

RESTRUCTURING IN NIGERIA THE WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study are to critically examine the causes of political and economic imbalances in Nigeria with view to providing solution in form of political and economic restructuring without necessarily dividing the country. In the course of our investigation we discovered that our colonial master was one of the architects of our political imbalance in Nigeria. Another factor was the type of constitution that we have been using since 1963. Another reason was the quality of leadership Nigeria has since independence till date. While military interventions into Nigeria politics. Compounded the country political system. Recommendation were made, these include resource control for each state where the minerals are discovered, devolution of power to states, while resources from each state should be developed for that state and certain percentage to federal government. Federal institutions in each state should be handled over to the state, People constitution should be drafted democratically. Parliamentary system of government should be reintroduced because it is less expensive to run.

Keywords: Restructuring, Devolution of Power, Poverty, Resource Control, Nationalism, Growth, Development, Revolution, Structural Change.

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INTRODUCTION

So when you talk about restructuring what do we really mean? Why do we want to restructure, what is wrong with the present structure of the country? Those are the things I think we have to address. For us, the older generation, when we talk of restructuring, we are actually looking backwards, and looking back to the founding days of this country to 1960 1963 and the constitution, which we had at that time that devolved almost all the powers to the federating units, at that time the regions, which were three, later four, and allowed them to exercise a lot of residual powers, a lot of initiatives. So, there was healthy competition and things moved pretty fast and there was development at, I will say, at the pace of every component region and so on and so forth. This state of affairs was disrupted when the military took over power in 1966. So

when we talk of restructuring these days, we are looking backward, to those days when the federating units were autonomous and took decisions to develop their areas and work all within their resources to move on. So, that is what I understand by restructuring. Is that good for a Nigeria of 2017 or not? The belief, like those of us who have kind of joined the agitation, is that the present system we are running was foisted on the country by the military, and the military system allows them one straight road, the command structure. Command must come from the top to the bottom, and the top in this case is the federal authority. A federation is not run in that manner, a federation is run at the basis of the agreement of the federating units and the understanding, where the federating units have more power and authority to do things in their own way and have deliberately given certain powers and authority to the federal authority, usually limited powers. It is a system where there is a superior authority, the federal government and inferior component, are the federating units. And that is what I believe the present agitators for restructuring are talking about Should it be the present way, or vice-versa, that is, for the federating units to ring to the federal authorities what they think they should do, in which case, means saying to the federal authorities, these are your responsibilities, this is the money you are to need to service those responsibilities, we voluntarily contribute that. It is going to be difficult for the present system to adjust to that, I think, because we have run it for quit sometime, now and it has become the system where there is a boss who is the federal authority, and there are subordinates, be it subservient units below, that is the problem We talk of restructuring back to 1960,1963 level that is what we are talking about when we talk about restructuring. The 1999 constitution is not considered as the people's constitution, it was not done by the people, it was one of the instruments foisted on Nigerians by the then military authorities, remember it was General Muhammed Abdulsalami's government who worked the 1999 constitution, they are still the military. So we want a constitution that is negotiated, discussed by all components of the polity, because the interest of all the components are involved, so if you started from one level, the federal level and they prescribe the constitution, it's not been negotiated, that is what most argument is all about.

That is not what we mean. We are talking; we use that as a formula to frame a constitution that suits Nigeria in its current development stage. Principally, what we are talking about devolve a lot more powers to the states, who are the federating units now, in those days, it was the regions, but now it is the states. Therefore, if we have use that pattern, it means that the states will have, perhaps even more powers, especially residual powers than the federal government As it is now, it is the federal government that is the ultimate authority in almost everything and the states can only function with this acting parameter that the constitution has allowed them to do. I do not, and I don't think most Nigerians share that, the National Assembly is empowered to make laws,

constitution making is an organic law, ground norm, and the lawyers would call it. And they are not empowered to do that, and to assume that authority goes beyond the powers which the people have given to them, go back to the people. The nearest thing you can call a people's constitution today, is not even the same, it could be to evoke the 2014 National Conference Report, where we had 492 eminent Nigerians sitting down to chart the way forward for Nigeria. That is the nearest document that is generally agreeable to most Nigerians. Short of that, not even recommending that the proper thing to do is to go to the people and call for the conference of the people, they will elect their own representatives, and these representatives will seat together, look at the state of the nation as it is now, discuss the various interests of the constituting peoples, it is not government but the people, and they are the ones to look at the various issues, argue them, come up with ideas, and vote on them, and agree what will emerge as a constitution. Their authority supersedes that of any government authority now, because what do we say, we say the people's will is expressed by those that they themselves have elected for that purpose. It is not the same as the National Assembly, who have been elected to make laws, to govern the country for the moment, but this is something that will review the entire ground norm of Nigeria, and it is beyond the mandate, which is given to the present National Assembly. Of course it can, but why are we complaining now about the constitution that was given to us in 1999, we think that those who did it, they didn't have the mandate to do it, the National Assembly has being elected to go and make laws for this country, they have not been elected to turn over the belly of this country, and then, negotiate for us what should be our new constitution, especially you would see that in one or two areas already, the National Assembly is not sharing the mood of the people. People are talking about restructure, the National Assembly is saying no need for restructuring. So, they speak for themselves for what they have perceived the situation to be.

However, people want to participate in what would ultimately be the ground norm of the constitution in which they would be governed, not only for today, but for the future purpose. Restructuring is an aspect of the much older term and phenomenon called "reform". A modern meaning of the word "reform" would offer the following: a) to put or change into an improved form or condition; b) to amend or improve by change of form or removal of faults or abuses; c) to put an end to (an evil) by enforcing or introducing a better method or course of action; and d) to induce or cause to abandon evil ways (reform a drunkard). What all these meanings of "Reform" point to clearly is improving, upon a current situation that is considered to be unsatisfactory. This is partly why Restructuring is captured by such catch-phrases as: "No condition is permanent"; "The only thing constant in life is change", and "Every action causes a reaction". Logically and factually, practically all major measures have positive and negative consequences, intended and unintended, with the best of intentions hence

continuous monitoring and efficacy of the feedback loop or arrangements would be critical to the relative success of any restructuring or reform exercise and, more crucially, to minimizing and eliminating adverse impacts and thus a much-improved new condition. Restructuring, we may sense from all of the above, comes in various formats. One could restructure a processor procedure, say, of designing and implementing leave roster, or payment of salaries of all federal public servants taken over by the Central Bank of Nigeria (of which an unintended consequence is impacting negatively on the disciplinary and other administrative procedures in tertiary educational institutions), or procedure for acquisitions and purchases, or method of payment and collection of personal or corporate tax, and method of preparing a budget, method or process of importing and distributing refined petroleum products, or, restructuring might be of institutional type: a sub-unit of or the whole organization or politico-administrative structure of a country may itself be restructured, by rearranging roles, span of control and positions and levels in the hierarchy, or how several organizations (National Assembly, Presidency, States and LGAs) may, in fact, relate to one another. Restructuring might be that of access to some value: social justice, freedom and mode of worship, procedure for accessing land (e.g. Land Use Act), or funds for agricultural purposes, unemployment benefits, health and medical services, housing, education, right to vote, freedom of association, right to abortion, right to speak freely, right to free movement, etc. Quite often, certain restructuring exercises involve not only the three forms simultaneously, but also push for a rank-ordering of values, processes and institutions. I don't understand the pillars and I don't understand why there should be any kind of controversy or uncertainty about restructuring, something that should be clear to everybody. But the meaning of restructuring in the contest of Nigeria, are talking about Nigeria here, is to people, there are over three hundred nationalities in Nigeria, research has been done on this and the figure is still disputed, have a sense of belonging. What should be clear is that, in a country like this, with such a vast expanse of territory comprising many ethnic nationalities, there is a bone of contention going on, each ethnic nationality grouped with other ethnic nationality that is related to it by language, culture and geographical contiguity should be allowed to govern themselves in matters that concern them alone.

Restructuring mean nothing more than allowing each ethnic nationality grouped together with other ethnic nationalities, related to it by culture, language or geographical spread. That was the basis on which we gained independence under the 1960 constitution, which remained under the 1963 constitution. It means self-government, and the term is nothing new to us, we are used to it. In 1953, 1960, 1963 there were groupings in the region, but with nationalities, big and small but related. In 1953, Anthony Enahoro moved independence motion north was opposition to it. The British said since North was not ready yet. So, self-government is not new, govern

yourself within your territory, within the territorial sovereignty of the country Nigeria doesn't imply destroying Nigeria. No, we keep Nigeria together as one state, but each group govern, itself, that is government that was accepted, established by law and the constitution; the colonial constitution. Western and Eastern Nigeria were given internal self-government in 1957 leaving the North until 1960 when full independence was granted to the country.

There is need for structuring in Nigeria. It is obvious now that the country is divided, north and south, on this issue. Let the southern groups and the northern groups come and negotiate, debate and dialogue. I believe in dialogue, I believe in debate and I believe in negotiation. There is no saying that Nigeria's unity is non-negotiable. We have to sit down and negotiate. How can we achieve this and what are the things to be taken away from the Centre? We have to examine also how we came to the present situation. Self-government was entrenched in 1960-1963, how did it come to be what we have as the present situation, how did it come about? That instead of groups being allowed to govern themselves we now have a central government that doubles into all kind of matters, converting the system to unitary. The Federal Government is the one to bring all negotiators together. Nobody is disputing that now. We have held one National Conference before and there have also been others in the past. What we need now is one specifically focusing on restructuring. Restructuring is a product of the dynamics of the system of government we operate. Everywhere you have a federal system, it is recognized as a system of bargain, negotiations- continuous bargains and negotiations. You don't finalize your federal instrumentalities/configuration, because the course of time, human societies demands change. You have the global economy that can make you poor tonight and tomorrow you become a rich country, all these things have a way of precipitating different demands and once you have those demands, they can lead to changes in power holding that may demand a review of jurisdictions. In Nigeria today, we have about sixty-eight items in the exclusive list and about sixteen in the concurrent list in the balance of scale that means the federal government is very powerful. But you don't have a federal system when you don't have constituents units that are legal units that can challenge the federal government by its own actions and activities and in the event of jurisdictional-conflict we go to the supreme-court.

