# Peace-Building and Good Governance for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

## By

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## Introduction

I feel greatly honored with the opportunity to deliver this lecture, and I wish to thank the Federal Government, in particular, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, for graciously extending the invitation to me. I wish all my compatriots a happy Democracy Day, with best wishes for many happier returns! I know that there are Nigerians who hold the view that there is no cause for such celebration. They are entitled to their opinions, but I believe that such a perspective is grossly misplaced. We should substitute pessimism with optimism. I believe that, we are entitled to this celebration somewhat akin to the late Chinua Achebe's proverbial lizard that fell off an Iroko tree; for those of you who read Things Fall Apart, if you recall, the Lizard felt entitled to nod its head and praise itself, even if nobody else did. Nigeria's return to civil rule in 1999 and the subsequent sustenance of formal, if not substantive, electoral democracy for close to 20 years, given our past experiences with either colonial or authoritarian military rule, is no doubt something to celebrate, especially in a country where, if the truth be told, there is a dearth of things worthy of celebration. But Nigeria has come a

long way in the quest to fulfill the aspirations of citizens for democracy. No doubt, given Nigeria's potential, things could have been better, but there is no need crying over spilled milk. I am glad that things are not worse than what we have today. We should just try harder to make things much better than they have been with sustained incremental, irreversible positive changes. And this is where the theme of today's lecture becomes pertinent, especially if posed as a question: how can Nigeria attain enduring peace, predicated on good, democratic governance and sustainable development?

While in a celebratory mood, we must also use today's occasion for sober reflections on outstanding challenges, and on what we can, and must, do collectively to address them. I hope what this lecture contains contributes in this regard.

What I intend to do in this presentation is a broad sweep, to explore the connection between, or the interconnectedness of, three concepts, which are contemporarily, of paramount importance in discussing the political economies of countries such as Nigeria, namely: Peace building, Good [democratic] Governance and Sustainable development.

I begin with conceptual clarifications and broad situational analysis. Then I zero down on the interconnectedness of these three concepts as applicable to the Nigerian context. Finally I offer some recommendations for improvement and conclude with brief remarks.

**Peace Building**

Peace building is a concept often used in the context of post- civil war or post-conflict situations, to address factors that cause or exacerbate inequity, conflict and violence. It is aimed at bringing about enduring peace, to prevent recurrence of conflicts and violence. It is also about "mitigating risk of conflict and preventing a relapse of conflict dynamics". Additionally, it is about "transforming socio-economic environmental systems so that they sustain progress and equitable opportunity" (Anan 1998).

Peace building, in its conventional usage, is essentially reactive, coming after humanitarian rescue, disaster relief, peace making and peacekeeping. Although peace building is a concept often used in the context of post-civil war societies, I believe that it is applicable to diverse, conflict ridden or conflict prone societies, such as Nigeria, where perennial conflict, even if comparatively of "low intensity" type, disrupts communities and undermines sustainable development. It also need not just be reactive; it can be proactive and preventive. It can be aimed at bringing about enduring peace, or to prevent conflicts from occurring in the first place.

Martinez-Soliman and Fernandez-Taranco of the UN have estimated that globally, 'more than 1.4 billion people, including half of the world's extremely poor people, live in fragile and conflict-affected settings'; with about 244 million on the move, 65 million of whom are being forcibly displaced. By 2030, this number is expected to grow by 82% (2017). Most of these conflicts are caused essentially by civil wars and other civil strife. But there are also countries characterized,

or affected by, comparatively, low-intensity conflicts, with devastating consequences. In Nigeria for example, in the past decade or so, massive destruction of lives, property and means of livelihood, as well as displacement of people has occurred caused by the Boko Haram insurgency, the 'herders-farmers' and other forms of conflict. These have serious implications for conflict resolution, peace building and socioeconomic development in the affected places, as well as for the nation as a whole.

Peace building entails three main aspects: Creating trust; building processes and institutions of reconciliation and cooperation; and reviving socioeconomic activities for sustainable means of livelihood. Thus, wherever violent conflicts, not just civil wars, disrupt communities and livelihoods and undermine peaceful coexistence amongst diverse groups of people, the concept of peace-building is applicable for return to normalcy and/or rebuilding trust and confidence for sustainable mutual coexistence.

