies, radio, companies, the streets and anywhere in the country. I had made this point under the “*shame of tribalism*” but re-enforce it here for emphasis. This shall also include negative comments against religious affiliations. Tribalism and religious bigotry shall be treated in the same way as racism in the developed world. This is very pivotal to the change in national orientation. The envisaged effect would be significant.

2. Propose a bill that would have a rotational or zonal presidential system. This is to control the agitations centred on sectional agitations for position of President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Only candidates from a given zone can compete against each other, regardless of the political platform or affiliation, for the position of the President of Nigeria. The president and the Vice President shall be from the same Zone. The impeachment or replacement of the President at death or another situation shall be by the Vice President from the same Zone. Another structure shall address inclusion and diversity.
3. The voting system shall be upgraded to assign a unique identification code to every Nigerian who attains the age of 18. Polling booths/centres would have networked computers for easy authentication and accreditation of every eligible voter. It is impracticable to expect every voter to live or be present, close to where he or she was initially registered. The existing structure allows for a high rate of voter disenfranchisement, thus giving room for easy manipulation and rigging. In the same way that bank account numbers and BVN<sup>14</sup> are administered, voting cards/ID shall be administered for easy authentication anywhere in the world. Nigerians living overseas should be able to vote. This would be considered a pivotal activity by our administration. The potential for underage voters, ballot box snatching, illegal thumb-printing shall be eliminated by implementing a global best practice resulting from the recommendation of a committee of Nigerian Heroes. This shall be a priority task within the first 100 days in office. Execution shall target completion within the first 2 years of the 4-year term.

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<sup>14</sup> BVN- Bank Verification Number, abbreviated as BVN is a biometric identification system implemented by the Central Bank of Nigeria to curb or reduce illegal banking transactions in Nigeria. This can also curb illegal voting or voter activities

4. As a part of the zonal presidential model, the constitution shall also be modified to bar the president from appointing anyone from his tribe or state of birth into the cabinet, executives, political appointments and ministers, if the ministerial structure would remain. He will select tested Nigerian heroes from other zones in the country. And the zones shall be outside of the president's adjoining zones i.e. from zones with predominantly different tribes or ethnicity. This shall apply to any serving president. If a serving president dies in office or is impeached, a new president shall be selected from his constituency. Or the VP (Vice President) replaces the president and a new VP is selected. This will discourage other tribes from wanting to grab power by impeaching or eliminating a serving president. This is one measure to eliminate or reduce the deleterious impact of tribalism in leadership and on the nation.
5. This aspect shall be reviewed and refined to a workable structure based on the baseline intent. The intent is to eliminate the cycle where presidents can make appoints skewed along tribal or regional lines. Or the grab-power-at-all-cost syndrome, just to dig into the national cake or treasury for the benefits of people from the president's tribe, family or region. A mini-conference of Nigerian heroes shall be constituted to refine this amendment.
6. Amend the constitution to outlaw the switching of political parties by serving elected officers. Such switches, should they happen, would only be allowed if the elected official resigns first from his elected office. There would be no waivers to this law.
7. Propose a bill to make rigging of elections and general election malpractice as forms of treason with appropriate punishment by the law.

8. As stated under the “*shame of tribalism*”, only Nigerians from other states of birth or tribes can contest for governor and senators in each of the 36 states of the federation. In this way, governors and senators would be freer to run a state devoid of tribal or clannish influences.
9. There would no longer be additional states created in Nigeria. Focus shall be more on unity as opposed to further splits.
10. Propose a reduction in the size of the legislative body at national and state levels.
11. Propose the elimination of the offices of Ministers of State. Our needs as a country transcend beyond political appointments. We need action and need action fast.
12. Propose a *National Project Development Organization* with leadership tenures that do not terminate with the 4-year election cycle. The appointment or termination of the chairman or president of this body shall not be at the discretion of the president. The purpose of this body shall be to ensure the continuity of national development projects and minimize the role that politics and politicians play in the payment of contractors executing national projects. Project stakeholders need greater confidence to investing and participate on national projects. The ministry of works and housing has failed to live up to expectations for several decades. Something needs to be done to address this anomaly. Yes, we have made improvements but the man on the streets needs to see visible progress in the community.
13. Reduce the financial burden on political candidates by establishing a system that encourages candidates to raise funds from the citizens. This way, politics would not be restricted to the mega rich. And the tendency to enrich the self when elected, to recover expense, would reduce to some extent. People who contribute to sponsoring

candidates would inevitably vote for their candidate. The burden to spread cash to win votes or rig elections would be minimized.

### **WHAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER AS A PEOPLE**

I would start with the political elite, the political class.

- **SPECIAL APPEAL TO THE POLITICAL CLASS.** For the few Nigerians who are skilled in the dynamics of political power, I make these submissions.
  - I must admit that it takes tremendous courage, will-power, energy, tenacity, charisma, ability to smile-under-pressure, and interpersonal skills to run for any political office in any country in the world. In Nigeria, in Africa, in the US, UK, Europe, Asia. Anywhere. Politicians are special human breeds. They must be respected. To present yourself for scrutiny, criticism from anybody and everybody, pressure from family members, friends, the public, listen to all kinds of demands, from the sensible to the ludicrous, is no walk-in-the-park. I believe it is the extreme criticisms that can sometimes make politicians become inured to criticism.

In any case, I must congratulate every man, every woman who has ever walked the path of politics in Nigeria all through history to date.

Regardless of how good or poorly you may have fared, you all deserve respect and appreciation. To have to deal with the intrigues, the shenanigans of humans, the deception of the heart and the threat to bodily harm from enemies and keep up the push is extreme personality gifting.

I have friends who are politically active, and I cannot but admire their courage, their persona and boldness amid so much pressure. May God bless and guide you all in your pursuits.

- Humans with special talents and gifts can use the same gifts for good and the not-so-good. It is the same courage and tenacity that propel men and women to venture into politics that can give them the capacity to pursue more of self-gain than the pursuit of the greater good of the people they lead. As the politicians relate with diverse people from close quarters, and they see the deception and hate that are sometimes targeted at them, some politicians choose to protect the self and family by amassing as much wealth as possible. At other times, some can become insensitive to the pains of the masses, the pains of the downtrodden. This can also stem from seeing and reading the hate spewing out of the press, the streets, the social media. It becomes difficult to know who your friend is and who the enemies are. These hate emotions that appear as if the people do not appreciate the tremendous efforts and personal sacrifice it takes to get elected in the first place, could

further aggravates the sensibilities of political leaders.

***It is the same sharp claws, the sharp teeth, the powerful paw, body and agility that the lion uses to kill prey and provide food for her cubs, that she uses to cuddle and protect her cubs.*** The same gifts that are used to kill the enemy, kill preys that also serve to provide security for the young lions. In the same way, I appeal to our powerful politicians to also use their strong will, courage and tenacity to protect and cater for the people they lead. The women, the children, the babies, the students, the families all over the country, the tribes and clans. They look up to your leadership for succour. The population recognize you are specially gifted and thus expect so much from you. Please spare a thought to the suffering of the people in a rich country.

Use your strength to unite rather than divide us.  
Use your strength to see how united Nigeria can be and encourage us all along these paths of unity.

Use your strength to cover our shame rather than expose our nakedness.

Use your strength to fend off the enemy rather than make our people, your people the enemies.

Use your strength to show us character rather than use it to rob us of our character.

Use your wisdom, your people's skills to attract investments into the land.

Use your people's skills to select a capable team to drive the country to the Promised Land.

- In many parts of the world, power tends to remain under the control of some select group of people. It takes some significant effort to develop political might. This attribute must be respected and appreciated. For Nigeria and Africa, we need to recognize that this power serves more purposes outside the satisfaction of personal needs. Power comes with the responsibility to improve the living conditions of the people you lead. No one can sleep on more than one bed at a time. There is only so much that we can consume between us and our families. It is very possible to extend the use of office to benefit the general public.

National leadership is a form of philanthropic calling. When the people fair better, bond better, a happier country is the result. A happy people become more productive. Higher productivity creates development. As we develop, you will be accorded better respect when you travel overseas for world submits, conferences. And your leadership will help our children, our future generations to be proud of you.

It may just be the heightened expectations by the people from you that creates the platform for constantly scrutinizing, accusing, blaming and castigating any errors or mistakes by the political elite. When the temptation comes to respond with negative action, remember that many heroes are recognized as heroes after leaving



office. This happens when the people see the real values of your work compared to that of others.

- The world may easily forget the richest people at different times through the ages. But it is difficult to forget the people who shaped societies for the better. We can make just that little effort, that extra sacrifice, to truly leave a legacy. When you already have billions amassed, would it not be easier to invest time and resources to upgrade the quality of living instead of striving to get more and more? Yes, we have all contributed to the failures in Nigeria, and we all have a role to play in our ultimate recovery. Nigerians never forget leaders who have added significant value to the country, state or regions. As a political elite, please know that you can always do more. Complacency is not often an option for leaders anywhere in the world. It is a tough job.
- If the leaders continue to create division amongst the tribes in Nigeria, we ultimately create the chasm that enables outsiders to inherit our estate. We may also inadvertently create extreme restlessness in the population. We may have all the money in the world, but we can become endangered in our own country as our stoking of tribal fires for election or re-election could create an unduly tense country. This can be easily avoided. We have no other country to call our own. We have paid our dues in the past. We are better prepared for the future. We must not allow non – Nigerians to make us hate each other.