Everyone says the federal government has too much money, the states are getting some money, may be not enough, and they are not getting the kind of money they should get. Lagos State said the taxes that comes from hospitality business belongs to it and begins to ask people to pay taxes to its revenue board and the federal government said it was a residual matter. It got to the Supreme-Court and the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Lagos State - that is restructuring. The way we are going about it is not the only way for restructuring. Restructuring cannot only be done at the legal unit through judicial

interpretations and reviews, it can be done through actions. All over the world, federations have restructured in this diverse manner. If the states were not dysfunctional, they also will be in the tick for the demand for restructuring; the political parties should also be in the forefront. When people refer to the 1963 constitution and all the bargains and negotiations that went on up to that period, they forget that it was the Action Group (AG), Northern Progressives Congress (NPC) and the National Council of Nigeria and the Northerners (NCNC); not Afenifere, not Ohaneze Ndigbo, Arewa - these are unknown entities led by self-appointed leaders. The only legal people who have those qualities in a democratic system are political parties. Action Group for instance had a motto that says "Unity through Federation" and everything it did reflected that. But today we have political parties that are responsible for the dominance of the centre, they all have only one, determinate centre of power - that is the national, the governors have monopolized the space at the state level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mounting call for restructuring

What seems to be sounding louder by the day is the call for restructuring by the various interest groups in Nigeria. The impression the agitators are giving is that the country is structurally lopsided to the extent that something urgent should be done, if the various ethnic, tribal, religious, economic and political interests are to continue co-habiting harmoniously. The issue now is: how sincere or genuine are these agitations for restructuring? Over the years, the need to restructure the federation has been at the front-burner. Recently, renewed agitations followed disturbing activities by secessionists as well as the various threats given for Nigerians to quit parts of the country, issued by other different groups venting their angers on the perceived imbalance and displeasure over the state of affairs in the country in terms of allocation of resources, appointments, environmental degradation, human right abuses, dominance of the Federal Government over states, power sharing parameters and the unity of the nation. To address the concerns raised by those calling for restructuring, there is truly the need for the various federating units to develop according to their resources and at their own pace without being slowed down by others. The process of restructuring would involve changes in the distribution of powers, responsibilities and resources, contrary to what is provided for under the 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended); a product of military regime that arrogates a whopping 68 items to the Exclusive Legislative List alone, unlike the 1960 Independence Constitution that had 44 items on the list while the 1963 Republican Constitution equally granted the regions 50 per cent of their resources. In line with what true Federalism should be, the Federal Government should rather concern itself with highly sensitive and critical sectors like Currency, Defence, Immigration/Customs and Foreign Affairs while devolving other sectors to the federating units.

The various interests that had clamored for restructuring strongly believe that the current structure is nothing, but a recipe for anarchy, insecurity and instability. In other words, a restructured nation would make the federating units explore the resources in their domains, considering the fact that there is no state in the Nigeria that is not endowed with arable land for agriculture or mineral deposits that could make them self-reliant and capable of transforming the lives of the people, if, when, well-utilized and harnessed. This was what the country experienced development-wise, during the era of regionalism, where there were healthy competition among the four regions of the Northern, Western, Eastern and Mid-Western governments. This brought about optimal harnessing of resources for development. In the past, agitations for restructuring had been championed mainly by some segments of the nation, notably by south westerners, but over the time, other Nigerians, cutting across other geopolitical zones, have clamored for the imperative of addressing the structure of the country in such a way that federating units would be more functional, premised on the principle of comparative advantage unlike the current arrangement, whereby states had become completely dependent on the Federal Government. For instance, the Western Region, under the leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, successfully laid the foundations for development in commerce and industry by creating an efficient Western Nigeria Development Corporation, the parent of the present-day O'dua Investment Company; revolutionized the production and marketing of cocoa by farmers; reformed the local government system; improved the Western Nigeria Civil Service; implemented the first free primary education programme in Africa; introduced and managed the first Free Medical Service programme in Nigeria for children up to the age of 18; established the first television station in Africa: the Western Nigeria Television, Ibadan that was established in 1959; the first in Africa; and the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife), among others.

Apart from the Western Region government, monumental achievements were also recorded by other regional governments in the country. What do we have now? It is unfortunate that today, most of the states in the country are unviable and under-resourced to deliver good governance, as they depend almost entirely on monthly allocations from the Federation Accounts, the bulk of which they expend on salaries and other recurrent expenditures leaving out capital expenditures that can actually drive development. Any opportunity that could bring about positive change that would better the lot of the people and the nation should be embraced. Therefore, if the call for restructuring is going to turn things around for the better, it is worth doing trying and doing. But looking at the, agitations from another perspective, those calling for restructuring, I simply because they have been at the receiving end in the current power equation, should not be seen as being patriotic in the iragitation. Those who belong to this category are made up of mainly politicians, who belong to several groups and

affiliations. They appear to have joined the call for restructuring for some self-serving reasons.

Restructuring is the key to progress

National Assembly is the primary law making body of the country, but that does not exclude at all, will never exclude, the right of the people who elect even these National Assembly members to come forward with their own view, to make a constitution that is acceptable to everybody. Already, we have seen that there is a clear division between the National Assembly and those people agitating for restructuring. National Assembly does not think there is need for restructuring, but the people think there is need to restructure. The National Assembly and every government as I know it, will say it is the will of the people they are serving, is that not right? That is what they are saying. Now the people who have this will, say no, give us a chance to also participate in the process, what is wrong with that? I will start by answering the second aspect of the question. It is not for her to determine what to be devolved to the states although I have said in a very generalist term that it is restructure back to 1963 or 1960, there had been a National Conference in 2014, I think we take a cue from the report of that constitution, I will largely be able to reflect the views of the people. I am told, I think we raised it here again that the National Assembly itself is looking into that report and obviously they are doing so in order to extract from it relevant views and aspects of the outcome of that conference, that may be useful to them during legislation, that are not making a fresh constitution, they are not empowered to make a constitution, so short of us convening another conference to determine the views of the component parts of this country, we will probably go back to national conference report of 2014, but that also will not solve the problem, if we want to follow a democratic process, then we consult the people.

But, remember that when we talk about the 1963 constitution and the 2014 confab report, we seem to forget that prior to 1979, there was a constituent assembly and the product of that constituent assembly of 1978 was 1979 constitution, now place side by side with the 1999 constitution, 2014 Confab Report and that 1979 constitution, which among the three best appropriates or comes closer to that 1963 constitution we have been pointing at? The constitutional conferences or reports of 1979 and 1999; the press probably are clearly up to date about the criticisms that have followed those reports. 1979 and 1999 are military constitution that were arrived through military decree. That is what people are angry about. But there are little differences between 1979 and 1999 constitution. All two were prepared under the military government supervision. The constitution as it is presently framed is wrong, it places all the powers in the hands of the executive, that man occupying the executive position, I think we copied it from America, but they have safeguards there. They are civilized to the extent that we are not yet civilized, so that safeguard as they have there, is controlling some of the things that

they do, but, even, then we can see the kind of utterances this present man, Trump, is making. We mean, it is frightening. If you let Trump to exercise his exuberance, he will soon bring the third world war. That is the constitution that we have copied, that has given the local government chairman absolute powers within the resources that he controls, and he controls all the resources and he accounts to nobody. Same goes for the state governors. Only at the national level, is there a sane head, because the two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives are, generally speaking, active and are able to exercise their responsibilities. At the state level where I come from, I don't know what happens in your own state, everybody in the State Assembly is a nominee of the governor, because he pays for them to be elected. And he chooses those who are to be elected to that assembly. So, we mean you heard of the case where governor takes his appropriation bill to the Assembly, and in twenty minutes, they have passed it, and that is the end of the story. You have heard of the situation where at some point in time, a governor had the Judiciary in his residence, in the Government House, he is running the legislature, the speaker is his own man, he is working from the governor's residence, and that kind of thing. We are just making a fool of ourselves.

Parliamentary system is the cabinet system. In the cabinet, everybody has the chance to air his own views, and the prime minister in an ideal situation is *primus inter pares*, they call it, it is just first among the equals, but it has to debate his initiatives for governance in the cabinet. It then has to go to the parliament, where all the ministers also belong, and they will argue against, not only the opposition, even members of their own party. So, at the end of the day, views are fully expressed, the parliamentary discussions are being listened to openly, the gallery is full, everybody who wishes to contribute is there is member of the assembly representing his constituency is there, he can always go and whisper something to him, and when the man comes back, every now and again, maybe it is a week, maybe it is a month, the constituency has the right to go and question him on the stewardship. What it is now, is complete mixture or mismanagement of what is done in America, their checks are not available to us. I don't know that how strong that advocacy is. I don't know, because I have been pretty well involved in these discussions, and people are more concerned about whether to have a zonal or states as the federating units to discuss issues, we now have thirty-six states, plus the federal capital territory. I dare say that if you wanted to interfere with this arrangement, there will be lot of resentments, already people have tested what you call autonomy in their respective states and to surrender it to now a zonal authority, it will be very difficult to convince people to do it. You have to actually convince every-body most people don't think that you want to go back to the place where somebody, in the case of yours, which used to be in Ibadan, will now dictate to the man in Ilorin, what things he should do. It is very difficult. I think the states now have become so attractive to most people that they will hold on to it. So, I think even at the confab meeting, we have come up with a report

saying that the states should be the federating units, because the sound thing was that the present states would not want to surrender their, should I call it autonomy or the right or whatever. Yes that is, it depends on what you mean by that, because if it has no functions that will lead to what the state will not usurp the state functions as they see it now, easy to accept, if it will, people will kick against it, they don't want to come back to these regional structures we practiced before, where the regions controlled the larger territory, as the states do now. The states are smaller territorial groups and they are closer to the people, and like we discussed a moment ago, the state governors until and unless the constitution is amended to give them less authority than they are enjoying powers they don't want to relinquish. I don't think they will want to go it in a total manner, that is the personal view of mine, I don't think we should have come to the presidential system of government.

Restructuring must be based on national consensus

I have seen public domain of people who say there are legal conditions or basis determining when a group is terrorist. Terrorism is not such a hard and fast definition or phenomenon. Kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, police harassment are forms of terrorism. The difference however, is that it is the state that determines what is terrorist. People will say this is not a terrorist organization and they cite all kinds of international conventions and even Nigerian laws. The government responds by doing what it thinks is legally required. If the government has determined or defined IPOB as a terrorist organization in its own wisdom, and if there are counter-position, they should then go to the law courts to contest and clarify those things. The government has said that IPOB has an intelligence unit, an army, an anthem, and these are things ordinarily for civility sake should not pose a problem after- all, many institutions have anthems they sing and even pledges they pledge to. But once you have other things that suggest that you threaten the monopoly or the use of force and you challenge the state's authority, the state deserves the right to device the legal basis for what it wants to do. One of the empirical and established basis of statehood is the ability to have effective control of the territory that belongs to the state. That means government, is able to exercise its authority throughout the lengths and breadths of its territory. If there are threats to the government's control, it behaves on that government to respond in an appropriate manner. A clamp down is part of what is expected to be the responses that a responsible government should do as demanded by statehood. Their art what is regarded to as "legitimate modes of engagements". In mainstream political sciences we don't just say they are legitimate, but within the rules, laws and regulations. One of such means of seeking redress is to approach the law court, have civil engagement with a democratic structures not restricted to the state and national assemblies, another is to have a civil protest You need to get the required permission so that you can engage people, write petitions, send delegations; all of which are within the rules and regulations. When you

then use methods that are extra-legitimate because they directly challenge the authority of the state. No state will fold its hands no matter what and say we should not arrest the drift one of the responses that the state can have to a clampdown if government in its wisdom feels "this is threat", then it can apply its own mechanism.

Periods of transition produce all kinds of outcomes, you can have displace, replacement, overthrow and all kinds of things. Because these are contested terrains you will have strong views. In many instances, when people get displaced from office, there are counter mobilization steps that some of them take. To take a parallel example, if in Angola, or Cameroon or even in South Africa, once you dis-place people from office, you expect some certain reactions - that's not unknown. In 1999/2003 when we had those kind of changes in some states in Nigeria, there were responses like adoption of sharia law; those were counter mobilization.