**Governance, Good Governance and Good Democratic Governance**

In a presentation in December 2017, I noted that:

> Social science concepts are often ambiguous and defiant of precise definitions. The concept of governance and most especially the popularized notion of "good governance", are clear examples of opaqueness and ambiguity of such concepts (Jega, 2017a).

I have waded through the literature and separated the husk from the grains and present in this section what I consider to be the best and

most useful definitions and conceptualization of governance and good governance.

Governance is often confused with government. But, as Heywood has noted, "'Governance' is a broader term than government", in the sense that it "… refers, in its widest sense, to the various ways through which social life is coordinated [in a given polity]. Government can therefore be seen as one of the organizations involved in governance…" (2015: 84). In this sense, government is the organizational platform of governance in the public sector, as "market" is the organizational platform of governance in the private/economic sphere, and "networks" are the organizational frameworks for governance in the civil society sector.

According to Schneider:
> The broadest meaning of governance is the production of social order, collective goods or problem solving through purposeful political and social intervention, either by authoritative decisions (hierarchical governance) or the establishment of self-governing arrangements (2014, 130).

The World Bank popularized the concept of "good governance" in the 1990s, following the failure of the SAPs in the 1980s, emanating from the "Washington Consensus", to address the economic crises in Africa and other developing countries.  It defines good governance as:

> The traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes (1) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced, (2) the capacity of government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies, and (3) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them (Working Paper No. 2196, 1991).

In the crisis and adjustment period of the mid 1980s, the *Washington Consensus* served as the framework for the intervention activities of the World Bank and other international economic development institutions in the "economic development" of African countries, such as Nigeria (World Bank 2000). It pushed for "massive deregulation of markets, tightening of public spending, guarantees for property rights and large scale privatizations" as the requisite conditions for economic growth and development (Rothstein 2014a: 144).

The notion of "good governance" evolved with the failure of SAPs to catalyze economic growth and development in the so-called developing countries. Since the 1990s, scholars have attributed the failure of the Washington Consensus strategy to the lack of functional, or weakness of, institutions and have been preoccupied with the search for measures and mechanisms of reforming public institutions and making the delivery of public sector services to the public more transparent, accountable, efficient and cost-effective through reform processes. As Rothstein has noted, "since the late 1990s, economists and political scientists alike have started to argue that dysfunctional government institutions play a central part in many of the world's most pressing economic and social problems" 2014b: 5). Hence, panacea was seen as "good governance", which can remove distortions in the public sector and restore functionality of institutions. Thus, "good governance" became the framework within which to introduce market mechanisms into the public sector governance processes. Many conceptions of "good governance" abound, as summarized by Rothstein: from good governance as small government, to good governance as the absence of corruption, to

good governance as the rule of law, good governance as democracy, to good governance as government efficiency, etc. (ibid. 2014a: 146-152).

In advancing the case for "good governance", many other concepts are also bandied about; such notions as "devolved governance" related to organization of public administration; "delegated governance", in regulatory policy; and new issues were introduced to "fiscal governance" (Hardiman 2014:236). In particular, under the framework of "good governance", African countries were guided to "bring managerialism into the public bureaucracy" and introduce "public management reforms" which have the objectives "of increasing efficiency, cutting costs, and helping the public sector to deliver high-quality service" (Pierre 2014: 188 &190).

In any case, good governance came to mean the absence of bad governance. Characteristics of "bad governance" are identified as: lack of accountability and transparency, interference with the rule of law and corruption. Indeed, bad governance is perceived as the inability of public institutions to manage public affairs and public resources, and the failure of a government to meet the needs of society while making the best use of all the resources at its disposal.

Thus, in World Bank's conceptualization, Good Governance is about making government "smaller and leaner" for cost effectiveness and efficiency in public services delivery. And the focus is on institutional arrangements, a rather very narrow approach.

