

NAIJA JUNCTION NIGERIA IN 2025

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1

INTRODUCTION

These are uncertain times for Nigeria. The outcomes of key issues which are quite fundamental to the future of the nation are simply uncertain. What will happen at the various electoral tribunals, what will the outcomes of the ongoing efforts at economic reforms be, and how will the efforts to curb corruption play out? Also critical are the agenda for economic revitalization and diversification, development of effective institutions, ensuring good governance, the development of a national innovation and technological capacity, and the need to address the values deficit and the causes of poverty, conflicts and disorder in various parts of the country, especially in the Niger-Delta.

How will the outcomes of these questions and issues shape the future of Nigeria? What are the possibilities of the future? Where does the nation go from here? What kind of nation should Nigerians aspire to build? How can the vision be turned into reality? These are very pertinent questions for every Nigerian. Nigeria is today at a crossroad.

Although no one can foretell the future, these important questions have been successfully addressed in other countries by the use of the scenario methodology, using high level cross-representative teams to explore, debate, argue and finally reach consensus on alternative paths their nation could take to the future. The Naija Junction Scenarios exercise was conceived as a platform to explore these important questions, debate the future and provide a springboard for action by helping to:

- forge a shared vision among Nigeria's current and future leaders,
- identify possible strategic paths for critical areas of transformation, as a basis for building consensus on a transformational strategy, and
- develop an agenda for change.

The exercise was launched in November 2006 with a team of 33 Nigerians and 2 other African participants brought on board to bring in external perspective. The scenarios development was undertaken in a series of workshops and subcommittee meetings in Lagos, Abuja and Kano. A series of challenge sessions were also conducted to present the draft scenarios, test their logic and obtain inputs and feedback from fellow Nigerians. The exercise was designed, coordinated and facilitated by the African Leadership Institute, a London and Johannesburg-based Pan-African institution. LEAP Africa, a Nigerian leadership development organisation, managed the exercise while a team of eminent Nigerians on the advisory board, provided guidance, oversight and assisted in raising the funds to support the exercise.

Following the scenarios construction in August 2007, the team began working with a media company to translate the scenarios into an audiovisual VCD to facilitate dissemination of the outputs. The scenario team included potential future leaders representing a cross section

of the nation. The team was selected through nominations and a rigorous review process to ensure that they are representative of Nigeria.

The main outputs are the Naija Junction scenarios that paint different pictures of tomorrow for Nigeria. The objective is to create a well thought through platform for dialogue on the future of Nigeria. These scenarios explore four alternative futures for the nation, each equally plausible. The scenarios are presented in a documentary-style audiovisual film, a macromedia flash presentation, this document (the main publication), as well as a printed summary publication.

The main publication provides the detailed version of the Naija Junction scenarios. It includes, in addition to this brief introduction, a retrospective chapter on Nigeria's realities and contradictions. It analyses the trends, highlights the key challenges and identifies the main uncertainties of the future. It then presents four (4) detailed scenarios which paint pictures of how Nigeria could evolve from now until 2025. The last section provides a succinct conclusion with an agenda for change.

The publications will be widely distributed and the scenarios used as a basis for a series of dialogues with key groups and constituencies throughout Nigeria, the aim of which is to build a common frame of reference and consensus among them on the way forward for Nigeria.

This however cannot and must not be left to the scenario team alone. All Nigerians have a role to play in supporting and participating in the dialogue on this most important issue, the future of our dear nation. The Naija Junction scenarios provide an excellent starting point for national dialogue.

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NIGERIA: TRENDS, TENSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS

Opinions will always differ on the factors, actions and happenings that have combined to create the present condition of Nigeria as we know it.

We are a nation at crossroads; a nation of paradoxes and contradictions, with huge potential, yet little to show for it. We are a giant with a barely noticeable footprint. Our reality often fails to substantiate the claims we make. Even when we have had opportunities, we have rarely taken full advantage of them. Yet, we are always full of hope that someday, somehow the future will be better.

From the political standpoint, it seems as if we are yet to evolve a true Nigerian identity. Our fledgling democracy appears to have been hijacked by political money bags/Godfathers who have very little interest in nation building. Our institutions of governance have failed to produce a much needed cadre of leaders with the right attitudes to move the nation forward, and potential conflict pressure points are many.

Our economy is overly dependent on Oil & Gas while our manufacturing value-added is low.

The quality of life of the average Nigerian is abysmal, with more than two-thirds of the country's people living in poverty. The state of our infrastructure is poor and the values which we once held in high esteem have all but disappeared.

The state of our natural resource continues to be a source of concern within and outside the country, fueling in some respect the simmering tensions in the Niger Delta.

Finally, the world around us is rapidly changing; global free trade, the rise of the economies of the East, climate change, instability in the Middle East and parts of Africa and rapid cultural globalization are issues with which we have to contend.

It has become very necessary for us to re-examine ourselves and the country as a whole. Hard questions must be asked and more importantly, the hard questions must be answered. Will we buck old trends so as to reduce tensions and cease to be a nation of contradictions? The choice is ours to make.

POLITICS AND INTERNAL CONFLICT

The Nigerian Political Scene

Nigeria's political history from 1960 to 2007 highlights the lack of a true Nigerian identity, a discredited political system based on patronage, weak institutions, poor policy formulation and implementation, an inability to properly tackle corruption, a stronghold on power by a small clique of ruling elites, intolerance of diversity and a culture of shrugging off the responsibility of nation building onto the ruling elite.

It is easy to argue that the colonialists carved up Africa the wrong way, without regard for tribe, religion or ethnic groups, thus creating countries that were potential boiling points. The entity that is Nigeria is a result of this 'carving' and so the potential for internal conflict exists. But then, Nigeria has existed for almost 100 years and has been independent for almost 50. Why then have we not been able to evolve a cohesive Nigerian identity? Why are we still a composition of ethnic nations to whom the Nigerian identity is expendable? Why do we identify first with our tribes and ethnic groups before we identify with the nation? Even within the carved out countries of the African continent, there are examples of countries that that have succeeded in living as one nation as opposed to an agglomeration of disparate tribes or ethnic groups.

Nigeria's first political parties were clearly representative of the three major ethnic groups in the country; the Northern People's Party (NPC) represented the interests of the predominantly Hausa/Fulani Northern Region, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) (later renamed *National Council of Nigerian Citizens*) represented the predominantly Igbo Eastern Region, and the Action Group (AG) dominated the Yoruba Western Region.

Although we now have political parties with so-called "national identities", the situation has not changed and every major ethnic group still demands to be part of the "federal character". It is quite troubling to see educated Nigerians from a region in the country campaigning for their region to produce the next president whether or not the candidate exists or has the right credentials. It is not strange to hear that the most qualified candidate in a state governorship election was not voted for because he was not an indigene of that state. This is perhaps one of the many negative results of a quota system that chooses ministers, ambassadors and other important political appointees based on states of origin as opposed to qualifications and character.

Censuses have become a bone of contention where each tribe and ethnic group fights to be the largest as this automatically translates into great political bargaining power. For example, during the 2006 census there was an exodus of people who lived in commercial centers like Lagos to their states of origin, disregarding the impact of low census figures on the infrastructure and economic development of where they lived and clearly showing that they favored development in their states of origin as opposed to their states of primary residence. Will we ever be able to truly live as Nigerians, favoring the country as a whole instead of our tribe or ethnic group?

Our institutions of governance have failed to produce leaders with the right qualities to serve the country. Once in a while an individual much like a superhero emerges, who fights the good fight but the fight is unsustainable because of the dearth of successors to carry on once their tenure in office expires. This has led to a situation where self-serving leaders who have had little or nothing to show for their time in office are constantly being recycled.

There also seems to be a deeply entrenched apathy on the part of the citizenry. Most Nigerians prefer to be represented instead of participating in the task of nation building. Leaders are rarely held accountable for their actions while in office and there is very little in the form of active political citizenry. Individuals with clearly poor performance records are repeatedly 'returned' to office. How else can the presence of ex-governors who had very poor performance records in the senate be explained?

Political godfatherism has put a stranglehold on the nation's political process. Individuals are "anointed" into office as opposed to being chosen by the people. The "anointed" are only accountable to the godfathers who put them in office thus allowing corruption to flourish.

Will these political godfathers continue to "anoint" successors without any regard for the wishes of the majority or will the citizenry decide to become a part of the political process and actively participate in the choice of our leaders?

Internal Conflict

Tensions in the Niger Delta have reached unacceptable levels and have started to have serious negative effects on the country as a whole. The economy is constantly suffering the effects of these tensions because of its heavy dependence on the oil and gas that is extracted from the region. The damage to infrastructure, especially electricity supply terminals and oil and gas pipelines, has caused power supply to become more erratic and epileptic. Investments and "doing business" indicators for

the region are at an all time low. Kidnappings and criminal activities in the region are more rampant and brazen, leading to unacceptably high loss of life and property, and contributing to an overall feeling of insecurity in the region. The revenue that could have been obtained from the huge tourism potential in the region continues to remain elusive.

The tensions in the Delta are not new and have been part of life in Nigeria for almost 5 decades. Would we be able to properly deal with their underlying causes to diffuse these tensions permanently instead of paying lip service or is another civil war in the cards?

It can be argued that one of the indirect results of these escalating tensions is a growing proliferation of ethnic based associations like the Movement for the Support of the State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Odu'a People's Congress (OPC) and the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), to name a few. These ethnic based associations have become veritable power-brokers in their respective sections of the country leading to further fragmentation of a nation crying for unity. Do we appreciate the implications and possible consequences of these growing developments? Or will the cries for secession and the protection of ethnic interests continue to grow and divide us as a people?

Finally, as if we needed any more barriers between us, there is the issue of religion. Religious tensions are always simmering and given the slightest push (sometimes even from external factors) they explode. How prepared are we to curtail this growing dangerous trend?

These issues must be addressed quickly. The nature of politics in the country has to change from one based on sentiment to one that is issues-based; we need to deal with corruption and the yoke of political godfatherism. The citizenry must demand accountability and punish or reward leaders based on their performance.

Across the continent there are many examples of once peaceful countries that failed to deal with or paid lip service to internal tensions until they turned into full scale civil war. The Nigerian worst case scenario paints a particularly disturbing picture should we ever allow situations and tensions to get out of hand.

THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY

All societies past and present have been largely influenced by the strength, size, structure and direction of their economy. The Nigerian economy and the way it has been managed (or mismanaged) will therefore play a big role in shaping the future of Nigeria.

To obtain a thorough understanding of our present economic “situation” a look at the path taken by the economy that was inherited post independence until the present time is necessary.

Independence to Post Civil War Period (1960 – 1970)

In the years following independence, the Nigeria economy was characterized by the dominance of exports and commercial activities. The industrial sector was yet to take off and agriculture was the mainstay of the economy, contributing about 65 per cent of GDP and representing almost 70 per cent of total exports. Agriculture provided the foreign exchange that was utilised in importing raw materials and capital goods.

The agricultural sector produced enough to feed the entire populace in addition to generating much needed revenue. The revenue was ploughed into developing basic infrastructure. The main thrust of policy at that time was to maximize the benefits of an export-led development strategy.

During this period, the rates of inflation, unemployment and productivity remained relatively acceptable. Increased productivity kept prices reasonably stable and the unemployment rate was relatively low at around 1.5 per cent.

As the country sank into the civil war in 1967, the economy became more characterized by the predominance of subsistence and commercial activities, a narrow disarticulated production base, a neglected informal sector; uneven development due in some part to the bias of public policies, an excessive dependence on external factor inputs, continuous siphoning of surpluses from the economy, and weak institutions.

Oil Booms and Busts (1970 – 1979)

Nigeria had discovered oil in commercial quantity in the mid-1950s and was slowly starting to become a part of the global oil and gas market. In 1973 the Arab oil embargo on the USA created a boom in the global energy market which brought in unprecedented amounts of revenue for the Federal Government.

This was to have an adverse effect mainly on the agricultural sector and it subsequently created serious structural problems for the economy as a whole. Nigeria’s economy became heavily dependent on oil exports. Oil revenues represented almost 90 per cent of foreign exchange earnings and about 85 per cent

of total exports. While the boom afforded the government much needed revenue, it also created serious structural problems in the economy. By 1974, the country had become a net importer of basic foods.

The Federal Government, already a player in the petroleum and mining sectors of the economy promulgated the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree and as a result became directly involved in banking, insurance, clearing and forwarding, among others. The argument at that time was that involvement in virtually all aspects of the economy was necessary for growth and development especially as foreign exchange seemed to no longer be a problem.

But there were problems. Primitive accumulation intensified, corruption, theft, outright looting of the government treasury and other fraudulent practices became the order of the day. It also led to the creation of a business class that depended solely on government contracts rather than on production. The gap between the rich and the poor widened considerably. Ad-hoc and ill-conceived government policies exacerbated the problem.

The exchange rate regime also encouraged excessive importation- from toothpicks to toothpaste dispensers. There was no serious attempt to invest the windfall from oil to upgrade the productive capacity and capability of the nation. Except for the expenditures on education and construction of dual carriage highways in some parts of the country, the country would have had nothing to show from the oil boom.

Declining oil revenues, disequilibrium in the balance of payments, growing unemployment, increasing rate of inflation and political instability, all confirmed that demand-induced policies were no longer effective. By 1978, a country which had thought that foreign exchange was not a constraint on development went borrowing on the Euro-dollar market.

Despite the oil boom, the private sector had remained weak and existing macroeconomic policies continued to encourage consumption rather than production, as the economy consumed much more than it produced. During this period GDP growth rate was so high that a growth rate of 10.5% in 1976 was considered unimpressive. Government expenditure fuelled the inflation rate, even reaching 23% between 1975 and 1976. Unemployment rate was between 2 and 4.3%. In 1971, the share of agriculture to GDP had stood at 48.23% but by 1977, it had declined to almost 21%. Agricultural exports, as a percentage of total exports, which was 20.7% in 1971, reduced to 5.71% in 1977.

The 2nd Republic & SAP Years, (1979 – 1999)

Between 1978 and 1986, except for 1979 and 1985 when GDP showed positive growth, the economy continued to register negative growth rates. There was also high inflation, high unemployment and fiscal imbalance. The stabilization and austerity measures of the Shehu Shagari regime (1979-83) did little to halt the deepening crisis.

The balance of payments did not improve and there was an increase in external loans which further exacerbated the debt over-hang. It was clear that the economy was suffering from stagnation. The country's industrial capacity utilization, which was 73.6% in 1981, declined consistently during the period such that by 1989, it was 31%. Manufacturing which grew at 14.6% in 1981 reduced to 3.2% in 1989. This poor performance occurred despite various stabilization policies of the 1980s. The structure of the economy made it vulnerable to external shocks and policies.

In 1986 the Babangida administration introduced the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), an era of “guided deregulation”. The package aimed at changing and realigning aggregate domestic expenditure and production patterns so as to minimize dependence on imports; enhance the non-oil export base, and bring the economy back onto the path of steady and balanced growth. In the financial sector it created a boom, but this boom did not lead to increased economic fortunes, instead it led to intensified speculative trading activities. The SAP failed to facilitate private sector development which would then serve as an engine of growth but sadly, after eight years of SAP what we had was deindustrialization, decaying infrastructure, high levels of unemployment and unstable prices. The share of manufacturing in GDP was still low, while capacity utilization was a little above 30%.

For the public, SAP meant a tightening of the belt and a smaller purse and increased prices without corresponding efficiency and productivity. The price hikes compounded problems for the industrial sector and the providers of social services. The increased prices paid by the average Nigerian further reduced already declining real wages.

After eight years of SAP, non-oil exports remained insignificant. The persistent depreciation of the Naira vis-à-vis other major currencies did not lead to exports. The instability in the exchange rate created uncertainty and fuelled inflation. The external balance remained in disarray while external debts mounted. The mismanagement of the foreign exchange market resulted in huge profits for the financial sector due largely in part to the wide differential between the official and the parallel market rates.

Manufacturers found it difficult to obtain foreign exchange for their imports and could not raise funds locally given the high cost of borrowing. Individuals with access became rich exploiting the gap between official and the parallel markets. This policy contributed to institutionalizing corruption in Nigeria.

The annual growth rates were 1.3% in 1994, 2.2% in 1995, 3.3% in 1996, 3.8% in 1997 and 2.4% in 1998. Given the estimated population growth rate of 2.83%, the GDP growth rate of 2.4% in 1998 was a decline in per capital income. Inflation rose from 57.0% in 1994 to 72.8% in 1995, though falling to 29% in 1996 and drastically to 8.5% in 1997.

During this period, of guided deregulation, despite efforts by government and the private sector to redress the situation, there was still high unemployment. The published unemployment rates were of 3.2 per cent in 1994, 3.8 per cent in 1996, 2.6 per cent in 1997 and 14 per cent in 1998. The general consensus among economists and various social commentators was that the rate of unemployment was far higher than the true ones published.

The pains were particularly unbearable for the populace. SAP which was intended to gradually restructure the economy and set it on the path to stability and sustainable growth unfortunately resulted in endemic inflation, shortage of foreign exchange, increased unemployment, the slow disappearance of a once vibrant middle class and an overall degeneration of the poverty situation.

In addition to the poor state of the economy, the pariah nation status that had been bestowed on the country by the international community because of persistent human rights abuses meant that the quality of life of the average Nigerian was at an all time low. Nigeria was ranked the second most corrupt nation in the world, (second only because Bangladesh ranked last had some missing information), the educational system at every level had become a shadow of its once glorious past, infrastructure and service delivery were at an all time low, insecurity was the order of the day and the giant that once was Nigeria had fallen.