Few Countries that Restructured in the World

Restructuring has many sides, different platforms and moves. America had restructured overtime, at the state, they've had boundary adjustments, the new deal, constitutional amendments. In Brazil, states had moved as legal entities to make demands. In South Africa, the national assembly parliament found that people elected to represent their provinces were not truly representing them so they decided to change the name to Council of Provinces. Our national assembly made of people to represent their various states sees itself as part of that powerful centre and does not ponder to the interest of the constituent units. I've heard people talk about state police while there are things more fundamental than state policing. Will the fact of state police make the police more efficient? Will it solve the problem we have come to associate with the police - issues of impunity, definition of security? There is no policeman to safeguard the lives of the ordinary Nigeria because we are too ordinary. Three hundred thousand police men and women in the country, two hundred and fifty thousand of them are on special assignments; safeguarding the lives of governors, their wives, commissioners, local government chairmen, the noble rich and big people in the country - that again needs restructuring. We have always restructured in this country. There was a time when the ethnic minorities that were deprived, dominated, exploited, suppressed and oppressed came out for a strong centre. It's partly because of that clamour and to have a safeguard to guarantee their safety, security and preservation that the police force was then made a national police force. Its because of minorities that we have new states. Whatever restructuring and outcomes we have now will not end out problems, those problems are open-ended there is no way they can end. When oil dries up as it is bound to or when it becomes less critical in the coming years and we get other resources, we will be back to this clamours. We must recognize that in the current world, the central government which is represented in our case is required to be strong. But what restructuring means is

that making the federal government strong should not be at the expense of the states; let the federal government be strong and also let the state governments be strong – it's that kind of thing we are looking for. Government is simultaneous, its concurrent there is no point at which this road becomes a local government road and because its local government road people who don't come from that local government should not use it. All the goods and services that we have in country belong to the realm of "Public Goods" and public goods are for all of us. So we expect all levels of government to function well, be effective and alive to their responsibilities.

It's not the president only that has said so but it carries more weight when it comes from the president. When the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) was founded in 1963, one of the things the founding fathers of Africa decided should help Africa was to accept the colonial determined boundary of states in the countries that we have so they gave a legitimate stamp to that. We accept those boundaries but the challenge in Africa is to see how everyone can work within those boundaries. At the continental level, there is an agreement that the boundaries that we inherited at independence should be kept. It's another matter if all Africa countries have succeeded in working out the basis of living in unity. In the Old School, we thought of Nation Building as something that requires a Nigeria; removing the Yoruba, Hausa or Igbo tradition; that was the 'Assimilationist School', which is regarded as national cultures, languages and so on. One of the manifestations of the old Africa regime was the search for lingua francas. Some people wanted single language, people will cite things like Awolowo's statement in part to Nigeria's freedom in 1940 when he said Nigeria is not a nation in which you have the English, the Welsh, and the Scots. But in the context of Awolowo's writing, the English are not the Irish, and all these are not going to be merged into one identity. They retained their various identities, the English philosophers themselves made it clear that in order to have the kind of cohesion, and you don't need to deny your being Scots, Welsh or Irish.

Restructuring for growth and development

Nigeria's system of states, was first implemented by the General Yakubu Gowon-led administration during the Nigeria civil war in 1967. The expectation was being smaller political units, states would reduce the power of political office holders, minimize the role of ethnicity in governance as well as the struggle for political power at the national level. It was also felt that a state structure would be better at driving economic growth and fostering a broad and strong sense of nationalism and inclusion as Nigerians as opposed to a dysfunctional ethnic based identity system. In essence, state creation was a response to a diagnosis that the prior regional structure was culpable in maintaining a sense of tribal affiliation and a hindrance to faster economic growth. The country was under military rule during the next 30 years and the military progressively split the

country from four regions to 36 states. The military also created a revenue allocation system that aggregated fiscally generated revenue – taxes, levies, royalties from crude oil sales, tariffs, license fees, duties etc. – at the federal level. This was then shared among the tiers of the political structure (federal and state governments) using a formula based on a percentage set aside for the Federal

Government and a state's population, geographical size and number of local governments. Arguably, one of the most significant events in this time-period was the enshrinement of the state system and the revenue allocation mechanism into the 1999 federal constitution. However, a long history of consistently slow growth rates and a failure to engender a strong sense of nationalism and inclusion, has led to increasing doubt about the efficacy of the system and calls for restructuring the country. The worry is that barring a course correction, the present state based governance and revenue allocation system, will only but perpetuate slow growth and negative collateral effects!. Understanding the reasons and mechanisms responsible for the failures of the current system is a complex endeavour. These include an inability of governments at all levels to generate sufficient revenues to fund their bureaucracies and development agendas and reliance by state governments on the Federal Government for financial bailouts. Other important factors are the perpetuation of ethnicity as a basis of identity at the individual and group levels, maintaining cries of marginalization and weak political, legal and economic institutions relative to the task of nation building and fostering fast economic growth. The suppression of dissent and free speech and thus a reduction of civil pressure for good governance is also a factor.

Also germane is a value system that emphasizes following leaders, rather than objectively confronting and robustly criticizing them when necessary; zoning and federal character as a basis for making appointments into key political, policy making and executive positions, rather than merit on the assumption that the possibility of zoning and federal character bringing balance and reducing ethnic tension, trumps merit and the promise of solid governance; selection as an overriding basis within political parties for identifying candidates for political office rather than competitive primaries; and a gross failure of local businesses to meet local consumer needs. The extent to which the current paradigm contributed to and perpetuates these weaknesses is controversial. Also controversial is the notion that a reversal to a regional system of political governance and the dismantling of the unitary revenue allocation system will propel faster economic growth and increased patriotism. Defenders of the current system contend that it is not the system by itself but its operation that is the problem. In essence, that there is no pressing need to restructure the country but an urgent need to implement the current system to generate good outcomes for all Nigerians. Clearly, socio-economic conditions in the country did not come out of nowhere. On the contrary, there are definite structural challenges on the ground, that political leaders fail

to recognize and by extension, fail to recognize the weaknesses of the current system and the extent to which it is failing to deliver its broad twin objectives: fast economic growth and a sense of inclusion. As such, the status quo continues and opportunities that can engender faster growth go untapped, reducing the impact of the real economy on the populace by failing to prepare businesses and entrepreneurs to leverage them in full.

The destabilizing consequence of this long drawn situation is compounded by the rise of China and India as economic powers able to produce decent quality but low priced goods and services. Consequently, Nigeria is dependent on imports for meeting consumer and industrial needs, reliant on crude oil prices for economic growth and revenues, and hamstrung in enacting growth supporting monetary policies, especially business friendly low interest rates and massive infusion of capital to spur consumer demand and hence, business capital investment, and a competitive and comprehensive tax structure that provides revenue for infrastructure development. For example, numerous states and the bureaucracy they entail is counter to the growth history of the advanced and emerging economies. For example, Texas, a state that is geographically the size of Nigeria is one state in the United States, a country that is 10 times the size of Nigeria and has 50 states to Nigeria's 36. In addition, the history, number and complexity of the features of the country's federating units – language, customs, norms and values – suggests that a federal structure based on regions, will be better for growing the economy. Switzerland a country with a similar but much lesser informal complexity is a federation of loose federating units and is one of the richest and most innovative countries in the world. As a result, the process of controlling winners and losers has become even more complicated not just economically, but also politically and socially. With a young and fast growing population, the risk of too many young people feeling marginalized, oppressed dispossessed and forgotten is growing. This can result in anger at political leaders, businesses and anyone deemed to be successful, with potential but serious negative consequences. The danger is these same conditions can lead powerful political and economic blocks, to turn inwards and block attempts to restructure, in the hope of maintaining advantages and privileges.

The question though is the extent to which restricting into regions, devolving power from the Federal Government to regions, and revising the revenue allocation system accordingly, will facilitate fast economic growth and a sense of inclusion. It is unlikely that restructuring by itself will deliver these outcomes because there is little reason to assume that the mere fact of restructuring will eliminate corruption and inefficiency in the allocation of scarce revenue. Indeed, the real structural changes Nigeria needs is in the informal architecture of values and norms, a cultural revolution, that does not tolerate corruption, does not deify leaders, and emphasizes quality education, hard

work, discipline and nationalism as a Nigerian. A structural change that enables the legal institution to counter corruption regardless of who is involved. These changes are not premised on the structure of the federation, rather they are embedded in good governance. However, good governance will remain challenging to achieve as long as merit is subordinated to perceived tribal and power block imperatives at the government and political party levels.

Restructuring is a path that Nigeria must follow

As the demands for restructuring continue to gain momentum in Nigeria, Nigeria National Summit Group (NNSG) has warned of a lurking danger if President Muhammadu Buhari and the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) fails to address the issue. In similar vein, the Centre for Anti-Corruption and Open Leadership (CACOL), urged the Government not to displace the popular will and of the people. A former President of Aka Ikenga, Chief Goddy Uwazurike in his opinion said the subject becomes "a must to address if the country must continue to peaceful relationship and unity." In a statement by the Executive Secretary NNSG, Mr. Tony Uranta warns that the country stands the risk of failing if not restructured on time. The NNSG rising from an emergency NEC meeting in Lagos of recent stated, "It is a pity that even the National Assembly pretends that Nigeria are bound together on-negotiable unity, when we have very loud secessionist agitations ongoing in at least three of Nigeria's six zones". According to the group, "At this stage in this country we must stop sticking our heads in pretending that all is well with Nigeria. We must all agree that there is a need to restructure Nigeria, that we will have a necessary devolution of powers, fiscal federalism, review of the many unjust that hold the country attaining its maximum potentials economically, politically and socially." The NNSG statement pointed out that there is no need to be panic or reinvent the wheel. It recommends that the National Assembly should immediately commence the process of amending the present constitution, "such that future amendments, or creation of a new constitution, must be submitted to a national referendum by Nigerians; and let the President send the report of the 2014 National Conference to the National Assembly, as an Executive Bill for urgent consideration, without delay."

The group added that if all persons elected into offices, especially at the federal levels, resolve to be patriots and nationalists, the legalities regarding restructuring Nigeria can be concluded in much less than six working months. The statement reads: "Should we all choose to let this window pass without us proactively seizing the time, there may be no Nigeria around, let alone politicians, to vie for offices come 2019. We may be a failed state, like Somalia, by then." They, however, seek audience with both the Presidency and the leadership of the National Assembly, to advise on the best way forward to ensure Nigeria's sustainable unity and progress going forward. Chairman of CACOL, Mr. Debo

Adeniran said only a Sovereign National Conference (SNC), which report would be subjected to a referendum, is the best option to go about restructuring the country. According to him, "Many people have been talking about the subject, calling for devolution of powers, granting autonomy to states, resource control and reversal to the 1963 Constitution, if these are what the subject is all about, then the 1999 Constitution can simply be amended to address the issue. "However, what we have today is beyond that and I will suggest a SNC where all reports of past conferences would be brought to the table and appropriately discussed." Adeniran, who kicked against the demand from National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) that Nigeria should revert to the 1963 Constitution, posited that if nothing was wrong with the constitution, the military wouldn't have struck over-threw the government in 1966 and suspended the constitution "in fact previous government after the 1966 coup would have reversed the constitution long ago but because of its flaws." While Adeniran suggested the need to hold SNC now, he said the reason reports of other conferences held could not be used was because none of them was sovereign. Uwazurike said restructuring has become a must address because it is now a general and popular demand. Even former Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan were left with no choice but to address it during their tenure despite their lackluster attitude towards it initially. He said the issue is not about Buhari, as a matter of fact it has even gone beyond what an individual wants or not but what Nigeria deserves. "I do not care which group is concerned but the fact that PRONACO, NADECO, NNSG, Southern Leaders Forum, Ohanaeze, Afenifere among other forums, are asking for it and even some past Heads of State are now turned in the direction, the ruling party should give it a consideration, at least let us look at previous reports of the conferences we have had." Meanwhile, a group within the ruling party, APC Rebirth 2019 in a position paper signed by its Convener National Coordinator, Prince Tony Akeni warned the APC leaders to save the party from a disastrous electorate revolt in the next general election. The group noted that there is presently anguish of unprecedented scale and depth among the poor and the lower middle class in the country, which must be addressed with sense of urgency.