- Whenever you are tempted to incite tribal hatred, please remember that this disunity is the main reason why we are of little value in the eyes of the world. They call us corrupt, inept, backward, and all kinds of negative names. These are not our names. They are not much better themselves in their posturing but the way we carry on with our actions give them the reason to give us a bad name. We can be better. We can build a better society.

Remember the African proverb: ***He who causes others misfortune, also teaches them wisdom.***

- The force of unity is so powerful, that only maybe ten, twenty or just a few Nigerians at the top, in the country's corridors of power, federal or state level, is all it takes to drive 180m Nigerians towards the path of sustainable progress. It is not possible for 180 Nigerians to become united overnight. But this unity can be propelled by a united political elite whose true vision is one-Nigeria, a powerful Nigeria and ***not*** a powerful North, East, South or West. These group would find it a lot easier to create an electoral process that would make it impossible for power grabbers to ascend to power.

And for Nigerians as a people, we are encouraged to consider these:

- The African proverb: ***“A farmer does not clear the bush and expect the grass to dry immediately”*** says it all.

Meaningful change would take time. Patience is required. The government would focus primarily on institutional changes to drive the change.

- Religious leaders should not patronize politicians. Religious leaders are known for upholding the tenets of truth. Prophets and religious leaders see unusual things. They seek the heart of God and bring revelations to the nation. Religious leaders and prophets operate on the realm of revelation, insight and guidance. Religious leaders should set the pace on the enthronement of values and the downplaying of money and wealth across the society.

Religious leaders may well reject monies from people of questionable character. Prophets are often not popular or loved by all. They deliver the messages as raw as it can be, undiluted. Religion remains the foundation for moral principles. And without this, a nation loses the compass.

As religious as we are in Nigeria, sometimes I wonder why there has not been a religious revelation on what really happened with the abducted Boko Haram girls. Maybe it was not destined for religious revelation.

- We should refuse to be agents for the rigging of elections. We should not sell our rights to express our choice during elections. The peanuts we are given to sell our votes are enough insults to our self-pride and dignity. Why should one even bother voting for a candidate who has already betrayed the code by offering people cash to vote? I suspect that sometimes, some people are trapped in situations where they either partake in the rigging activities or have some hard price to pay for refusing. At other times, the people involved

may not even know the illegality of their actions. They are simply following the directives of the boss they know. These situations I must admit are extremely difficult to deal with.

- We need to recognize that members of our tribe when elected for president does not guarantee good governance for us and for all Nigerians. We should seek for quality governance over tribal interests. If the exchange rate is bad, we all feel it. Power situation is bad, we all feel it. Poverty has no tribal protection. All humans feel pain and anguish. When the politicians realize that the tribal card no longer works, they will be forced to shape-up for our collective good.

Our musicians show us the powers of unity as many collaborate on songs and videos. Nigerians from all tribes happily team up on ‘collabos<sup>15</sup>’ which grows their brand, collectively and individually. Nigerians can surely benefit from more happy ‘collabos’ on the streets, in business, in politics and everywhere.

- We should put the interests of the nation above personal or regional interests, knowing that with a successful country, our personal and regional interests are best served. When we succeed, first as a nation, individually, we all get to better feel and enjoy the essence of living in a safe, secure and thriving country. I understand that this is easier when hunger is not a daily threat. But the many who are not hungry can lead the pace that ultimately spreads the wealth across the land.

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<sup>15</sup>“ Collabo”, a street term coined after the word, collaboration. This is more used to refer to a song performed by two or more artistes.

- We should return to the societal code of practice where parents question the source of wealth for relatives, friends, and children. We should also not be complicit in encouraging relations in power to help us, by helping themselves to the common purse.
- Accept that our development will come at a cost. The first of these would be to accept delayed gratification over quick wealth.
- Recognize that our leaders can only come from among us. If our families have lost values of integrity, where do we expect the leaders we seek to come from?

## **THE SHAME OF NIGERIA NOT HAVING A NATIONAL AIRLINE**

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Many African countries have national carriers.

Many airline operators in Nigeria open and close shop,  
rather easily.

## THE PRACTICE

Nigeria had a national carrier, Nigeria Airways (Actually Nigeria Airways Limited). It was founded in 1958, as WAAC (West African Airways Corporation), as the original WAAC was dissolved. It changed to the name, Nigerian Airways in 1971. It stopped operations in the year 2003. The Nigerian government raised her equity in the company from 51% to 100% in 1961 till the company folded up. Interestingly, on behalf of Nigeria, Nigerian Airways have been managed by several foreign companies including KLM<sup>16</sup>, South African Airways and British Airways. These measures did not stop the venture from collapsing.

The airline, on record was plagued by massive corruption and overstaffing which inevitably resulted in huge debts estimated to be over \$700m as at year 2018.

Several attempts to revive the national carrier has failed.

## WHY IS IT A SHAME?

In the last quarter of 2017, *according to the National Bureau of Statistics, Air Transport Data*, the total number of passengers who passed through Nigerian airports hit 3,659,999. Among the over 3 million passengers who travelled through Nigerian airports in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2017, 71.60% or 2,538,190 were domestic travellers within Nigeria while 28.40% or 1,012,182 were international travellers entering or leaving Nigeria.

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<sup>16</sup> KLM Royal Dutch Airlines is the flag carrier airline of the Netherlands with headquarters in Amstelveen, with its hub at nearby Amsterdam Airport Schiphol.

The table<sup>17</sup> below gives a breakdown of the number of international passengers for the first, second, third and fourth quarters of the year 2017;

AIRPORT	1st QUARTER	2 <sup>nd</sup> QUARTER	3rd QUARTER	4th QUARTER	TOTAL
MMIA	663,330	692,207	737,655	739,226	2,832,418
ABUJA	127,137	142,958	231,414	202,496	704,005
P.H	21,220	20,262	22,111	20,217	83,810
KANO	42,434	60,328	49,630	30,151	182,543
ENUGU	8,964	10,168	10,042	11,547	40,721
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>863,085</b>	<b>925,923</b>	<b>1,069,918</b>	<b>1,009,620</b>	<b>3,868,546</b>

Interestingly, there is no Nigerian airline to benefit from the international passenger traffic.

Egypt has a National Carrier. South Africa, Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Morocco also have National Carriers. If these countries can run successful airlines, why are Nigerians not ashamed not to have a National carrier?

Table<sup>18</sup> below shows the number of passengers carried by Kenya, Ethiopian and South African Airlines annually from year 2010 to year 2017.

YEAR	KENYA AIRWAYS	ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES	SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS
2010	4,039,583	3,347,022	15,761,210
2011	4,508,698	4,440,917	16,407,784
2012	4,653,459	5,001,121	17,571,565
2013	4,516,500	5,671,501	16,311,250
2014	4,448,530	6,274,582	17,026,643
2015	4,569,473	7,074,779	18,882,898
2016	4,484,016	8,242,114	19,744,932
2017	4,892,682	9,566,378	20,821,044

<sup>17</sup> Courtesy: Data estimates from International Civil Aviation Organization, Civil Aviation Statistics of the World and ICAO staff estimates

<sup>18</sup> Data sourced from Anna aéro Airline network News and analysis report: 12 Jan, 2018 And International Civil Aviation Organization, Civil Aviation Statistics of the World and ICAO staff estimates.



Nigerian airways, if operational, with Nigeria's population and land mass, has the potential to gross over 15 million passengers annually and higher.

### **THE DAMAGE TO OUR NATION AND OUR PEOPLE**

There are several damages that the absence of a national carrier inflicts on us, as Nigerians. Some of these include:

- Loss of national pride. As large as we are in land area and in population, we cannot do what other African nations are doing easily.
- Loss of revenue to the government of Nigeria
- Loss of jobs for Nigerians
- Capital flight
- Additional pressure on the Naira
- Nigerians must transit in other countries before reaching final destinations as other carriers must stop-over in their countries before connecting flights to various destinations. This increases the time of flights, cost to Nigerians and more travel stress.
- The figures shown would grow exponentially, when our airports become upgraded and our local tourism industry scaled up under a secure social and business environment. Nigeria and Africa have an all-year-round summer weather, hence any African country that provides adequate security, attractive infrastructure

and exquisite tourist sites would reap rich rewards from tourism. We cannot continue to pretend that someday, somewhere, somehow, somebody would do it. We must wake up and do the needful.

## **WHAT I WOULD DO AS PRESIDENT**

Simply re-establish a National Air Carrier.

### **1. Address issues of overstaffing**

This was most likely due to pressures on the management to hire excess staff members due to issues such as federal character, nepotism, or some other jaundiced factor. To address this, the JV structure shall cede operatorship to the company with no intrusion from public officials on recruitment and manpower allocation. Overstaffing has not been an issue with international companies. This would be easy to address, as even in today's Nigeria, there are many organizations with staffing fidelity without undue interference from government. With the many parties involved, the possibility of induced overstaffing would be strongly curtailed or eliminated.

### **2. Address Corruption**

Corruption usually thrives when the corporate structure is muddled up giving directors and stakeholders the room to pursue disjointed interests. The company board shall be

structured to eliminate or minimize the potential for corruption to thrive. Best practices in other African countries and global experiences shall be explored and considered.

### **3. Address issues of Conflicts of Interest**

The Nigerian Airways as a company may not be handed over to an airline currently operating in the country. It could present a conflict of interest situation that would not be fair to the airline. The operating joint venture shall be an independent entity.