The Reform Years (1999-2007)

Nigeria's economic performance in the two decades prior to the Obasanjo government's comprehensive economic reforms was generally poor. Over the period 1992 to 2002, annual GDP growth had averaged about 2.25%. With an estimated population growth of 2.80% per annum, this implied a continuing contraction of per capita GDP that had resulted in a deterioration of living standards for Nigerians. Inflation levels were high, averaging about 28.94% per annum over

the same period. By 1999 most of Nigeria's human development indicators were worse than, or comparable to, that of any other least developed country.

Economic Growth and CPI Inflation (1992-2002)

Selected Economic Indicators (1992 – 2006)

	1992-1998 (avg.)	1999-2001 (avg.)	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 (est.)
(Annual percentage change; unless otherwise specified)							
Real GDP (at 1990 factor cost)	1.8	3.5	1.4	10.9	6.1	6.2	5.1
Oil GDP	0.9	2.9	-11.6	26.5	3.5	2.6	-1.6
Non-oil GDP	2.4	3.8	8.0	4.4	7.4	8.2	8.2
Inflation rate (year-on-year)	39.3	10.4	12.2	21.8	10.0	11.6	12.2
Money supply (M2) (% change)	...	35.0	21.6	24.1	14.0	16.0	...
Exchange rate (IFEM/DAS) (N/US\$, average)	...	102.3	121.3	129.5	133.5	131.8	126.5
External reserves (US\$ billion)	3.6	8.4	7.7	7.5	17.0	28.3	46.5

Source: CBN, 2006b; Federal Ministry of Finance (Nigeria), and IMF (2001; 2003; 2005)

The economy was also highly volatile driven largely by external terms of trade shocks and the country's large reliance on oil export earnings. According to the

World Bank, Nigeria's economy ranked among the most volatile in the world for the period 1960 to 2000.

Public expenditures closely followed revenues, which meant that fluctuations in oil earnings were transferred directly into the domestic economy. These fluctuations in public expenditure reflected both the over-reliance on oil earnings and weak fiscal discipline by previous governments and tended to cause real exchange rate volatility.

The macroeconomic and structural reforms embarked upon focused on the following key areas; the macro economy, privatization, the Civil Service, the banking sector, trade policy, debt management, public procurement and expenditure, and corruption.

According to the government, the major objectives of the macroeconomic reforms were to stabilize the economy, improve budgetary planning and execution, and to provide a platform for sustained economic diversification and non-oil growth.

A first major hurdle was the need to de-link public expenditures from oil revenue earnings. An oil price-based fiscal rule was introduced and Government expenditure was based on a prudent oil price benchmark; thus ensuring that government expenditures were no longer tightly linked to oil revenue earnings thereby reducing the transmission of external shocks from a volatile international oil and gas market on the domestic economy.

There was a marked improvement in the government's fiscal balance, with the previous deficit of 3.5% of GDP in 2003 turning to consolidated surpluses of about 10% of GDP in 2004 and 11% of GDP in 2005. Adoption of the fiscal rule also resulted in significant public savings for the government. Gross excess crude savings totaled about \$6.35 billion at the end of 2004 and about \$17.68 billion by the end of 2005. Over the period 2003 to 2006, foreign reserves also increased by more than fivefold, from \$7.5 billion at the end of 2003 to about \$38 billion in July 2006.

The implementation of monetary policy was similarly fairly disciplined, with the central bank adhering to various monetary targets and reducing inflation. End-year inflation declined from 21.8% in 2003 to 10% in 2004 but increased slightly to 11.6% at the end of 2005. Similarly, interest rates, although relatively high, are gradually declining: prime lending rates have declined from about 21.3% at the end of 1999 to 17.6% at the end of 2005.

Finally, the adoption of the Wholesale Dutch Auction System facilitated the convergence of foreign exchange markets and the elimination of a previous parallel market premium.

The improved implementation of fiscal and monetary policies provided a stable macroeconomic environment, which led to an increased private sector participation in the domestic economy. In 2005, credit to the private sector grew by 30.8% to N2.01 trillion (US\$15.1 billion), exceeding the target growth rate of 22.5%. In addition, net credit to the federal government declined by 37% to N306.0 billion (US\$2.3 billion) compared with the target decline of 10.9%. The fall in lending to the federal government was attributed mainly to a decline in the central bank's holding of treasury securities.

Increased macroeconomic stability provided a platform for improved growth performance. Growth rates averaged about 7.1% annually for the period 2003 to 2006. More importantly, the strong growth rates were driven by high growth in the non-oil sectors, which was needed for employment creation. Growth in the non-oil sector for 2003, 2004, and 2005 were 4.4, 7.4, and 8.26%, respectively.

Progress in oil revenue management and implementation of monetary policy was complemented by improvements in debt management and the budget preparation process. Public debt declined substantially from about 74.8% of GDP in 2003 to about 14.2% in 2006, largely because of a successful agreement with the Paris Club. In 2004, Nigeria's stock of debt amounted to about \$46.6 billion, comprising \$35.9 billion of external debt and \$10.7 billion of domestic debt. After lengthy negotiations with its creditors Nigeria received a 60% debt write-off on its \$30.1 billion Paris club debt in return for a \$12.4 billion payment of arrears and buyback.

Large underperforming state-owned enterprises that had incurred repeated losses and required annual government transfers to remain operational were privatized and government activities in some sectors were deregulated to improve the efficiency of these enterprises, curb corruption, and reduce the financial costs to the federal government.

Between 1999 and 2006, 116 enterprises were privatized, including various loss-making government enterprises operating in industries such as aluminum, telecommunications, petrochemical, insurance, and hotel. Privatization has also been accompanied by deregulation of various economic sectors to encourage private sector participation, notably in telecommunications, power, and downstream petroleum sectors.

Government Support to state-owned enterprises in 2001

	Investment Grants	Operational Subsidy	TOTAL
(in millions of naira)			
Steel mills	1,711.4	1,040.0	2,751.4
Coal company	283.6	20.0	303.6
Oil refineries	6,998.0	599.6	7,597.6
Mines (solid minerals)	4,919.8	46.7	4,966.5
NEPA, power sector	3,858.4	431.1	4,289.5
Chemicals	504.0	5.0	509.0
Railways	283.6	595.1	878.7
Ports	500.0	218.9	718.9
Airports	1,625.6	629.9	2,255.5
Telecom	8,300.0	3,100.9	11,400.9
Sugar	506.0	6.0	512.0
TOTAL	29,490.4	6,693.2	36,183.6
Total GDP			5,339,000
as percent of GDP	0.55	0.13	0.68

Source: Office of the Accountant General of the Federation

An under skilled and poorly remunerated civil service was also targeted to improve service delivery. Government pay scales were reviewed upwards by 15% and various public sector benefits such as housing and cars were monetized and consolidated with basic salaries. A total of 35,700 officials were severed from the service at an estimated cost of about N26 billion, while 1,000 university graduates were recruited. In the process of restructuring, an estimated 8,000 ghost workers were expunged from the government payroll.

The Nigerian banking sector was weak and fragmented and was largely characterized by banks that financed short-term arbitrage opportunities, conducted limited lending to the private sector and predominantly engaged in the lucrative business of round tripping foreign exchange. In mid-2004 a bank consolidation exercise was launched reducing the number of deposit banks in Nigeria from 89 to 25 and attracting about \$652 million of FDI into the Nigerian banking sector.

Three significant pieces of legislation were also developed to strengthen the banking sector and its supervision. First, the CBN/BOFI Act Amendment Bill, to improve autonomy of the central bank in its monetary policy decisions; second, the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) Act, to establish a comprehensive framework

for addressing the case of private depositors who may be affected in the liquidation process; third, a new Microfinance Act seek to support development of the microfinance industry in Nigeria.

Finally, wide spread corruption, which had become a deterrent to economic growth was tackled to some extent at various levels.

The reforms of the Obasanjo-led government and the growth rates of the economy over his 8 years of government had a positive impact on the shape and direction of the Nigerian economy but nonetheless still present numerous challenges thus leaving the economy (like the nation) at crossroads. This poses some unanswered questions viz: How will the reforms, mainly executed at the federal level, be extended to the state and local government levels? Will we be able to focus on growing the non-oil sector of the economy? What plans are afoot to improve the domestic business climate? How will infrastructure investments be sustained, increased and maintained? Will we strengthen critical domestic economic institutions? How will we tackle the unrest in the Niger Delta to ensure that the oil and gas needed to grow and diversify the economy continues to flow without glitches? And finally, how will we increase the quality of social sector spending to affect the over 70% of the population that currently live below the poverty line.

In conclusion, the contradictions of our economy exist in the various directions it could take. According to a Goldman Sachs report on developing economies, the Nigerian economy has the potential to become the 20th largest economy in the world by 2025 and the 12th largest by 2050. On the other hand if it continues on its current trajectory, it could be the world's 167th largest economy by 2020. A nation where 75% of the people will live below the poverty line and 2% of the population would control 98% of its wealth.

OUR QUALITY OF LIFE and VALUES

Quality of Life

Our quality of life indicators read like the report card of a failed state. According to the latest United Nations Human Development Report, Nigeria falls into the low human development category. We are ranked 159th out of the 177 countries surveyed, one place below Rwanda and one above Guinea. Togo, our neighbor to the west is 10 places above us in 149th place, while Ghana is ranked in the medium development group in 136th place.

Human Development Index Rankings, 2006

LOW HUMAN DEVELOPMENT										
147	Togo	0.495	54.5	53.2	55 ^a	1,536 ^p	0.49	0.54	0.46	3
148	Djibouti	0.494	52.9	.. ^l	24	1,993 ^p	0.47	0.52	0.50	-13
149	Lesotho	0.494	35.2	82.2	66 ^a	2,619 ^p	0.17	0.77	0.54	-26
150	Yemen	0.492	61.1	.. ^l	55 ^a	879	0.60	0.51	0.36	18
151	Zimbabwe	0.491	36.6	.. ^l	52 ^{a,h}	2,065	0.19	0.77	0.51	-18
152	Kenya	0.491	47.5	73.6	60 ^a	1,140	0.37	0.69	0.41	7
153	Mauritania	0.486	53.1	51.2	46	1,940 ^p	0.47	0.49	0.49	-12
154	Haiti	0.482	52.0	.. ^l	.. ^v	1,892 ^{h,p}	0.45	0.50	0.49	-11
155	Gambia	0.479	56.1	.. ^l	50 ^a	1,991 ^p	0.52	0.42	0.50	-19
156	Senegal	0.460	56.0	39.3	38 ^a	1,713	0.52	0.39	0.47	-8
157	Eritrea	0.454	54.3	.. ^l	35	977 ^p	0.49	0.50	0.38	9
158	Rwanda	0.450	44.2	64.9	52	1,263 ^p	0.32	0.61	0.42	-5
159	Nigeria	0.448	43.4	.. ^l	55 ^a	1,154	0.31	0.63	0.41	-1

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 2006.

Over the last 30 years the population has grown at an average rate of 2.8%, a rate which for many years was higher than the growth rate of the economy. We have a large and rapidly growing income inequality gap, rapid urbanization, is coupled with very poor urban infrastructure, good housing is scarce, expensive and unaffordable to many, and we have a health service system that can be best described as inadequate. The educational system is admittedly flawed and is in need of serious overhauling, and since the civil war ended safety and security in our communities have drastically declined.

Table Showing Selected Data on Infrastructure

	Nigeria	South Africa	SSA	LIC	HIC
Electric power consumption kW per capita (2001)	82	3,793	456	317	8,421
Road-to-Population Ratio 1000km per million people (1995-2001)	1.1	8.5	2.6	—	—
Paved primary roads – percent of roads (1995-2001)	30.9	20.3	13.5	16	92.9
Telephone – Mainlines per 1000 people (2002) ^a	6	107	15	28	585
Access to sanitation – percent of population (2000)	54	87	54	43	—
Access to safe water – percent of population (2000)	62	86	58	76	—

Source: World Bank (World Development Indicators, various years)

The creators of the human development index state that the basic objective of development is to create an enabling environment in which people can enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. With the current trends, how long, healthy and creative will the life of the average Nigerian be over the next 20 years?

These statistics bring with them numerous challenges; it is estimated that 70% of the population live in poverty; over 60% of the population are under the age of 15. The growing income divide has meant that one of the major engines of growth and development in any society, the middle class, has all but disappeared. How does a country develop without a middle class? What happens when the teeming population of youth starts to grow restless and demand for its right to a quality of life that it sees in a rapidly modernizing outside world? How do we intend to meet one of our millennium development goals of halving poverty by 2015?

Values

Religion is everywhere in Nigeria; on our persons, on our cars, plastered on the walls of our houses, hanging in our offices, used in meetings, shown on the news, and present at social gatherings. One would be forgiven if you thought God had taken a nationality and was Nigerian.

A survey on religiosity carried out in 2004 on 65 countries across the globe; ranked Nigeria first. According to the BBC's report on the survey, 91% of Nigerians said they prayed regularly, believed in God and were willing to die for their belief.

If religion provides us with most of our values, morals and ethics, how, one might ask can we reconcile this high presence of religiosity with life as most of us know it in Nigeria? Our values have all but disappeared, many have little respect for the rule of law, we have a culture of impunity, and we hold others responsible for every ill but never ourselves.

It is not uncommon to see openly corrupt leaders being feted and celebrated. Bribery and corruption are as common on our expressways as the potholes that line them. We now have individuals with ill gotten wealth brazenly displaying their loot. These values are not in consonance with any religious tenets.

For many years Transparency International has ranked Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. No matter what the doubters say about our exact position, the truth is that corruption is pervasive in Nigeria at levels that are unacceptable to most societies. Corruption is eating away at the fabric of Nigerian

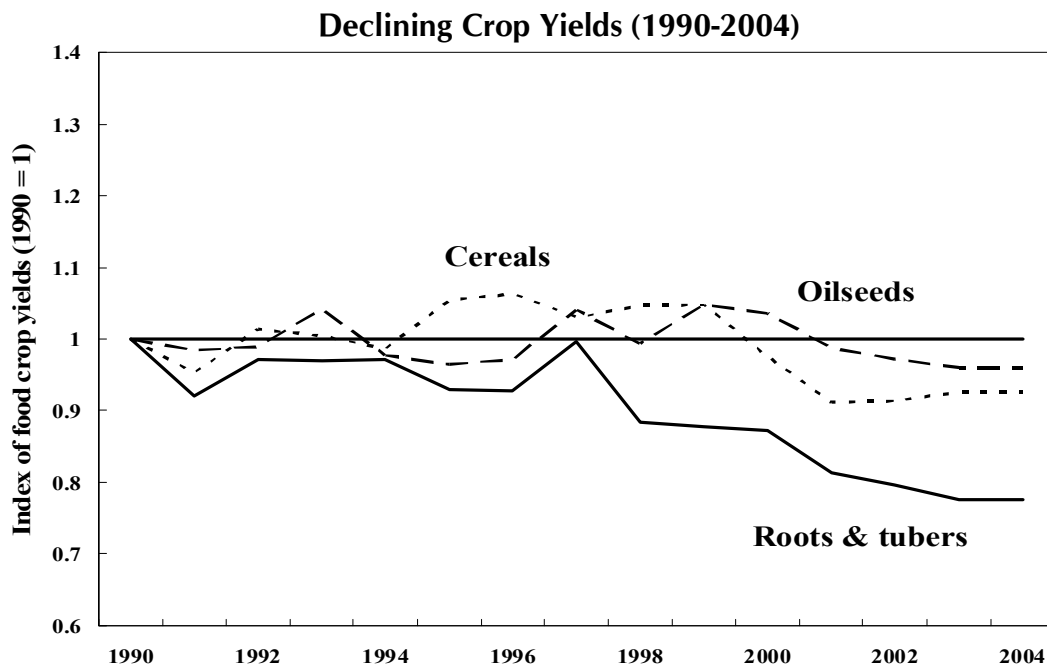
society; it has almost become an acceptable part of our lives. Will we be able to stop this cancer before it destroys us completely or will we continue to pay lip service to eradicating it?

It appears we have managed to create a hybrid of values that are neither European nor African and the challenge before us is to find a way to purge this hybrid out of our system and re-orientate ourselves with our old values and some of the necessary new ones that we need to be successful as a people. Are we up to this task?

OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The importance of our natural environment cannot be underplayed. For a largely resource based country this is where many of us eat from, where most of us are employed, and where some of the country's key battles for economic growth and economic diversification will be played out.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Nigerian populace but lack of sustainable agricultural policies has meant that the area of farmed land has increased all over the country but we are getting less crop yield. By and large, the farming methods and practices within the sector have not evolved beyond rain-fed, slash and burn, cutlass and hoe. Added value in the sector continues to be very limited and modern methods far and in between. The result is declining yield and land degradation.



Nigeria is richly blessed with an abundance of natural resources, but the passage of time and the inability to properly conserve and manage these resources has led to serious environmental degradation. There is deforestation in the East, desertification in the North and air water and soil pollution all over the country.

The environmental trends in Nigeria suggest a lack and an abuse of environmental standards and regulations, a case in point is the Niger Delta where conflict has been fueled by destruction of once rich and fertile land. There also seems to be a serious lack of understanding on the part of policy makers on how to properly conserve and turn the resource endowments into a blessing from the curse they seem to be at the moment.

