A PLAN FOR ACTION

Recommendations for measures to be taken by the Nigerian Government on national unity, security and development

FINAL REPORT JUNE 2021

Savannah Center | Nigeria Network of NGOs
CONTENTS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are especially indebted to Ireti Disu, Adeshola Afariogun, Mojisola Akinsanya, Apostle Tola Adenekan, Rev. Father Peter Akinkunmi, Dr. Mike Omilusi, Barr. Ayo Adebusoye, Olumide Olaitan, Jennifer Aghemwenhio, Taiwo Dominic, Seun Akinola, Allo Martins, and Michael Olatubosun for their instrumental role in our outreach to critical stakeholders.

Disclaimer
The opinions, assessments, positions, recommendations and, where applicable, judgements expressed are within the responsibility of the persons making the corresponding statements in this report, which aims to capture and distil, while employing the Chatham House Rule, the ideas conveyed by the consultation and regional conference participants. They do not necessarily and not in every case correspond to the positions and opinions of the Savannah Center and Nigeria Network of NGOs.
When the Executive Director of the Nigeria Network of NGOs approached us to lead the conversation and consultations on the imperative of National Dialogues for Unity, Security and Development, we saw it as a national assignment and the opportunity for us to contribute our quota to as civil society leaders and elders to address the myriads of challenges facing our country around the focal themes of national security, national unity, youth and women development and civil society government partnership.

We are more than happy that citizens have shared their precious time, insight, wisdom, expertise with us. Participants are part of a pool of different stakeholder groups from traditional leadership, security and full spectrum of civil society. The come from opposition parties, ruling parry, politics, business, academia, communities, traditional rulers, state assemblies, nonprofits, associations and 6 states of the South-West with very diverse background and outreach. They are living proof that citizens are willing to engage if the mechanisms are there.

From their insights and experience, we have worked with the Nigeria Network of NGOs to develop this report and an agenda for action for Mr. President. For us as elder statewomen and men with a combination of over 70 years as civil society actors, the consultations and dialogues were an exciting experience. Travelling across the 6 South-West States by road provided us with another view of the region, its unique diversity, people, progress and challenges.

The engaging and interactive format for the meetings created an atmosphere were everyone was empowered to learn and change their perspectives on the focal themes. For example, when asked “To what extent has the high-level meeting confirmed or changed your perspective on national unity, security and development?” 29 participants out of a total of 93 that attended the state-wide consultations responded it has changed their perspectives very significantly, 47 significantly and 15 moderately.

Participants had the opportunity to speak up and share insights on exactly what they think needs to be done urgently to address the issues. They exchanged experiences, asked questions and finally came to a common understanding on recommendations. The “recommendations for action” from each State addresses what leaders at all levels should do.

The learnings from the desk research on past confabs underscores the thoroughness of this assignment. Thanks to the Savannah Center and the Nigeria Network of NGOs who brought us together at this peculiar time and created the multi-stakeholder format for engagement and Oyebisi, B. Oluseyi, Executive Director, Nigeria Network of NGOs who led the project Secretariat and convened the meetings in our behalf.

The success of this assignment depends on how much of the recommendations, the President and other critical stakeholders finds useful and decides to implement fully or adapt.

We can only wish this unique initiative truly provides solutions to the country’s challenges.

Ms. Yemisi Ransome-Kuti
Founding, Executive Director and Trustee, Nigeria Network of NGOs

Rev. Fr. John Patrick Ngoyi
Executive Director, Justice Development and Peace Commission.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From March to May 2021, an independent, multistakeholder consultation and dialogue to contribute to the ongoing national and sub-national debates on issues of national unity, national security, youth, and women development and civil society-government partnership was convened by the Savannah Center and the Nigeria Network of NGOs.

The initiative's methodology centred around a desk review of the national conference reports to ascertain recommendations, identifying actors across the 6 South-West states belonging to stakeholder groups with interest or at the forefront of conversations on the focal themes, individuals committed and with unique capabilities, ideas and networks within each state needed to advance the national unity, security and development conversation and to propose concrete ideas and inclusive strategies through consultative meetings and regional dialogue for the President and other political leaders to consider and for holding all stakeholders accountable to the implementation of the recommendations.