### **4. National Recognition & Awards**

The people who drive this initiative to excellence shall be nationally recognized and treated as Nigerian Heroes.

### **WHAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER AS A PEOPLE**

As a people, I would simply encourage Nigerians to proudly fly the national carrier, as the company proves her weight in safety and service delivery.

The Nigerians in charge of the airline should wear the pride of the nation on their hearts and their faces. The beauty of the nation shall be reflected in the beauty of the green-whites of the crew uniforms. Our Nigeria. Our country. Our pride.

We shall beam with pride as the lead crew personnel in charge announces:

*We welcome you aboard Our Nigerian airways flight, NGA-X742....on board we encourage you to relax and enjoy the hospitality of our united crew, from a united country of 300 languages, 371 tribes, 36 united states flowing with laughter, warmth and happiness.....!!!*

# THE SHAME OF MEDICAL TOURISM OVERSEAS

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The acceptance that only foreign hospitals are good enough for our upper class and wealthy few. And for our political elite, the president, governors, others.

Local hospitals continue to decline in standard  
Gifted, intelligent medical doctors at cross roads.

## THE PRACTICE

There is a general loss of confidence in our healthcare delivery system in Nigeria. Almost anybody who can afford it would rather go overseas for medical attention. And this is not only for the difficult cases of cancer or complicated surgeries. Sometimes, medical tourism overseas is for routine or periodic medical check-ups.

Specifically, some of the ills affecting our healthcare system include but not limited to:

- The Public Healthcare system has remained inadequate to cater for most Nigerians.
- In 2005 the NHIS, National Health Insurance Scheme was launched under Act 35 of the 1999 Constitution for affordable medical care under several prepaid platforms. Poor awareness, funding, corruption, inadequate hospitals, and poorly motivated health workers are some reasons adduced as responsible for the inefficiencies in the system.
- On the face of it, there are not enough medical doctors per citizen, but the available medical doctors remain poorly remunerated. It is more attractive for our medical doctors to relocate overseas for better conditions and opportunities. Nigerian doctors continue to excel in their chosen fields all over the world. And in Nigeria, the story is not as beautiful or as interesting.
- The private hospitals cannot save the situation as they do not provide enough confidence to rich Nigerians to prevent overseas treatment.

- Fake or adulterated drugs have been fingered as cause for some deaths or disabilities in Nigerian hospitals and homes.
- There are not enough hospitals in the country for Medical doctors to specialize and qualify as consultants/specialists after their basic degrees.
- Professional motivation for Nigerian doctors is at an all-time low.
- The situation in healthcare, basically does not differ from what applies in Aviation, Works, Housing, Sports, Infrastructure, Power, everywhere. Few professionals truly experience the joy and fulfilment of professional practice in the country.

### **WHY IS IT A SHAME?**

Is this shameful? Without a doubt, it is simply ignoble to have the situation we see daily in our beautiful country.

We can only outline a few:

- At primary and secondary school levels, it is always clear that many of top intelligent and brilliant students are those who go on to study medicine. They qualify as medical doctors. In medical doctors, you have arguably the brightest and smartest academically, at least in the sciences. This has been the case in Nigeria, for as long as I am aware. This does not say there are no intelligent people in other disciplines, but my point is that medical doctors come from

the brightest in the land. There are probably more high- IQ<sup>19</sup> people among medical doctors than in other professions in Nigeria although I have no statistic to back this up. Regardless, Medical doctors are very brilliant people.

The point here is, how is it even possible that a nation can afford to waste the best of her brains by not putting in place the infrastructure that would allow these brilliant men and women to thrive and flourish?

Is it not a shame, that despite our not having enough medical doctors, many of our doctors leave the country for jobs overseas? Who would be left to tend to our sick and dying? When we fail to motivate our own, others reap from our carelessness.

- If we play politics in many fields or aspects of life, can we also play politics with the health of our people?
- Would anyone play politics with the health or life of his child, children or spouse? The real shame is that we feel safe, only when our biological children are safe and secure, with overseas medical treatment or the best that private hospitals can afford in Nigeria. In some private hospitals, the minimum deposit required could be as high as N200, 000 before one can be attended to. And the bills stack up very quickly. How many Nigerians can afford these fees? We should be ashamed of not realizing that all Nigerian children, are our children. Every child born in Nigeria is our child. Without exception.

We should be ashamed to allow our families, our people die needlessly, with the abundant natural wealth at our disposal. This evil we continue to do against our people,

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<sup>19</sup> IQ-Intelligence Quotient



because we simply lack the awareness to know that our children are not just our biological children. All the children in our country, our society, belong to us. Leaders at all levels must recognize this. This recognition would lead to massive changes in the way we act, think and do things.

- The qualified consultant medical doctors are so few that one consultant medical doctor serves many private and public hospitals. What happens in an emergency when a patient needs urgent medical intervention and the key consultant is occupied in another hospital? Shame to us as a nation.
- Yes, officially, Nigeria has adopted the western medical practice, on the professional platform. But we have only adopted the system but fail to match the pace of advancement for healthcare delivery in the countries where these systems originated from. That our standards are not up to the best in the world is not the biggest deal as we are out of pace in many fields of life. Except maybe in making new babies.

My question is, why we are not developing our Nigerian Medical system on another side, to support the orthodox medical system? There are many countries in the world with home-made medical and health practices, so why should we be different? Why are we not encouraging nutritionists, non-sorcery-related herbalists (*who genuinely use herbs, plants and roots to treat and heal effectively*)? Maybe our herbalists mess things up by meddling with sorcery-related displays and confuse religious people into thinking that herbalism is synonymous with evil practices. Health is the right of our people and it is a shame when we collectively fail to keep the nation healthy.

## THE DAMAGE TO OUR NATION, AND OUR PEOPLE

The damage to our country and our people is wide ranging. A few are outlined below:

- Medical doctors who are naturally intelligent and brilliant, would inevitably not sit idle and allow the society to mess them up without a fight. We steadily lose our doctors to foreign countries. And some, become business people, entrepreneurs to earn incomes that would accord them the respect they deserve in our society. The small pool of trained medical doctors continues to shrink, to the detriment of the country's healthcare system. The masses pay the ultimate price with their lives.
- Agitation for improved conditions of service lead to doctors going on strike occasionally. The multiple needless deaths that occur during these times is best not talked about.
- Private hospitals resort to some unhealthy practices to force payment of higher bills by patients, just to survive. The patient pays the price. The country loses ultimately.
- Hospitals overseas are now used to Nigerians and Nigerian patients. It has been reported that some hospitals overseas no longer pay proper attention to Nigerians. Our negative image is doing us no favours. Many Nigerian patients are returned home to die. How do we expect others, foreigners, to treat us in the best

ways possible when they know we do not even value ourselves well enough to treat each other with respect?

- We spend hard earned dollars to improve the revenue of foreign medical institutions, while our medical structures continue to crumble. Some big shame for us.
- Why would today and tomorrow's bright minds want to become medical doctors anymore? When our top minds shun the medical profession for faster riches, who takes care of the nation? How can we compensate for the loss?
- How can the hospitals survive on self-power generation, high cost of running hospitals with low patronage, as we find it a lot easier to buy drugs from the pharmacists than pay mere N2,000 as consultancy fees to a medical doctor who has spent over 20 years in school to qualify?
- Pharmacists who stock fake drugs aided by weak monitoring and regulations add to the shame. This is simply another sad case.

### **WHAT I WOULD DO AS PRESIDENT**

As the President, I would realize that sermonizing will not help. Talk is cheap. I would see the need for visible action and steps would be taken to stimulate action, implementation and thus

motivate our people to believe, to participate and feel the pulse of progress. We shall push for some of these and more:

1. Create a Medical Emergency Rescue Board, made up of *Nigerian Heroes*, detribalized, committed and filled with ethical pride to move the country forward. It will be men and woman at the point of legacy transition, who recognize that more-money is no longer the credo for their existence. These would be industrially satisfied men and women whose burning desire is to help leave a legacy for the coming generations. I am proud to know there are many Nigerians who already fit into this category. It will not be a committee to share money. Share naira or dollars. It is a committee of heroes.
2. Heroes who know that Nelson Mandela is not remembered today because of his wealth. Mahatma Gandhi is not remembered for his wealth. Isaac Newton not for his wealth. Men and women who changed their nations, their societies continue to be remembered long after the richest men in history have been forgotten.  
It shall be called the **Dr Ameyo Adadevoh Board**, in recognition of the incredible sacrifice this woman, this Nigerian made for the love of her fatherland. To believe in this country when many have given up is worthy of recognition and celebration. Her mind transcends Ebola. Her mind is the mind of the Nigerian Hero. The mind to give all, for the greater good of the community.
3. Create 1,000+ bed ultra-modern hospital facilities complete with modern testing and laboratory facilities in each of the 6 geopolitical zones of the country. Foreign

hospital and pharmaceutical chains will be invited to bid for the construction, commissioning and operations for 25+ years. Foreign groups shall partner Nigerian stakeholders, but operations will be in the hands of core professionals.