The tensions in the Niger Delta escalated because of the effects of inefficient and environmentally unsound practices that were used to extract the resources in the region. The people of the region have lost their farmlands and waterways to pollution and, as a result, their means of livelihood while not benefiting from the oil drilled from their land.

What will happen if the environmental degradation in the Niger Delta is not brought under control? What implications will continued environmental degradation have for unrest and conflicts in the country? What if the international community decides to put an embargo on oil from a region that has been tainted by the blood and suffering of the people in the region? When will we start to implement sustainable resource management policies?

Our natural resources are endowments that will not last forever. The challenge before us therefore is to maximize their use without hindering the chances of future generations.

THE WORLD AROUND US

The rate of change in the world around us and the far reaching consequences of these changes present numerous challenges. Perhaps the ultimate test for Nigeria as a nation will be its ability to manage and influence events in the direction that is beneficial to its people.

Economic issues, like how we will respond to the challenges that arise as power shifts to the East may challenge our very existence as a viable corporate entity. China and India are quickly becoming global players and their demand for African resources is at unprecedented levels. How we ensure that they do not have a “hollowing out effect” i.e. take out all the useful resources from the country so that there is little or nothing for us to use is a critical issue. How also we ensure that the

relationship does not lead to the same impact like the last time outsiders came for resources is yet another matter to deeply ruminare over.

We continue to be heavily dependent on oil and gas for revenue while the global market for these commodities remains highly volatile. War in the Middle East, an increasing demand for a shift to renewable energy sources, terrorism and the growing call, especially in the US, to end dependency on oil from other nations, are all fueling investment in research and development of alternative forms of energy. In addition, new producers of oil and gas are emerging. How ready are we if an alternative competitive source of energy becomes available in the near future?

There is also the issue of free trade; the World Trade Organization is continuously pushing for free trade in which the developed world continues to be at an advantage. Can we defend our national interest in the global negotiations? How ready are Nigerian markets for goods and services that will come from more competitive and developed markets? Will our firms be able to innovate and compete in the global marketplace?

Political and religious tensions continue to be felt on the global stage and spillover effects of these tensions have been known to affect us in Nigeria. What preparations do we have in place to contain these tensions in the future?

Climate change is becoming a major factor the world over. According to the experts, Sub Saharan Africa will be the most adversely affected of all the regions of the world. What would happen if the inhabitants of the coastal cities of Lagos, Port Harcourt and Calabar were given 48 hours tsunami or hurricane warnings to evacuate the cities? What if the sea levels do rise in these areas? Are we prepared to deal with the potential impacts on our nation, especially in these low lying coastal cities?

Then there are regional issues like instability in the ECOWAS region, including recent wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire. The ongoing dislocations in the sub-region have created a generation of men and women that have intimately known war, with no job or hope for the future. Many of these young men and women constitute a ready reserve army for hire.

There is the need and desire for the region and the rest of Africa to become a trading bloc in order to be able to better compete against other regions. However, trade continues to be mostly with the West rather than neighboring countries. Nigeria, given its size, is expected to play a leadership role. Are we able and indeed ready to lead if we are unable to manage our affairs?

Conclusion

These have been the realities of Nigeria since independence. The future of Nigeria will depend on how we as a people are able to deal with these trends, tensions and contradictions. They present us a set of strategic challenges or driving forces that will shape our future as a nation. The next chapter presents the scenarios of the future which emerged from the analysis of these driving forces with assumptions on the actions and inactions of the key actors, we the people of Nigeria.

3

THE SCENARIOS:

“PARAMBULATOR”

SHINE YOUR EYE

JAGA JAGA REPUBLIC

WE DON WIN

SCENARIO 1: PARAMBULATOR

Nigeria in 2025

It is 2025 and Nigeria's statistics remain depressing: 250 million people, 8th most populous nation in the world, 75% of people live on under \$1 a day, the third largest number of poor people amongst the nations of the world, per capita income of \$400 is the fifth lowest on earth, the country ranks as the fifth worst place to live on earth, average life expectancy is 44 for men and 46 for women (the fourth worst figures of all nations). 60% of Nigerians do not have access to good drinking water, acceptable shelter, and good quality health care. Unemployment rate is 40%, literacy rate is the fifth lowest on earth, while the crime rate is among the top 6 countries in the world.

How did we get there?

Looking back to June 2007, the country had just emerged from contentious elections. It was apparent that the basic elements required to evolve a functional democracy were largely absent. The citizens had little confidence in the ability of the political class and the electoral institutions to deliver a democracy based on the aspirations of the people. The oversight functions of the various arms of government were undermined and consolidated under the control of the ruling party and the government in power.

Different segments of civil society began a series of strikes and stay-at-home civil disobedience to express their frustration with political processes and governance in the country. In order to address the crisis of credibility, the new government held extensive consultations with the different interest groups, the objective being to establish what was most important to the Nigerian people and then to set the country on a course directed at achieving the established objectives in a way that almost all Nigerians could identify with. It focused on three National Priorities and set out a plan to deliver them.

The government declared the **Niger Delta** a National Disaster Area and unfolded a N6.4 trillion, 15-year development master plan, to finally resolve the issue of marginalization in the oil rich region. At the same time, the government reorganized a military command responsible for security in the South-South and publicly identified the king-pins behind illegal bunkering and kidnapping. The marauders were rooted out within six months, arrested and prosecuted.

The second priority area for the new government was **electoral and law & order reforms**. It worked with the National Assembly, to strengthen the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the code of conduct bureau, the judiciary, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), The Police, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the National Assembly itself. The objective was to make these institutions independent, well funded and professionally managed, so as to develop public confidence in them and provide the much needed assurance of good governance and civic security to Nigerians.

The third National Priority involved **social infrastructure and quality of life**. The government set minimum National Standards for Quality of Life on Health, Education, Electricity Potable Water and Security (**HEEPS**). These minimum standards were approved by the Federal Executive Council, The National Council of State and ratified by the National Assembly for adoption by all the states and local governments in the federation.

The Government's dialogue with the business sector led to the adoption of a Social Business Compact wherein the government pledged to facilitate an enabling environment through fair corporate laws, reduction of bureaucracy, adoption of fiscal and monetary policies that encourage entrepreneurial activity and investment, in exchange for Corporate Social Responsibility and increasing investment.

The government began to publish a quarterly **National Quality Of Life League Table**, comparing actual results in all the states and the local governments, against the **National Minimum Standards**. The National League Table became particularly useful for accountability purposes as it set off all the funding applied to each **Quality of Life Index** by each of the three tiers of government, against the actual results achieved.

The Government presented a 7-year plan to ensure that at least 75% of its citizens had access to acceptable shelter. The Shelter Bank of Nigeria started a loan program to real estate developers and mortgage schemes by providing loans to qualifying employees priced at 5% per annum. Government target was to build 10 million houses over the 7 year period.

Over the next four years, interest, exchange and inflation rates were further stabilized and better managed. The more confident organized private sector became outspoken in support of the prudence and probity of the new government in managing the affairs of the country.

Some political godfathers, many of whom were instrumental in bringing the president to power, were frustrated at having to subject their bids for government contract to due process. They typically lost such bids to more competent companies. Tensions began to develop within the ruling party caucuses.

However, The National Assembly, the judiciary and all the law enforcement agencies were treated with respect, adequately funded and allowed to exercise their oversight function in a congenial environment. These newly empowered and professional law enforcement and security agencies began to perform their duties with neither fear nor favour.

At the onset, the average Nigerian loved the transparency, dedication and humility of the new government. A new mood of purposefulness and direction engulfed the nation. The national slogan became *Nigeria Na We Own, We go make am beta ooh*. Although people had heard this before, they felt that this government meant it.

In spite of intense pressure from the political god fathers, for whom things were no longer quite the same, the Government spent its first four years in office without compromising itself, largely fighting corruption and working for the people. There were reforms in all aspects of national life but the most difficult institutional reforms, which would involve loss of civil service jobs and removal of subsidies had not yet been carried out.

It was now time to seek re-election. The government's reformist manifesto was prudent, rational and strategically sound. The platform was simple: *"No Pains, No Gains"*. The government however had the political system to contend with.

Seeing themselves as being marginalized, the entrenched vested interests in the ruling party were bent on changing the Party's presidential candidate in 2011. However they did not succeed in manipulating the intra-party apparatus to choose a new candidate who would be more amenable to their manipulation. The president with his allies had the backing of the unions who mobilized the masses, and big business that provided the funding for his re-election bid. After a bitterly fought election, which was adjudged largely free and fair, the president was re-elected for another four years.

On May 29, 2011 the serving President was sworn in and from that day onwards, he was widely referred to as President/CEO because of the strong support he had from the organized private sector. The Team, as the president and his core advisers were called, saw to the commencement of a modern rail network across the country. Private companies were given incentives to run rail systems with cargo and passenger coaches. 30 year concessions were given for private companies to build toll roads and bridges under Build, Operate, and Transfer agreements (BOTs).

The expansion of power generation was encouraged. The global economy and emerging markets were constantly studied and monitored to facilitate the proactive management of the Nigerian economy. Gradually Nigeria began to hold its own against competition from Asia. The country's manufacturing base became better positioned to produce competitively and export to generate foreign exchange. Incentives included tax holidays and special export loans through the banking system.

The evolving enabling environment attracted a number of world-class companies to Nigeria. Also, Nigerian Conglomerates modernized their plants, expanded their capacities and started to focus on exporting. Nigerian companies began to export building materials like cement, iron rods, and nails. By 2014, foreign exchange earning from locally manufactured goods reached an all time high of \$10bn from under \$1bn in 2000.

Another measure introduced was a reduction in Company Income tax from 32% to 22%. Corporate Nigeria had argued that profit making should not be affected by high tax rate, but rather consumption should be taxed. A 10% Sales tax was introduced to make up the Government tax revenue which was targeted to contribute N3tn forming 35% of Government non oil revenue up from N880bn and 25% in 2006. The collection systems were overhauled and vastly enhanced. Sales tax was collected on a wide range of goods and services but excluded essential services like health.

The Tax Collection system actively enforced the payment of personal and corporate income tax by mandatory filing of personal tax returns by all adult citizens and residents in employment, and by all registered corporate entities operating in Nigeria. Tax evasion became a serious crime and to serve as a deterrent to potential tax evaders, the government thoroughly investigated and prosecuted a few high profile cases of non-compliance cutting across different strata of society.

The Team announced the composition of a Civil Service Reform Committee which soon announced the need to cut civil service personnel by 60%. The manpower needs of the public sector of Nigeria as an emerging global economic powerhouse were to be met by attracting the best brains from the universities and top flight qualified personnel from academia and the private sector from the middle to top level. The pay structure was upgraded to within the top 15% bracket of leading private sector organizations. By 2012, an unprecedented layoff exercise began in the civil service. Terminal benefits were however paid on time and re-training and self-employment programs were arranged for the affected personnel.

2014 to 2019

By 2014, Nigerians were forced to deal with the harsh realities of structural reforms. The civil service had been pruned of dead woods and the subsidies on petroleum products had been removed. Utilities worked, but the rates were high. There were limited opportunities to use electricity or water and not pay. Transportation was getting more modern, better organized and efficient, but also rather expensive. Education was free for primary and secondary schools, while preschool and university education were expensive and largely beyond the reach of the poor. University education was only possible for poor people who could get a scholarship because they were exceptionally brilliant or to those who were able to get access to student loans.

New factories were springing up, but wages were relatively low. And unemployment, even though, significantly lower than four years before, was still high at about 20%. A combination of improvements in extractive technologies and further breakthroughs in the quest for alternative sources of energy leads to a drop in global oil prices. Although life was on the average improving, Nigerians found themselves in a strange situation where they had to work harder, and to pay their way. They found it difficult to adjust.

Many people were out of work and the unions were unhappy about the various legislations, which the government had pushed through the National Assembly that made it easy for employers to hire and fire. But the labour and productivity ministry argued that people should take advantage of the various retraining and entrepreneurship/business-ownership incubation programs to qualify for the increasing vacancies in the highly skilled management cadres opening up, and the knowledge industry that was emerging. The government argued that mobility of labour was good for the economy, encouraged investment and made Nigerian businesses very competitive.

The Unions saw the government position as 'pro-big business' and a 'sell out'. In response they threatened not to support the ruling party in the forthcoming 2015 elections unless it reversed its "anti labour" policies, re-introduced some subsidies, and started to create a welfare system to cater for those who were finding it difficult to adapt to the new ways of doing things. Even though general elections were approaching, the government refused.

The old political guard within the ruling party and old contractors who were no longer able to get government patronage through the new competitive order were determined to win the 2015 elections. As far as they were concerned they had been marginalized for far too long. Government patronage was no longer forthcoming. All opportunities for rent seeking within the economy were being

blocked. They broke off and formed a new party fielding a flamboyant businessman as their presidential candidate. He promised to make Nigeria a modern market economy without any pains and promised free education at all levels, housing for all within eight years and a universal health-care program that would also be free. When asked how he was going to pay for all these programs, he replied rhetorically, that so long as Nigeria was exporting oil, chocolates, textiles, metal products, building materials and various services, money was not Nigeria's problem but spending it. He derided the ruling party as puritans and fundamentalists who, not having much joy in their own lives, did not want Nigerians to enjoy. He promised to bring back joy to the lives of Nigerians.

The ruling party ran on its pragmatic, reformist platform citing all the gains of the past eight years without trivializing the trauma of those that have had to lose their jobs, and of those who now had to work long hours to keep their homes and cars. The ruling party stated that it was a good thing that Nigerians were working harder and seeing not just the result of hard work but glimpses of a better tomorrow for themselves and their children.

The election was bitterly contested and the ruling party, now perceived to be serving the interests of big business, loses narrowly to the new party formed by its former cronies, which ran on a socialist and populist platform. The people's choice was to revert to Government handouts.

The new government was overjoyed at having wrested control of power from the progressives. The swearing-in ceremony of the new president was a jamboree. A one week public holiday was declared to allow Nigerians to celebrate the defeat of the "enemies of enjoyment" and to think about how to move the country forward. Every head of state in the world was invited to Abuja to be part of the celebration. 1000 BMW cars and 1000 Mercedes Benz cars were imported so that the high profile guests could be chauffeured around Abuja and have a favourable impression of the great nation (the cars were later sold at a healthy rebate to party loyalists and cronies of the government after the event). Pop stars from America, Europe and South Africa were flown in for a series of concerts. And the government imported millions of bags of rice and cans of cooking oil to be distributed to Nigerians in every local government so that no one was left out of the celebration.

Some of the first actions of the new government were to raise the minimum wage and reintroduce subsidies in the pricing of petroleum products and transportation, abolish tuition fees in all tertiary institutions and the introduction of unemployment and disability benefits for people who could not find work or were unable to work.

Entrance examinations into the civil service were reviewed to make them more *culturally sensitive*; a euphemism for lowering the standard of entry. A quota system

that put origin and connection ahead of qualification and competence was introduced to guide government appointments and selections; merit was sacrificed for political exigencies. The size of the new cabinet was over three times that of the outgoing government

Over time bribery and corruption started to escalate. The leadership cadres of the law enforcement agencies were progressively compromised or disillusioned. The era of fiscal indiscipline returned with the government awarding contracts to its cronies for white elephant projects designed solely to reward friends of the government.

The government began to consolidate power at the centre again. It also began to undermine the oversight functions of the judiciary and legislature. Statutory allocations were not disbursed on time to states controlled by opposition parties. Party members were appointed to head key institutions like INEC. Money supply widened significantly within the economy and there was some inflationary growth.

Still high oil prices plus additional revenue from solid minerals sustained the Government's subsidies and consumptive spending spree. The granting of special approvals to favoured persons to import items at zero duty began to undermine some industries like tyre makers, various processed foods, and textiles. During this period over 80% of the Government budget was for recurrent expenditure with less than 20% for capital projects. Infrastructure development was being neglected.

Power supply was at an all time low as generating plants decayed and were not maintained. Ration cards for power were soon introduced to be purchased by each household, which allowed 4 hours of power per day per household. The corporate sector was however expected to generate its own power supply completely.

Asian markets were growing in leaps and bounds and the Nigerian market is flooded with cheap goods from Asia, hampering the growth of local industry. Local manufacturing companies begin to fold up.

The United Kingdom (UK) continued with its Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI) and Highly Skilled Migrant Program (HSMP). Other western countries, recognizing the benefits for their nations' development, soon adopted similar programmes, which increased the number of skilled professionals who left Nigeria in search of 'greener pastures'.

Science and technology development was hampered by the dearth of intellectual knowledge in the nation coupled with the fact that the government did not place it among areas identified as priority for investment. Opportunities for long-term rewards via research and partnerships between industry and the academia were lost.

A growing incidence of contagious diseases consumed the nation as the health sector suffered. Polio, malaria and tuberculosis, once almost eradicated, made a comeback with strains resistant to conventional medication. This resulted in a health disaster of almost epidemic proportions with 700,000 children dying of malaria and 400,000 adults of tuberculosis within the space of a year. International travellers were warned about the health risks and advised against travel to Nigeria.

Come election 2019, the government threw all caution to the wind and blatantly made all Government agencies donate money to the party to finance the election campaign of the ruling party. Sharing bags of rice, cooking oil, clothing, radios, mobile phone handsets, and of course cash to ensure victory, the party manages to win the presidential elections (enough Nigerians were willing to sell their votes) with a slim majority in the upper and lower houses; about half of the Nation's 36 states were controlled by various opposition parties.