Ironically the World Bank's conception of "good governance" is applicable within the contexts of both democratic governments and authoritarian regimes, with profound contradictions being evident. Cutting costs, "rolling back" the state, efficiency, institutional capacity building, were pursued vigorously at the expense of inclusivity, participatory processes, bottom up approaches and to some extent, even transparency and accountability. Thus, "good governance" is stripped off its normative democratic content.

An alternative broader definition based on a holistic approach, offered by Rothstein and Teorell is rooted in the basic norm that characterizes the system as a whole; and that places premium on the objective interests of the citizens, rather than the narrow interest of ruling cliques. According to them, that basic norm is "impartiality in the exercise of public power". They expatiated this basic norm, the core of good governance, as follows:

> When implementing laws and policies, government officials shall not take anything about the citizens or the case in to consideration that is not before hand stipulated in policy or the law (2008, 130).

While good governance is desirable, especially as rooted in the basic norm, as articulated by Rothstein and Teorell, what is even more desirable in my view, is Good Democratic Governance, which is an essential requirement for progress and development of a modern nation-state. Good democratic governance incorporates aspects of efficiency and effectiveness in governance, inclusive and participatory governance, responsible and responsive leadership, as well as the professionalism and "the impartiality of the institutions that exercise government authority" (Rothstein and Teorell 2008,

165). The need to imbue governance with democratic content cannot be over-emphasized, especially in diverse, fragile democracies, such as what we have in Nigeria.

Now, failure to recognize the need for, and infuse 'good governance' with democratic content in terms of consultation, representation and inclusiveness, to my mind, is responsible for the failure of World Bank's efforts to have desirable people-oriented transformative effects, in African development.

From this premise, I argue that, good democratic governance, and not merely 'good governance' in its narrow definition, is what is an essential requirement to catalyze peace building and sustainable development. To pursue effective peace building and sustainable development programs, effective planning, sound institutions and structures, as well as all-encompassing partnerships, consultations and dialogue are necessary. Only good democratic governance can guarantee that. Good democratic governance nurtures participatory, inclusive, responsible and responsive harnessing of societal resources for efficient and impartial delivery of public goods and services and facilitates economic growth and sustainable development, in order to satisfy the fundamental needs and aspirations of citizens. Contrarily, 'good governance' devoid of democratic content breeds injustice and exclusion, nurtures political instability and erodes regime legitimacy. Hence, no doubt a more useful concept would be that which qualifies governance, such as a notion of "good democratic governance". In a transitional democracy, such as Nigeria's, whatever else governance could be, it must include

a democratic content: it must be participatory, with bottom-up processes and it must have inclusivity (cited from Jega 2017a).

**Sustainable Development**

Globally, the failure of successive development programs to address threats to lives, property and livelihood, or human security, especially in the developing world, combined with the effects of climate change, devastating wars and civil strife, to give rise to concerns about sustainable development. The United Nations and its agencies have since the Rio De Jenero Summit in 1992 been in the forefront of promoting and pursuing the Agenda for sustainable development. Over time, a consensus has emerged that global development challenges cannot be effectively addressed in silos, and by national governments individually acting on their own. Rather, international collaboration, cooperation and partnerships are most desirable for setting sustainable development goals and agenda for actualizing them. This led to the commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, arising from the UN Millennium Summit in 2000;  and subsequently the adoption of the 2030 Agenda  for Sustainable Development in September 2015.

Sustainable development can be defined as a process through which societal resources are prudently harnessed and utilized to address the fundamental human needs of the present, without compromising or undermining those of the future generations. (UN World Commission on Environment and development, 1987). It is seen as the best means of addressing global challenges, which threaten or undermine human security.

Sustainable development and peace building are interconnected. UNDP has posited that 'sustainable development and sustaining peace are two sides of the same coin" (Martinez- Soliman and Fernandez-Tranco (2018).

To elaborate, perpetual conflicts threaten, erode or undermine capacity to pursue stable development processes. They have been disruptive and have occasioned tremendous suffering for many globally. They have adversely affected the attainment of the objectives of sustainable development. It is in this context that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which focuses, among other things, on the goal of creating "peaceful, just and inclusive societies", recognizes the intricate connection between peace and sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda is targeted to "address major global problems, such as accelerated global warming, growing inequalities, poverty, gender based discrimination, violence and conflicts, and structural flaws of the global economic and financial system" (UN 2017). The principal goal of the 2030 Agenda is said to be "shifting the world on a sustainable and resilient path".