Security is presently a major challenge in Nigeria. There is no doubt that these are tumultuous times in the country as many residents face economic, political, and social problems. Kidnappings in the South-West, proliferation of arms, with state institutions and agencies facing the tough hurdle of addressing these challenges. The two broad crucial elements of national security: state security and human security are waning.

Fake news, injustice, inequality, tribalism, nepotism, insecurity, ethnic profiling, over politization of issues, religious intolerance and hate speech across the south-west region and by extension the entire country continues to threaten the nation’s national unity and security. Citizens face evolving challenges in the South-West region as well as across other regions of the country. Poverty, unemployment, economic, environment, and climatic factors are strong drivers of insecurity in the region. These developments have resulted in increased unpredictability of the relative peace enjoyed in the past.

There is an arc of insecurity and instability across South-West communities and beyond. The region is faced with a range of security challenges and national unity threats that originate from lack of citizens participation, weak intergenerational dialogue, tribal and religious sentiments, weak security architecture, democratised economic opportunities, and corruption, among others. The region’s security is also deeply affected by youth unemployment, growing menace of drug abuse, cybercrime, lack of people centred development plans, democratic systems—weak inter and intra party politics. Kidnapping and banditry have risen to unprecedented level of intensity in the South-West region and now represents an immediate and direct threat to the country’s national unity.

Over the past two decades, Nigeria have had no less than five National confabs. Each of these confabs aimed at providing solutions to the myriad challenges -political, constitutional, governance, security, economic, and infrastructural development facing the country. The recognition of the need to have a national dialogue on certain issues by successive administrations underscores the fact that there are several issues begging for attention based on the demand of the diverse entities that make up the nation. These demands
are often motivated by ethnic, political, economic, and religious factors. The motivations notwithstanding, they seem to have similar objectives, they identified similar issues and made recommendations accordingly.

Drawing from a review of the confab reports, a desk review that sought to identify recommendations from the past confabs along the focal themes, determine if they were implemented and what has changed as a result. It also aimed to understand the reason(s) why the recommendations were not implemented and what has become of the issue(s).

In addition, a state-wide consultation to contribute independent insights, analysis and practical, yet ambitious recommendations for political leaders across all levels of government was convened from April 20 through May 7, 2021. For each session, opposition figures, influential voices, farmers association, Christian Association of Nigeria-CAN, Oodua People’s Congress-OPC, academia, youth groups, right holders, media, landlord resident associations, civil society, Police Community Relations Committee-PCRC, security agencies, trade union, persons living with disabilities engaged in a candid dialogue (under Chatham House Rules) on issues, challenges, progress and recommendations to advance solutions towards the focal themes. To this end, the six-part engagements in Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Osun and Lagos States took stock of actions to achieve the four focal issues of national unity, national security, youth and women development and civil-society government partnership.

Further to this an “Imperative of National Dialogue for Unity, Security and Development” conference was convened as a hybrid solutions conference (physical, online and 1hr live radio) organised in the framework of the current challenges facing the country. It focused on finding solutions to the focal challenges of national unity, national security, youth and women development and civil society government partnership as framed by important recent developments within the south-west region, as well as other significant initiatives undertaken by other civil society organisations in other regions of the country.

The conference was an opportunity to:

>> Make recommendations to different stakeholders responsible for addressing these matters; including government, business, civil society organisations and citizens.

>> Provide an overview of existing policies and programmes aimed at addressing the focal challenges, identify main trends and emerging concerns. Share good practices and suggest solutions to enhance the country’s national unity, security and development.

Drawing on the outcomes of the desk review of the various confabs, state-wide consultations and regional conference, this report provides a first estimate of concrete recommendations serving as an agenda for action to the Federal Government of Nigeria:

**National Security**

>> Host a Bi-Partisan Conference on National Security

>> Issue an executive order designating NCCSALW as the implementing agency for the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA).

>> Presidential Directive on Forest Reserves

>> Presidential Working Group on the Implementation of the Police Act 2020

>> Expand Membership of the National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy

**National Unity**

Presidential Directive on Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Better justice, diversity and inclusion data through National Bureau of Statistics

Reinvigorate SERVICOM through a Presidential Directive on Frontline Public Servants.
Establish a Multistakeholder Presidential Steering Committee on Content Moderation

Facilitate access to justice for citizens starting with communities affected by conflicts and violence.