2019 to 2023

Upon being re-elected in 2019, the Government announced that the people will be taken care of as the Government was sensitive to the hardship faced by its citizens. One of the first things it addressed was to sell petroleum products at subsidized prices by importing products and selling through a chain of filling stations built by the president's daughter-in-law.

The government decided to see to the availability of affordable quality education by building one special secondary school in each local Government. Contracts were awarded to build these special schools that would be as well equipped as leading private secondary schools. Twenty choice local contractors were awarded the lucrative contracts valued at a whopping N1.4tr and 50% advance payments were made. In order to ensure that contractors moved to site and promptly executed the projects, the requirement to produce Advance Payment Guarantees from Banks was waived.

By December 2022, the government, to ensure that it won the 2023 elections in four months time again started importing major consumer items like rice, vegetable oil, salt, and sugar. This time, radio and TV sets were included. A program to distribute these across the country at very low prices was implemented by the ruling party even though the government funded the importation of these "essential commodities".

The opposition party at every stage of this government's wild spending and consumption party continued to present the dangers of destroying investor

confidence and Government's abandonment of its role. It cautioned that the long-term benefits of their well-crafted strategies over the 8 years they ruled (2007 to 2015) were being eroded. At this point, in spite of near \$100pb crude prices, the country's reserves of \$20 billion could only cover 10 months imports leading to fear of further devaluation of the Naira.

The opposition party that watched what it considered its eight-year success systematically eroded by the current government was determined to regain power. For the 2023 elections, it campaigned aggressively albeit with a smaller purse. The well laid out strategic plans and reminders of past successes was well received by the Nigerian people going by opinion polls.

However 2023 brought about elections that were flawed and heavily rigged. Voter turnout was the lowest in the nation's history bringing home the general apathy and disillusionment of the populace. The ruling party was however declared the landslide winner of the election. Protests and marches against the government became the order of the day. Security of lives and property was at an all time low as the police force rebelled against the populace and rented out their weapons to criminals. Law abiding Nigerians became terrified of going out after dark. Soon there were new pockets of growing violence in the Niger-Delta region, which were not nipped in the bud as the government was occupied with growing dissent in other areas. The government then accused 'foreign saboteurs' for inciting trouble in an area that had borne an uneasy calm over the years.

On June 10, the president died in a plane crash and opposition party leading members were immediately arrested as being behind an unsubstantiated claim that the crash was caused by a bomb plant. The situation decayed further until the nation was faced with the prospect of hurtling into a socio-political abyss. Civil society organizations then got together to promote the plight of Nigeria in the international arena, which snowballed into massive campaigns for immediate world attention to be focused on Nigeria.

International pressure from the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) resulted in the Senate declaring the immediate setting up of a Care Taker Government (CG) to which the rein of power was handed; the CG members were selected from the various parties and interest groups in the country. On October 1, 2023, the Care Taker Government was sworn in and tasked with the responsibility of building trust within the public and preparing a timeframe for organizing fresh elections to determine a new democratic leadership for the country.

The CG spent the next one year fire fighting various domestic issues and getting the key institutions ready for a credible election process. It also spearheaded a

programme of collating a database of Nigerians in Diaspora with a view to getting them involved in the process of getting Nigeria back on track.

On January 1, 2025, the Head of the Care Taker Government gave a sober New Year speech. He said:

" Let every man and woman ask himself two questions and give an honest answer. Can my country Nigeria join other countries who are matching steadily towards a more quality and prosperous life for their people? What are my contributions towards achieving this for Nigeria? It is 2025, our statistics remain depressing: 8th most populous nation in the world, 75% of our people live on under \$1 a day, we have the third largest number of poor people amongst the nations of the world, our per capita income of \$500 is the fifth lowest on earth, our country ranks as the fifth worst place to live on earth, our average life expectancy is 45 for men and 48 for women, the fourth worst figures of all nations. 60% of our people do not have access to good drinking water, acceptable shelter, and good quality healthcare. Our unemployment rate of 40% is in the top ten highest worldwide, our literacy rate is the fifth lowest on earth, while our crime rate is also in the top 6 on earth. Nigerians, we have been left behind in a world that has got better for almost every other nation. Our destiny is in our hands. The choice is ours.

SCENARIO 2: SHINE YOUR EYE

Nigeria in 2007: Stuck, and Searching

The fact is we are **stuck**. Life in Nigeria has been getting harder for decades. In 25 years, 52 million Nigerians joined the ranks of the poor so that by 2007, they numbered over 70 million people (over half of the population), up from 18 million (less than a third of the population) in 1980.

Our mothers, daughters and sisters have a one-in-ten chance of dying while giving birth; our babies are dying in their infancy because only a quarter of them have been vaccinated; just 60% of our children are enrolled in primary school, and on average, we couldn't expect to live much longer than a short 44 years.

Our roads and railways are in a terrible state, making it dangerous and expensive to travel within the country. Few of us could even remember what it was like to have an uninterrupted supply of electricity for more than a few hours each day.

Most of us are assaulted not only by worsening ignorance and malnutrition, but also by the murder and thuggery that has become part of our daily existence. Violent crime is used by some of our youth merely to survive, but by others to stay ahead of everyone. The results are deep, collective suffering and pain. It is a frontal attack on our trust in and compassion for each other and it threatens to tear apart the very fabric of our society.

Our leaders keep telling us how they are doing everything to improve our lives. The country is strewn with a veritable 'jollof' of initiatives, ideas, projects, schemes, programmes, interventions, strategies and blue prints: SAP, DFERRI, NDE, BLP, FEAP, FSP, PBN, PAP, PEP, IPRSP, NEEDS, SEEDS, LEEDS, WAI, OFN, Vision 2010, NESG, Green Revolution. The list is endless, but there is little to show for it. These mostly fruitless initiatives means that we are spending a lot of money and energy **spinning our wheels** trying to move but we remain stuck in the mire of our misery.

Our **self-confidence has been shattered**. Many Nigerians have replaced hope with despair and desperation. Thousands of our young graduates, in whom we have invested so much, have given up all hope of finding gainful work. Worse, many have neither the skills nor inclination to start businesses or create work for others.

Those who can, leave Nigeria taking with them their precious skills and energy. But most are left behind to face a life of joblessness and crime.

Millions of us were either unable or unwilling to register for the April 2007 elections. In addition, given the importance of the historical moment that it represented, our muted collective response to the manner in which the elections are conducted – so serious that it weakened our trust in ballot-driven democracy – seem like total surrender to fatalism.

We try to fill the void created by our lack of faith in political leaders by **searching for a saviour** who can save us from ourselves. We are desperate, vulnerable and gullible. The temptation to exchange our personal responsibility, liberty and freedom for the promise of some relief to our daily suffering is strong.

We are faced with a stark choice: Food or Freedom.

When we look at the world around us, we see the glaring example of the growing power and influence of a dynamic East Asia. Whereas we had started at roughly the same place in 1960, during the preceding half-century they have improved their living standards 34 times faster than us!¹ We wonder whether their success legitimised authoritarian rule. Have they made a better decision in trading democracy for prosperity? The problem is that our experience with a similar approach has produced very different results – repression, corruption, mass misery.

East Asia's success opens up a window of opportunity for us. China and India are hungry for the oil and minerals that we have in abundance, and for the huge market that our people represent for their factories and traders. We are a crucial part of their bold ambition to lift more hundreds of millions of their people out of poverty. Perhaps their rising tide can also lift our boat.

For the same reasons, we are very important to the West. As they acknowledge the competition for our attention and affection from the East, they are reconfiguring their stance and adopting a pragmatic posture to our shortcomings particularly in the areas of governance. They are showing signs of greater sensitivity, flexibility and even compliance to our priorities.

In 2007, a number of inescapable pressures have built up in Nigeria. An important one is the **demographic momentum** driven by the sheer weight of our numbers. After doubling during the preceding two and a half decades, our population is expected to further increase by at least 60 million more people over the next 25 years to over 200 million by 2030. Almost half of us are younger than 15 years (and are therefore dependent), and out of the two-fifths of us who live in the cities and towns, 80% lived in slums. This population explosion further generates a huge but

¹ *Will Africa ever get it right?* The Economist, April 28th, 2007. p. 14

unmet demand for schools (and teachers), hospitals (and health care workers), water and sanitation services, housing (land), security (police), power (generation), transport systems (roads).

At the same time, Nigeria appears to be going through a **spiritual awakening**. While this had been institutionalised in some northern states governed under Sharia law, Pentecostal revivalism is also surging and winning thousands of hearts, minds and wallets. The air is alive with rising religiosity and a 'merchandising of the anointing.' But this spiritual awakening seems to have no effect on our values. Crime and corruption are rife. We are a God-conscious but not God-fearing society.

In a nutshell, we are mired in a miserable existence from which we seemed unable to loose ourselves. Our self confidence was so shattered and the future seemed so bleak that we could not see the opportunities around us that could move us forward. We sought salvation.

This is a story of salvation delivered, but at a high price.

2008 – To the brink and back

It is early 2008. The country is sliding fast into chaos and anarchy since the Niger Delta situation had escalated into open armed conflict. The security forces decide on a show of overwhelming force to root out the insurgents. Live ammunition and heavy weapons replace the non-lethal rubber bullets and tear-gas. It is met with bullets, Molotov cocktails, stones and machetes. The result is an unmitigated disaster. Within a month, over 3,000 bodies litter the streets, creeks and waterways.

120 riot police are either dead or missing and hundreds more are badly injured. Many cities and towns in the five Delta states had been looted and selective night-time curfews are in force. There was an uneasy lull in the violence.

Human rights activists and students across the country, angered by the deaths of innocent citizens, swear to honour them by demonstrating. The security forces are equally enraged by the deaths of their brothers and vow revenge. The security services' assessment at the emergency Internal Security Estimate Committee (ISEC) meeting was, with hindsight, naïvely rosy. It is persuaded by its civilian members that they could calm the situation down and restore order in the affected States. They have recently been appointed and wanted to demonstrate their capabilities at resolving a major crisis.

There follow weeks of appeals for calm and negotiations between the labour unions, student leaders, security personnel, anti-riot battalions and senior

politicians. The President is kept closely briefed about these talks. He wants to understand the nature of the challenge to the legitimacy of his administration and how he might have to respond.

There is sharp disagreement at a final reconciliation meeting during which the withdrawal of federal security forces from the troubled areas was discussed. On grounds of public safety the security forces refused to withdraw their troops. In fact they wanted to pre-empt further escalation of violence to other parts of the country, by deploying more troops to the states. Students, labour unions and other civil liberties activists would have none of it. They vowed to return to the streets. Some openly declared their intention to join the insurgents. The battle lines are drawn.

The unrest and lawlessness resumed and escalated, resulting in a breakdown of public order that threatened the stability of the country. Oil production had fallen sharply for three weeks, and the increase in the oil price sent a clear signal that the global markets are becoming increasingly nervous about our situation. The Americans are relying on Nigeria's oil to boost the supply which was under threat from their restive South American neighbours. They are pressuring us to restore order and quietly hint that significant support would be forthcoming if we take decisive action. China's pressure is based on their worry that the higher oil price was dampening their international competitiveness. At the continental level we are, frankly, embarrassed by comments about our 'inevitable collapse into yet another failed African state.'

At a crucial ISEC meeting, the assessment is crystal clear: disorder is escalating in the Delta. Militant groups are mushrooming in other parts of the country bringing with them kidnappings and hostage-taking. The protests are becoming increasingly violent, driven in part by people releasing their frustrations with the elections, fuel and power crisis and anger at the toll of civilian deaths as the security forces respond. The ISEC recommendation was simple and direct: **stability has to be restored, maintained and guaranteed, at any cost.**

A State of Emergency, neutralising the insurgents

Following a long and heated debate (the civilians arguing strenuously against it), the President is persuaded to invoke section 305 (3), subsections (c) and (d) of the Constitution of Nigeria.² In the prevailing atmosphere of lawlessness in the country

² **305. (1)** Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the President may by instrument published in the Official Gazette of the Government of the Federation issue a Proclamation of a state of emergency in the Federation or any part thereof.

(3) The President shall have power to issue a Proclamation of a state of emergency only when -
(c) there is actual breakdown of public order and public safety in the Federation or any part thereof to such extent as to require extraordinary measures to restore peace and security;

the justification of the Proclamation to the people is obvious. In a special New Year address to the nation the President reminds Nigerians:

'...of the tremendous steps that had been taken in previous administrations to lay a good foundation for a strong and stable Nigeria as a major pillar of the African Renaissance. Sadly this foundation was under very serious threat from within. There was clear and incontrovertible evidence of a widespread conspiracy to undermine the emerging fruits of the many sacrifices that Nigerians had made to build this platform for take-off. This temporary measure is absolutely necessary to safeguard the Federation and its democratic institutions against these schemers who are seeking personal gain at the expense of Nigeria's patriotic sons and daughters.'

This speech marks the beginning of the gradual transformation of our country. The Delta region's State governors are quickly summoned to Abuja for emergency security consultations following which they are strongly advised to remain in the city for an indefinite period pending completion of the anti-insurgency operation.

The military campaign is swift, overwhelming and unrelenting. The niceties of assessing 'legitimate' claims and grievances are dismissed as tactics to slow the operations down. Gangsters, insurgents and some 'godfathers' feel the full force of the armed forces. The Americans came through on their promise to support decisive action: they stationed ships from US Navy's 2nd Fleet off the coast to block escape and munitions supply routes by sea. They also provide vital infra-red and satellite imaging support which help find and rout the insurgents more efficiently and with a minimal loss of men. Open combat with the armed insurgent groups in the Niger Delta is over within weeks. A general but uneasy calm had been restored in Nigeria.

During the campaign, leaders of insurgent groups, labour unions, student leaders, and other activists had been rounded up and their 'cooperation' with the security forces resulted in the 'uncovering' of an extensive network of conspirators. Over the next few months, more and more people are detained as we follow the linkages and connections. The information we used to identify our targets sometimes came from some surprising sources: their neighbours, workmates and occasionally even family members. In response to some complaints about the justification for some of the arrests and detentions, a series of tribunals are set up for swift public trials, convictions and capital punishment. Public expressions of doubt about the process disappeared after a number of complainants are also rounded up and detained.

(d) there is a clear and present danger of an actual breakdown of public order and public safety in the Federation or any part thereof requiring extraordinary measures to avert such danger;

Popular support from a grateful people...

Early support for these actions comes from the millions of Nigerians who are fed-up with the culture of god-fatherism, backhanders and exclusion. Ordinary businessmen and women who are unconnected to the system could hope that the playing field would be levelled. State Governors and assemblies take careful and grateful note of how quickly and effectively action from the Federal Government has diffused the growing chaos and restored order in the country. Technocrats and career civil servants who long for a meritocratic administration approve of the efficiency with which decisive action had achieved results. Millions of poor Nigerians, fearful that their country had been on the edge of disintegration, rekindle their hopes when the chaos ends.

A Federal Executive Council for the New Nigeria

Having restored order across the country, the next priority is to deliver a series of quick wins for the people. A competent team is needed urgently to deliver, through a radically restructured mechanism.

The President restructures the Federal Executive Council (FEC). Its size is reduced from nineteen to seven ministries. At its core, are four Mega-Ministries: **Domestic Production** (incorporating Agriculture, Commerce and Industry, Mines and Steel Development and Tourism); **Infrastructure Development** (incorporating Energy, Water Resources, Transport, Housing, Science and Technology), **Citizen's Welfare** (combining Education, Health, Labour, Women's Affairs and Youth Development) and **National Security** (combining Defence, Interior, Information and Communication and Justice). The Foreign Affairs, Finance and FCTA ministries are unchanged.

The incumbent Cabinet is dismissed and, in a first for the African continent, the new positions for Ministers and departmental Director-Generals are advertised nationally and internationally. The jobs are on a renewable contract basis with internationally competitive salary and benefits packages. Thousands of applications are submitted including several hundred from Nigerians in the diaspora. The large pool of highly competent and patriotic Nigerians both within and outside the country is impressive. Because of the transparent selection process, managed by an international head-hunting firm, the recommended candidates are passed by the Senate with little objection.

The Cabinet that emerges is powerful, competent and committed. It combines new faces and those with previous cabinet-level experience, people with a record of excellence and achievement in technical and management challenges and with an unshakeable passion for building a New Nigeria. They hit the ground running.

Keeping an “I” on You

The Ministry for National Security worked closely to complete the National Identification (ID) Program. Access to government services for all adults was tied to having the new national ID card. The tender for its upgrade and implementation is won by an India-based firm, based primarily on their undertaking to use Nigerian partners and to train local teachers to carry out the data capture (digital photography, finger-printing and electronic signatures).

By the end of 2010, the new ID system is a central tool for planning, resourcing and delivering the country's Citizens Welfare initiatives and services. It becomes mandatory to present the ID card to register children for schooling and access public and private health services. Over time the ID card became essential for financial transactions, obtaining loans and micro-credit, school attendance and hospital care and a requirement for both internal and international travel, in addition to a passport. The ease with which they can be obtained makes it more likely that they are obtained just to avoid personal inconvenience. Of course it is also an excellent mechanism for us to enhance our surveillance capabilities.

Periodic dialogues with the religious and ethnic leaders focus on Citizens Welfare issues. They responded positively to our request for their support at mobilising their people behind our programs. Labour union leaders are also invited to Abuja regularly for “briefings” by the Domestic Production Ministry. The official message is clear: the Federal government will provide the physical infrastructure to lower the cost of production and export of Nigerian primary and manufactured goods. Union leaders are expected to guarantee a disciplined workforce. Unauthorised strike action will be considered hostile and be dealt with the requisite severity.