Only restructuring can guarantee Nigeria's survival

We grew up believing strongly in one nation, that time things were well organized. The drainages were clean, things were well done and there was high cultural value. We knew nothing about robbery or cultism and other vices. All these values have being destroyed. So much have being disrupted that made me feel disillusioned like we said earlier. Getting back from the brink. We can only get back on course if we address the lopsidedness in the structure of Nigeria. There is a lot of imbalance and lack of fairness in the conduct of the affairs of our country due to the nature of our constitution. A country of multi-ethnic diversity in a situation where we have an over centralized government at the centre, will always continuously create tension and apprehension.

That's why we are in this situation today. Proffering solutions we will take part of the solutions from the colonialists who created the problem for us in Nigeria. The United Kingdom (UK), after centuries of claiming to be united as a country is in itself disintegrating. About a year ago there was a referendum in Scotland where the separatists who want to breakaway from UK had the upper hand. It took the efforts of Past Prime Ministers and leaders from Scotland to stem the tide of separatism. The issue of Ireland is still very strong. Northern Ireland is still not on same with UK, the Welsh still do not see them selves as same as UK. If Britain that handed over parts of the institutions we have today to us is itself facing problems after centuries of claiming to be one, what makes them or us think that a country like Nigeria with diverse culture and diverse historical antecedents, can easily move together if we don't respect the norms and the attributes of each of the nations. That is why we seriously think and learn from the so-called British masters, who in their wisdom are regularly devolving powers from the British Parliament to Scotland and other parts of UK. They will be convinced by force. The younger elements in this country are not going to be as tolerant as my generation and generations before us are. I grow up in Nigeria where people from different parts of the country were my classmates at school. Since independence, we have been drifting into our little cocoons in certain ways but the children of today don't really have other counterparts to relate with. My own attitude of one Nigeria is becoming outdated to the views of the younger generations. The younger ones are better educated and more exposed and have access to much information through the Internet and they are not going to tolerate some of the things that we tolerated. Boko Haram is a major issue in itself threatening the oligarchy in the north. When I said it would be done by force, you can see the agitations in the country. The Biafra agitation is a mere name to request for the wants of the people in the east, the militants in the Niger Delta are not different from the OPC in the Southwest. They only take the issue from different perspectives. I don't want to turn this to a tribal issue. The north itself and those who oppose true federalism and restructuring are doing so because they are myopic. They would have been the real beneficiaries of true federalism because they would even have a free hand in carrying out their Sharia laws. They are agricultural producing region, why can't they use the vast lands in the north, the landmass there could be used as a food basket for the entire nation, and we all have our strengths and weaknesses. The mistake they are making especially about crude oil, very soon the oil would be of no value. Developed countries are already making vehicles that will run on solar and electric power energy. If the oil crashes, then we have to look inward; you can see states are beginning to encourage taxation. UK for example survives on the taxes of the masses. It will still come to a point where the north will be the one to agitate for true federalism.

When we were young, there was massive trading between Benin Republic and Lagos. Everyday traders came from Port Novo via Idi Iroko to trade and go back. That is to show you that whether there is this division or not, the economic activities and cultural affinity will always be there. Devolving power does not remove the economic relationship between the different ethnic groups at all. Do you blame Nigeria's political elites for not seeing this? Some of our leaders think they would be in public offices for life. Some think they will become a Mugabe. You don't give general condemnation of politicians, yes some have failed us but some have failed us but some have equally lived up to the expectations. For example some past governors have won cases in court, which show true administration and federalism. We should not therefore make generalized condemnation of politicians.

Activities of NADECO and other agitators for restructuring

Approximately 70% of our population engages in agricultural production at a subsidiary level. The sector could boast of about a quarter of our GDP, yet we have not been in achieve self-sufficiency in food production. We spend about \$1.1 billion importing food yearly, including wheat, rice, sugar and fish. A swift correction of this menace is that it create thousands of jobs, there would be less pressure on our foreign exchange and indeed an increase for our food security. Another key sector that seems to hold the ace for the Nigerian economy is the sector. Relative stability in electricity supply will go a long way in boosting productions and indeed SMEs, which will ultimately improve our GDP growth and employment. However, with less than 4,000MW power generation, Nigeria will need minimum of \$20 billion investments to generate additional 20,000MW. Another \$10 may be required as investments in the transmission and distribution value chain power sector. While the generation and distribution have been privatized, they still remain in the tight grip of the federal government. Beyond mere privatization will ultimately unlock value and attract investors into the sector is full deregulation states are supported to generate their own power through regional grid transition structure or off-grid embedded power programmes. Yet, the federal government continued to artificially fix the price for power as well as the feed stock, thus emergence of a competitive trading in bulk power where market forces determine and allocation of power resources.

Still, there is the more fundamental issue of fiscal federalism. Over the years, our problem of fiscal federalism has run parallel to our model of market economy. In a market like ours, decisions on production and distribution activities are based on market a free price system (or a guided market dynamics with minimal artificial)

However, while we profess a market economy, our practices and procedures the resemblance of a centrally planned economy, where government decisions drive aspects of the country's economy, particularly the commanding heights that have greatest multiplier effects. This comes at a very heavy price in form of inefficient allocation of resources and unsustainable pricing system. The call for restructuring of the country is not entirely new. The National Demi Conference (NADECO) headed by late Chief Anthony Enahoro called for a Sovereign National Conference in the 90s. The agitation was based on the fact that the constitution were foisted on the nation by past military regimes. The call gained ground with the introduction of Sharia law in some parts of the north but was heeded. Professor Tam David West later joined the fray to canvass for a National Conference to examine pertinent issues confronting the country, which decisions co put to referendum.

Former Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan convened National Conferences which recommended the retention of a federal system of government core element of which shall be a federal (central) government with states as federal conferences, which recommended the retention or a federal system or government core element of which shall be a federal (central) government with states as federal units. The conference did not foreclose the issue of a regional government, saying that each state that is regionally based should create a self-funding zonal commission promote economic development, good governance, equity and security in accordance the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). In recent times, however, the likes of Soyinka and Abubakar Atiku have renewed to for a restructuring on the basis that the current structure is heavily defective, as it not provide the enabling environment for growth and progress among the 36 states of the federation. Considering the fact that most economic decisions are taken in a political environment there is also the need to restructure our constitution. The restructuring should for devolution of power and resources to the states and local governments while the f government should concern itself with:

- Security (state policing?)
- Foreign affairs
- Economic wellbeing of Nigerians by implementing sustainable monetary and fiscal
- Reduce its share of the financial resources of Nigeria. The country's current s formula gives the federal government 52.68%, states 26.72% and local government councils 20.60%. This has to be reviewed in favour of the states and local

government

sustainable development.

The present structure of governance, where petrodollar money is shared every month encourages no state to develop its resources. It should be noted that before the oil in Nigeria, the various regions were encouraged to invest heavily in commodities such as cocoa, groundnuts, coffee, palm oil, etc. But fiscal federalism was sacrificed at the cost of the oil-boom. Nevertheless, no political restructuring can move the nation forward

first dealing with the economic malfunction of the Nigerian fabric. It seems settle regional autonomy belies the real economic independence for survival of the state time has come to refocus the restructuring debate on a workable model that advantages political and economic reforms that is complementary and reinforcing.

- Democratically people constitution should be drafted in Nigeria.
- Effective resource control for each state should be put in place.
- Devolution of power to the states by federal government should be adopted.
- Federal government should concentrate on his areas of internal and external defense and inter-governmental as well as foreign relation
- Each state should be developed in line with its available resources Merit should be the Standard yard stick for employment and promotion in the civil service State police should be in introduced to reduce lead and international criminals in the country. Federal government assets in each state should be handed over to the affected states. Federal civil servant should be deployed to their states of origin for continuation of their works.

It will being governance to the grass root level. The economic design of each state will depend on the quality and the quantity of resources available in each state of the federation. Salaries and allowances of the workers will be paid promptly. It will also minimize rate spheres from Nigerians to their leader. People will be more educated, enlightening in civilized about the corporate governance in Nigeria. It will encourage merits and provide employment opportunities for young teeming graduates that are roaming the street, of important towns and cities in Nigeria. In view of these advantages therefore, it is importance, urgent necessary and important for Nigeria to be politically and economically restructure. If you are to raise a kind of executive summary on the issue of restructuring, what are the points you will like Nigerians to get? In one single word, I will say restructure back to 1963 to devolve all the things that we are agitating, talking about what will bring power closer to the people, because they are every state, every federating unit, that is all we are to exercise, to make your own constitution, you have all the basic issues that governs your people. The federal government had his own

authority but it was limited to that of the federating units, which was limited to that of the federating units, which is why you would see that in that constitution, the leaders of the parties were actually at the regional level and their representatives, but the ones who descends the National level. So if we have that system repeated, I think the country will benefit from it.

Without restructuring Nigeria risk disintegration

The handwriting is clear. The cloud is gathering. Our dear country, Nigeria, is sitting on gunpowder, waiting to explode. Nigeria has remained in the tunnel of misery including fighting an avoidable civil war which claimed, over a million lives. The drums of war are being played in many parts of Nigeria: the Yoruba from the South-West; IPOB/MASSOB from the South-East; the Niger Delta militants, MOSOP/MEND and others from the South-South and the catastrophe of possible civil war must be avoided through proactive means with urgency and decisive measures of restructuring. I commended the thoughtfulness and bravery of Nigerians who are presently championing the call for the restructuring of Nigeria and urged them to continue speaking truth to power. I want to reiterate that Nigeria must get rid of unit; system. It will kill Nigeria. We must restructure now with six equal regions, If Nigeria fails to listen to the voice of reason and equity and restructure, it will be the last straw that may break Nigeria.