The three core dimensions of sustainable development, namely, economy, society and environment, are all negatively affected by conflicts, and they need peace to strive and flourish (Anan, 1998). As Orebiyi and others have noted "Without peace, development is not possible" and "without development peace is not durable" (2013: 185). They point to how "internal conflicts introduce tremendous uncertainty into the economic environment, making both public and

private investment riskier", and thus driving away investors; and they also observed that "progress is impeded or threatened by conflict", drawing upon empirical evidence by Collier (2003) which shows how "one year of conflict reduce a country's growth rate by 2.2 %".

Peace building contributes to sustainable development in many fundamental respects, including the following:
- It improves inclusion of parties in decision and policy making
- It readjusts public perspectives toward long-term issues rather than short-term coping mechanisms
- It helps to build confidence among all stakeholders, from civil society to government, to donors and international organizations
- It helps to restore normalcy and revive mutual trust for sustained livelihood and coexistence

**Peace Building and Good Democratic Governance for Sustainable Development: The Nigerian Contextual and Situational Analysis**

Countries that are branded in the literature of democratization as democratic (in contrast to authoritarian) are classified into three: Mature Democracies, Flawed Democracies and Hybrid Regimes. Countries in the hybrid category are often also classified as fragile democracies. Nigeria is both a hybrid and fragile democracy. For example, it is classified by the Economic Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index as fragile, along with 14 other African countries, out of a total number of 39 globally as can be seen from Table 1.

**Table 1. Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2017**

|  | Type of regime | No. of countries globally | No. of countries from Africa | Index category |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Full Democracies | 19 | 1 | 8.1 – 10 |
| 2. | Flawed Democracies | 57 | 8 | 6 – 8 |
| 3. | Hybrid Regimes | 39 | 15 | 4.0 – 5.99 |
| 4. | Authoritarian Regimes | 52 | 24 | Less than 4.0 |

Source: Wikipedia.org Democracy Index

This is because, among other things, Nigeria's electoral democracy, launched in 1999, has for long been lacking in electoral integrity, resulting in bad governance and somewhat undemocratic mode of governance. And it is fragile, also because of its ethno-religious diversity, which is characterized by deep fissures and acute fault-lines; lack of electoral integrity, which undermines the legitimacy of elected governments; and on account of reckless, bad governance, which characterized most of its 58 years of independence from colonial rule. Indeed, as a transitional democracy, Nigeria, as Larry Diamond has observed, is being "haunted by the specter of bad governance…governance is drenched in corruption, patronage, favoritism and abuse of power" (2017, 119).

Nigeria is not only a fragile state, it is also categorized as a volatile and potentially explosive country. The Fund For Peace 2018 Fragile States Index has placed Nigeria on category 9 out of 11 (i.e. Alert, with a score of 99.9!), in which there are 19 countries world wide, and along with Libya and Liberia!

Additionally, the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) 2017 ranks Nigeria number 35 out of 54 African countries, with a score of 48.1, below the African average of 50.8. Now, while the good news is that Nigeria is said to witnessing 'increasing improvement' since 2007, the bad news is that the rate of increment is only +0.38! A lot, a lot more is desired in this regard.

Also, as the Electoral Integrity Project's *Year in Elections 2017 Report* indicates, the Perception of Electoral Integrity (PEI) Index ranks Nigeria number 15 out of 47 African countries, a 'moderate' classification.

All these clearly show that there is much that is desired in Nigeria with regards to human security, peace, governance and electoral integrity. Indeed, the prevalence of corruption, as indicated by the poor ranking of Nigeria on the recently released Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), which is 27/100 points and ranked 148 out of 180 countries, further complicates the issue of bad governance due to a massive hemorrhage of resources, which could otherwise have been channeled into meeting citizens' basic needs in human security. In the circumstances, peace building, good democratic governance and sustainable development are desirable objectives to be pursued with vigor, passion and commitment, in order to get out of this depressing situation.