Early successes: Healthy babies, better roads, power for the people.

By 2011 things have started to turn around. The Citizen's Welfare Ministry's National Living Standards Survey (NLSS 2009) shows infant mortality rates falling from 101 to 90 per 1,000 live births. Maternal mortality figures have dropped from 800 to 500 per 100,000 in the decade since 2000. The share of home deliveries has dropped by 30%. All modest improvements, yes, but proof that movement was finally in the right direction.

The bold ‘Promise to the Nigerian Child Programme’ announced in 2009, focused on keeping mothers and children alive and healthy showed that simple implementation and tight supervision could have a huge impact on health

outcomes. Salaries for health workers are increased modestly and ante-natal and delivery fees in state and federal health centres are waived, all paid for by the savings from reduced foreign travel and expenses by federal officials. The Niger Delta receives special attention in the implementation of the Promise programme.

The 400-kilometre Lagos-Benin Expressway, long a death-way and haven for armed gangsters, is another area of early focus. Local construction companies and private contractors are directed by the Ministry of Infrastructure Development to submit joint proposals for its rehabilitation. Labour-intensive approaches are favoured and existing regulations of cost and minimum quality standards are strictly enforced by the Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FERMA). The project is completed in record time, creates 800,000 man-hours of new jobs and sets a new standard and model for road maintenance across the country.

Taking comfort from the robust oil price and a calm Niger Delta, the invitation in January 2009 to international firms to tender for contracts to build, operate and transfer seven, modern 2,000MW power plants and related transmission lines in the country receive such an enthusiastic response from South African, European, Chinese and Indian players that some very good deals are negotiated, ensuring that power tariffs did not increase when the power came online on January 1, 2011.

A new generation of Nigerians, born in 2007, could look forward to a better future.

“Wai Two” - Excising the Corruption Cancer

In March 2009 the intelligence services investigations prove that a Director-General had colluded with a foreign firm to rig one of the seven power plant contracts. That contract is cancelled and the foreign firm expelled despite loud protests, diplomatic manoeuvres and thinly-veiled threats of retaliation from its home government. The Nigerian senior official and his network of accomplices within and outside the government are arrested and charged as economic saboteurs. The evidence against them gathered from intercepted emails, phone calls and bank accounts is comprehensive. Following a swift public trial, a conviction was secured and the sentence – execution - carried out immediately.

The zero-tolerance message is now crystal clear – Corruption Don Do! Until that point, the public face of our anti-corruption strategy has been less aggressive. The Ministry of National Security had reorganised the police force by replacing senior officers who lack enthusiasm about discipline with younger energetic officers, increasing salaries across the whole force and providing them with modern communications and transport facilities. However, it is not enough. Fed by years of greed, ignorance and indifference, overall levels of indiscipline and corruption in

the country remained intolerably high. The Director-General's trial, conviction and execution is the opening shot in the War Against Ignorance and Indiscipline (WAI).

Building on the positive popular response all Nigerians are invited to help root out this cancer. A Citizens' Reporting System (CRS) is established, working with the mobile telecommunications firms, all of whom place great value in operating in Nigeria. Digital photos, videos and SMS can be sent via the millions of mobile phones in Nigeria. Nigerians respond enthusiastically by sending over 3 million images, text and sound recordings of corruption and criminal activities to the Federal CRS database in the first three months.

Special WAI tribunals are granted full powers to investigate, prosecute, judge and sentence corruption cases and they are uncompromising. The first swift convictions and punishment of several previously untouchable godfathers and their protégés demonstrate the seriousness of the administration's resolve to win the war on corruption. It was not necessary to prosecute, convict and punish all reported perpetrators to have a noticeable reduction in indiscipline within a fairly short time, which proved that the new system had a strong deterrent effect.

By the 2011 elections, Nigeria felt different as a result of the decisive actions that had been taken. The Niger Delta was calm, social indicators are improving and power cuts are becoming less frequent. Citing these achievements, the incumbent is re-elected with a large majority. The opposition tried to distract the people with complaints about the 'repression' used to restore calm in the country, 'threats' to the labour unions and 'intrusive' war on corruption. Worried that their message could begin to resonate, efforts are redoubled to contain it.

2011-2015: The Consolidation Term Agenda

It is evident that consolidating, entrenching and building upon the successes to 2011 needed continuity, time and further concentration of executive and fiscal power at the centre. Plans for the Consolidation Term Campaign start soon after the 2011 elections with proposals for constitutional amendments. Two major changes are proposed; a) to secure greater Federal control over State and local government authority (LGA) finances, and b) to remove term limits.

Knowing that these proposals will face tough opposition, a two-pronged plan is executed. The first is a massive, nation-wide public awareness campaign – 'Naija don Beta!' - to remind Nigerians of recent achievements, and the need to intensify the momentum for even better results. The second is a deployment of the Citizens Reporting System and the network of informants that had emerged during the 2007 State of Emergency to keep dissenting governors, senators and representatives on a

very short leash. The implicit threat is simple: support the amendments or face the WALL tribunals. Where incriminating evidence is lacking, frequent detention and release 'pending investigation' often had the desired effect - acquiescence.

Constitutional reform also carries a few other things with it. Employers cannot take on degree or diploma holders without valid NYSC certificates. NYSC is prolonged to eighteen months, 6 months of which consisted paramilitary training at designated military run camps. There are no exemptions.

The Consolidation Term Campaign gathers support, especially among the huge cohort of young Nigerians who are experiencing the strange new feeling that that tomorrow can be better than yesterday. The elections management technology purchased from Results Solutions Inc. is deployed in the 2015 general elections. Compulsory internet-enabled registration and voting ensure a well-run election and successful outcome for the Consolidation Agenda.

Public spending is reduced in part by limiting international official travel and significantly reducing incidental expenses. Returns for travel expense advances are expected within 48 hours of conclusion of business or they are simply deducted from monthly salaries. Civil servants are no longer allowed to send their children to school or college overseas and they take vacations at their own expense.

2015-2019: Continuity

Dissenting elements have begun to air their disgruntled voices. An Agricultural Workers Union demonstration against supposedly poor working conditions at a foreign-owned plantation and food processing plant was swiftly quelled. It is unfortunate that 17 of the striking workers suffered fatal burns when three of the new Ray-Gun vans usually deployed for riot-control malfunctioned. Self-styled activists continue to call our response 'excessive and heavy-handed.'

Despite the increasing international concerns about green house gasses and global warming since 2007, pressure from India and China, with our support, ensured that the Kyoto II emissions targets agreed in 2013 are kept very modest. Fossil fuels remain the most important source of energy in the world, and strong demand from the Asian economies has resulted in a robust global oil price.

A decade (2009-2019) of rehabilitation, re-tooling and re-skilling restores competitiveness to our manufacturing sector which is now founded on the steel, cement and textile industries. Nigeria is now the largest market for West Africa's raw cotton, which it transforms into fabric, and garments for the global markets.

Years of large and stable oil and gas revenues are used to finance infrastructure upgrading and social spending. By 2019, the country's economic growth rate has been maintained at a minimum of 10% for over eight consecutive years. Nigeria's sovereign credit-rating is significantly enhanced which attracts larger portfolio and foreign direct investment flows. The annual income of the average Nigerian has risen threefold to \$1,700 by 2019 from \$560 in 2005. Life expectancy increased to 55 years from 44 in 2007.

2019-2024: The Graduation of the Niners

The nationwide live holocaust³ of the 1st Graduation of the Niners in June 2020 is attended by almost 10 million people in the thousands of ExperiCentres⁴ scattered around the country. Five million 18-year olds graduate simultaneously during the holocaust, receiving their LifeSkills Certificates on their personal computing and identification devices (PCIDs) from the Ministry for Citizen Welfare's server.

Ten years earlier the Ministry had launched the new nine-year curriculum to replace an outdated approach to equipping Nigeria's children with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the 21st Century. Every single nine-year old is now automatically enrolled in one of our 33,000 Federal LifeSkills ExperiCentres (formerly known as 'schools'), some of which are converted Unity Schools. Parents choose whether their children attended physically or virtually from home or a nearby ExperiCentre. Children spend a minimum of five full hours of interactive contact with their instructors and peers every weekday. The LifeSkills software does not allow anyone to log-off until the 5 hour minimum time was completed. Early log-off or failure to log on by 10am each morning results in an automatic deduction of one day's pay from the either one of the parent's bank accounts.

Within three months of graduation, 56% of the new graduates have already secured employment, some with the Federal and state governments, most with the local and international private firms. Many of the remaining graduates go on with their Third Level training, much of it from local and international universities, delivered via the high-speed fibre-optic cable that linked Nigeria to the world in 2012. Some graduates are trying their hand at self-employment which had become very attractive due to the availability of affordable bank loans and an almost hassle-free physical infrastructure.

³ The broadcast of three-dimensional holographic images, which do not require screens as the images appear suspended in air.

⁴ Multi-purpose, multimedia community centres housing theatre facilities for holocausts, internet access, LifeSkills Centres (formerly known as 'schools')

The graduation ceremony coincides with the redemption of the last of the three 200 billion Naira LifeSkills Bonds floated nationally and on the international markets to pay the Indian company which developed, installed and maintained this system for us.

The execution of that propagandist was holo-cast a day earlier. Ironically, he was executed under the new Enemy of the People Act – the very law he had dared to condemn in his underground weblog. Our capability to track each and every device on which his weblog was viewed helps neutralise the outlawed ‘Nigerians Awake’ network of ‘civil rights’ activists.

2024: Extreme Secularism

In 2020, Nigeria’s population is approaching the 180 million mark. Because of the tremendous investment over two decades to improve social service quality and delivery, people’s expectations are high and threaten to outpace the government’s ability to deliver. The cost of providing good quality education and health services for all young Nigerians are putting tremendous pressure on the physical and financial resources. Ironically, we are becoming victims of our own success. The combination of a rising population and rising expectations is unsustainable and needs a bold solution.

The Family Size Limitation Act of 2021 was simply put: “no more than two children are to be born per family. In the event that the 3rd child is born, all costs related to raising that child and the other two are to be borne entirely by the family”. The cost of doing this within the country where previously these things had been relatively free is prohibitive.

The strength of the people’s opposition to the FSLA comes as a complete surprise. The FSLA is branded as un-Nigerian, un-African and ungodly. The opposition from the spiritual leaders has been underestimated. In 2022, and despite efforts to both justify the Act on economic grounds and intimidate the religious leaders who are against it, opposition deepens and spreads across the country. Indeed, the major faiths formed a united front against it: the Crescent and Cross Alliance for Real Democracy (CARD). With their slogan, ‘A Free Life, is a Beta Life’ they have gathered a massive following across the country, especially among the new class of Niners.

In a pre-emptive move, all public expressions of organised worship are banned in the government’s Secular Nigeria Decree. Faith is strictly a private matter between an individual and their god. It is illegal to hold fellowships, prayer meetings, prayers after death for anyone without a special government license which was rarely

provided. Religious Knowledge is removed from the LifeSkills curriculum. People can read their Bibles and Korans at home, but they could not preach or pray or teach on them in public.

The opposition to the Act is undiminished and resistance becomes sophisticated. Since 2022, the intelligence network has weakened and it becoming almost impossible to recruit trustworthy new members. The resolve of the security forces to enforce the Secular Nigeria Decree is waning. The National Security Ministry reports that the increasing incidents of cyber-sabotage is jeopardising their ability to guarantee national security. The crash of the Citizen Monitoring System for an entire month in January 2023, on which dissidents are monitored, was a major blow to the government's total control of the country.

For almost two decades, Nigerians have traded their personal freedom for a strong and stable economy, a halving of poverty levels and greatly improved social services. By 2025, 'salvation' has come to Nigeria.

But was it worth the price?

SCENARIO 3: JAGA JAGA REPUBLIC

Nigeria in 2025

The Escape: My world is spinning, I have not eaten properly in 7 days; we have been feeding on grass and dead animals. We are on our way to a refugee camp. Only God knows if we would get there alive. Our feet are sore from walking, any sound makes us retreat in fear; our hearts are heavy and ready to burst. Yesterday, I saw people being massacred right in front of me; heads chopped off with machetes. My body is covered with other people's blood. We have seen mass graves and burnt bodies littering the streets, dead bodies feasted on by flies and vultures. Some of the people with us lost limbs; some kidnapped and forced to either join the militants or work in mines and oilfields. Victims and witnesses of rape tell their stories of woe. The lady next to me told how she ran into a religious house but the gun battle that ensued led her to run for dear life. My home area had turned into a war zone with ethnic and religious cleansing. A friend's family was burnt alive in their house. How will I cope? My former life seems like a distant dream, my family members have all disappeared. I can't find my wife.... I don't even know if she is alive.... The whole nation seems to be engulfed in a bloody war. It is complete mayhem. How on earth could those young people afford the bazookas, AK47's and sophisticated weapons? Who exactly is sponsoring them? No one is safe!

At camp: *I don't know how long we can survive in this refugee camp with disease rife and skeletal body frames due to food shortages. People are dying everyday. We hear Nigeria's problems destabilised the whole ECOWAS region, the countries still standing together with the international community are holding the 25th emergency meeting in Ghana to find a solution to Nigeria's crisis. Once the Giant of Sub-Saharan Africa; no one could have envisaged that we would, one day, become the parasites of Africa; a country only in name!*

How we got there.

The "God Dey" Culture ... Declining Economy: 2007 - 2011

The 2007 elections were massively rigged and adjudged unfair by local and international observers. The previous government retained power with an overwhelming majority (state governments, National assembly etc). Nevertheless,

within weeks of the flawed elections, major world players congratulated the newly “elected government” giving their tacit approval. To the disappointment of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Nigerians, the international community was well represented at the inauguration ceremonies. With no one wanting to stir the hornets’ nest, and the masses unwilling to protest and hoping that “God will one day straighten things out.” Political leaders (elders/elite) appealed to all, arguing that Nigeria’s democracy was nascent and should be allowed to bloom. Such appeals and the usual political compromises among the political elite calmed down most people and weakened the base from which a possible CSO protest action should have emerged. With the ever-present “God-dey” culture, people began to place their hopes in the present administration as a result of its promises to reform the electoral process and improve the living conditions of the Nigerian people.

The new government inherited reforms but also a lot of liabilities /problems. Increase in prices of domestic petroleum products, rising food prices, ASUU strike, multitude of strikes by trade unions and CSOs, the sale of government assets to cronies with emergent monopolies, increase in VAT, the dearth of SME industries, political prisoners, the draconian crackdown against political opponents, almost comatose electricity supply, socio-economic decay and increased poverty. Those who had expected a reversal of the damning policies were disheartened as this never happened.

Hoping that the Niger Delta problem will be resolved with a tokenist strategy, the FG appointed more ministers from that area amidst accusations from other ethnic groups. The government also appointed women to some ministerial positions, but there were no real efforts to ingrain gender sensitivity in government policies. The disabled were ignored. Some groups in the North made strong calls to the Federal Government to provide support on joint venture (JV) basis for international oil companies to explore and develop the oil findings in Bauchi, Chad and Benue basin.

Seeds of discontent remained with feelings of exclusion among other minorities groups. The desire for self-determination by different sections was festering

In the first few months of the new administration, there were vigorous campaigns to reform the electoral process, to make the electricity problem a thing of the past, and to generally strengthen and institutionalise the reform agenda of the past administration; extend its reach to impact on the common man and pay more than lip service to “war against corruption”. While making bold statements, the government however did not have any blueprint on how it planned to fulfil its promises; the governments’ sponsors and lobbyists also would not allow them deliver; as a result, its reform efforts were not strong enough to leapfrog the nation from poverty.

Lack of transparency continued and became the order of the day. Anyone who dared to raise their voice or throw temper tantrums against malpractices was in danger, with few judges who gave contrary rulings either being picked up by the Financial Crimes and Sabotage Commission (FCSC) for fraud and embezzlement and others disappearing for cover after receiving death threats from faceless persons. It was rumoured that because the ruling party had retained power, the previous actors were still very much in control. But in a way, our God-dey attitude held us together.

The West watched keenly but quietly on the side, preferring not to “interfere in the internal affairs of Nigeria”. China however aggressively supported the government for which they are rewarded with some oil blocs, the continued “start & stop” development of our railways and the new oil – the solid minerals sector.

Institutions continued to weaken and the federal government became a toothless bulldog with power concentrated in the hands of a few. The civil service was full of square pegs in round holes, and technocrats, who were seemingly well educated with international pedigree, were unable to curb the excesses of public servants. Internal security became very poor and the rule of law was a farce.

Subsequently, the anti-corruption agencies were accused of large-scale corruption. There was complete impunity; corruption continued unabated, an accepted means of survival for all from the top, middle and bottom. The police no longer demanded at least N20 but N100 on the streets! Looters and thieves continued to receive chieftaincy titles and merit awards; the wrongdoers became our role models.

The Nigerian economy was still dependent on oil as 95% of national revenue; although fallen from the peak of 2006, oil prices remained in the lower \$60s. The gas project had also slowed down because of threats to expatriates and the petroleum companies from the Niger Delta militants, including armed robbers. There were little efforts towards real diversification of the economy. Revenue from privatisation and external reserves were frittered away through corruption and mismanagement. In the international arena, advances continued to be made in the area of alternative energy source, but no serious breakthrough was developed. Meanwhile, wood continued to be the major source of energy for domestic heating and cooking, which gave rise to desertification even in the rain forest belt of the country.