Initiate programmes in coordination with the National Human Rights Commission and the National Communications Commission to help citizens (starting with communities affected by conflicts and violence) know their rights (understand the law) and make them feel able to act on them using citizen helplines and algorithms and other choice tools like USSD and SMS to provide consistent advice to more people.

Issue a Presidential directive that provides impetus to the Legal Aid Council (LAC) of Nigeria to deliver on its mandate and further develop its national paralegal movement.

Strengthen the Nation’s Peace Infrastructure through the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council and National Peace Committee.

Foster Peace and Inclusion through the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution.

The President is encouraged to issue a Presidential directive that gives impetus to NOA in fulfilling all its functions and objectives as listed in the NOA Act. This includes the provision of adequate and timely releases of funding to the agency.

Youth and Women Development

Issue a Presidential directive to all Ministries, Department and Agencies on youth and women inclusion. The MDAs should develop a practical quota system for women and young people in their programmes and projects.

Support through the Ministry of Women Affairs campaigns such as “Elect Her” at https://elect-her.org/ that encourages and prepares women for political leadership.

In setting an example for the nation and other political parties, the President should consider leading a personal campaign within the APC in partnership with the APC women wing to move the APC to have 30% women in its electoral list. If successful, the President may initiate a draft law to make it obligatory for parties to have 30% women for the constituent assembly and on their electoral list.

**CSO Government Partnership**

Through the Office of the Special Assistant to the President, work with national nonprofit networks, traditional nonprofits and associations to develop a civil society compact aimed at ensuring Government and CSOs work effectively in partnership to achieve common goals and outcomes for the benefit of communities and citizens in Nigeria.

Continue to make public commitments to the Open Government Partnership and the full implementation of the 2nd National Action Plan.

Redesignate the Minister for Special Duties and International Affairs as Minister of Special Duties, International Affairs and Civil Society with an additional portfolio of coordinating, engaging and ensuring meaningful participation of civil society in government programmes and projects.
From March to May 2021, an independent, multistakeholder consultation and dialogue to contribute to the ongoing national and sub-national debates on issues of national unity, national security, youth, and women development and civil society government partnership was convened by the Savannah Center and the Nigeria Network of NGOs. The back-to-back event gathered diverse perspectives from different stakeholders (traditional rulers-Alake of Egba Land, Deji of Akure and Olota of Ota), title holders in Yoruba land such as the Maiyegun of Yoruba Land, state assembly members, victims of kidnapping, opposition figures, influential voices, farmers association, Christian Association of Nigeria-CAN, Muslim Groups, market women associations, Oodua People’s Congress-OPC, academia, youth groups including student union governments, right holders, media, landlord resident associations, civil society, Police Community Relations Committee-PCRC, security agencies, trade union and persons living with disabilities including disability groups) at separate consultative meetings in Ondo, Ekiti, Oyo, Osun, Lagos and Ogun States and a regional conference in Ibadan in response to the overarching question around:

> What do we already know about these issues?

> What are the current trends and realities stakeholders are seeing?

> What experiences can stakeholders share to these realities/fact or data?

> What are stakeholders' reflections on these issues? What are the implications? What does it mean for the South-West region?

> What are the key dividing points on these issues and what can stakeholders agree on?

> How can we respond to or address these issues? What can we do? What are we going to do? What will be the best course of action?

The initiative's methodology centered around a desk review of the national conference reports to ascertain recommendations and identifying actors across the 6 South-West states belonging to stakeholder groups with interest or at the forefront of conversations on the focal themes, individuals committed and with unique capabilities, ideas and networks within each state needed to advance the national unity, security and development conversation and to propose concrete ideas and inclusive strategies through consultative meetings and regional dialogue for the President and other political leaders to consider and for holding all stakeholders accountable to the implementation of the recommendations. The results of the desk review, consultation, and regional conference will also be used in the preparatory work of the conveners (Savannah and NNNGO) and in solutions scan around the focal themes.