These poor global rankings highlighted in the preceding paragraphs are depressing for a country with such a high potential and

remarkable leadership role in Africa. No doubt the 'Giant of Africa' is faltering and it needs to be put back on track.

Although Nigeria's situation with regards to instability could be said to be, in relative terms, characterized by 'low-intensity' conflicts (e.g. in contrast to civil wars), these conflicts nonetheless have devastating consequences, in terms of losses of lives, destruction of property and negative impact on economic growth At the peak of the Boko Haram insurgency for example, over 3.3 million people are estimated to have been displaced in  6 states in north-eastern Nigeria. A recent report indicates that now, only about 1.881 million remain in IDP camps, with 1.441 million classified as returnees (IOM, 2018).  As Keuleers has observed, "where safety is routinely and casually under threat, it will be impossible to generate lasting improvements in most aspects of peoples lives" (2018: 1)

It is ironic that we have to apply the notion/concept of peace building to address Nigeria's perennial conflicts, even though technically, the country is not a post-civil war or post-conflict society in the conventional definitions of these, in which the concept is normally applied.

The reality, however, is that the perennial nature of Nigeria's conflicts and the fragility of its systems, institutions and structures, circumscribed as they have been by bad governance, require a serious focus on peace building and the restoration of normalcy in these areas. An Agenda for peace building and Sustainable Development must compliment, if not replace, our failed national

integration and forging of national unity projects. It is therefore essential to provide enduring security, to build peace and to pursue sustainable development agenda more vigorously, throughout the country, but especially in those areas, or states with perennial violent conflicts.

In this context, good democratic governance is the best framework and the foundation for peace building and sustainable development. That is what Nigeria needs and that is what we should focus on, in nurturing and institutionalizing.

To be more specific, for example, peace building is necessary in the North-East geo-political zone, as normalcy returns, as Boko Haram insurgency is degraded, and in the post-Boko Haram insurgency dispensation; as well as in areas drastically affected by herders-farmers conflicts and other forms of perennial communal or ethno-religious conflicts, such as Plateau, Nassarawa, Benue, Kaduna and Zamfara states. Indeed, peace building is also required in the Southeast and South-South geopolitical zones, to deal with the Agitation for Biafra, Niger delta militants, and other forms of militancy. Even more significantly, sustainable development goals and agenda must be combined with peace building for long-term turn-around of these conflict-ridden areas. Sustainable development goals and objectives have to be incorporated and reflected in the three core components of peace building, namely, disaster relief, macroeconomic reform and post-conflict reintegration (Smoljan (2003/2010).

Doing this, effectively and efficiently in the current state of affairs in Nigeria, however, would require significant up scaling of good, democratic governance in the polity. If truth is to be told, there is a remarkable deficit of good governance, not to talk about good democratic governance in Nigeria. The chaos, inadequacy, inefficiency, corruption, inequity and lack of participation and inclusiveness, which characterize provision of disaster relief in the conflict-ridden areas is illustrative of this. Indeed, judging from this, it is very difficult to see how, beyond disaster relief, programs and projects of peace building and sustainable development in these areas could be successfully brought to fruition without remarkable doses of good democratic governance. Improved governance in all its ramifications is key to peace building and sustainable development in Nigeria.

**Recommendations:**

Arising from the preceding discussion, the following recommendations are pertinent.

1. Nigeria needs to develop capacity, institutions, structures and processes of peace building for sustainable development domestically. Nigeria has made substantial contributions sub-regionally and continentally, to peacekeeping and peace building. But it seems to lack capacity, effective means and mechanisms of peace building and conflict resolution domestically. This needs to be remedied as a matter of urgency.

2. State governments should establish conflict resolution and peace building agencies, as a panacea for perennial conflicts and insecurity, such as famers-herders conflicts and communal

disputes and conflicts. These should then develop transparent and inclusive partnerships with stakeholders and civil society organizations to engage in dispute and conflict resolution, as well as peace building and community reintegration

3. The governance architecture, processes and institutions need to be remarkably improved upon, to effectively drive peace building and sustainable development. In line with the goal of Agenda 2030, i.e. of having "peaceful, just and inclusive society", we must work harder to institutionalize good democratic governance. Governance must be transparent, participatory, inclusive, equitable, fair and just. We need to institutionalize good democratic governance, as we deepen our democracy, rather than leave governance at the mercy, goodwill, pre-disposition or, indeed, idiosyncrasies of elected legislative and executive office holders.