In the wake of 2009, electricity supply dwindled even further with the average generation hovering at 900megawatts for the entire country. Although, four electricity stations had been commissioned in 2007, because of the inability to decisively deal with the Niger Delta problems, gas supply was cut off to the

electricity stations, thereby rendering the newly installed electricity stations useless. Power supply became worse than ever as water levels reduced with each passing year as a result of climate change - drought

The gap between the rich and the poor widened, less than 10% of the population lived in opulence while more than 90% lived a “wowo life” well below the poverty level. There were no access to basic needs e.g. quality food, primary and secondary health care and education. Diseases were rife. Malaria continued to be the largest killer of Nigerians. Infectious and multiple drug resistant diseases such as Tuberculosis, meningitis and HIV/AIDS spread, waterborne diseases, and kwashiorkor increased. Polio in the North increased since their governments due to religious reasons questioned the effectiveness and motivation for vaccination. “Wowo Life” indeed stirred even more people in their faces.

In the continental arena, Nigeria continued to play its “big brother role, taking the fore in the Darfur issues, and the war in Somalia and Sudan, but its clout was diminishing in the face of its internal problems.

Discontent and the feelings of exclusion among minorities groups heightened because the administration could not deliver on its reform agenda (electricity, access to quality water, low quality education etc). Hope was lost. Unhappy people blamed the government and were also quick to attribute their misfortunes to other ethnic groups. This attitude permeated to everyday life, extended to neighbours, the marketplace, and even to schools. Ethnic distrust intensified, while the masses increasingly sought solace in the arms of religion.

A poll conducted by the CSO on the leadership and state of the nation unequivocally returned, “God Dey” as the most popular response.

By 2011, Nigeria remained among the poorest countries in the world, despite its human potentials and vast natural resources. The reasons were not far fetched: corruption, theft, poor leadership, lack of overall initiative and very weak institutions. The situation was compounded by the state governments who made it impossible for the FGN to implement sound economic reforms because of the strong hold they had in their individual states. This made it almost impossible for any national concern to be adequately addressed. The states only succeeded in squandering their statutory allocation to their own advantage and without accountability.

The Baba-Na-Chop Syndrome 2011 – 2015

Leading to the 2011 elections, with the government yet to make any visible reform in the electoral process which it promised at its inauguration, CSOs called for improvements in the electoral process. Opposition parties on the other hand called for scrapping of the electoral Commission. The incumbent government appointed new Commissioners and Chairperson. The “new” Commission prepared for the upcoming elections with huge budgets of billions of Naira to purchase new computers and other materials. The “revamped” commission proved to be as irresponsible as its predecessors and other government agencies.

There were major campaigns by different groups to get people registered and to educate them on the importance of voting. The opposition vowed to protect their votes by arranging armed (vigilante) gangs to help their cause. Also, dissatisfied with the government’s dismal performance, having failed on even the smallest promise and the previous blatant election riggings, the opposition parties planned mass protestations in all major cities, but the police, backed by the Federal Government, refused to grant permissions for any mass protest to take place. Ethnic sentiments and feelings of mistrust among the populace discouraged people from voting for anyone who is not a member of their religion or ethnic group.

The 2011 elections took place, but were plagued by worse irregularities than the 2007 elections; indeed they were a “fight to finish” affair with the government claiming, “*God was a member of their party*”. The elections were characterized by political apathy, fear, low voter turnout, and loss of lives. Many known fraudsters (419ners) and drug dealers were voted into the national assembly. The incumbent government retained power to the chagrin of the masses.

As Nigeria slowly moved towards a one-party state, the populace despaired at the worsening quality of life. Since the masses never actually elected the politicians, they never saw any reasons why they should be answerable to them. The only place the administration seemed to be thriving was wasting money on sponsored media campaigns. The vulnerable groups (women, youths, disabled) were excluded in decision-making. Strategic engagement of the CSOs and other state actors in policy formulation was lacking completely.

Due to lack of transparency in the previous privatisation processes, monopolies thrived; with an upsurge in prices of goods and services. Prices of fuel, kerosene, and diesel skyrocketed beyond the reach of the average Nigerian. The petroleum sector remained largely controlled by a tiny but powerful clique – Nigerian elite, Chinese, Europeans and Americans.

The service sectors of finance, telecom and some portion of mining were positioned purely for “extraction”. The mining sector remained largely under-developed. Technological transfer or improvements were absent and agricultural activities were at an all time low, such that basic food importation from other countries, South Africa, Europe and America increased significantly.

Population growth continued. With increased migration from the rural to the urban areas, especially Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Kano, Aba, Onitsha. The fast growing, urbanizing population overstretched the already poor and inadequate infrastructure. Slums increased in cities. There were no plans to improve public utilities. The railway project to connect cities and states, which would have improved both human and commodities transportation, was abandoned. Nigerians basically lived in darkness as electricity generation depleted to less than 800 Megawatts from lack of maintenance and low investment. Water became available only from gutters and personal boreholes. With industries groaning under heavy fuel and other costs, SME manufacturers preceded to shut down operations. Unemployment grew by 45%. VAT increased to 20% in line with World Bank recommendations aggravating poverty even further. Due to the low indigenous manufacturing capacity, Chinese imports monopolised the Nigeria market. Cheaper but low quality goods became available as “China towns” sprang up in every nook and cranny of different States especially the capital cities.

The “republic” was stuck in the ‘Baba-Na-Chop’ syndrome. It remained a situation of your worth being measured by the balance in your Swiss account, as well as palatial homes. Nigeria witnessed increase in grossly dishonest people in positions of influence/leadership who perpetuated corruption but hide under the guise of godliness (religion).

Education remained in shambles, unfocused and of low quality. The impact of such poor education was that mostly ignorant half-baked people were being churned out into the society. Entrepreneurship was not encouraged and there was mass exodus of skilled Nigerians to other countries of the world. Unemployment soared. Schools shut and opened sporadically, as demoralized and underpaid teachers (at primary, secondary and tertiary levels) protested the below subsistence level salaries and increasingly poor and dangerous working conditions, they met with suppression. To make ends meet they resorted to immorality and corruption sometimes demanding gifts and sexual favours from their students as prerequisite to passing examinations. The teeming unemployed disconnected from society turned to the world of crime & violence, believing their only means of survival were pick pocketing, armed robbery, rape and car jacking. Criminal gang activity, fear and insecurity increased without the policing capacity to protect the masses.

Environmental degradation increased and continued unchecked; oil pollution in the Niger Delta, desertification in the North, gully erosion in the Southeast. Climate change also impacted heavily on Nigeria: temperatures soared, heat wave increased, dug wells and boreholes were drying up, even rivers like the Benue and Niger diminished drastically, some parts of the seabed along coastal cities eroded, leading to devastations in economies of Lagos, Port-Harcourt and other coastal cities. Cholera and other diseases spread, food production further declined, malnutrition increased.

In a bid to find answers to their problems, people increasingly turned to religion. Unscrupulous religious leaders proceeded to take advantage of followers for economic benefits while fuelling intolerance by encouraging followers to cut-off from people (even family members) who were not “one of the brethren”, part of their faith. Many village chieftains, in concert with ethnic leaders were falling out with government, promoting distrust and advocating their ethnic groups, accusing those in power of marginalisation. Nepotism and division became a tool and way out of under-development. Communities were killing each other for land and sabotaging means of livelihood like razing other people’s farmlands to the ground. Murmurings and the noises of more self-determination were heard around where small groups gathered to discuss the sad state of the nation, and how the officials were sponsoring campaigns about their goodwill and hard work to divert attention from accusations of stealing and under-development.

The report in The Nigerian Post said, “Spirituality advocates tolerance, and religiosity does not. In light of what’s happening in our nation do we really know God?”

After 8 years the Nigeria administration had become headless chickens, Goldman Sachs and the NIC released its newest research paper in 2015 announcing that Nigeria was no longer in the list of the 11 emerging economies as they had forecasted in 2005. All hopes were lost. Due to lack of infrastructure and an enabling environment, the financial sector that was rapidly growing witnessed a downturn and therefore unable to serve as a catalyst for economic development. The economy continued to decline worsening the quality of life for Nigerians. Support from beneficiaries of the government sustained the leadership, oil-blocs and bogus contracts were readily allocated to the sponsors. However, their activities were not substantial enough to diversify the economy, improve the infrastructure base or improve access to basic

The Nigerian Post wrote, “I have never seen such a cruel country as this, in other countries of the world, the elite, at least, provide basic needs but in Nigeria, the elite have a healthy contempt for the masses....”

needs. Nigerians remained angry and impoverished while the elite (though divided) remained in control.

The future is bleak –Chop and Quench 2015 – 2019

The 2015 elections witnessed military tankers all over the streets to curb any protest or grievances. The electoral commission declared that the ruling party won 97% of the votes. Voter turn out was at its lowest. However, there was fractionalisation and dissent from within the party, most became dissatisfied and no longer supported the government's ideals. They were no longer in good terms with the incoming president who they saw as a betrayer (would no longer listen to them). He had also become power hungry, dictatorial and accumulated powers including taking control of the running of the party machinery. The disgruntled elites and opposition resorted to using all tools in their arsenal including religious and ethnic sentiments to stir up unrest. Many began sponsoring damaging media campaigns and their own gangs to wreak havoc on the other, including sabotage, assassinations and property destruction.

Nigerians became tired of being told to pray for a better future. Our Naira lost its value it; the exchange rate became ₦10000 to \$1. Many people parked their cars because they could not afford fuel. Many had to steal to feed or maintain their lifestyles. Schools were closed most of the time due to inability to resolve disputes with teachers and their unions. The populace had reached breaking point. Crime and general insecurity of the nation increased to a new level, with area boys and regional vigilantes oppressing people and short-changing them in return for protection. The new rallying cry for those seeking change became *'those who made peaceful change impossible had made violent change inevitable'*.

In the bid to try and solve the problems of resource control and revenue allocation (given calls from the south-south for increase in the revenue sharing formula), the south-south states got 50% of total expenditure with the other states left to share the rest of the 50%, they resisted this change, calling it "an injustice". Northern governors argued that the FG had neglected development of their own natural resources and that the action was tantamount to entrenching poverty. The western States on the other hand argued that they contributed more of Nigeria's non-oil revenue and should be entitled to more allocation. But as the allocations were in fact going into the governor's and their cronies purses the FG became radical in its approach and held on to some State revenues insisting on clearance and certification of use of allocation by the Auditor General's Office before release of monthly allocation. Some of the States tried to procure external loans, however, most became bankrupt and dragged the FG to court. These sustained the hostilities

amongst the elite. The FG teased that at least they were building up financial reserves. Governance at all levels collapsed. Fighting took new and more serious dimensions. The State of the nation was very bleak. Repression of opposing voices continued and some opposition voices began a slow emigration process.

The administration proclaimed its readiness to help improve the conditions of the common man, therefore its earnings (95% of which was still from oil), was to be effectively utilised to provide basic needs. “Value for money” became the new catch phrase for government. To check corruption in the Oil & Gas sector and improve revenue coming to the government coffers, the President made himself the sole Minister for Petroleum.

The “no nonsense” President announced that given the 2007 fiscal responsibility bill, any Governor guilty of inflating contracts or milking the state’s treasury dry would not only be jailed but executed. In true authoritarian style and without recourse to the National Assembly and in utter disregard for the constitution, some governors were ambushed, arrested, thrown in jail and executed. The masses cheered and urged the President on. The Courts were silent. Opposing judges and lawyers were run out of town. Noises from CSO groups were not loud enough to be heard, media houses were shut down, the international community and organisations not condemning or endorsing the action, said they were anxious about the state of the nation and would continue to review things. The elite, who had not taken the President’s statement seriously, began to think of overthrowing the “madman in power” who had chosen to bite the fingers that fed him. The President’s reaction was swift and more heavyweights were arrested, thrown into jail and executed; top military officials included. The President and his cronies were now in a battle for supremacy. Those who could escape went to other countries where they had palatial houses, citing human rights violations/offences as reasons for seeking asylum. Behind the scenes they vowed to ensure the tyrant had no peace and intensified the sponsoring of religious riots through some religious leaders who were given mouth-watering amounts of money to help fire up their followers and make Nigeria ungovernable until the President was ready to negotiate.

Increasingly, those at the helm of affairs were divided among themselves given selfish interests, and the quest for power. All efforts to address the Nigerian situation failed.

Unrest increased all over Nigeria, environmental degradation and poverty continued. Businesses were grounded due to the fightings and curfews imposed. Meanwhile on the external scene, Nigeria’s efforts in regional conflicts resolution were ignored, its voice no longer heard. Internally, there was strife. The infrastructure in big cities had completely collapsed; even Abuja had become a

slum. The China towns were abandoned. International and local crime skyrocketed and the youths including the sponsored militia were angrier and hostage-taking rose to another level. Subsequent events could only have been imagined.

Pipeline vandalizations and general insecurity in transporting petroleum products crippled supply within the nation, and created food shortages and hardships. Everyday living became a nightmare. Expatriate kidnappings had started years ago to draw attention to the plight of the Niger-Delta. It had already escalated to extortionist criminal gangs demanding ransoms. The trend unfortunately ascended to bloodthirsty militants ready to end the lives of their captives, generally they hated anyone not from their land especially the expatriates they christened “gold-diggers”.

The country became more deeply divided along ethnic and religious lines. Within the North, South, East and West all were tired of one another. Sensitive areas like the Niger Delta exploded as the militants become more intractable by the “Special Niger Delta Force” created by government to maintain calm in the region. Micro wars became amplified as desire for self-determination grew among many groups. Conflicts were fuelled by political jobbers who continued to misinform their people to create the chaos that only benefited them for the supply of ammunition to the different warring groups and provide good bunkering opportunities. Crime increased and sponsored militia targeted top politicians in power starting from Aso Rock. The action caused retaliation from other ethnic groups. The center moved fast to try and quickly execute perceived leaders of militants. However, calls for cessation became rife as warlords called for break-up. Anarchy became the order of the day. Internal tensions increased within different groups with some supporting the “Nigeria” project and militants pushing for break-up.

Fanatism fuelled the crisis; emergent Islamic and Christian militants were ready to die for their beliefs. Some of the uprisings were attributed to persistent strife in the Middle East, Al-Qaeda gaining new recruits. The traditionalists were not left out as innocent bystanders; they also took up arms to fight for their own. The assaults sent a new wave of fear through the whole nation, people were butchered for being unable to speak certain languages, recite prayers (depending on which group accosted them), for looking or dressing a certain way, houses were burnt, and multi-ethnic families started breaking apart. Non-indigenes that fled to their original States met religious and ethnic cleansing in their villages. Many partook freely in this warfare that had an initial political outlook, but now degenerated to ethnic and religious warfare. The violence caused tens of thousands of deaths within a short space of time.

In tackling Ethnicity the questioned posed was, “What happened to UNITY IN DIVERSITY? Have Nigerians lost their thinking hats? Lost their way?”

One of the damning incidences that draw the wrath of the west was a situation where the militants had somehow gained access into Exxon Mobil and Shell's official residences, killed and kidnapped many people from different nationalities demanding money. They later publicized a media broadcast that all petroleum companies must leave Nigeria within 48 hours - a condition that was non-negotiable or all hostages would be executed. The kidnapped hostages were tortured and raped. All foreign embassies issued circulars that all their nationals leave Nigeria immediately, their websites and high commissions advised that anyone insisting on staying would be doing so at his/her own risk. They evacuated their nationals. Later, given that the Nigerian government was unable to contain the situation, foreign armies invaded the Niger-Delta area, first to secure the release of the hostages and safeguard what was left of their investment. Nigeria's revenue nose-dived as oil and gas activities came to almost a complete halt.

More elites fled the country to join their families abroad. The centre became wobbly and Nigeria ungovernable. Oil resources were exploited, without remittance to the federal government. Gangs proliferated, exploited and sold oil directly. Organized oil companies had pulled out their staff and abandoned the country; in their place the American, European and Chinese multinationals/governments imported mercenaries, sponsored and supported certain factions in the Niger-Delta to protect their crude oil extraction (build up their reserves and sell internationally). They may not be able to stand in the way of Nigeria falling apart, but they were not compromising; they would at least continue to reap benefits from the country's vast petroleum resources.

Nigeria's dream of becoming a 1st world and a solid member of the G20 became an illusion. The instability in Nigeria created anxiety in the ECOWAS region. FDI flew out of Nigeria and most organised oil companies shifted to calmer areas like Angola. The UN talked about the Nigerian crisis. The European Commission met to decide how the problems might be solved. America too watched from its Sao Tome Base and made small noises about how Nigeria could not be allowed to become a failed State. They all introduced new measures to tighten entry and control their borders to restrain Nigerians immigrating into their countries.

The Movement for the actualisation of the sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB), Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Pan-Yoruba socio-political organisation (AFENIFERE) who had joined forces to fight the government (initially seen as a common enemy), were now fighting for self-determination and to protect their own ethnic nations.

Approaching 2019 a bloody military coup took place, but did little to salvage the chaotic situation. The military also factionalised along ethnic and religious lines,

only succeeded in taming and controlling a small section of Nigeria. Federalism was shattered. Nigeria had become a decapitated republic with the different layers of self-governments operating like headless chickens. All that remained was a country in name. Millions fled their homes. Since Nigeria was the biggest economy of the ECOWAS, its instability led to problems in other ECOWAS countries, most of whom, closed their borders and turned back refugees.