Different socio-demographic groups were represented in the 6 consultation sessions and a regional conference on the focal themes of 1) national unity, 2) national security, 3) youth and women development and 4) civil society government partnership to draw common threads from the consultations, regional conference, and concrete recommendations were held. The initiative is an example of public participation in a democracy and mini-national conference in which a number of citizens and citizen organisations discussed issues and make recommendations for political leaders.
In their collective statements, participants emphasised making national orientation and ethics a priority, the importance of managing the nations diversity, addressing issues of inequality, poverty, unemployment, hate speech, intolerance, and fake news. The consultation and dialogue proposed diverse measures to address the focal themes. The conclusions and recommendations are listed in the report which will be submitted to the President and other political leaders.
While civil society organisations have become leading partners in the areas of social development, civil-society government relationship remains tokenistic and at best antagonistic. A vital landscape in which CSOs are active and reach out to a broad range of actors especially government in an environment that allows working collectively on national reforms and policy formulation in a regular, transparent, and well-regulated manner remains an imperative.

Security is presently a major challenge in Nigeria. There is no doubt that these are tumultuous times in the country as many residents face economic, political, and social problems. Kidnappings in the South-West, proliferation of arms, with state institutions and agencies facing the tough hurdle of addressing these challenges. The two broad crucial elements of national security: state security and human security are waning. The extent to which the political leadership can anticipate, recognise and respond effectively to providing security for the life and property of Nigerians including guaranteeing the integrity of the country’s territorial boundaries using available national resources is best seen from recent events in Oyo and Ondo[1] and other parts of South-West.

The security challenges and national unity question also co-exist with immense youth unemployment as 13.9 million young people are unemployed in Nigeria[2]. Causes of unemployment in the country have been linked with rural-urban migration, rapid population growth, low standard of education, rapid expansion of the education system, lack of steady power supply and corruption[3]. One of the major challenges for consolidating democratic societies is to overcome the persisting gap between civil society and government. Establishing mutual trust and culture of reciprocal cooperation to shape policies and programmes for the wellbeing of Nigerians remains a complex and long-term aspiration.

---

1-https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/55781290
3-https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331786593_Causes_Effects_and_Solutions_to_Youth_Unemployment_Problems_in_Nigeria
Fake news, injustice, inequality, tribalism, nepotism, insecurity, ethnic profiling, over politization of issues, religious intolerance and hate speech across the south-west region and by extension the entire country continues to threaten the nation’s national unity and security. Citizens face evolving challenges in the South-West region as well as across other regions of the country. Poverty, unemployment, economic, environment, and climatic factors are strong drivers of insecurity in the region. These developments have resulted in increased unpredictability of the relative peace enjoyed in the past.

Separatist agitations emanating recently from the region is largely fuelled by cases of insecurity ranging from kidnapping for ransom, kidnapping for rituals through to farmer-herder crisis, banditry and robbery. Energy around the movement for “Yoruba Nation” has been growing. For example, the separatist group have had rallies [4] across the South-West and held online polls [5] to garner citizens’ opinions on their agenda. The voice for a sovereign national conference [6] to decide if the federating units of the country still want to continue to live together, and, if so, under what arrangements remains loud in the region.

Also fuelling these agitations according to participants at the State dialogues are issues of people participation, inclusion, justice, and equity as they are crucial to the attainment of national unity, national security, youth and women development and effective CSO-Government partnerships. Exclusion has become accepted across South-West communities through injustice, discrimination, marginalisation of women and the vulnerable, corruption, lack of political will and deepened inequalities. Weak institutional capacities have rendered all arms of government ineffective.

There is an arc of insecurity and instability across South-West communities and beyond. The region is faced with a range of security challenges and national unity threats that originate from lack of citizens participation, weak intergenerational dialogue, tribal and religious sentiments, weak security architecture, democratised economic opportunities, and corruption, among others. The regions security is also deeply affected by youth unemployment, growing menace of drug abuse, cybercrime, lack of people centred development plans, democratic systems—weak inter and intra party politics. Kidnapping and banditry have risen to unprecedented level of intensity in the South-West region and now represents an immediate and direct threat to the country’s national unity.