Currently, the North has 19 states, mostly unsustainable, while the South has 17 states, some likely, not sustainable as well. Interestingly, there are more senators and representatives from the North who are constitutionally empowered to make laws that govern the conduct of all Nigerian citizens. Furthermore, the North has 19 states with 419 local government areas, 58 senatorial seats and 191 House of Representatives. On the other contrary, the South has 17 states with 357 local government areas, 51 senatorial seats and 169 House of Representatives. I submit that the North is reaping where they have not sowed at the expense of the South whose sweat and labour and resources are channelled to the North through an unjust structure, policies and laws. This aberration was the handiwork of the military which imposed the 1999 constitution designed to favour the North at the expense of the South and orchestrated with impunity. Therefore, the adoption of this flawed constitution creates an unjust system that benefits the North, making it difficult to change through a constitutional means. The current Nigerian structure imposed by the constitution is unjust, inequitable, unfair and unbalanced and must be changed to address the challenges of the current disposition. The military constitution imposition must be done away with along with the unitary system which is counterproductive to a democratic form of government. Nigeria must be restructured to fast-track economic growth and entrepreneurial productivity and development. Restructuring with true federalism option and regional autonomy (six

regional zones: North–East, North–West, North–Central, South–West, South–East, and South–South) may be the only solution to the Nigerian impasse. It is on this and other bases that restructuring Nigeria into six autonomous regions, three from the North and three from the South that will proffer a lasting solution, unity, peace, economic productivity, growth and sustainability of the Nigerian entity. Otherwise, Nigeria risks the dilemma of non–existence and possible destruction.

Lastly, the United Nations together with the United States of America should intervene in setting up a national conference to prevent further escalation and the possibility of armed struggle, war, and disaster of imaginary proportions.

Devolution of Power

With the concentration of power in the Federal Government, the country is not where it ought to be. We criticized that is the main issue about the restructuring that is the main issue, too much power concentrated at the center. How can you seriously talk about true federalism when the political functionaries of the state government, the members of the State House of Assembly, even, members of Local Government council, had their election conducted by a Federal Government agency? Take police as another point. The state government is supposed to be autonomous government. The idea of government implies an authority with an independent control of its own forces. You cannot talk about government if that government does not have control of the coercive forces. All personal Position. I grew up in a one Nigeria and I believe in it. But I know that it is good for everybody and I hope that it will remain so. But the way we are going, the position of the present Federal government seems to give the Invitation to violence. The way the Federal Government, under the present administration, is going is suggesting a set agenda. Check the recent appointment in NNPC, out of fifteen top positions, ten go to the North, three to the Southwest, two to the South–South, nil to the Southeast. It is like the present Federal Government is not really interested in holding the country together. They cannot hold this country together without doing justice to all groups, North and South. I hope that the present administration will reverse its attitude and its policies.

Nigeria became a united British colony by the amalgamation of its Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914. In 1960 it attained independence, fashioned a federal Constitution, which had three and subsequently four regions as its federating units. The pre-1960 and the 1963 constitutions of Nigeria were fashioned by the people of Nigeria as represented by the leaders of their ethnic nationalities. The coup of January 1966 and the counter-coup of the same year occasioned by ethnic tensions and disagreements within the military–led our country to disastrous consequences. Our first Prime Minister, Rt. Hon Tafawa Balewa and the then Premier of Northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello, as well as the then Minister for Finance Festus Okotie–Eboh, were murdered.

Massive attacks were unleashed on South Eastern Nigerians living in the Northern Nigeria. A sitting Head of State from the South East, Major General Aguiyi Ironsi and a governor from the South West Col. Adekunle Fajuyi were murdered. The military suspended our 1963 constitution and adopted a unitary system of government to fit their command and control structures. Opposition to this move by Southern Nigeria led to constitutional talks in Aburi, Ghana. The agreements reached Aburi were jettisoned. War broke out and claimed more than three and a half million lives mostly from the South East. After the war, the military-authored two more constitutions, one in 1979 and another in 1998/99. The two military constitutions were finally approved by the Supreme Military Council. Under military rule, this organ was the highest legislative organ for the country. It was made up of senior military officers, a majority of whom were from Northern Nigeria. The last constitution of 1998/99, which the military approved one, was the legal instrument that governed Nigeria's transition to democracy. It is still in use in Nigeria today. It was not subjected to a national referendum. It created 19 states out of the old Northern Region, 6 states out of the Western Region, 2 states out of the old Midwestern Region and 9 states out of the old Eastern Region. An agreement by a constitutional conference convened by General Abacha divided the country into six geopolitical zones. This agreement was never incorporated into a legislation even, though, it continues to be adopted for administrative purposes by Government and the political parties. The creation of states and local governments in these six geographical areas did not respect equitable parameter.

Our present constitution is not autonomous. It was not written by the people of Nigeria. It was not approved in a National referendum. In jurisprudence, its effectiveness will score a very low grade on account of its unacceptability. Regrettably, it continues to hold sway and begins with a false proclamation. Our present constitution was written at a time of unprecedented increase in National revenue following the massive discovery of oil in Nigeria and its global reliance as a source of fuel for mechanical machines. It had as its centre piece, the distribution of national revenue and national offices using states and local governments as units for division. It constructed a federation in name but a unitary government in practice following the pattern enunciated in 1966 from the inception of military administration in Nigeria. Competition and drive for production by the federating units was destroyed. Each state and local government waited every month for proceeds from oil generated revenue to be divided out to them. The Federal Government became enormously powerful taking over mining rights, construction of interstate high ways, major educational establishments, rail and water transportation, power and several infrastructural responsibilities previously undertaken by the regions. Competition for control of the Federal Government became intense and corrupted our electoral system. Corruption became perverse as the Federal Government became too big to be effectively policed by auditing and administrative regulations. As at now,

Nigeria has a grim economic outlook. Nigeria's external debt has grown from \$10.3 billion in 2015 to \$15 billion in 2017. Her domestic debt has also grown from 8.8 trillion Naira in 2015, to 14 trillion Naira in 2017. Domestic debt component for the 36 states rose from 1.69 trillion Naira in 2015 to 2.9 trillion Naira in June 2017. The Federal government has on two occasions released bailout funds to enable states to meet their recurrent expenditure requirements. Only about eight states in Nigeria namely Lagos, Kano, Enugu, Edo, Delta, Abia, Rivers, and Kwara have their internally generated revenue sufficient enough to cover their interest repayments on their debts without depending on allocations from Federally collected revenue. For the Federal Government close to 40% of its annual revenue was spent on servicing of by interest repayments on debts and according to International Monetary Fund (IMF), this percentage is expected to increase further. According to Fitch ratings, Nigeria's Government gross debts is 320% of its annual revenue one of the highest in the world. In the face of this economic reality, the Population Reference Bureau Predicts that Nigeria will in 2050 become the world's fourth-largest population with a population of 397 million coming after China, India and the United States of America. This is only 33 years away. In 2011, five Colonels in the United States Centre for Strategy and Technology, Air War College did a case study on Nigeria and the global consequences of its implosion and came out with a conclusion that, "despite its best efforts, Nigeria has a long-term struggles ahead to remain a viable state, much less a top-20 economy". Faced with this grim economic outlook and a structure inimical to growth what is, therefore, our way forward? Our growth what model has to change for us survive as a country.

A model based on sharing of Government revenue must give way to new structure that will challenge and drive productivity in different regions across the country. This new model must take into account that the factors driving productivity in today's world are no longer driven by fossil oil but rather the proliferation of a knowledge-based economy. The restructuring of Nigeria into smaller and independent federations limits and the devolution of powers to these federating units to control exclusively their human capital development, mineral resources, agriculture, and power (albeit with an obligation to contribute to the federal government) is the only way to salvage our fledging economy. Restructuring will devote attention to the new wealth areas, promote competition and productivity as the new federating units struggle to survive. It will drastically reduce corruption as the large federal parastatals, which gulp Government revenue for little or no impact dissolve and give way to small and viable organs in the new federating units. Those campaigning against restructuring in Nigeria have painted an unfortunate and untrue picture that those of us in support of restructuring are doing so in order to deny the Northern States who have not yet any proven oil reserves of the ability to survive. This is unfortunate. The new model we propose for Nigeria recognizes that revenue in the world today is promoted by two main sources namely, human

capital development leveraging on technology to drive the critical sectors of the economy and agriculture. Ten years ago the top ten companies in the world were the likes of Exxon Mobil, Shell, and Total. Today the top eight companies in the world are represented by technology related companies. They include Apple, Microsoft, Google, Facebook, and Amazon. The example of Netherlands in Agriculture is also relevant here. The Netherlands is the 18th largest economy in the world. It has a land area of about 339,000 square kilometres. Niger State, one of Nigeria's 37 administrative units has about 74,000 square kilometres. Netherlands has over \$100 billion from agricultural exports annually, contributed mainly by vegetables and dairy. Nigeria's oil revenue has never in any one year reached \$100 billion. Northern Nigeria is the most endowed agriculturally in Nigeria. Its tomatoes, carrots, cabbages, cucumbers, tubers, grains, livestock and dairy feed the majority of Nigerians in spite of its huge reserve of unexploited export potentials. In a restructured Nigeria, Northern Nigeria with the right agricultural policies will be the richest part of Nigeria. Our analysis here must be viewed from the background that datelines have been fixed by OECD countries and China for the cessation of production of automobiles and machines dependent on fossil oil. This development and the new technology for production of shale oil in the United States has made world dependence on Nigeria's crude oil a rapidly declining phenomenon.

This brings me to the question of what from Nigeria will assume under a restructuring

Restructuring for National Cohesion

Two basic models have been canvassed for restructuring in Nigeria. A conservative model aimed at maintaining the status quo has been proposed to mean simply a shedding of some of the exclusive powers of the federal government like issuing of mining licenses, permission for constructing of federal roads and shedding of regulatory powers over investments in critical sectors of the economy like power. This model merely scratches the surface of the problem. It avoids fundamental devolution of powers. The second model calls for a fundamental devolution of powers to the States as federating units and a lean Federal Government with exclusive powers for external defence, customs, immigration, foreign relations and a Federal legislature and judiciary to make and interpret laws in these exclusive areas. This second model proposes states at the federating units with two different approaches. The first approach simply wants the states as the federating units and a federal government with limited powers. It wants the states to control a percentage of revenue accruing from their areas and contribute an agreed percentage of such revenue to the federal government. The second approach proposes the states as the federating units with a region at each of the six geopolitical units whose constitution will be agreed to and adopted by the states in the geopolitical region. The regions will have the powers to merge existing states or create new ones. There will be regional and state legislatures and judiciary dealing with making and

interpreting laws made in the respective political entities. This approach proposes a revenue sharing formulae of 15% to the Federal Government, 35% to the State Government and 50% to the State Governments. To achieve a national consensus on this subject requires a national discussion. Regrettably, the ruling party, APC which promised restructuring in its manifesto after two years and four months in office is still appointing a committee to define what sort of restructuring it wants for Nigeria. To make matters worse, none of the other political parties have come up with any clear-cut route for achieving a consensus on this matter. The National Assembly itself is a reflection of the deep ethnic divisions in the country and the Northern majority conferred on it by the military makes it highly unacceptable to Southern Nigeria. Recent resolutions made by it on devolution of powers have not helped the situation. Happily, the Senate President has promised a revisit of the subject matter. In the recent past, self-determination groups have sprung up in Nigeria. The self-determination groups include IPOB, MASSOB, Arewa Youths, Niger Delta Republic and Republic of the Middle Belt. Of all these groups IPOB and Boko Haram have been designated as terrorist organisations by the federal government. This development in relation to IPOB is unfortunate. Boko Haram is an armed organisation, which has attacked and occupied Nigeria territory hoisted its flag and appointed local authority governments. It has abducted and abused Nigerian women, kidnapped and imprisoned many and killed over two hundred thousand people. It is still involved in guerrilla warfare against Nigeria yet the Federal government is negotiating with them. No member of Boko Haram captured by the military is under trial. Members of this Federal government are on record for condemning the previous government for brutal murder of Boko Haram members and condemning the retired Chief of Army Staff for zealous prosecution of the anti-terror campaign. Members of the sect who confess to a change of mind have been received along with their abducted female partners in the Presidency and rehabilitated.