4. The government shall support the project with finance and guarantees. These hospitals shall provide multiple benefits for the country. These include platform for practical experience for future doctors and consultants, internship slots, jobs and a return to belief in the country. This would also reduce the pressure on the naira for sourcing forex for overseas treatments or medical attention. Foreign doctors would work side by side with Nigerian doctors.
5. Besides the firm activities on power generation and road network projects in the country, there will be a linked strategy for upgrade and development.
6. Private organizations shall be encouraged to build more of these types of hospitals where the government shall provide incentives including but not limited to tax rebates and funding guarantees, among others.
7. Re-enforce the NHIS program as a minimum mandatory support system for all Nigerians. Seek views from tested professionals on how to make the system more effective.
8. Appropriate funds for the upgrade of medical schools in the country based on best proposals received from the institutions.
9. Institute an *Annual Recognition and Award* scheme for medical institutions and personnel. Special recognitions and awards shall be given to Nigerians who make significant breakthroughs and discoveries in the treatment

of challenging diseases such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, arthritis, heart diseases, sickle cell anaemia, stroke, Parkinson syndrome, fibroid, among others.

10. Recognize the ills of fake drugs and take appropriate steps to educate the people and discourage the practice. It must not all be about money. At least, not money at all costs.
11. The government shall also officially recognize nutritionists and alternative/traditional health practitioners. There is no conflict. Both sides have the same objective. ***Ona kan o wo oja***<sup>20</sup>, there are many roads to the market. We shall not discourage home grown medical practice as we all know that today's pharmaceutical drugs are basically synthesized chemical compounds based on field research on the therapeutic properties of organic plants and herbs. We shall recognize Nigerian Heroes in herbal/nutritional healthcare. Nigeria would have our own healthcare regulations and guidelines. We shall progress what works for our people.

#### WHAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER AS A PEOPLE

As a people, we may well know these few things.

- When we visit a pharmacy to buy drugs and medicines, we need to realize that we are patronizing a medical establishment. Under this establishment, the counsel/prescription of a qualified medical doctor is the

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<sup>20</sup> *Ona kan o wo oja*. A Yoruba adage, literally translated means-There are many roads that lead to the market. Real meaning is that there are several routes to solving a problem.

right thing to do. And not the advice of the seller or attendant. The medical doctor with over 20 years in school studying health and healthcare is best positioned to tell us what to buy. Or not buy.

- Medical doctors are also encouraged to engage in activities that develop them as individuals and as teams. They should collaborate more, wherever possible to stay abreast of latest trends in treatment protocols. When your work creates confidence in your patients, your practice will benefit from repeated patronage. Our hospitals must be better than Malaria and Typhoid treatment centres.
- Doctors may be advised to not push patients into expensive procedures to create more revenue when simpler approaches would serve better. Not all women must use Caesarean session (CS) for delivery. Normal delivery is still possible and the primary choice of not a few women. Encouraging women, or pushing women in labour to go for CS, when it is not based on genuine safety or health concerns, is not the right thing to do. It will bring more money but remember the oath you took. Doctors who scare patients with cancer for more revenue may also not be doing the right thing. No profession is immune to malpractice. But, as lives and deep emotions are involved, we may do much better.
- We can embrace healthy living by eating and exercising right to decongest the hospitals. We need to recognize that our health starts from what we eat. When we eat

right, we improve on our chances of staying healthy. Our food is our first medication.

- Traditionally, occupations for livelihood were in the open fields, the soil, manual and physical. We sweated more. The sweat from our efforts force us to excrete wastes from the largest organ in our body, the human skin. Today, occupations have become more cerebral and sedentary robbing us of the opportunity to sweat and help maintain regular health from our daily routine. To counter this, exercises and gym equipment have been developed. Exercising is no longer an option but a key component of healthy living. We must no longer see health in the light of coated pills and capsules as cure all. Our lifestyle remains a part of our total health routine.



## **THE SHAME OF “LOST VALUE SYSTEM AND SOCIAL DISORDER”**

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Disorderly boarding of airplanes in foreign airports.

Youths resorting to cultism and violence in large numbers.

Corruption in the legal system

## THE PRACTICE

This is simply about the many forms of social disorder and the lack of a value system as traditionally applicable in our good old Nigeria. We look at a few practices that demonstrate this loss:

- Disorderly boarding of airplanes in foreign airports. This often leaves me in shock. All seats are numbered. Every passenger has a boarding pass. There has not been a single case where someone at the boarding gates was ever left behind. One would think that anyone who can afford an overseas flight ticket and get a visa, has developed a higher sense of being to know this. Yet, often, on flights to Nigeria, at the boarding gates, we rush to the gate, disregarding the announcer's guided pattern for boarding by zones.
- On a recent flight I was on, from an African country, we were close to the Murtala Mohammed airport, when the pilot announced that we could not land as the Nigerian President was about to land. Our plane had to circle around till the pilot got the clearance. The plane almost crashed. We had our hearts in our mouths.
- Some musicians across the land creating songs around the acquisition of wealth and trappings of money as theme. Alert, cars, *"I don make am"*<sup>21</sup>, house, private jet, all sorts of material things as the focus for the songs, the highlights, the celebration. Where are the days when

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<sup>21</sup> Pidgin for: I have made it big. I have become rich, wealthy.

musicians used music to promote peace, national unity, and comment on social ills for change and generally educate the fans, the public as they entertain?

- Potholes on our roads making driving anything but pleasurable. SUVs have become the preferred mode of transportation to navigate through the ‘roads’. Social class is obviously enhanced by driving SUVs. Our highways look anything but highways.
- Youths resorting to rituals, cultism, advanced-fee-fraud (419) and violence. The common lingo is to ‘hammer<sup>22</sup>’, hit the big money. With no jobs, half-education and mostly musicians, actors and actresses to look up to as heroes and mentors, youths’ resort to any fast means to make an income. It is no longer ignoble to be known as a yahoo boy<sup>23</sup>, yahoo girl, or ritualist. Even quick-money ritualists advertise their magic on the internet. Nollywood movies are filled with common themes of rituals for money and all sorts of get-rich-quick drama. Unfortunately, these get-rich quick syndromes are often devoid of plans or strategies to solve the many challenges to the society. The sole goal is wealth. Money. *Ola, Ego, Kudi*<sup>24</sup>!!!
- Corruption in the legal system. For this, I am sure Nigeria is not alone or unique. All over the world, Legal systems

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<sup>22</sup> Hammer- Lingo for making it, hitting the big money.

<sup>23</sup>Yahoo boy- Fraudster, ritualist. Same for Yahoo girl. But more used for males

<sup>24</sup> Ola- wealth in Yoruba language, Ego, money in Ibo language, Kudi- Money in Hausa language.

including police officers have been found guilty of, taking bribes or involvement in some shady practices. Making no excuses for our judges and lawyers, my belief is that the legal institution in the country would improve when the overall ethical standards of the nation improves.

If you have been to a typical Nigerian police barracks, you will wonder how anyone living under such conditions is expected to fight crime or fight armed criminals with sophisticated weapons with courage, motivation. When the families living in the barracks see death, death of a family member, death of a neighbour, corpses brought back from duty, you wonder how others would be motivated to fight crime. Or how children of police officers would aspire to become police officers themselves in the future.

When fresh lawyers join legal firms and chambers, and they are made to work for almost free or peanuts, is it a surprise that Lawyers aspire to help themselves when the opportunity rises?

- Illegal checkpoints and extortion by police or security officers on our roads. Our highways are filled with numerous police or military checkpoints. These cause disruptions in free flow of traffic but more intriguing is that it creates an atmosphere of security stress and siege as one travels through Nigeria. Our highways are clearly not smooth or orderly. This is not what would attract tourists or first-time visitors into wanting to

return. The show of guns and weapons scare the lily livered. It is hard to tell if we are in war times or peace times.

### **WHY IS IT A SHAME?**

When you consider what obtains in some countries that people, including Nigerians love to visit, it would be easy to see why we should be ashamed of these attitudes.

- We are educated enough to respect ourselves and board planes orderly. This is just too crass to even attempt to pontificate on it. It is too shameful.
- When our plane, on the flight from Ghana was prevented from landing, the lead crew member, announced that we are to circle around till they receive clearance, as the Nigerian president was about to land at the MMIA<sup>25</sup>. One passenger said this only happens in Nigeria. I felt ashamed. I have not quite investigated to confirm if this was unique to Nigeria but having experienced a similar traffic blockage, this time on the road, in Abuja, I was not surprised. In Abuja, we were held up in one spot for over 45 minutes, long after the presidential convoy had passed. Some other passengers were to confirm there have been similar incidents in the past. What if these planes are suspended in the air when they have insufficient fuel left in their tanks? What if an airplane carrying over 200

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<sup>25</sup> MMIA- Murtala Mohammed International Airport, Lagos.

people crashes because of this? Do the pilots get the notification for this delay before take-off or they are sudden events communicated when the plane is about to land? Maybe airplanes are expected to have enough fuel to accommodate these sudden scenarios.

- Is it not a shame to house police officers under miserable conditions, plus poor welfare schemes and expect them to be selfless heroes in fighting crime?
- Imagine a country run on corruption, driven primarily by the insecurity around the nation, people thinking the country does not care and the country has no hope. The leaders are corrupt. Everybody wanting to stock up cash, properties, in the event the country crashes! How can this situation persist, and we expect lawyers not to get tempted? We expect the police to be decent? We expect the doctors to be ethical all round? We want the bankers to be heroes? How? It is a shame to expect the impossible from others when we are no better.
- Highways should be highways and overseas, in other countries, we see and enjoy free flowing traffic. It adds to the beauty of the country. Pot holes and countless checkpoints are not the standard design or expectation for roads and highways. Driving from Accra through Benin Republic and Togo, *Cotonou*, the roads are smooth until you get to Nigeria, as you cross the border into Badagry, Nigeria. How can this not fill us with daily shame? Yet in our minds we are a country bigger than Ghana, Benin Republic or Togo.
- There is more to life than showing off with SUVs, cars we cannot build, houses and material stuff in a backward society. Yet, we feel no shame, because, who cares about Nigeria, when we can look foreign and speak in

fake-foreign accents. We copy and imitate those who would never care or want to imitate us in any way. Yet we feel proud in cloned robes.

