

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

**By**

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## **Introduction**

I am pleased with the opportunity to deliver this lecture, indeed I feel greatly honored and I wish to thank the Federal Government, in particular, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, for graciously extending the invitation to do so 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 Chinua Achebe's proverbial lizard that fell off an Iroko tree, and felt entitled to nod its head and praise itself, even if nobody else did. Return to civil rule in 1999 and the 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 our aspirations for democracy. It could have been worse than this; it can, and should have been, better, but I am glad it is not worse than what we have today. We should just try harder to make things much better than they have been with

sustained incremental 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?

The task I have taken upon myself 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, before zeroing down on the interconnectedness of these three concepts, applicable to the Nigerian context. I end with recommendations and brief concluding remarks.

### **Conceptualizing 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 the international context is essentially reactive, coming after humanitarian rescue, peace making and peacekeeping.

Although peace building is a concept often used in the context of post-civil war societies, I believe that we can, nonetheless, apply it in contexts, such as Nigeria's, where perennial conflict, even if comparatively of "low intensity" type, disrupts and undermines sustainable development. Peace building is no doubt applicable to diverse, conflict ridden or conflict prone societies, such as Nigeria. It also need not just be reactive; it can be proactive and preventive. It can be aimed at bringing about enduring peace, 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 cooperation; and reviving

socioeconomic activities for sustainable means of livelihood. Thus, wherever violent conflicts disrupt communities and livelihoods and undermines peaceful coexistence amongst diverse groups of people, not just civil wars, the concept of peace-building is applicable for return to normalcy and/or rebuilding trust and confidence for mutual coexistence.

### **Conceptualizing Good 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).

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 Scheider:

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 notion/concept of good governance in the 1990s, defining it 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 its 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.

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).

In the context of the public sector in modern states, governance is about “steering” the course amidst “the changing boundaries between the public, private and voluntary actors, [which] may

include a range of themes [such as] “the process of engagement (politics), the substantive issues (policy), and the institutional structures through which state and other actors relate to one another (polity)” (Hardiman, 2014: 228). Even in stable democracies, the complex interactions and associated outcomes, which governance represents, are in constant need of refinement and replenishment through reform measures. In unstable and transitional democracies, such as ours in Nigeria, governance requires constant attention and requisite reforms for it to deliver on the fundamental needs and aspirations of citizens, amongst which human security is paramount. Good democratic governance is the panacea for national socioeconomic growth and development and human security. Bad governance and mis-governance, on the contrary, obstruct democratic development, undermines economic growth and subverts sustainable development.

In the public sector, governance is a form of public management, which involves “rowing” (administration or service delivery), or more recently, “steering” (setting targets and strategic objectives) in addressing the welfare and wellbeing of citizens. In this context, to ‘govern’, “is to rule or exercise control [over] others” and to preside over and coordinate the traditional government organization, the bureaucracy, through ‘top-down’ authority systems (ibid. 85).

Governance in the context of a modern nation-state is first and foremost about providing for the fundamental needs and aspirations of citizens, through governmental institutions and processes, steered, driven and guided by chosen representatives of the people through

competitive elections, which are free, fair and credible. Amongst what can be termed as the fundamental needs and aspirations of citizens in any country are: food, shelter, health, education, rights, wellbeing and human security, which is indeed paramount.

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, and seem to have replaced the Washington Consensus in the 1990s. 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 of 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 their disposal.

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.

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 impartiality of the institutions that exercise government authority" (Rothstein and Teorell 2008, 165). The need for a democratic content to governance 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 any transformative effects, especially in Africa.

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 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).

### **Conceptualizing Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development can be simply 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)

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).

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 was designed and unfolded by the member states of the United Nations. The Agenda, which focuses on the goal of “peaceful, just and inclusive societies”, recognizes the intricate connection between peace and sustainable development. 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 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, Flawed and Hybrid. 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**

	<b>Type of regime</b>	<b>No. of countries globally</b>	<b>No. of countries from Africa</b>	<b>Index category</b>
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).

Similarly, the Fund For Peace 2018 Fragile States Index has placed Nigeria on category 9 out of 11 (i.e. Alert), 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 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 witness '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, the Electoral Integrity Project's Year in Elections 2017 report indicates that 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, 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 through 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.

Thus, although Nigeria's 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. 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 our crises and the fragility of our 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 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.

Good governance is the framework and the foundation for peace building and sustainable development.

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 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. 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 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 in Nigeria, and whatever evidence of good governance is there is grossly deficient of democratic content. 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 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 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 our public institutions. 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.

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.

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 speed 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 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 youths greater roles and responsibilities in the public services and public offices. The “Giant of Africa” is lagging far behind 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 in our country (see Jega 2018a). As the 2019 elections approach all hands need to be on deck 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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