No Igboman, for instance, heads any security arm of the Nigerian Armed Forces. Our area of is the most heavily policed as if there was a deliberate policy to intimidate us and hold to us down. Our endurance has been stretched beyond Hooke's gauge for elastic limit. The deployment of the Nigerian Army under the guise of Operation Python dance to the South East or was unconstitutional under S. 271 of the 1999 Constitution. Deployment of the army is only allowed in circumstances of insurrection, terrorism and external aggression not in killing of priest, or fighting kidnapping. And in those circumstances where they can be deployed, leave of the Senate must be sought This brazen impunity in dealing with matters, which concern the South East, is provocative. The Arewa Youths Council by issuing a quit notice for Igbos to leave Northern Nigeria and declaring a Federal Republic of Nigeria without Igboland had committed serious infractions of the law. First by declaring a new Republic of Nigeria, which excises the South East unilaterally, they were committing treason. By issuing a proclamation for

Nigerians to leave any part of Nigeria forcibly they were infringing the fundamental rights of innocent Nigerians, as guaranteed by the Constitution to live and do business anywhere. By commencing an inventory of Igbo property in Nigeria for seizure by October 1st, 2017, they were attempting conversion. By proclaiming a mop-up action of those who did not comply with their order by October 1st, they were, without doubt, inciting genocide. Yet in spite of all these orders to arrest them by the Kaduna State Government and the Inspector General of Police were not enforced nor were they prevented from holding court with Governors and leading elders from the North. The only hope for change in Nigeria today is the rising call for restructuring pioneered by the Southern leadership forum, supported lately by ex-Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, former President Ibrahim Babangida and leaders of the Middle belt including Dan Suleiman and Prof. Jerry Gana. The President must address the situation by constituting a nationwide conversation of all ethnic nationalities to look into the 2014 National Conference report and the trending views on this subject matter so as to come up with a consensus proposal that the national and state assemblies will be persuaded to adopt. To continue to neglect a resolution of this impasse will spell doom for our dear country. Our argument is further reinforced by a two-year extensive study by the UNDP titled, *JOURNEY TO EXTREMISM* released in September 2017 which indicated that exposure to state abuse and marginalization not religious ideology are better predictors of radicalization. It also indicates that those living on the periphery of their country with less access to education and health services are more vulnerable to be recruited into violent extremist groups. In Nigeria, millions of unemployed graduates from universities waiting for up to 10 years without gainful employment are restive, agitated and veritable cannon fodders for escalating restive-ness.

In conclusion, I hope that the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the British Government and British interests associated with Nigeria will continue to offer useful advice to our polity that will lead to an early resolution of our situation. I thank you for your kind attention at one go- and which is the case with National Conferences or Constitutional Talks.

In multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-cultural countries with communities differentially endowed with human, mineral and other resources of economic value, the basis for common citizenship, not being automatic by definition has to be carefully and deliberately crafted because such admixture is naturally problematic. All around us, happenings everywhere, in the Middle East, European Union, United States of America, the United Kingdom (Scots, Welsh, Irish and English/Anglo-Saxon) and our own CIVIL WAR and socio-political developments since then say so most eloquently. More importantly, a more fractious polity, aside from being part-outcome of improved avenues for voicing one's views on any matter (sometimes libelously, sometimes raucously, and other times subdued by teargas and other strong-arm tactics of law

enforcement agencies maintaining "law and order" and "public peace"), is also traceable to the reaction of partisan state authorities to the drawing of attention by those individuals, groups and communities so affected, to those unsatisfactory conditions. Quite often, due to a combination of factors, usually ideological preferences, largely unbridled competition for and control of political power and sectional and much narrower considerations, the needs of and preferences advocated by some groups and persons "lose" legitimacy before the eyes of partisan state authorities - particularly legislators and presidency, security and intelligence agencies and political cabals - and such groups' or communities' activities directed at protecting, promoting and pursuing their interests, ostensibly like other interest groups in society, attract negative labels - anti-government, subversive, ill-conceived, illegal, terrorists, etc. - and dealt with accordingly. Countervailing reaction by such groups, persons and communities and partisan state authorities' own further actions all tend to create a seemingly vitriolic, unstable social, political and economic environment, held, locally and internationally, to be "unfavourable" to investment and development, including the relative absence of some of those physical and social infrastructures long-demanded by the groups and communities not so endeared to partisan state authorities and other better-connected interest groups at that juncture. All this is not a judgement call, but to highlight the hate-driven logic of the long-standing, hate-producing public, political and economic policies and actions, corrosive of nationalism and patriotism, being indisputably fuelled by parochial, regional, ethnic, and religious sentiments and bigotry and which have brought to the fore the rational questioning of the basis for continued common citizenship in many quarters and levels of society.

On this take, the current round of so-called hate speeches from all sides owe little to election defeat since a typical politician always blames actual and imagined rivals or the opposition for any unpopular development or occurrence, a variant of the well-known psychological disorder of the oppressor blaming victims for his own actions. Then, again, you never know... a retired Admiral and former governor was quoted to have publicly bragged about how "we dealt with the Igbos and Yoruba are next", obviously pitifully ignorant of the fact of most officers and men of the Second and Third Divisions who bore the brunt of the fighting during the Civil War were drawn largely from Western Region and Northern and Southern minority ethnic groups. A top politician also announced how "they" would make the country "ungovernable" for President Jonathan. It would be stretching the imagination beyond limits to think President Jonathan summoned a National conference because he liked such things, selected and ordered all the participants to show up, grouped them into various committees, compelled them to produce reports and append their signatures to the Final Report. And he was so power-drunk and ambitious that he forgot to restructure in line with contents of the Report. *Ahhhh. hate speeches? Na today?*

So, we have less than half a million "fellow" Nigerians nationwide holding everybody to ransom because of their greed and narrow-mindedness, specializing in divisive policies that from the middle-belt to Bornu, western states to southeast and south-south, any of these at very short notice can RESTRUCTURE to have their own security organizations, civil service, parastatals, economy and military outfits capable of, like Israel in the Middle-East, holding off all others and you better believe it - and European Union, the USA, UK, Canada, China, Russia and lesser powers will easily back such rearrangements as long as ethnic and religious bigots keep on this way against all odds and we end up in violence. A million and more refugees from Nigeria will collapse all the economies in ECOWAS. Nigeria and the world have changed a good deal since 1967 and we now have over 80 million young ones under 30 who must find a living against these cabals having monopoly over land and mineral resources. Even for a booming economy anywhere in the world, not more than 10% can be salary/wage earners as companies and investors do not go into business to create jobs because there is mass unemployment; only those jobs and tasks which guarantee profits. The current economic down-turn might have increased anxieties and poverty, but is not the cause of the general malaise, simmering anger, palpable tension and periodic outbreaks of violence.

First, repeal the Petroleum Act pending final determination by a National Constitutional Conference. Second, not such only remove Land Use Act from the Constitution, bury it deep more than six feet permanently under the ground without a coffin - dust to dust. From 1951 to 1966 Nigerian peasant farmers fed us and European, British, Japanese, American and other foreign industries with groundnuts, cotton, palm oil, palm kernel, rubber and must other agricultural produce with our customary land tenure systems, common law principles on sale of goods and other contractual relations, and Islamic Property Law in operation. And these did not hamper the development of the solid infrastructure from 1954 to 1965 that put schits, as earlier noted, corruptly and incompetently ranaground. What has been the state of agriculture and everything else with a Land Use Act? Easily the most anti-Nigeria contrivance in our national history. Third, decentralize the NNPC immediately.

Restructuring without end

To live, is to die. It is an inevitable process. That might have been why William Shakespeare wrote in *Julius Caesar* that he is amazed why human beings fear death because: "Death is a necessary end, it will come when it will come." Like death, so is it with restructuring which simply means the running of something like an organization, polity or country in an innovative, novel, different or new way. In other words, restructuring is an inevitable part of life. When some politicians got fed up with the then ruling Peoples' Democratic Party, PDP they launched a coalition, the All

Progressives Congress, APC, on February 6, 2013 to restructure the country along the path of 'Change.' Given his antecedents, I do not lose sleep that Professor Ango Abdullahi is opposed to restructuring. His ignoble role in destroying the education of many youths in 1980/81 through vindictive and political mass expulsions, and in the police killing of four students in 1986, do not lend him to be taken serious. But I worry when an elder statesman like Alhaji Salihu Abubakar Tanko Yakasai campaigns against it. He has been active in the progressive politics since the 1950s. He fought against the feudal system for the emancipation of the *Talakanwa* (the poor masses). Some nationalists like Alao Aka-Bashorun and Baba Omojola under whose tutelage some of us came, used to tell us that if we need progressive Pan-Nigerians with whom to ally in the North, we should look in the direction of Yakasai.

In 1990, when there was a movement to restructure the country through a National Conference that would change military rule to the dustbin of history and enthrone a fair federalism, the then dictatorship of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida announced that all those who attended the conference will be sent to jail for five years. Alhaji Yakasai, a member of the National Consultative Forum, NCF, which organized that National Conference, was one of those who courageously stepped forward to attend the Conference preferring to go to jail in order that our country be restructured. In his autobiography, *The Story of a humble life*, the elder statesman confessed he was one of those in the Contact Committee who one Friday in 1966, organized a protest against the Ironsi Unification Decree in Kano. He wrote that: "The whole thing suddenly turned into an orgy of anti-Igbo violence, which degenerated into a major confrontation before-the police" could Intervene, the situation was completely out of hand. Many innocent people were killed, maimed or had their property destroyed...On hearing what happened in Kano, other places If Nigeria were a school and restructuring an examination, the NASS that has carried out a number constitutional amendments to restructure the country and failed, would have been expelled like Zaria, Kaduna, Jos and Makurdi reacted in similar fashion with grave consequences. It was this fire, lit in Kano, which like a harmattan fire turned into the huge conflagration known as the pogrom that eventually resulted in the Civil War in which over two million people died. I have no doubt that Yakasai regretted the outcome of that protest. Today, at 91 and in the twilight of his life, he can assist the country to move forward by dropping his opposition to restructuring the country based on the progressive principles of his early life. I admit that at any given time, restructuring cannot be "fair to all concerned" nor "will it be beneficial to all concerned." That is the type of illusory code the Rotary Club pushes. In reality, there are those who benefit from the current imbalance and would feel that they would be losing some privileges if there is a change in the system. They should be comforted that restructuring will be based on social justice and that on the long run, all Nigerians shall be winners. There are also those who, realizing that restructuring is an

unstoppable train, try to impose conditions such as that it is only the National Assembly, NASS that can restructure the country. This is illusory. First, if Nigeria were a school and restructuring an examination, the NASS that has carried out a number of constitutional amendments to restructure the country and failed, would have been expelled. Secondly, the skewed structure of the NASS is one of the reasons for the restructuring demand for a fundamental devolution of power. Thirdly, there are many who do not think we need twin chambers in the NASS. In other words, they want either the Senate or House of Representatives abolished; preferably, the latter. Fourthly, if constitutionally and universally, sovereignty belongs to the people from whom all power must flow, the people must have a say in the future of their country and not be consigned to the margins because the military imposed constitution says so. I am not one of those under the illusion that the NASS can be trusted to preside over the reduction of its powers.