- What future lies for us when the leaders of tomorrow massively mortgage their future in negative endeavours with no continuity or positive value to the community? How can parents accept monies from their children when they know clearly that their wealth is from un-holy means?
- Is being a musician in Nigeria all about, money, house, cars? Can they not resist the temptation to flaunt wealth or money in their songs? Can they not use their platforms for positive commentary in the society? If all we achieve in life is more money, we have achieved little. Fortunately, we still have many great musicians in our country.
- It is a shame that youths openly flaunt their wealth, as yahoo boys or some other such means of livelihood. In the past, people of questionable means of livelihood conceal it. They hide their real occupation. But not anymore.

#### **THE DAMAGE TO OUR NATION, AND OUR PEOPLE**

We simply look at a few damages to us as a nation.

- Non-Nigerians who use our roads would not understand how a nation as ours can be so rich yet so poor and so

disorganized. Millions are lost to traffic bottlenecks resulting from potholes and sometimes broken roads in Nigeria. It would appear that man-hours count for little in our mental evaluation of productivity.

- We struggle so much to maintain existing roads, some built in the 70s, that it is almost unthinkable that we can wish for new, better roads. The mental picture in the minds of the average Nigerian is that of stagnation. And over time, we see these anomalies as normal.
- Students in schools who should focus on learning, end up diverting their attention to get-rich quick activities, thus robbing the country of potential leaders in various noble professions. Some of these youths are cut off in their prime. The nation loses the more.
- What hope exists when our system forces corruption on the judiciary and the police force? And when the government does not respect court rulings, what hope lies for the masses when justice is up for sale? How can the masses trust a hungry police force?
- Our lawyers do not help push for corporate governance and responsibility. I can't remember when a big corporation was made to pay fines for defaulting on commitments to customers. As a result, poor GSM service, poor airline service and so many other poor service-delivery litter the country's land and air space. Almost anyone can get away with anything, if you are rich enough. Not nice. Impunity reigns.



- Disorderly boarding overseas clearly marks us out in the negative.
- SUVs are not the solution to bad roads.
- Policemen taking tips on the road should be a shameful act, but they are not all to blame. Their conditions are often hard.
- We lose so many citizens to cult violence, rituals and the other unwholesome practices in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. God help us all. And the negatives now wear fashionable tags: *yahoo boys!!*

#### **WHAT I WOULD DO AS PRESIDENT**

As the president, I know social change takes time. However, I would push for some measures to shore up our overall performance as a people.

1. Appropriate matching budget allocations to upgrade the standard of police barracks in the country. Running water, steady electrical supply, improved remuneration packages and better weapons for the police and the military would be top priority for the administration. Equip the police and restore the pride to the force. The creation of infrastructure for pipe born water, power and other amenities could be prioritized for the Police force from the beginning. Pipe

borne water and power shall be the right of every Nigerian citizen, regardless of social standing or region in the country.

2. Create a system where every citizen will play some security role, as practiced in some countries. I believe in the supremacy of crime prevention over crime mitigation. When people know they can be reported by everyday citizens watching out for the good of the nation, the load on the regular police force will reduce. To make this happen, first, there must be renewed faith and belief in the country's governing body. With this new belief, mass mobilization should be easier.
3. Improved job opportunities by the new projects in the country shall provide avenues for profitable engagement for our youths. The natural incentive for crime and ritual based careers would decline. Socially, the government shall create campaigns that discourage quick-rich schemes including 'yahoo' things.
4. The minimum performance standard for all roads in Nigeria shall be ZERO Potholes. A road is only a road if it is smooth.
5. Improve national security. This would enable the military-siege type of roadblocks across national highways to be dismantled. This shall go with improved intelligence and security monitoring. The new Nigeria would auto-dismantle on negatives. With a country to be proud of, compliance with the law would become easier. Hopefully.
6. Our laws shall be updated to include how to deal with fetish crimes, together with efforts to rid our social sphere of the

acceptance that Africans must be associated with fetish activities.

7. We shall encourage and reward lawyers and police officers who show *Nigerian Hero* attributes and performance.
8. Encourage making movies that downplay wealth as a common theme in the country. We should use movies to help shape our society.

#### **WHAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER AS A PEOPLE**

- Our religious leaders are encouraged once more, to lead the way in encouraging appropriate social behaviour and culture. Repeat emphasis on nation-building efforts over cash or money as recognition or testimony bias is key.
- Chieftaincy titles and recognition for people of unclear means of income should not be encouraged.
- Our Lawyers are encouraged to help enforce corporate performance by institutions in Nigeria.
- Our musicians can surely do better, in helping the nation grow.
- We should see order and cohesion as more our way than hustling and bustling to “make it”. We can copy from the many countries we visit for summer holidays.

## **THE SHAME OF “LOST PROFESSIONALISM IN THE CORPORATE AND CRAFT WORLD”**

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Mass Importation of craftsmen from African countries,  
Eastern Europe and Asia while our youths engage in  
quick-rich schemes.

Stunted industrial growth

Poor quality construction works in the country

## THE PRACTICE

I'll use a few areas to illustrate this. We'll consider engineering, building, construction industries, regulatory agencies and a few others. This would include regional and town planning. We highlight some features that cast an insight into the practice:

- There is a Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE) and there is the Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN). Yet Nigeria has no robust engineering practice and culture. Apparently, one of the strongest benefits of being a member is to have the title, *Engr*, to your name. This is of course some exaggeration, but these bodies need to do more for engineering. I am probably as guilty as everybody because I am not actively involved in the activities of COREN. Looks like I must improve as I accept complicity.
- Innovative engineering as a passion field has yet to kick in, in Nigeria.
- Incidents of building collapse still occur around the country. Some construction managers or developers use less than specified quality of building materials such as steel reinforcements, concrete mix, and others to save costs and possibly undercut the value of the design. Fortunately, the factors of safety built into design standards prevent mass scale disaster. Building collapse is the result of multiple system failure, including failure of regulations. Luckily for Nigeria, this is not a pervasive occurrence. But the intent in any

society is to make the incident count zero *i.e. zero defect.*

- Our architects and engineers together, have not pushed the boundaries of engineering and design space to create the ideal tropical housing for Nigeria and possibly Africa. We are blessed not to have winter, hurricanes, terrible storms or heat waves. Does this not give us tremendous opportunity to spread our wings to design the African tropical house? Houses that are cool to live in all year round. Houses that make for tourist attractions. It is our deal, so it remains our call to make it happen.

I recall when I was a kid in the 70s, there was the Tejuosho model market in Yaba<sup>26</sup>, Lagos. My mum often took me to the market for grocery and general household shopping. I think my crime was that I was the first or eldest child. Of all the markets she took me to, I loved Tejuosho market. I disliked the Orile<sup>27</sup>, and Ajegunle<sup>28</sup> markets. The thing about this Tejuosho model market, was that, it had no electrical air-conditioning system, yet it felt very cool inside, all year round. Maybe I did not see the air-conditioning systems in my young mind, but I saw no window units. I knew the spaces were open. There seemed to be some heavenly steady stream of cool air once inside the building and I

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<sup>26</sup> Yaba- a major hub area in mainland Lagos state, Nigeria.

<sup>27</sup> Orile- a low-middle class residential area of Lagos mainland, in Lagos state.

<sup>28</sup> Ajegunle- a low, average residential, commercial area in Apapa area of Lagos state. Densely populated. The face of Ajegunle is continuously evolving.

never sweated for once. I don't know how it was done but it was a beauty in the experience. It was tropical architecture. Energy efficient. The old market has been replaced by an energy-intensive building. It would be interesting to have the old type of Tejuosho malls re-created around Nigerian cities. It need not have a million stores or retail partitions. It would simply be our thing, if you get my drift.

- The spacing between our buildings, tend to be much smaller than recommended minimum spaces. Sometimes, occupants of two adjacent buildings can decently converse with each other via their open windows, and at regular tones. This arrangement stifles air circulation or ventilation and presents some fire spread risks if fire starts in one apartment.
- Cantilevers on building designs **stay safe** at 900mm (3ft) or less in many buildings, sticking to historical designs and not venturing further.
- Buildings are not just meant to contain rooms and toilets. Buildings do far more than that. Buildings are statements of beauty that define the landscape of cities, of countries. They add to be beauty of the experience of driving and walking through cities, towns, and settlements. In other words, the aesthetics of buildings and infrastructure, is as important as their technical, and structural integrity. The exterior finishing of many buildings in our country lack inspiration. The town planning authorities and regulatory bodies are

complicit. Considering there is insufficient housing for the population, apparently, Nigerians are happier to have a roof over their heads than bother with aesthetics. Not to worry, this would soon be a thing of the past.