All hope is lost - 2019 – 2025

Marginalisation, jailed journalists, lack of an effective media, inactive civil society, poverty, ignorance, an unenlightened citizenry, enmity amongst the elite, misuse of influence and loss of nationalism drove us to a state of no return, a state where Nigeria shattered.

Rumours, myths, ignorance, hostility and stereotypes contributed to the negative attitude towards other ethnic groups. Radio messages circulating the airwaves contained the deafening cries of war. The years of fighting, coupled with the flight of most businesses, disrupted economic activity. Millions of Nigerians were displaced from their homes. Nigeria's oil continued to be extracted without remittance to the national purse and largely controlled by a powerful clique. The various warlords had renamed their settlements (Republic of Arewa, Biafra, Oduduwa etc) and were refusing to negotiate or compromise to end the battle.

Nigeria's standing in the international community was eroded. In Africa it had become a giant without muscle, Chad invaded Borno for the Chad Basin and Cameroon for more parts of Cross River to add to the Bakassi Peninsula. The nation was impoverished. The intractable widespread micro wars and deafening calls of self-determination ensured the centre remained weak and in disarray. Nowhere was safe! Nigerians now felt like actors in a Nollywood horror movie. Majority had lost everything due to this senseless war. Nigerians realized too late that the choices they had made in the past had caused their homelessness and now refugee status was all they could immediately expect. They hoped that one-day, very soon, they could go back home, to calm, to a united and better Nigeria, a land that was rich in human and mineral resources.

While our thoughts are about escaping the mayhem, foreigners are extracting our oil for free... "Blood Oil"

A myriad of socio-economic and political power struggle, had initiated Nigeria's crisis. The docility of the masses had encouraged oppression, poor leadership, lack of transparency, corruption, looting of the treasury, and socio-economic decay, which

The question on every Nigerian's lips, " Can we ever recover what we lost? Will Nigeria ever become one country again?"

frittered away our resources leading to frail institutions, religiosity and ethnicity, and the loss of national identity, which crippled our nation.

Economic and political power captured by a small clique weakened unity amongst the elite (in or out of government), their fuelling of the masses dissatisfaction resulted in a chaotic society, and ultimately, the disintegration of the Nigerian State. The war in Nigeria did not start as a populist uprising, the powerbrokers engineered it, unfortunately even though they had nothing to gain by bringing the nation down, their strategies-gone-wrong led to the undesirable outcome, where the masses ignorantly helped to destroy the nation. 2025 and Nigeria remained a country only in Name! The dire situation the country finds itself was put succinctly by a *live broadcast from the Radio on the Hill Palace, Ghana on 20 January 2025: Special Focus on Nigeria: Alex Duru reporting:*

Today, marks the beginning of the 25th ECOWAS head of states and government Emergency Meeting on Nigeria in Ghana, the purpose is to discuss the state that the once acclaimed pride of sub-Saharan Africa now finds itself. The crisis in Nigeria started years ago. Driven by corruption, poor leadership and complacency of the citizenry, the giant is now shattered. Our coverage on Lagos last week, revealed that, the most vibrant city in Nigeria and at one time "one of the fastest growing cities" in the world, is now full of hungry people dressed in rags carrying machine guns and machetes seeking their next prey. In Kano, another major commercial centre, men were dressed in long white robes with amulets hung on their necks and small sharp daggers to protect them in the micro, ethnic and religious wars. Earlier this year, thousands of student protesters, including women and children attacked ASO Rock, killing thousands of soldiers, children and civilians. No one could have imagined that women and children could take on a soldier let alone kill him. The nearby military headquarters and prison yard were set ablaze. Civilians turned bandits freed all the prisoners. This was the case in most of the 36 states. Many of its citizens fled the cities/villages seeking refuge in camps set up by Medicins Sans Frontiers in neighbouring countries, northerners fled to Niger, Lagosians to Cotonou, people from the Niger Delta to Sao Tome. People are being massacred on a daily basis; there is complete break down of law and order. The atmosphere is that of lawlessness and utter mayhem.

Can Nigeria become a nation again? How can the warring factions be reconciled? How did the international community stand aside and watch the collapse of this giant over decades. From where I stand, I see the then President of Nigeria alighting from his car. At least he heeded the call by other heads of State to attend this meeting. Observers from EU and America are also attending some of the sessions, but not the closed-door sessions, for ECOWAS members only. We hear that the European Union plans to discuss the Nigerian State at an emergency meeting in a

fortnight. I see some pro-democracy activists who had fled Nigeria over the past 5 years huddled in a corner discussing. Will they be part of this meeting?

We shall keep you informed on the goings on as we get more information.

SCENARIO 4: WE DON WIN

The Context

The year is 2025 and a 16 year Nigerian student is making a Statement at the Annual Meeting of the African Development Bank. Her statement is about the **Nigerian Success Story** which is being touted as an outstanding example of how a fragile state can evolve into a successful middle income country with the right development approach. She is telling the story of how Nigeria moved from a developing country and a pariah state to one of the top twenty economies in the world and into the top thirty countries of the transparency international index.

The gathering of diplomats and technocrats is inspired by Nigeria's remarkable success over the past 20 years. Now a model for African democracy (decidedly different from the Western version but fitting for the polytheistic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual countries of the Sub-Saharan), Nigeria in 2025 can now credibly lead an international effort on the challenges for social and economic development in the developing world. Nigeria has become a politically stable middle income country, the largest economy in Africa (having surpassed South Africa in 2019) and a member of the G20. Nigeria has met the MDGs, though a few years later than hoped. With a population of 185 million, the growth rate has slowed to 1.8% from 2.3%. Per capita income, though an irrelevant measure in the past, is now \$1500, from \$560 in 2006, but in 2025 reflects a higher state of income distribution as oil revenues have helped transform the economy making the services sector the largest contributor to GDP at over 50%.

In 2025, looking forward, there are still challenges ahead. However, a dedicated investment in institutional reform, education and economic diversification as well as a credible process for political transition makes Nigeria well-positioned to handle the obstacles ahead.

Our young student tells the interesting story of how we got here.

2007 – 2011: BOLD ACTION HELPS BUILD POLITICAL CREDIBILITY

Amidst international and local criticism of the credibility and transparency of the election process, a new President and Governors were sworn in in May 2007. After the swearing in, there was a public outcry about the credibility of the administration and the lack of progress towards prosecuting corrupt ex-leaders who were no longer immune. This was in spite of the media's publication of some hard facts about the corrupt practices of ex-senior government officials including some ex-Governors between 1999 and 2007. In response a group of young military officers in early 2008 attempted a coup whilst the President and key cabinet ministers were on an official visit overseas. Instantaneously, there was a spontaneous public outcry of outrage and spurred on by the media, civil society and religious leaders, Nigerians within a few hours rallied around a 'never again/we shall not return' agenda – spontaneously pouring out in droves in mass demonstrations in streets across the country. Emboldened by the intensity of the public outcry, the old guard in the military quickly stepped in and successfully curtailed the coup attempt within 48 hours.

Quick strike reforms demonstrate courage and vision

On his triumphant return to Nigeria, the President thanked Nigerians for their stand against the coup. Recognizing the need to demonstrate both courage and vision to this newly emboldened citizenry, the President announced three bold initiatives around battling corruption and empowering Nigerians through improved access to and quality of education. He pledged that:

- a) All investigations of political figures would be expedited and completed within 90 days and those found guilty prosecuted.
- b) By 2010 the police service would be corruption free.
- c) By 2010, literacy would improve significantly, through an initiative that would ensure every school-going child got one full meal daily.

Nigerians were sceptical about these announcements adopting a “wait and see” attitude while foreign development finance institutions called them “too ambitious”. The President however moved swiftly from talk to action.

The Police ‘Force’ was immediately renamed the Police ‘Service’ and by July 2008 top echelons of the police service had been investigated and the criminal elements removed in a public display of due process. A well-regarded reformist was put at the head of the police service. A bold restructuring plan for the police service was

launched which involved a hike in salaries, comprehensive training, incentives for good performance and community policing programs. Also by July 2008 three ex-

Governors and 15 senior government officials had been imprisoned although their appeals were pending. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) was seen to be independent and objective in follow up with the big fish examples of the perceived “sacred cows”. These actions, demonstrative of the government’s political will to fight corruption and make the tough calls appeased the electorate. Trust and confidence slowly began to be restored in the system as the rule of law appeared to be taking root.

All ruling party States signed up to the ‘Feed and Read’ programme and the Federal Government introduced a matching grant scheme which facilitated the buy-in of non-ruling party States. League tables were introduced and published to track state progress towards this agenda. Civil society could then monitor state development closely. And the common man and woman began demanding action from the local government authorities (LGAs). A sense of accountability began to develop at the grassroots level.

INEC reforms to prepare for 2011

Building on the success of the anti-coup demonstrations, the civil society feeling empowered challenged the incumbent party to put in place systems that would facilitate free and fair elections. The media were particularly vocal, telling the President ‘*This is Your Chance to Gain Real Credibility*’. Following the problems of the 2007 elections, the new National Assembly initiated an investigation into INEC which led to a restructuring of the organization and new lines of reporting. The restructured institution began to put in place the necessary structures for the 2011 elections – in line with what was approved in 2006 but not delivered. Civil Society embarked on deepening democracy initiatives which focused on educating Nigerians on their role in the election process. The ruling party initiated a process of ‘good election practices’ where candidates that failed to adhere to the political and economic mandates of the party could not be selected in the primaries. This forced the other parties to reassess their positions and practices prior to 2011 and then they followed suit with the implementation of similar programs. The impact was a reasonable turn out of the electorate and the impact – the 2011 elections is a vast improvement on 2007.

A New Mindset Is Emerging; Moral And Value Orientation Take Centre Stage

As success became apparent in some important areas giving credence to Nigeria's capability to change, diverse advocates of change emerged at individual, business, civil society, community and professional levels. Religious leaders, building on this wave, rallied together under the umbrella of a new organization "National Association of a New Nigeria" NANN, calling and mobilising for national moral and value orientation and active citizenry, as a fundamental approach to sustainable national development.

By December 2008, NANN's influential religious leaders (both Christian and Muslim) had developed a code of conduct and ethics that was adopted, kicking off a re-orientation process in churches and mosques. The Federal Government capitalized on this, adopting the code and under a collaborative programme with civil society organizations (CSOs), expanded it to address citizenship and patriotism. Civil society partnered with government at all levels to sensitise the public through public awareness campaigns and capacity building for national value orientation. By September 2009 the new "civic studies" was introduced and into the school curriculum at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

In villages, schools, markets, farms, offices and all across the country people began to bring this new sense of citizenry to bear in their daily lives, carrying it as a badge of honour. Importantly, children heartily embraced the new code of conduct. This began to set the stage for a new generation of leadership.

A group of 5 young students from the University of Ibadan, as their own change project, put together a television show "I spy", dedicated to exposing corruption at all levels in daily Nigerian life. Later syndicated and adapted for radio and the internet, it became the most popular programme on media all across Nigeria and the diaspora. With the ubiquity of camera mobile phones and other capturing devices and contributions coming from all and sundry, the fear of being caught and exposed publicly on "I spy" became greater than the fear of even the very effective EFCC which by then together with the Police Service had become the symbols of government's success at institution building.

The Niger Delta –Civil Society Takes Action

Having initially adopted the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) Master Plan for the Niger Delta, the new administration in 2009 announced a new policy in which the NDDC was abolished and a new framework for accountability and delivery introduced. The fiscal responsibility bill was passed and further amended to require State Governments to publish their allocations and accounts on a quarterly

basis. In the new policy, the FGN introduced a matching grant scheme (\$3bn per annum) where it allocated an additional 50% of investment to social and economic plans implemented effectively in the Delta. Importantly, this program by-passed the State governments and went directly to the communities. The Matching Grant scheme provided important incentives for the creation and development of credible civil society groups. Social and infrastructure development began to take root at the local level. Community groups began to take an active role in such areas as building schools, better roads, clinics, and rural electrification. Accountability was dealt with at the local levels. But the challenge of youth employment still lingered and tensions, though reduced, continued to simmer. Nevertheless, kidnappings and other deviant behaviours became noticeably more infrequent by 2011.

Naija Get Light

The new administration continued the work initiated by the previous team on electricity generation and succeeded in producing 10,000 MW by 2010 from the 2,300 MW. The distribution and generation units were successfully unbundled in December 2008 and the new companies improved and expedited the pre-payment metering system in line with NERC's performance targets. These changes led to substantial improvements in urban power supply and a gradual increase in rural electrification. In May 2010, Nigeria celebrated one month of uninterrupted power supply - the first in two decades. The manufacturing sector which had been moribund for decades by the high cost of power responded by diverting these resources into increased production, thereby generating much needed employment opportunities – for semi/skilled youth. Reliable power access spurred unprecedented economic activity in the services sector as well, including the informal sector.

Employment Initiatives Take Off

Employment generation was made the No.1 priority of the Minister of Finance and his/her Economic Management Team. After pumping money into NAPEP and other special employment programmes to no avail they started to focus on addressing the concerns of the Nigerian private sector which included issues such as taxation, licensing, land administration, access to finance etc. The policies/regulations were drafted and tough decisions were made on public sector reform to ensure they were delivered. A redundancy plan relieved the civil service of hundreds of thousands of inefficient staff. The impact was slow but gradual emergence of a dynamic real sector (industry and agriculture) capable of creating jobs for 30% of the 6m new entrants into the Nigerian labour Market each year. By 2011, not only has formal employment increased but the entrepreneurial flair most admired in Nigerians was

flourishing and bearing results as people took advantage of a more conducive environment for business. GDP growth hits 8% per annum from 6% by 2011.

Laying the Ground for Growth

Federal and all State and Local governments adopted an integrated development plan for Nigeria based on NEEDS/SEEDS/LEEDS 2 and committed to new targets for addressing the MDGs. Economic diversification, education and infrastructure development were identified as key focus for long term sustainable development. The various states commenced the active development of regional growth strategies around different services sectors: the Northern states started to create the enabling environment for solid minerals and agriculture; the Eastern states, the development of the environment for the production of Africa's indigenous technology boom; and the West an enabling environment needed to make Nigeria the service hub of West Africa. The South continued with the oil, and South South, tourism.

The Education, Health, Water, Housing and Macro-economic reforms that were initiated by the previous administration continued in full force. Schools and hospitals were built as more contracts are issued by State governments. The educational system was slowly but consciously being revamped to address the development of relevant skills with higher education focused on development of science and technology skills, and particularly ICT. The infrastructure elements of the social systems were also being developed but unfortunately there was insufficient focus on quality of social services. Progress was slow. But by 2011, the outgoing administration could credibly claim that systems were being developed.

2011 – 2015: REALIGNING POLITICS TO FOCUS ON THE PEOPLE

Impressed by the political and economic progress made, and the successes of the "Feed and Read", and the anti-corruption initiatives, the people of Nigeria re-elected the incumbent president. But it was an election with a difference. The ruling party had a majority and most of their gubernatorial candidates were generally perceived to be men and women of integrity and committed to the service of country. This was a result of the internal reforms within the ruling party, itself emerging with a new party leadership. State Governors were committed to the Party's development agenda. There was recognition that the Party would remove you if you did not deliver.

The Party's constituents were moving more towards the people of Nigeria and gradually away from the traditional godfathers as the fear of getting caught and the

certainty of punishment was beginning to take root. Opposition parties also began to seriously reassess their positions in an evolving democratic environment.

Building on the success of the 2007 bold initiatives, the President announced an ambitious and expensive national ID scheme to ensure better delivery of social services. After a few false starts, by 2013, every man, woman and child was registered in a national database.

The State and Local governments wanting to identify with and tap into the success of a popular President buy into the Federal Government's plan to invest \$3 billion to create thousands more hospital beds across the country, with a focus on primary and preventative care, over the 2 year period. With a national call to action and patriotism fully supported and championed by the media, Nigerian expatriates, especially physicians, in the diaspora started returning home by the thousands under a special 2 year compensation plan.

Bold Action for the Niger Delta

In 2011, the Niger Delta looked different – it had motorable roads, there were schools, teachers and hospitals staffed with qualified nurses, but the youth employment challenge (including vandalism and illegal bunkering) was unresolved. Having paid little attention to the local content initiative in earlier plans, it was now seen as a priority for generating employment opportunities.

A group of communities with the support of local and international NGOs initiated a case against the Federal Government of Nigeria and the oil companies to secure compensation for environmental degradation in the area. In response the government launched an investigation into the environmental degradation caused by oil companies. By 2015, a community compensation scheme had been launched (financed from 1% contribution from oil companies' profit). The scheme focused on developing upland agriculture. In addition a process for introducing international best practice in drilling oil taking advantage of the technology element in the post Kyoto UN framework convention on climate change was introduced. Youth unemployment was reduced by 30% and there was a reduction in vandalism and criminal activity in the Delta. People in the Niger Delta were beginning to feel an integral part of the country's development agenda.