There are also those who rule that the unity of the country is not negotiable. I love the sound of it, but what constitutes unity? This argument reminds me of the Babangida dictatorship which ruled that there can be no alternative to any of its programmes like its fraudulent SAP Programme. So those 'Structural Adjustment Programme', it decreed that to this, 'There Is No Alternative' (TINA). But the renowned economist, Professor Sam Aluko replied that there is alternative to everything including life, which is death. The history of Nigeria, is the story of constant restructuring. When colonial Britain tried to save on administrative funds and run its Southern and Northern Protectorates and the Lagos *Crown* Colony as a single administration unit, it amalgamated them in 1914 and reduced the three capitals to one; Lagos. It created three regions with Divisions as sub units. When the minority agitations in post-colonial Nigeria could no longer be contained, the country was restructured in 1963 into four regions, and in 1967, into 12 states and further into 19 states before ending in the present 36 states. In 1976, following restructuring, Local Governments were created. Everywhere you turn, there is restructuring going on; one of the latest being the restructuring of the Ibadan Monarchy from a single king, the *Olubadan*, to 22 kings. The 1967 Aburi Accord was about restructuring the country and the military, the failure to implement that Accord was one of the major reasons that led to the Civil War. In contrast to those opposed to restructuring, those in favour are behaving as if restructuring is like the Kingdom of God which would come in one fell swoop. They are not approaching it as basic socio-economic and political *re-engineering designed to address* human concerns. More importantly, they neglect the content such as Nigerians' right to food, shelter, education, healthcare and good governance; they are rather concerned with form. They claimed that the first Ogulagha indigene to be employed was in 1980, 12 years after oil production began in the community, and that the next person employed was in 1998. The spokespersons argued that: "It is very sad and incredible to hear that Forcados Terminal

that has been in existence for over 46 years does not have one person from the kingdom as a Community Liaison Officer, CLO, or Community Relations Officer, CRO. Can this happen in any other oil-producing community or kingdom in this country or in the world at large? They said after series of agitations, from 2007/ 2008, the SPDC agreed to absorb 'qualified youths from the kingdom in their training programme with the promise that they will be employed if they successfully completed the training. They claimed that while 16 of the 18 youths passed the training programme with distinction, only three of them were employed as direct junior staff while the other 13 were placed in different categories as casual workers. They claimed that while the community protected the oil facilities during the armed militancy in the Niger-Delta, the SPDC "relegated all Ogunlaga kingdom contractors to grass-cutting, housekeeping, toilet washing and all kinds of dehumanising contracts" while outsiders were rewarded with juicy contracts Community demanded:

*Fifty percent of the Forcados offshore oil facility surveillance vessels contract.

*Engagement of four Community "Relations/staff in Forcados Terminal.

*SPDC should train some Ogunlaga youths in the FYIP gas-gathering facility in the kingdom.

*SPDC should immediately engage the outstanding 13 trainees as staff.

*Recall all " Ogunlaga Kingdom persons sacked due to SPDC asset divestment.

*Convert all Ogunlaga graduates who are currently on contract into permanent staff, and

*Hence forth, Ogunlaga indigenes be given first consideration for any project/contract to be executed in the kingdom.

The SPDC Government Integration Manager, Mr. Abubakar Ahmed who represented the company said Shell has heard the complaints of the Ogunlaga people, that the company is not disputing the issues presented by the community and that Shell will look into all issues raised. He promised that Shell will engage the community in further dialogue. He said most of the projects in the host community are based on contracts and that the company will have to investigate complaints about abandoned projects in the community. Hon. Julius Pondi, the Member Representing Burutu Constituency which includes Ogunlaga Kingdom said the promise of Shell that it will verify the projects in Ogunlaga is an old one and that the company should act immediately. He rejected the offer of Shell to host a meeting with the community leaders in Port Harcourt, insisting that such a meeting should be held in the community. The Chairman of the House Petitions Committee, Honourable Uzoma Nkem Abonta advised Shell to treat the issues raised by the community with all seriousness adding that if Shell meets its basic obligations to its host community, all sides will be at peace. He adjourned further sitting on the issue until December 6, 2017 with the hope that Shell would have done the needful in the community.

Why we must restructure Nigeria

For the better part of the year 2017, one topic that has dominated the national discourse is the clamor for the restructuring of Nigeria. Several groups have debated this very important matter at different forums but no consensus has been reached because most of the arguments have been motivated and sign-posted by primordial, self-enlightened interest unfortunately, if wisdom is not applied, these disparate and dangerous views might drag the nation to the precipice. On October 1, 2017, during the 57th Anniversary of our Independence, President Muhammadu Buhari, in a dawn broadcast, added his powerful voice to the roiling national debate on restructuring. He was rather combative, tense and emotional. It was very obvious that our dear President was not on the same page with the advocates of restructuring. Not unexpectedly, after President Buhari's speech, some presidential aides tried to amuse us by dismissing those clamoring for restructuring as jobless, favour-seekers. Before these hardline, scorched earth policy pushes us deeper into the miry depths, it is imperative to clear the dangerous cobwebs blurring our vision to national cohesion and compromise. Advocates of restructuring are not jobless; they are not favour-seekers, they are clear-headed thinkers, patriotic and selfless citizens who want Nigeria to succeed and soar like the eagle. But success must be based on justice and fairness to all regardless of race or religion. The current "non-negotiable" mantra being imposed on everybody by some of our elected leaders is retrogressive, sectional and dictatorial. If we want peace to reign, then, there should be nothing under the sun that we cannot negotiate or debate. According to a popular singer, Peter Tosh, everyone is crying out for peace but no one is crying out for justice, without justice, no nation can; without justice, no nation can have peace; without peace, there will be no growth or success. Our country, Nigeria, is stagnant and stunted today because those who we entrusted with power and leadership are nepotistic and parochial; comfortably wallowing in the murky waters of tribalism, partisanship and selective justice.

Some northern governors forbid the selling or drinking of alcohol in their states yet they get the lion share from the VAT money accruable from the sale of alcohol in other states. This is sheer hypocrisy and greed. This is why restructuring has become a desideratum. When we restructure and practice true federalism, each governor would be contented with the resources in his state. In a true federalism, no leader will appoint only his relations and cronies into highly sensitive and lucrative positions to the utter chagrin and disadvantages of other sections of the country. In a restructured Nigeria, there will be nothing like "Federal Character", "Quota system", "Catchment Area" and "Disadvantaged States" etc. These are clever ploys to manipulate the system to favour a particular section of the country. In a true federal government, each state will have its police, judiciary, resource control, education, salary model and financial independence, among others. When we restructure, the central government will not be sending

dancing pythons armed smiling crocodiles to intimidate Federating states. Contrary to the pretentious propaganda and backward mindsets of primitive purveyors' of lies, restructuring is not about secession, balkanization or disintegration. Restructuring will engender healthy and constructive competition among federating states; it will encourage creativity and promote rapid social development. It is selfish and myopic of opponents of restructuring to think that they will lose their entrenched privileged positions in the new order. In the current political dispensation, state governors are treated like vassals of the President that is not true federalism; that is primitive feudalism. Restructuring will eliminate dependency and cronyism.

Restructuring will open up opportunities for new ideas, in order organization innovation each federating unit will be self-sufficient. We practiced the system between 1960 and 1965. And if opponents of restructuring are arguing that all states cannot be equal, that is the more reason why each state should be allowed to develop at its own pace and capability. There is no need for the current unprofitable and exploitative uniformity. According to a Senior Advocate of Nigeria who recently chaired the South West Conference on restructuring in Ibadan, "This country is too complicated, too large with so many tribes, traditions and cultures, to be governed under this present arrangement. Our founding fathers realized these problems and this is the reason why they deliberately fashioned a constitution which allowed each section of the country to develop at its own rate. That constitution was abolished by the military and they brought a constitution which concentrated powers on the centre" This view was supported by a former Ondo State governor who argued that "True Federalism is desired in this country to put an end to agitation for tenures for the executive at the Federal, State and Local government levels". Also, a renowned academic, Professor Godini G. Darah observed that "Kano State that contributes nothing to the Federation Account has 44 councils and gets the largest share at all times. But Bayelsa State that is a major oil-producer has only eight councils and receives the least among the state. Lagos State has about the same population as Kano State according to the national census, but Lagos has only 20 local government areas. Most of the local councils were created by military fiat in the 1990s and the exercise like that of creation of states, was manipulated to favor the 19 states in the northern part of the country. Thus the local government is another conduct through which Niger Delta wealth is siphoned to finance the administration of sections of the country that do not generate revenue for the country." Professor Darah added: "Nigeria is the only country in the world where the areas that are richest in oil and gas are also the poorest and most neglected by government". In the peculiar, absurd brand of federalism we practice in Nigeria today, every move, every idea, every initiative of governors to lift their state out of doldrums and abject squalor must be sanctioned by the President. That is not true federalism. Such relationship does not promote self-development. It is backward. It stultifies growth and wealth creation. The current variant

of presidential system of government being practiced in Nigeria under the guise of "non-negotiable" unity is a clever device for sectional exploitation, thievery, corruption and flagrant promotion of feudalism. Before the January 1966 military coup, each region developed at its own pace. We want Nigeria to be restructured so that each state will develop and grow at its own rate, think and carry out governance, using its own God-given resources for the welfare of its people. Each state must be free to take care of its workers. The current embarrassing situation where by states crawl, cap-in-hand, and every mouth to collect allocation in Abuja is bizarre, unproductive, primitive and insulting. Now, Abuja is doling out "bail-outs" to governors, which some of them will embezzle, anyway. Let every state create its own wealth. The current spirit of parasitism should be rebuked and done away with.

Restructuring confronting northern elite's narrative

When delegates representing various northern interest groups met in Kaduna recently, they were obliged to sign on to the inevitability of a re-ordering of the Nigerian project. Reluctant, petulant and clearly irritated by the increasingly vociferous clamour for fundamental changes in the current national political arrangement, the Northern elite opted for a vague vote for a "return to regionalism." Call it by whatever name, however, a return to federalism and all it connotes, has become imperative to re-position the country for real development and to avoid an implosion. Organized under the auspices of the Arena Research and Development Project in collaboration with several other socio-political groups from northern Nigeria, the conference had met in response to the agitation for restructuring spearheaded by groups representing the three Southern geo-political zones and the North-Central zone. That agitation has spiked in the last two years and spawned secessionist fringe movements in the South-East and South-South regions where IPOB and MASSOB in the one, and relapsed militants in the other, have signaled their loss of patience with the current system. To these, the Northern elite, angry as usual at being called out by their Southern and North-Central counterparts, for the undue advantages the current patronage system confers on them, spent considerable time berating restructuring and the longstanding complaints that the North contributes least to the central pot but takes the lion's share of the spoils. A return to pre-1966 regionalism appears progressive at first blush, but could well be a booby trap and bargaining chip to delay and obfuscate the urgent need to restructure Nigeria as a truly federal state with considerable powers devolved to the self-sustaining federating units. Restoring the defunct four regions today is nigh impossible.