- There are no fire water piping and hydrant systems that cover industrial and residential buildings. We are all at the mercy of the water that the fire trucks can carry if fire outbreaks occur. And we must hope and pray there is no traffic congestion to impede their trips to and from location to refill their tanks if the first supply cannot put out the fire. It may appear to be wishful thinking to have firewater ring mains when pipe borne water is not even available. I think it is very realistic because it takes the same thinking and process to lay and install portable water system and firewater ring mains. If we must copy, we can at least copy right.
- It is becoming difficult to get masonry craftsmen in the country who can erect and render blocks and walls in perfect straight lines. Buildings have warped lines, arcs are rarely rendered to perfection. Plumbing leaks are common. Poor electrical works that lead to short-circuiting and fires from power surges are not uncommon. Project engineers and managers have a hard time getting skilled Nigerians to execute quality tasks. Often, we depend on craftsmen from neighbouring African countries to bail us out. Our previously rich craftsmen pool has disappeared. Our



pool of musicians is increasing daily, while our technical pool of workers is fast depleting. Our youths must hammer<sup>29</sup>. Who wants to mess with cement, mortar, wires, cables, spanner and screw driver when one album can make you a superstar?

- We import and drive the most exotic of cars, yet the number of people, auto-mechanic technicians who can service and maintain these vehicles are small when compared to the number of vehicles in daily use. Sophisticated automobiles everywhere. Some with sophisticated electronic and electrical systems. The traditional system of apprenticeship that trains new auto-mechanics has become stunted. There must be skilled masters in the first place and willing students to establish a steady system of generating skilled auto-mechanics. Unfortunately, the rate of increasing sophistication of the vehicles is so high, it would take some catching up by local auto-mechanics. But the interest in hands-on vocations in the country continues to decline in preference for white collar jobs or quick-*hammer* fields, good or bad. Spare parts, genuine spare parts add to the problem. Nigerians are thus at the mercy of quacks, half-baked auto mechanics or the few super-expensive auto-workshops.
- On a general level, there appears to be a huge gap between the understanding of the core values of professionalism and our appetite for wages or money.

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<sup>29</sup> Hammer- become wealthy fast.

Does an architect, an engineer, a town planner, a regulator, and auto-mechanic, a president, a governor, a mason know what his real job is?

When one is employed, does he or she know his real duties, besides the salary that would be paid at the end of the month, job or contract?

Do we understand our job description and the validation measures for performance?

Does the mason know that a wall **must** be straight and all corners square before the task is accepted as successfully completed?

Do we understand that fees or wages are not due, unless the job completion satisfies pre-defined criteria?

- The engineer should know his main calling, as an applied scientist is to continually apply scientific knowledge in providing and building engineering solutions to challenges and problems in the society. His calling is not just to get a good paying job in an oil company or international organization. His calling is to develop his society. To challenge the frontiers of science and practice. And leave the society a better place than he met it.
- The Architect is to use his training to create a beautiful landscape in buildings, infrastructure and designs. He is charged with enhancing the quality of living in the execution of his works. All

developed societies exhibit the hall marks of great architecture and engineering. Engineers, scientists and architects build a nation. Musicians oil it but musicians don't lead technological revolution. Our music and movie industries are growing but Nigeria is retrogressing.

- The town planner should know he plays a pivotal role in the beautification of the landscape, the aesthetics and functionality of the region he covers.
- The Mechanic expects to be paid in full when the car is not fixed satisfactorily.
- The mason expects full payment for a rough wall or bent corners and uneven edges. This, after wasting work materials and claims this is how he has always done it on other projects, and he had no fuss with payment.
- The dress maker messes up your fabrics and expects full payment. How often have customers gone to pick up their dresses from a tailor, on the eve of their critical event, a wedding, a party, or a function only for the tailor to lock up shop and disappear into thin air. The dressmaker tells every customer to come back in 2 or 3 weeks to pick up the clothes. Often without structured calculations or planning.

- The tiler expects to be paid after wasting cement, materials and lays tiles awkwardly.
- The worker expects full wages even when absent from work for over 10 days cumulatively or more.
- The regulator expects full wages when protocol was bypassed to approve a deficient application.
- The Lawmaker's duty is to make laws that benefit the country and create a safer, more functional society. His or her job is not to sit and earn huge allowances with no bills passed. Or to collect cash to pass dubious bills.
- The governor expects to be respected when he clearly is underperforming, values people from his clan or tribe far higher than people from other parts of the state.
- A president is happy even when he does not realize that the life of every Nigerian citizen is of equal importance and not just the life of his family members or people from his tribe.
- The politician pretends to care only to get elected and helps himself, herself to the people's funds after elected into office.
- Company directors need to realize that the partnership is to collaborate and grow the company, grow value to employees and shareholders.

- The company supervisor or manager's job is to work with his team to generate quality performance and results. His job is not to ego trip and command the people reporting to him, as he pleases. He should lead with empathy, warmth and vision. A leader is a motivator for excellence. Great leaders rarely self-serve as sole focus. Unfortunately, this understanding is not shared by all supervisors.
- The Airline's job is to get people on time to their destinations and not to trap people at airports rescheduling flights for several hours on a consistent basis.

### **WHY IS IT A SHAME?**

I think it is a shame all round for anyone **not** to know the real responsibilities and expectations that his or her job or role demands. There can be no productivity, cohesion or meaningful progress in a society where people are disconnected from their job functions but remain very focused on wages or cash.

It is much worse when individuals don't know their jobs but expect others to know theirs.

The social media is the one platform where everybody is a specialist. And people condemn others so fiercely, you would be forgiven to think the castigators are perfect in themselves.

To be ignorant of what should be basic knowledge is cause for big shame.

### **THE DAMAGE TO OUR NATION AND OUR PEOPLE**

The damage to our nation and to our people are enormous.

- We have a legislature who don't make laws or hardly make laws to improve the quality of life in the country. We have politicians who stoke tribal hatred and associated ill acts for personal objectives.
- We have leaders who don't lead. Leaders who reap off the masses. The country flounders like a ship without a captain.
- Companies don't grow as workers lack the pre-requisite skill nor the commitment to support sustainable growth and development.
- High cost of doing business in Nigeria. A task may be done much more than once to get it right.
- Low quality buildings and ugly landscape across the country. Poor finishing. Generally poor aesthetics.

- Importing and driving vehicles we cannot maintain.
- Stagnated industrial growth: meaning greater unemployment for our youths. Industries can only grow from the hard work of skilled and committed people. Wishes do not grow industries.
- Increasing pool of unemployable people. People with certificates but no qualification. There is an increasing pool of unemployable yet entitled group of people. With paper certificates, they have high wage demands and would not settle to learn or acquire skills that would make them genuine wage-earners.
- Failures in leadership at many levels.
- Increase in environmental pollution, as regulations are weakly enforced.

#### **WHAT I WOULD DO AS PRESIDENT**

This aspect of our country poses a significant challenge. It also happens to be an interesting challenge. It would require the cooperation of many stakeholders to address the problem. My initiatives shall include but not limited to:

1. The Nigerian Society of Engineers and COREN must develop a Nigerian Engineering Standard and practice in 3 years without waivers to stimulate local engineering growth. They

shall set the standard for in-country engineering application. The objective will be to create a platform of pride for the Nigerian Engineer.

2. The Nigerian architects and engineers must develop a real model for the energy-efficient tropical housing. Even if these cannot be replicated for multi-story buildings, we would need a signature Nigerian, African feature on our houses, and such housing can be replicated in the villages and rural settings. National award and recognition shall be given to those who make this happen.
3. We shall create 3-5 Building/Infrastructure projects to develop tourist sites and show a symbol for the New Nigeria. This could be a 70-Story Building, monuments or statues. It could be the largest non-electric-powered-air-conditioned structure in Africa, or any creative landmark to give pride to the designers and builders plus the image lift for the country. The designs and construction must stretch the frontiers of science and learning. This is a classic *Nigerian Hero* effort. Our engineers, scientists and architects would lead this effort.
4. I would move for a bill to have educational institutions add or enhance a course or subject in the first and final years of study that clearly define performance standards and expectations for every graduating professional. These courses shall have 1-pager “take-away” that serve as constant reminders of what it means to be an engineer, an architect, medical doctor, pharmacist, historian, journalist, lawyer, judge, solicitor, lecturer, teacher, dentist, etc. The



same would be done for craft and technical schools across the country. There shall be no waivers to this requirement. A mason, a tiler, and electrician, a plumber, must know what quality work is. There should be no options around this standard of delivery and performance.

The objective is to clearly communicate the specific professional expectations from every individual in the performance of duties, to merit or earn wages or money. Carrying out a job must be to the satisfaction of defined standards and not according to the subjective views or thinking of the individual. Project managers, leaders, engineers, or some other stakeholder should also clearly define performance standards and expectations at the beginning and in contracts, offer terms and agreements signed off, showing understanding and commitment.

Emotional blackmail or such weak means that claim: *“pay me my money, I have completed the job”* would not suffice. If a supervisor is being mean or high-handed, the defined performance standard or measures would serve as valid reference.

5. Building auto-factories in Nigeria would help provide training and skills to auto-technicians in the country. The same applies to other craft and industrial application field.
6. The new landscape where universities and training institutes compete annually against each other would inevitably force universities to recruit and retain qualified lecturers/teachers, as opposed to compromising on standards. This would over time weed out unqualified

- teachers who otherwise could perpetrate mediocrity in learning institutions.
7. The infusion of many nationalities into Nigeria's industrial space would help in the stimulation of professionalism and capacity development. This is part of the basis for the earlier formulations stated in the get-rich-quick fix. With multi-nationals working on road, medical, water, and general infrastructure projects, the benefits would be massive. However, Nigerians would remain first class citizens in our country. We shall remain proud Nigerians. Not arrogant Nigerians.
  8. The ***Nigerian Hero Award*** and recognition system shall promote professionalism across fields in Nigeria. This is not the traditional National Award i.e., Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON). This recognition system would get to the streets, the grassroots. Tailors and dress makers who love their jobs and take great pride in exceeding customer expectations. Barbers, mechanics, teachers, engineers, medical doctors, Architects, hair stylists, technicians, craftsmen. Nigerians everywhere. This would help galvanize the spirit of professionalism across the land.