4. Governments at both federal and state levels need to recognize that peace building and sustainable development are indeed two sides of the same coin: no peace without sustainable development and vice versa. Attention therefore has to be focused more on creative and enduring ways of pursuing development programs and projects on a sustainable basis, while simultaneously building peace in the conflict raged areas of the country. What can be termed as preventive or proactive peace building agenda also needs to be developed and deployed in not only post-conflict areas, but also in all conflict prone areas, which are so many, given the predisposition and the predilection of the elite to mobilizing ethno-regional, communal and religious identities to ignite conflicts

5. The fight against corruption has to be intensified in all its ramifications. There are many successes achieved, which are commendable but the magnitude of the problem on the ground is turning these into drops in the ocean. Indeed, it needs to be recognized that corruption has virtually become a way of life in virtually all of our public institutions at federal and, more so, the state, level. We have cast the searchlight upon embezzlement at the echelon of public service, which is very good. But we also need to cast searchlight on bribe giving and bribe taking in the day to day running of the public service, especially at the middle and lower levels: this has become a way of life. This seemingly 'low-intensity' type of corruption has devastating consequences on governance. This dimension of corruption also requires urgent attention, and should be the second and more intensified phase in the on-going fight against corruption. In some cases, the giving, demand for and taking of bribes appears like a normal occurrence, clearly driven by impunity. In the National Assembly for example, some committee chairmen have gained notoriety for this unwholesome conduct purportedly in the course of conducting 'oversight' or appropriation duties. All the heads and CEOs of government departments and Agencies, as well as Vice Chancellors of universities whom I have spoken with have harrowing tales of brazen extortion by some committees of the National Assembly. These corrupt practices with impunity must stop. Like Oliver Twist, those patriotic Nigerians who like and appreciate the current effort of President Buhari in tackling cases of high-profile embezzlement, would ask for

more effort targeted at these brazen acts of corruption which are becoming routinized.

On another note, there is no reason to be defensive about reports by organizations, such as Transparency International or Human Rights Watch and others, when they indict our country. They may embellish or misinterpret some evidence, but the basic reality remains, there are so many things that are going on, that are wrong and condemnable, and that we need to be reminded of. The challenge is to keep addressing these, with focused incremental positive changes and generation of incontrovertible evidence,  so as to remove the opportunity to cause mischief by these organizations.

6. General governance reforms are imperative, and urgently desirable, for our country to improve its profile towards good democratic governance. Reform of the public services is necessary for efficient, effective, inclusive and impartial discharge of their mandates. And, the security architecture in general and the Nigeria Police in particular need urgent and substantial reforms to improve and reposition them to be more effective in protecting lives and property, safe-guarding national security, enforcing the rule of law and dealing decisively with criminal impunity. The rule of law is the foundation of sustainable development, human security and peace building. The police in particular and the security agencies in general must be repositioned to induce and/or compel compliance with the rule of law and prevent or penalize, as appropriate, its breaches. Above all, they must

demonstrate competence, professionalism and impartiality in the discharge of their responsibilities. Significantly, the judiciary also needs to reform and improve upon the administration of justice, to speedy up the process and ensure that justice is not, willfully or inadvertently, denied.

7. Perceptions may be deceptive but we seem to be treating such weighty issues with devastating consequences as the so-called 'herders – farmers' conflicts with kid gloves. We must put on the right kind of gloves to fight these at all levels, local and federal and we must adopt a long-term perspective in doing this. No doubt, the root causes relate to climate change, environmental degradation, desertification, dwindling of ordinarily finite resources and consequent migrations and the pressures they exert on land and other resources. But there are other underlying causes, as well as immediate causes, which can be addressed in the short- to medium term by policy, by law enforcement and by mediation, through conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms and structures. No matter how passionate and emotive the issues may seem to be we must only have recourse to the rule of law in protecting fundamental rights of citizens.