The Northern elite should in the interest of all 180 million Nigerians overcome their morbid fear of equity and federalism. What we have today is a unitary state pretending to be a federation and everyone is a loser as a result. As some of the delegates recalled, each

of the pre-1967 regions was self-sufficient, including the preponderant Northern Region and each was able to develop at a fast pace as they competed with each other. Today, unmitigated poverty stalks the land and the North is worse off. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, with Sokoto at the bottom posting 81.2 per cent poverty level in 2015, nine of the 10 poorest states in Nigeria were in the North. The UN's Global Multi/dimensional Poverty Index 2015, cities average poverty rates at 80.9 per cent in the North-West and 76.8 per cent in the North-East compared to 27.4 per cent in the South-East and 25.2 per cent in the South-South. Overall, Nigeria ranked 152 out of 188 countries in UNDP's Human Development Index 2016. Clearly, our system is delivering poverty in the midst of plenty instead of creating wealth. We reject the disingenuous arguments by the Northern elite and their disparagement of true federalism: contrary to their posturing, no one has ever suggested that there is a perfect federal system; rather, each polity, following on universally accepted principles, adopts a system that is best suited to its circumstances and enacts amendments when necessary. While the United States and Canada fashioned a federal system based on the vision of their founding fathers' amalgamation of multi-national population, Germany's is described by *The Economist* of London as a product of history where many independent states with people of the same nationality created a single federal polity. Unlike the German States, Canadian provinces, Australian States and Swiss cantons exercised control over their natural resources, have separate police forces and are economically independent, but Nigeria's weird "federal" constitution lists 68 items on the Exclusive Legislative List and reduces the states to fiscal beggars at the mercy of the centre. The intelligent position canvassed by Southern groups is a qualified return to the 1963 Republican Constitution with regions replaced by states, complete with fiscal Federalism, state police and control over natural resources. Now that the Northern groups are bowing, and reluctant, to the inevitable, it is important to remind all the potential in each state and region. The North's advantages in agriculture and solid minerals are unassailable. From the Middle Belt savannah to the upper Sahelian fringes crisis-crossed by rivers and streams, including the mighty Niger and Benue; Yobe, Rim and Hadejia, the region can re-enact the strides made by the late Ahmadu Bello, as regional premier. Olugbenga Okunlola, a professor of geology, has mapped the prevalence of diverse minerals with the Northern states obviously more endowed. The Northern leadership must end its fixation with oil and gas and the revenues that accrue there from: the resources belong to the host states who ought to retain 50 per cent of the proceeds and share the rest with the centre and the other states. Southern groups do not advance the provocative position that minerals or livestock belong to all as Northerners routinely claim for oil. The ongoing desperate search for oil all over the North using revenues from oil-bearing states is unjust. It is also counter-productive as the world's major buyers of crude have launched programmes to switch to alternative energy, while oil has been proved to distort the economies of developing nations. Instead of belly-aching at the agitation for restructuring, they should ponder why they

perpetually deliver poverty to their own people. Federalism, like all human endeavours, may not be perfect, but experience proves that it offers the basis for development in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural polity. Regular amendments seek to adapt constitutions to current realities. Thus, the US has made 27 amendments to its constitution since 1787, India 101 to its 1950 constitution and Canada 10 amendments since 1982. Even a unitary state like the United Kingdom devolves considerable powers to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland whose populations are 5.29 million, 3.02 million and 1.8 million respectively cannot match those of many Nigerian nationalities and states. Nigeria can no longer carry on with the pretenses of "unity in diversity" when a skewed system engenders strife and mutual hostility. We just have to restructure and dissolve eventually in strife.

The Restructuring Debate

Restructuring is the in-word now in Nigeria. It is an anthropological associate of political, economic, social, cultural and religious diversity of the society. Its meaning subsists at the level of inter subjective objectivity as a result of which it is a nebulous concept in dire need of deconstruction. For one thing, it is not a private language so long as it has found itself into the public domain as public issue. Secondly, it coheres with a set of body of language with the insignia of true value in a society of true and rational persons venting their feelings about what otherwise ought to be the case. From an inter-subjective agreement it is all about the political and economic direction in which Nigeria should go but the pundits and media have not crystalized the structure of how it will go hence it remains largely subjective even through it is objectively an anthropoid of socio-economic injustice and inequalities of opportunities in Nigeria. The opposition to "restructuring Nigeria" has latched onto the vacuity and nebulosity of this trending concept to discountenance it. To save it requires a deconstruction. Restructuring from where to where? Backward or forward? As far as Nigeria remains it will not be easy to decipher the way out of these questions as long as the old dent or issues like "nationhood" and "nation-state" continue to raise their ugly head. It is not enough to do without these conceptual foundations, otherwise, Nigeria collapses. Before restructuring, there must be an agreement among the nationalities to co-exist without hatred and rancor and with a sense of commonality and shared destiny. Nation-state, to be precise, is the trust and comparative advantage of all the component units held in common. This will be the foundation or superstructure of any restructuring process in Nigeria. The decree No 34 of 1966 of the then military regime of J.T.U Aguiyi-Ironsi neutralised regional governments. It forcefully brought back the faltering regional governments and tattering federation into one united entity. In all the desperate and disparate episodes for the unification of Nigeria by force, the truth ought to have been told that a nation-state cannot be built or contracted by force. The same military regimes created 36 states in the quasi-federation and all the campaigns for democracy

that heralded the second and the third republic swallowed hook and sinker the paramilitary content of civilian constitutions. If by restructuring, the proponents mean going back to the old 1954–1966 regional government with their inherent economic and political self-determination, then restructuring is more problematic and obfuscating than simply advocating for restoration of regional governments. It is more meaningful as a futuristic concept. Restructuring as a futuristic plan of action is to address inadequacies and inequities. In the highest wisdom of the military regimes, they restructured the country when states and local governments were created. But that restructured federalism has whittled down federalism thereby falsifying itself and in place of this “proper federalism” is being sought as “true federalism” which itself is a redundancy. What is to be restructured is the misconceived federalism created by the military and their civilian accomplices. If there is something to restructure, it is federalism that is in need of deconstruction so that the mistakes of the past would not be repeated. Deconstruction of Nigeria’s federalism is going to be in recognition of the mistakes in balkanizing the regional autonomies, dislocation of ethnic balances, bad leadership, election fraud, corruption and insecurity. It must recognize that Nigeria as a country is a nation-state that must respect ethnic identities and religious pluralism inherent in the state.

The nation-state must be based on equal opportunities and freedom for all religions where none would be regarded either as official religion or with state backing in its proselytizing missions. Above all, there must be a tacit and explicit acknowledge of Nigeria as a state still in the process of nation building. This is a theoretical and epidemiological basis for restructuring Nigeria into greatness. Nigeria is already structured along zonal lines. It is a zonal structure based on nationalities with relatively geographical and cultural contiguities. This has been given credence and legitimacy by the agitations and self-determination consciousness that *pattern whereby each and every one* of this proper federalism is *have* followed that pattern and every one of the units now wants resource control and devolution of powers, Until the Goodluck Jonathan-convened national conference is given a legal frame-work, the emerging consensus on how Nigeria will be restructured, the 36 states in the federation could have their fate hanging with the zonal structures namely, South West, South South, South East, North West, North East and North Central. The states unwilling to go with their present zones could have their stand permuted by a referendum or plebiscite. A federation based on these zones from where economic and political powers and processes flow is an assurance of a strong, united and prosperous Nigeria. Restructuring Nigeria may not be feasible on the basis of the current 36-state structure because nationalities and ethnic identities transcend their geographic boundaries.

RECOMMENDATION

The advent of the military in governance created a highly centralized politics economic system, with enormous power and resources should be decentralized from the centre of use the resources from the centre to establish solid economic base for the state. a regime of over-t federal recurrent expenditure (almost 80% of budget year-on-year, subsidized government owned monopolies (Nitel; NEPA; Nigerian Railway; Nigerian Airways; NNPC; Nigerian Company etc.) with huge unfunded pension funds were foisted on the nation. Administrative functions from the centre should be delegated to the state.

- Prune the existing structure and divest itself of some unwarranted administer responsibilities.
- Reduce the number of ministries at the centre and assign more ministries to the state with enough fund from the federal government, merge functions and devolve more responsibilities to states.
- Hand over intra-state roads to states while keeping only inter-state highways to the federal government
- Give more autonomy to states with respect to control of inland water ways.
- Hands off control of lottery business in states.
- Limit the responsibilities of the Ministry of Solid Minerals at the federal level
- Divest itself from involvement in distribution of VAT (sales taxes).
- Abolish the law that vests all mineral resources under the soil of Nigeria in the federal government. This will allow states to partner with the private sector to exploit resources and pay agreed derivation to the federal government.
- Review mechanism for administration of PAYEE to give the states more control.
- Reduce taxes for companies and entrepreneur.
- Allow more private sector involvement in the economy.
- Divest from the natural gas infrastructure of Nigeria (including removal of subsidiary order to create a competitive gas sector that will attract private investments and the economy.
- Divest from the Transmission Company of Nigeria and break the national regional grids. This will allow private sector investments and eliminate the distortions.
- Fully deregulate the downstream oil sector.
- Abolish all forms of subsidy intervention in the foreign exchange market so that they can operate competitively and allocate resources appropriately.
- Diversify earning capacity of the federal government to increase revenue.

CONCLUSION

Our problems are multi-faceted, covering economic, political and social, and there must be multi-dimensional approaches. Clearly, it cannot be business as usual concerted efforts must now be made to appropriately diagnose the problems and workable solutions in order to avoid plunging our economy into full depression. Questions must be asked...Where did we go wrong? How did we arrive here? How do we move from one of the fastest growing economy to an economy on the brink of how can we navigate our way out of the present predicament? And more importantly, how do we comprehensively restructure Nigeria in a way that will support our aspiration, productive and egalitarian economy, a stable polity, and a fairer society. There is need for reality checks by all tiers of government in Nigeria (Particularly the Federal government of Nigeria). Perhaps, in the process of conducting a reality check, we might just be retracing our steps by embarking on a far reaching and comprehensive restructuring not the cosmetic approaches that the nation has been accustomed to over the decades. The direction of the on-going debate on the restructuring of Nigeria has been directed towards yet another political restructuring. Nigeria, since independence, has series of political restructuring programmes from creation of states at different periods the complete change in the political system from parliamentary to presidential, and other forms of adjustments. It is as if every government at the federal level wants to conduct it political/constitutional conference to restructure Nigeria. The fact that all the political restructuring initiatives to date have not addressed Nigeria problems is evidence that the problems are structural (and substantially economic), the nation has carried out different political reforms, the only period that Nigeria said to have had serious economic reforms that had significant effects on the structure of the Nigerian economy were the reforms of 1985 to 1992 that divested government interests in various business concerns; and the reforms of 2002 to 2015 that restructure some of the commanding heights of the economy - banking, insuring telecommunications, power among others. It is therefore clear that the solution to our structural economic problems must commence with the dismantling of the rigidities that have held the country down economically for decades. In view of the merits and demerits of structuring, it is important, necessary and urgent for a country to be politically, socially and economically restructured.

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