#### **WHAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER AS A PEOPLE**

Once again, I would encourage our religious bodies, our music and movie industry to take the lead in this massive initiative.

Fathers, mothers, leaders in the family are also to play key roles in driving this societal change.

Specifically, I would encourage:

- Religious teachings should highlight the critical values of doing a good job. Emphasize the meeting and satisfaction of customers' needs on the path of earning a living. Teach and recognize astute professionalism, dignity in labour as hall marks of true disciples.

Success solely in terms of money, wealth or fame, disconnected from the ethos of professional practice must not be encouraged. Our society has taken big hits from the culture of mundane success defined in cash terms. This cannot be over-emphasized. These were the values that created our heroes and founding fathers. Hard work should not be disdained. Perseverance, diligence, loyalty, commitment to causes should be praised openly and encouraged.

- Movie writers and producers can infuse humour, drama and entertainment on plots to highlight and honour the virtues of persistent hard work, pleasure in work and pleasure in the results of the work as it affects the society. They are encouraged to please reduce the constant or frequent theme of visits to herbalists and money ritual priests for quick riches. This is damaging the society. Although in these movies, the repercussions of evil practices are displayed, creative minds would be tempted to do the same with the hope they will outsmart

the gods or priests one way or another. All some youths or people crave is to have the wealth and the societal adulation that goes with the riches, even if it is for a short period.

- In social circles, people who show pride in their jobs, and dedication to duty should be celebrated, rather than ridiculed. The era of a 'good name is better than riches' can make its way back into our society. One buddy recently told me of a new guy who owns a barbing salon he patronized. He shared his experience with the barber who beat his chest to say he will do any other job in this life. He proudly says he is the best barber in Nigeria and possibly the world. He described how this Nigerian glowed with pride in his vocation. I mentally noted that I would have to go meet this wonderful barber and share in his glow. The story touched me deeply.
- Parents are encouraged to understand their children better and nurture them to pursue careers that would best utilize their natural talents. Pursuing careers tailored to massage the ego of the parents or careers that promise more instant money may starve the nation of the genius required in various fields. This starvation ultimately hurt the family, the child and the country.

## THE SHAME OF “OIL AND GAS” POVERTY

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*Recent audit report in 2016 by the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) showed that Nigeria earned as much as \$677.9 billion, between 1999 and 2016, 18 years, from the sale of crude oil produced from oil fields in the Niger Delta region*

Billions of dollars earned from oil and gas has not translated to national wealth, growth and development

Oil producing host community Issues

Over-dependence on oil & gas to the detriment of other minerals.

## THE PRACTICE

Oil has remained Nigeria's major foreign exchange earner for decades. We remain Africa's highest producer of crude oil. Oil and gas reserves are mainly in the southern part of Nigeria. There are a number International Oil Companies with Indigenous Oil Companies who partner the Nigerian government to explore and produce these assets. This is however not a platform to repeat the information on the aspects of the Nigerian petroleum industry.

The country is blessed by an abundance of highly educated, skilled and experienced professionals, who are capable, extremely capable of leading Nigeria out of the woods. This is cause for great cheer, as we look at some problems or concerns which appear daunting but are rather easy to resolve, once the objectives are defined and agreed to by us, as a group.

Some practices of concern are as outlined below:

- There is a high dependency by all states of the federation on allocation from the Government to run their states and the country. This allocation comes from revenues generated from oil and gas sales.
- Negligible attention is given to other solid minerals that abound in the country.
- Electrical power generation in the country is skewed towards gas fired power plants.
- Operating oil companies are forced to play the additional role of the government albeit in strange

circumstances for the oil asset host communities. This awkward arrangement creates a tense situation for operators and new investments in the Niger Delta.

- Oil assets are mainly under the control of non-natives. This is however not a Nigerian unique-case. This applies to many other countries too. However, this has not eased the tension in oil operating regions of Nigeria. Insecurity remains a concern in the Niger Delta because of imbalance in the structures and mechanisms of oil exploration, production and sales.
- There is also the case of corruption at national and regional levels in the oil & gas sector
- There are regulations but enforcement is weak.
- There are also some weaknesses in the local content model in the petroleum sector.
- We have oil everywhere, yet we have inadequate refining capacity in the country. Nigeria incurs significant costs on the importation of petroleum products. Heavy subsidies are paid by the Government for some petroleum products. Diesel (*AGO-Associated Gas Oil*) has been deregulated, to some degree.

## WHY IS IT A SHAME?

Why is it a shame? Just a few markers will suffice:

- How can millions of extremely gifted people focus on only oil and gas, when we can do much better? There are many developed countries in the world with no oil deposits yet have created functional systems and with healthy per capita incomes. Other countries with oil and gas reserves are active in manufacturing and other industries. I know we are much better than this and we will surely wake up from this temporary slumber. We feel the shame of being very gifted, rich yet very poor.
- There is no reason we cannot explore further power generation options in wind, hydro, solar and other viable alternatives that would enhance our power infrastructure. It is a shame we are allowing a practice that does not happen in other countries to persist in our blessed country. My previous comments on developing our power infrastructure applies.
- While it is difficult to reverse the ownership structure of oil and gas assets, I believe that it is shameful that we have not translated the revenues from oil and gas into visible improvement in the quality of life for those who are born in the oil production areas of the country. Improvement in the quality of life differs from allocating or paying monies to community leaders, state governments or some other regional body responsible for Niger Delta people. If Nigeria



is battling with corruption, the Niger Delta, or any state or region, would not be corruption free.

In the same way that oil revenues accruing to the Federal Government may not all be used to develop Nigeria, there is no guarantee that oil dues to host communities may not impact on all the citizens of the region.

Visible improvements in the quality of life for Niger Delta indigenes should show in a few areas;

- Beautiful interconnecting roads and highways between communities
- Viable transportations system among Niger Delta communities and linked to the larger Nigeria
- Access to quality healthcare facilities. World class hospitals. Every Nigerian deserves this but if we all depend on oil, the oil 'people' should start early on the benefits.
- Quality educational institutes from primary to tertiary levels.
- Functional industries in the region providing massive employment opportunities for the people.
- Uninterrupted power supply
- Quality housing and housing infrastructure.
- Unpolluted waters where indigenes can still enjoy fishing and aquatic life.

- A pride of place
- What-If individual states compete to contribute more to the country, our country, as opposed to the practice where the states compete to “out-collect” from the common purse? Sometimes, some governors have approached the Federal government to help pay wages and wage arrears. If everybody continues to pull as much as possible to collect from the centre, progress would be slow. Contribution to the centre, via enterprise generating taxes, diversified export proceeds, viable states and local governments would grow the nation more. Unfortunately, begging from the centre is not seen as shameful. So, the practice may continue.
- Personally, I feel it is shameful to pay cash or monies periodically for projects and the like, to host communities by oil companies as community levies or dues. I don't fancy the image it portrays for these intelligent and gifted people. The communities deserve more. They should be active stakeholders. The federal government as stated earlier would do better. The cash paid out quickly dissipates. And the general conditions of poverty persist. It can be better than what currently obtains.
- How can we not have functional refineries everywhere in Nigeria? Just how is this even possible? How can we not create enabling laws that would speed up the installation of refineries to meet at least 100% of our local needs? How do we justify the high number of legislators in government if we cannot create enabling laws to meet this most basic of needs?

- We flare our gases daily, simply because we are too eager to 'chop' the fast monies from oil, and thus fail to recognize that we are burning the wealth of our nation and that of our future generations. We simply cannot see far enough into the future to recognize the folly of gas flaring. If we can make ready cash, ready dollars from crude oil, who cares. Let the gas burn. Tomorrow will sort itself out. Who knows, maybe when our children are born, they find they have no more oil or gas to depend on, maybe they would be forced to think, and plan better than we are able to do.

#### **THE DAMAGE TO OUR NATION, AND OUR PEOPLE**

The damage to our skewed dependence on oil and gas is far too obvious to bother recounting them again.

#### **WHAT I WOULD DO AS PRESIDENT**

The problems will not go away overnight, but I would make efforts along these lines.

1. Prioritize local consumption of gas to stimulate the business model for gas production, processing, transmission and utilization. Some measures would include but not limited to:

- a. Develop gas distribution and consumption grids to industries and residential areas across the federation starting from the oil and gas communities. The existing single natural gas pipeline, the NGC pipeline is not enough to serve the nation. The project would be broken down into manageable sizes for ease of funding and completion. Residences should have the option to use electricity, natural gas or LPG for heating. Being a tropical country without extreme colds as experienced in winter, the gas need may be limited to cooking thus reducing net demand. This would be factored into the project scope definition and strategy.
- b. The main challenge to residential natural gas distribution and use is the applicable safety standards in the country. Whatever the case, Nigeria cannot have a population of over 180m, significant gas reserves and we keep flaring our gas. This is a challenge that must be tackled so our children don't wake one day and discover that their fathers and mothers have wasted their gas, through shameful burning in flares.
- c. Our best minds would brainstorm through this challenge. If the exercise is carried out by *Nigerian Heroes* or people with minds of the *Nigerian Hero*, the mind of the detribalized Nigerian, the mind of legacy minded Nigerians, then the results can only be positive.