8. We need to continue to expand the scope of inclusivity of governance in Nigeria, by giving more women and youth greater roles and responsibilities in the public services and public offices. The "Giant of Africa" is lagging far behind many other African countries in this regard. In particular, our so-called 'youth bulge' should be seized upon as a demographic

asset and appropriately utilized, to prevent it from becoming a liability and formidable security threat.

9. Ultimately, attention has to be focused on strengthening electoral integrity and deepening democracy, as the framework for engendering good democratic governance and sustainable democracy in our country. I recently gave a Lecture under the auspices of the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, titled "Towards Elections with Integrity in 2019: Challenges and Prospects" (see Jega 2018a) in which I made several recommendations on how best to improve the integrity of our elections in 2019 and beyond. However, four key challenges, which currently pose serious concern for INEC as it prepares for the 2019 elections are: Violence, increasing spate of hate speeches, delay in the amendments to the electoral legal framework, and security deployment for elections.

Recent rancorous, even violent, party congresses portend danger for the general elections. If parties cannot successfully and peacefully organize congresses, it is doubtful if they can engage with other parties in elections with civility and peacefully. This needs to be addressed.

The increasing spate of hate speeches by political, religious and opinion leaders, is another issue of major concern. These incite and mobilize citizens along fault-lines cable of exacerbating crises and conflicts. Ways and means need to be found to tame hate speech before the general elections.

The unwholesome delay in the amendment to the electoral legal framework (Constitution and the Electoral Act) is also worrisome. It is necessary to urgently conclude this, because there are some provisions in the extant laws, which require repeal or amendment, so as to improve the integrity of our elections. Such current provisions, as the one pertaining to internal party democracy, run-off elections and bye-elections threaten conduct of elections with integrity and should be addressed urgently. In any case, Nigeria is a signatory to ECOWAS and AU protocols / declarations, which require as good practice that amendments to the electoral legal framework should be concluded at least (or not later than) six months to general elections. Nigeria should be a leader in compliance with these provisions, which seek to deepen democracy in our continent.

It is also desirable to pay attention to the challenge of neutrality, professionalism and impartiality of the Nigeria Police and the other security agencies in their engagement with elections. In 2015, this engagement was remarkably much better than 2007 and 2011 and the working relationship between INEC and security agencies as coordinated in ICCES, was partly contributory to the integrity of those elections. Ways and means need to be explored to ensure that the Police and the security agencies display greater impartiality, professionalism and neutrality in the 2019 elections.

There is no over-emphasizing that, as the 2019 elections approach all hands need to be on deck for continuous improvement of the integrity of our elections. The more the integrity of our elections, the better, more responsible and responsive our elected office holders, and indeed our entire governance system and processes, would be.

**Conclusion**

Having established the interconnectedness of peace building, good democratic governance and sustainable development, and having reviewed the current state of things in Nigeria presently, with recommendations for improvements, two pertinent points remain to be made in conclusion.

First, given our diversity, which has historically been complicated by mutual suspicions and fears, and bedeviled by perennial conflicts, we must nurture and develop the infrastructure for peace and we must invest massively in peace building and in sustainable development. As Lederach has observed: "without adequate resources [devoted to peace building], explicit preparations, and commitment over time, peace will remain a distant ideal rather than a practical goal" (2017: 87). That would only undermine the prospects for sustainable development. As things stand now, we don't seem to have invested sufficient energy and resources to domestic peace building, notwithstanding the reputation of our country in sub-regional and continental peacekeeping and peace building. We must therefore try harder in this regard.

Second, and finally, the major challenge of our time is how to make Nigeria more peaceful, just and inclusive, especially for those 'most at risk of violence, injustice and exclusion', and how to embark on a solid pathway to sustainable development. Only good democratic governance can provide the appropriate framework for meeting this challenge on a sustainable basis. But this is not a manna that can fall from heaven while we all "siddon look"! It is a product of concerted vigorous struggles by progressive, patriotic and democratic forces in our country.

God Bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
Thank You.

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