Economic Reforms Deepen Further

In 2011, there was further investment in the production, transmission and distribution of power and the government's robust enabling environment

programme generated more public/private investments into infrastructure. It increased investments in transport with help from the Chinese. The new transport plan focused on roads and rail networks that linked key cities throughout the country and an expansion of the ports. Against the advice of the donors, the Federal Government borrowed \$3bn from the Chinese to invest in the sector. By 2015 more than 40% of Nigerians had access to reliable and affordable power and goods were being freighted between Kano, Port Harcourt and Lagos by rail. Continued public sector reform and amendments to the legal and regulatory environment guiding business had given Tinapa the additional boost required and it was finally showing signs of success attracting investors and drawing hundreds of thousands of business tourists to Nigeria. The jobs created led to mass migration to Cross River. Federal and State governments' full adoption of ICT led to greater transparency and efficiency of delivery of public services.

Economic Diversification Spurred by a Drop in Oil Prices

In 2013 the oil price had dropped to \$45 per barrel as new cheaper technologies encouraged Western countries to actively exploit alternative sources of energy. Having built its growth around an oil boom, the Federal Government was not well-prepared for the decline in oil prices. The downturn in the oil sector provided setbacks to the reform agenda and forced the Government to focus and expedite action on its integrated national development plan and economic diversification strategies which were still at fledgling stages in most of the States.

The administration also turned its energies towards strengthening regional trade with a view to making Nigeria's exports to the African region becoming a key factor in Nigeria's economic growth. It engaged more actively in regional trade issues and in partnership with South Africa and Kenya supported broader economic development on the continent.

The Commerce and Industry Ministry was empowered to work with the private sector to reduce bottlenecks and promote development and growth. An innovation fund was set up to support entrepreneurs with innovative/creative ideas to build and market their products with the aim of meeting local needs and building an export market. A new National Standards Agency was also set-up to work with companies to improve the quality of their products; helping to bring companies together to fund joint product development, share technologies and to develop new techniques to improve quality and set standards for product quality.

Government also encouraged the establishment of trade associations providing training and support and matching grants. These trade associations assisted with respect to building knowledge base, facilitating information exchange, promoting

learning, and setting standards within their industry. This proved particularly useful in developing new industries and sectors. Incentives were also provided to engineers, scientists and financiers in the diaspora to return and facilitate applied research and innovation working closely with the National Research Council which was charged with funding research and promoting links between universities and industry.

Social Reforms Become a Reality

With the changes in the Governors at the State level the social reform agenda took off as State governments effectively utilized resources to deliver health and education reforms. Food production capacity was also significantly improved by the creation of market based Extension Services around farmers. An initiative initially championed by Sabon Gari local government and supported by the State government under its agro development strategy had quickly gained momentum in the Northern states. Under the scheme, groups of farmers were brought together to share core inputs, technologies and facilities, provided with information and skills, and modern seeds to boost agro production and access to markets. This not only increased food availability nationwide but raised economic productivity and income levels in the North, alleviating the endemic poverty in the region and reducing regional economic disparities. This gave rise to a marked reduction in social and religious tensions.

With a focus on the delivery of quality to facilitate effective utilization of the infrastructure developed earlier by 2015 the trend of Nigeria's social indicators began to change for the better. Maternal mortality decreased from 30% in 2007 to 15% and under five mortality improved from 20% to 10%. The tertiary institutions built in the first four years were producing good quality students and Nigerian graduates were slowly gaining respect again; a degree from Nigeria began to mean something again, companies could recruit without investing heavily in re-training of basic skills and employment opportunities were emerging. 40% of new entrants into the marketplace had access to a job befitting a well-trained college graduate.

The Fight against Corruption Yields Results

Nigerians continued to embrace moral and values re-orientation and were emboldened by media and civil society's roles in tackling institutional corruption. Intolerance for corrupt behaviour took on a rallying cry throughout the country. In one particular incident, students chased a lecturer who demanded money for good scores to his house and kept him hostage for 3 days before the police took charge.

The political 'Godfathers', recognizing the efficacy of the anti-corruption and enforcement agencies, and the shifting paradigm, reassessed their position as financiers of political parties and by 2013 began to re-negotiate new agreements based more on recognition and less on contracts. The impact was the fact that the battle for the President's successor, senatorial, gubernatorial and local government candidates was fought on policies and achievements to date and not who had the most powerful godfather. The political elite finally bowed to the power of the vote and the new electoral process. The main opposition parties had over the past four years arrived at the same conclusions and came together to form a patchwork alliance

Further Public sector reform was carried out at all three tiers of government focusing on the implementation of the rule of law. Three things were addressed – drastic retrenchment of poor performance (using excess crude reserves), a focus on attracting high calibre graduates and the introduction of performance systems in the public sector. The public service including security forces became a viable source of employment for the crème de la crème of Nigerian graduates. By 2015 trust and confidence had to a large extent been restored in the system as progress was apparent in a number of important areas. Ordinary people were no longer afraid to challenge corruption in government.

However, the social compact moved to a different level as people began demanding results for the use of their taxes and pushing for more public services. Government began to feel the pressure of over promising and under delivering in areas it was yet to show notable results.

Immigration and other challenges emerge

Nigeria began to see an influx of migrants from the sub-region as its economic and social reforms continued to yield results, and the effects of climate change took its toll on its northern neighbours. This started to take a toll on Nigeria's social and security system and people started to call for expulsion of all non-Nigerians. The former 'Ghana Must Go Crisis' became an 'All Must Go' attitude. Certain factions in the political class took advantage of this problem and began to agitate for a change.

Others took up issue with the slow down in investment inflows into the country resulting from the increasing tension with China over the influx of cheap Chinese goods. Leading up to the elections, a NEPAD trade committee under the leadership of South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria successfully lobbied, with support from WTO, to limit the influx of Chinese goods into Africa.

The 2015 Elections was to be a major test of the Nigerian democratic system. The world was watching closely.

2015 – 2019: REGIONAL INTEGRATION TAKES CENTER STAGE

With a more knowledgeable and involved citizenry, and a much stronger opposition, the election was fought around the divisive issue of 'Deportation of West Africans' vs 'Integration into West Africa' debate. The 2015 election results were very close. The Opposition party won narrowly in what was generally considered to be a free and fair election by internal and external observers.

A Focus on Regional Integration

The new President and her administration immediately went to town to deliver on the election promise of regional integration. This was the main pillar of the strategy for minimizing the negative impacts of the country's rapid development and delivering on its sustainability. Boosted by a decline in French influence and the increasing use of English in Francophone West Africa, Nigeria stepped in to fill the gap both economically and politically, leveraging on the success of the former administration's trade policy. The Government introduced schemes incentivising and sending English teachers to Francophone West African countries and also imposed the study of French in primary and secondary schools to promote its integration strategy. It also engaged Senegal in a rebirth agenda for Ivory Coast.

Meanwhile the private sector was ahead of government. Nigerian banks had been successful in making Nigeria the Financial services hub of West Africa and had provided the impetus for making Nigeria the ICT hub of West Africa. New fibre optic cables were built by the private sector providing for cheaper access. Building on these private sector led successes, Government championed an open skies agreement in the region and PPP based pan African road and rail networks.

By 2019 West Africa had a credible new Big Brother status as regional integration finally became a reality after decades of dialogue. With awareness and information and increased access to funds through SME finance schemes, the entrepreneurial propensity of Nigerians was unleashed as they embraced the new opportunities created. Tens of thousands of new businesses and hundreds of thousands of jobs in existing and new sectors in the formal economy were created. The ECO became the main currency in West Africa and Nigeria became the financial hub of Africa superseding South Africa.

The Government continued to engage actively in Pan African regional trade issues and in partnership with South Africa and Kenya supported broader economic development on the continent.

Continued Reforms keep the Economy on Track

Infrastructure development continued to be a priority for Government with further investment in power transmission and distribution and transport modalities. Niger Delta was no longer a special programme but an integral part of NEEDS VI (Nigeria's development plan). More than 70% of Nigerians had access to reliable electricity by then, affordable power and transport networks between and within States has improved substantially. Goods moved cost-effectively between the North and the South. Nigeria's transportation networks (roads and rail) had been further expanded and were effectively linked to the ports. Continued focus on institutional reform and a robust monetary policy was the order of the day. The judicial process allowed for quick adjudication and dispensation of all cases, criminal, civil, and commercial. The business community, championed by the Banks was actively dispensing its Corporate Social Responsibility role supporting among other causes the police with logistics and communications equipment. This alongside improved remuneration and re-training and increasing public cooperation with community policing led to continued reduction in armed robberies and other social crimes.

By 2016 Nigeria had become a recognized force in international business outsource processing, almost outpacing India on a per capita basis.

Oil Prices Collapse and Set back Reforms

The global economic environment presented setbacks to the reform agenda. For over 10 years Nigeria had benefited from rising oil prices and used the revenues to enhance economic development and diversify its income base. In 2017, the non-oil sector comprised 70% of GDP and 50% of the country's revenue source as the country had become a major exporter of agro-processed and manufactured goods and financial and ICT services to the region and Europe. No one expected a collapse in oil prices. But in 2017 it happened (due to new technology which made trillions of formerly uneconomic global reserves viable). Despite the economic diversity, the collapse of oil prices to \$25 per barrel had a substantive negative impact on the country's revenue base. This forced Nigeria back to the drawing board as it looked at how to utilize its extensive resources to fill the gap and garner additional private sector investment into agriculture, mining and manufacturing. The prospering formalized businesses paid more taxes which helped to address the budget gap. But donors were needed to help for a few years until the reforms

brought the economy back on track. The 2017 experience was a painful one and expectation of high oil prices became a thing of the past.

On the Social Front the Indicators Continued to Improve

By 2018 Nigeria's health and education indicators had improved substantially with maternal and under-five mortality reduced 5% and 10% respectively. 80% of primary school children are in school, including 60% of girls in the North. Secondary and tertiary institutions were effectively training young people and graduates were effectively equipped to meet market demands. Unemployment rates reduced to 30% and the informal sector was absorbing the unemployed. In particular, employment programs were targeted at the North. The word "underemployment" had been removed from the Nigerian dictionary. Security had improved substantially and people felt safer and more secure. A social security benefit was in place to address the needs of the 20% still under the poverty level. The threat of social, religious and ethnic tensions died down as people become more gainfully employed and less influenced by external factors. The Nigerian Police Service was quite effective at quelling disturbances well before they could take root.

The Tragedy of a Health Crisis Brings Home New Realities

In 2016, the country was hit by an outbreak of tuberculosis believed to have been imported from a neighbouring country. This quickly led to an epidemic resulting in 200,000 deaths nationwide in just a matter of months. Medical institutions though they responded swiftly could not adequately cope with the crisis. Nigerians were relieved at the quick response. But the crisis demonstrated to many that the institutional reforms and investment in infrastructure were works-in-progress and needed to be sustained. Although the country's largely improved health system enabled it to limit the devastation of the TB outbreak, it caused a big scare and took a toll on the morale of the people and the country's economy.

A Strong Sense of National Identity

The national moral and value reorientation program embarked on and sustained over the years had by 2019 created a strong national identity and an active citizenry that was the underpinning of sustainable national development. A sense of justice, fairness and meritocracy permeated homes, schools, religious institutions and the work-place. A zero tolerance attitude to corruption, theft and cheating was rife in all aspects of societies.

However, Nigeria's ever expanding economy and the huge increase in its green house emissions highlights the question by the UN of Nigeria signing-in on the new UN Framework Convention for Climate Change and limiting the growth rate of emissions to 75% of current rates by 2030. The debate for the 2019 elections revolved around this and the sustainability of Nigeria's growth agenda in an ever increasing interdependent and competitive world. The 2019 elections were very close and the incumbent party only won 20 out of the 36 States with the Coalition of Opposition Parties (COP) winning the balance. In the Presidential election, the ruling party failed to secure 2/3rds of the vote in the first round but had a decisive win in the second round. INECs independence in the face of the tense and fiercely fought election was applauded by all. Nigeria had held successful elections three times in a row since the much criticised one of 2007.

2019 – 2024: TIDES SHIFT AS THE COMMON MAN DEMANDS MORE CHANGE

Having returned with a small majority, the party was in turmoil and tried to initiate a process for constitutional reform which reduced the number of States required for presidential win to 60%. This led to an outcry from the opposition and civil society and the constitution was retained by the national assembly. However during the process, some key amendments were made to the constitution which responded to various demands over the years.

Having failed to influence the constitutional amendment desired the administration returned its focus towards the key social and economic reforms that had enabled it to make progress to date. As the economy continued to boom, the administration directed its focus towards tackling the problems of the 20% of the population still living below the per-capita income of US\$360. It introduced a number of social reforms such as the social security benefit to address this objective. However growing international tensions around China's reaction to the NEPAD Trade agreement minimized its ability to focus on this critical domestic issue. The administration focused its energies towards strengthening regional trade and moving forward with the creation of the common monetary zone in Africa. By 2021, the stage was set for the creation of the AFRO, a common currency for Africa. Nigeria's exports to the African region became a key factor in Nigeria's economic growth and African countries, rather than the US, become Nigeria's biggest trading partners. Nigeria began to form stronger South-South ties with countries such as Brazil and India as an alternative market to US and China.

By 2024 Nigeria became a top middle income country and a member of the G20. As the economy continued to boom and social systems were improved, Nigerians are proud of their achievements but civil society and community groups start to

demand a refocus on the un-captured poor. Nigerians overwhelmingly vote for retaining the status quo in spite of the strong political campaign of a party promoting a more leftist, less business-friendly ideology, copying some of the dogma of Latin America that began to spread in 2005.

2025

Now a model for African democracy (decidedly different from the Western version but fitting for the polytheistic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual countries of Sub-Sahara), Nigeria in 2025 can now credibly lead an international effort on the challenges for social and economic development in the developing world. Nigeria has become a politically stable middle income country, the largest economy in Africa (having surpassed South Africa in 2019) and a member of the G20. Nigeria has met the MDGs, though a few years later than hoped. With a population of 185 million, the growth rate has slowed to 1.8% from 2.3%. Per capita income, though an irrelevant measure in the past, is now \$1500, from \$560 in 2006, but in 2025 reflects a higher state of income distribution as oil revenues have helped transform the economy making the services the largest contributor to GDP at over 50%. GDP growth has levelled at 7%.

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CONCLUSION

Nigeria's history since independence in 1960 is replete with some successes, lots of missed opportunities, and a multiplicity of crises and failures. Our history reads more like the "Parambulator scenario"; we make progress but immediately take two steps backwards. The nation cannot continue on this path. The consequences could be dire, as outlined in the Jaga Jaga scenario. We must not allow the past failures to define our future nor allow the current circumstances to hold our future hostage. Our future, must not be a rerun of the past.

The Nigeria 2025 Scenarios exercise seeks to focus the Nigerian's mind to the fact that change is possible. It is about avoiding "business as usual" and facilitating change. Nigeria can be transformed and be placed on the high growth scenario of "We Don Win" despite the numerous challenges.

The goal of the team now is to generate a nationwide dialogue; and reflection between and among the leadership and the population and within various sectors and levels of society. A strategic national reflection and dialogue focusing on where we are, why, where we want to go and how we will get there as a nation is a basic requisite for change.

Each of the four scenarios like all good stories has a strong message. A full reading of the scenarios indicates two classes of messages: what we must avoid doing and what we must do to get on the path of building the desired 21st century Nigeria that every Nigerian can be proud of. These messages, focused on what we must begin to do, have been distilled into an agenda for change.

The agenda places emphasis on the need for a new national consensus and crusade for a minimum set of national values, a bold visionary leadership and visionary citizenship/followership, and nurturing effective institutions in all spheres of society. The agenda also calls for moving away from managing poverty to creating wealth. We must focus on building a new economy that is diversified, globally competitive and able to provide for the population at large and not a few. The national compact must call for a new social solidarity, a society that is caring where we ensure basic needs are met for all, and a society where people genuinely care about their neighbors; in which the fortunate care for the less fortunate, that is "being our brothers/sisters keeper".

The agenda for change therefore include:

- Adopting and implementing **zero tolerance for corruption** across all levels of our society.
- **Becoming Nigerians first** rather than primarily a member of a tribe, religion or State.
- Re-entrenching **strong positive values** in our society.
- Establishing and defending **strong Institutions** to eliminate the “big man” mentality, god-fatherism and patronage.
- Demanding bold, accountable and **visionary leadership**.
- **Resolving the Niger Delta crisis** quickly, equitably and permanently.
- Replacing a debilitating ‘God-dey’ attitude with **active and constructive participation** in the affairs of our country.
- Accelerating the **diversification of our economy**.
- **Investing in Nigerians** through radical reforms in health, education and social safety nets.
- **Creating a friendly and secure environment** for investment whilst always keeping our country’s interests in focus.
- **Rebuilding our physical infrastructure** – power, roads, rail, water and communications.

Despite the ascendancy of cynicism as a result of years of incompetent prosecution of the development agenda, the team fervently believes that change is possible. Our current realities dictate change must take place and importantly people are expecting change. However, Nigerians must accept there will be “no gain without pain”, but anything is possible with smart and collective effort.

This is the time for a strategic dialogue on the future of our nation to guide the change that must take place. The Nigeria 2025 Scenarios are a contribution to this process. The challenge however cannot and must not be left to the perceived leaders alone. The future of the nation is of a great importance.

History has shown that great changes and transformation only happen when ordinary people make a decision to collectively work together as a community to drive change, and to hold the leaders to account. Nigerians must make this decision. We must all get engaged. More importantly, each of us must become a leader, be willing to drive change in our little corners and lead responsibly from anyplace we find ourselves. The time for blaming our leaders or others is over; we must all find and pursue our role in creating a better and much desired 21st century Nigeria. We must commit ourselves to effect change at the individual and societal levels.