- d. Review the gas pricing and taxation models to ensure a competitive framework is achieved locally to help gas utilization projects take off and get completed.
2. I would move for a plan that would lower the focus and reliance on oil revenue for recurrent expenditure. That the economy should be diversified is a no-brainer. However, we can appropriate 50% of oil revenue strictly for national development projects and to shore up our foreign reserves.
3. The government will consider the installation of adequate refineries in Nigeria a top priority. Whatever needs to be done, on the forex regulations, equity participation or location of refineries must be done. It is no longer an option. How can people of the Niger Delta pay more per litre of fuel than people living in other parts of the country? Simply absurd.
  - a. Refineries must be set up in the core Niger Delta states and regions. This is not a new initiative, but execution strategy remains pivotal.
  - b. Investors fear not recovering their investments in refineries as payments would be denominated in the unstable naira. Business men and women prefer to earn in US dollars. The projects are based on the US dollar. Basic wisdom dictates that where there is an established need, barriers must be broken down to meet the need.
  - c. Regulations must be shaped to favour local refineries.

- d. And the fear of doing business in Naira needs to be addressed too.
4. The downstream petroleum sector would have to be de-regulated. As call rates and sim card charges were very high at the onset of the GSM licensing, market competition and forces drove costs down to the present levels. Competition always favour the consumer. We must see into the future. Neighbouring countries pay more per litre of fuel than Nigerians. De-regulation would not kill us. The Government is bleeding on subsidies. There are more innovative ways to apply subsidy. We can dialogue over these. But deregulation is the way to go. This is my opinion.
5. Revenues accruing to the oil producing states can be split into several areas;
  - a. One portion shall be channelled to building of refineries in the oil producing areas.
  - b. Another portion shall be cash based payments.
  - c. Another could be to sell the oil to the Niger delta refineries at discounted rates.
  - d. And another shall be on prioritized development of the region in terms of roads, hospitals, education (institutions), factories.
6. Oil exploration and production companies would receive incentives for locally refining a fraction of their oil production.
7. Development of other minerals shall be given higher priority and attention.
8. Nigerian local content initiatives should develop to have foreign companies who manufacture items for the Nigerian

oil & gas industry to set up shops and factories in Nigeria and partnering Nigerians.

9. Building factories near to oil and Gas fields would be one way to improve on the utilization of associated and non-associated gas in Nigeria. This shall be encouraged. High penalties for gas flaring may not solve the problem, because when companies shut-down operations because of high costs of associated-gas<sup>30</sup> flaring, the government may soft-pedal. The reduced proceeds from shut-in production would inevitably affect government revenue and coerce some waivers and the cycle repeats. Accurate gas accounting may not be guaranteed readily. A win-win approach that includes funding and participation in the multi-chain gas production, transmission, and consumption process is the way to go.
10. The pollution of the Niger delta waters would need to be cleaned up. This is a morally right project and all stakeholders shall be involved to correct this devastation. To make this a holistic effort, the following would need to be done:
  - a. Strengthen the environmental laws that govern waste water treatment and disposal. Monitoring and compliance would need to be effective for the laws to mean anything. The *Nigerian Hero* mind-set needs to be called upon here. Produced water disposal quality needs to be clearly defined by the Regulatory bodies and should be consistent with best-practices in advanced countries. There is some

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<sup>30</sup> Associated-Gas is the gas that is produced along with the oil from oil wells.

confusion in the application of these guidelines in the country. This needs to be addressed and shall be addressed.

- b. International stakeholders and professionals would be involved in the clean-up efforts.
- c. Indiscriminate dumping of oily waste water and the bombing of oil pipelines in the creeks have contributed significantly to this pollution and environmental disaster. Future bombers of oil and gas pipelines may well consider this negative effect of pollution and attendant health hazards. It may be easy to say this from an outside view but when visible efforts are made by the government in the centre and in the states to recognize and reward host communities, I believe the tendency to bomb pipelines would significantly reduce.

#### **WHAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER AS A PEOPLE**

- We may need to be patient to see the activities mature to fruition.
- Niger delta indigenes will do well to understand the value of a united Nigeria. Other parts of the country contribute to the overall quality of life for all. A balanced perspective is advised. Niger Delta leaders may need to



diffuse the fear or tension created, if they posture towards pulling out of Nigeria as the country leadership skews benefits towards their region in recognition of the oil contribution to the national purse.

- Accept deregulation so we can end the cycle of poorly understood subsidy. Neighbouring African countries pay much higher prices for petroleum products than Nigerians and they have not perished. We must see how competition and free enterprise forced mobile telecommunication prices to fall and lead to widespread consumer benefits. The subsidy regime as practiced is not sustainable. If the subsidy is paid for locally refined products, in naira, our Naira would not be subjected to the periodic devaluations that has weakened the confidence in the naira. It is these devaluations over the decades and not the absolute value of the naira that has weakened the confidence on our currency.

Subsidies could well remain with respect to Nigerians benefitting from being an oil producing nation, but surely not in the way it is currently structured and implemented. The Nigerian product importers who are somewhat benefitting from current subsidy regime shall be given other opportunities in the new dispensation to continue to earn revenues and profits that would shore up Nigeria.

With a stable Naira, business people and Nigerians in general would feel safer to save in Naira, thus improving the confidence on the Naira. With more savings, a better

savings culture, commercial banks become better positioned to finance longer term projects.

- Nigerians who have made significant profits in the oil and gas industry may consider building non-for-profit legacy institutions for the common good of Nigerians. High quality, low or affordable fee schools, offering scholarships to intelligent but financially challenged Nigerians is one way to make this happen. In these schools, the One-Nigeria mind-set, ethics, creative thinking, and moving the society forward will be defining philosophies. We may well know that at 60 years, a multimillionaire, a billionaire, may be best positioned to initiate legacy undertakings as more money for self-pursuit and satisfaction may not necessarily be prime objectives anymore. Hospitals and craft institutes are other avenues to build legacies for the future generation.
- Any Nigerian who authorizes, or permits, overtly or covertly, the dumping of out-of-spec produced water into the soil or waters should feel a personal shame. Anyone who does this loses the moral right to accuse any leader of corruption or ineptitude. Even when bombing oil pipelines, the bombers must also realize the far-reaching ills of the act on their communities, long after a truce is reached.

## WE ALL WANT THE SAME THINGS

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The average needs of all Nigerians are generally the same. Or revolve around the same concerns.

We want to feed ourselves and our families

We want to leave an inheritance for our children

We want fair representation and treatment

We want quality education for our children

We want our children to be employed after getting an education

We want to marry who we love

We want our marriages to last forever

We want to love who loves us

We want to afford to buy what we need

We want social recognition

We want security for ourselves and our families

We want healthy children.

We want shelter.

We want excellent leadership.

We want equity and fairness.

We want freedom to pursue our preferred mode of worship

We don't want hyper-inflation

We don't want discrimination against us, based on tribe or religion

We don't want the disrespect that comes with our Nigerian international passport

We fear rejection

We fear failure

We fear unrequited love

The list can go on and on. But from these, we can see that regardless of our tribe, or religion, our needs do not differ significantly.

Why should we love ourselves to have it all and deny others the right to the same things?

Together, we can all win.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Okeke Onwuka simply loves to creatively explore the richness of life's options regardless of discipline or field. He has deep interests in Fine Arts, Drama, Sociology, Psychology and Soccer. His one major passion area is the pursuit of personal awareness, control and influencing skills to free self from the ills of stress & anxiety. With an engineering degree, he has over 30 years' cumulative experience in the Energy, Power, oil & Gas industries working for

International Oil companies and the companies he founded after leaving ExxonMobil. He has extensive experience in Process and Facilities Engineering, HAZOP leadership, Risk Assessments, Project Engineering and Management. When his father who was never sick was diagnosed of cancer in 2006, at age 70, his interest in the fight against various types of cancer, heart failures, diabetes and other debilitating diseases was born, never to be diminished again. Focusing mainly on natural organic plants, fruits and herbs, he sometimes uses himself as human guinea-pig, but he considers this a part of the fun, convinced that any herb or plant that can reverse a disease, can prevent the disease! In addition to consulting and driving his companies, he finds time to write books on Self Development, Motivation, Technical Safety & Risk Assessments, Process & Facilities Engineering, Natural Healing, Nutrition, Business Start-ups and Expansion. Wife, Yes. Kids, Yes.

## IF I AM THE PRESIDENT OF NIGERIA

This is simply about my dreams for a united country Nigeria. My dreams, as thoughts and the action steps we may take to bridge the divides of religion and tribe, of dialect and clans, to grow our society, our people and give hope to our children.

Nigeria and Africa are home to very many tribes and dialects. And the tribal divides have been further complicated by religious differences and together, these walls have played a deep role in stunting our development as a people.

Our good weather, devoid of extremes like hurricanes and cold, fuel complacency, hence it is easy to fall to the ills of continuous corruption, tribalism, religious bigotry, ethnicity and easy gratification.

But the shame we feel, as we realize how backward we are when compared to other countries and continents mean we can no longer pretend all is well with us. The motivation of shame would help us get out of the woods.