---

4-https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331786593_Causes_Effects_and_Solutions_to_Youth_Unemployment_Problems_in_Nigeria
6-https://poll.app.do/loduduwa-republic
and Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti announced the establishment of the new security outfits after their respective State Houses of Assembly passed the bill for their establishment into law. Amotekun was established to support the Nigerian police, a federal agency, in fighting crime in their six states and curb clashes between farmers and roaming cattle herders.

The outfit was especially expected to check escalation in kidnapping, armed robbery and ritual murder incidents associated with rogue elements among cattle herders in the region. According to StatiSense[7] 169 people were kidnapped in the region between January and June 2021. With the establishment of Amotekun, kidnapping and killings remain rampant as there are more reported cases of killings and kidnapping in the South-West region. Many Citizens agreed that the establishment of Amotekun was yet to significantly reduce crime
DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPERATIVE OF NATIONAL DIALOGUES FOR UNITY, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Composition and Representativeness
Working through civil society organisations and on-air personalities (OAPs) in all the 6 South-West States, the project identified individuals within the leadership of the stakeholder groups within the socio-demographic representation that should be invited to the consultation and dialogues with the aim of having participation from different background and diversity. The participants included men and women of various ages who had formal and informal education and included people who spoke English as well as their mother tongue. A total of 128 people participated in the state-wide consultations and 39 at the regional conference.

Scope of Work
The desk review of the confab reports was done by an independent consultant simultaneously as the consultations were holding. An “elder system” was used where 2 civil society leaders were selected to lead the engagement and discussions with critical stakeholders across the South-West States. Both leaders: Rev. Fr John Patrick- Ngoyi and Ms. Yemisi Ransome-Kuti were selected for their acceptability, independence of opinion, access, reach, credibility, creative positive social change, and influence. Briefing notes and Dialogue Project Guides were developed and shared with “the elders” to provide information on the objectives and expected outcomes of the initiative. Visits were made to all the 6 South-West states with conversations moderated by Ms. Yemisi Ramsome-Kuti. Participants at the consultations had the opportunity of speaking openly and frankly under Chatham House rules.
The regional conference moved between panel and plenary discussions led by individuals with experience to familiarise participants with the subject matter and to help deepen and stimulate conversations in as versatile a manner as possible and from different perspectives. A small group of secretariat team worked throughout the meeting (consultation and conference) to develop discussions into a communique and printed it immediately for review by participants before leaving the event for their direct input. Edits, inputs and reviews were then harmonised and sent to participants via email and WhatsApp for their final review and sign off. The outcome document from the conference was read on live radio (Splash FM) for dissemination to the public, followed by an interview to further inform the public of the objective and outcomes of the conference.
Over the past two decades, Nigeria have had no less than five National confabs. Each of these confabs aimed at providing solutions to the myriad challenges - political, constitutional, governance, security, economic, and infrastructural development facing the country. The recognition of the need to have a national dialogue on certain issues by successive administrations underscores the fact that there are several issues begging for attention based on the demand of the diverse entities that make up the nation. These demands are often motivated by ethnic, political, economic, and religious factors. The motivations notwithstanding, they seem to have similar objectives, they identified similar issues and made recommendations accordingly.

Drawing from a review of the confab reports, the desk review sought to identify recommendations from the past confabs along the focal themes, determine if they were implemented and what has changed as a result. It also aimed to understand the reason(s) why the recommendations were not implemented and what has become of the issue(s).

The reviewed reports were the 1986 Political Bureau, 1994/95 Abacha conference, the 2005 National Political Reform Conference by Obasanjo, the 2014 Jonathan’s National Conference and the All-Progressives Congress (APC) 2018 report on True Federalism. See Annex 1 for the full report.

The review mapped out the issues identified and recommendations from the reports in relation to the following themes - national unity, national security challenges, youth and women development, and Civil Society Organisation (CSO)-Government partnership. Under the national unity theme, the overarching issues include Creation of States, Resource Control/Derivation Principle/Fiscal Federalism, Public Finance/Revenue Allocation, Form of Government, Legislature, Power sharing/Rotation, Local Government, Independent Candidacy, Governance and the Land Tenure Act. For national security theme, issues of common thread included Immunity clause and anti-corruption. Youth and women development and Civil Society Organisation-Government partnership themes were not major subjects of discussion at the Confabs.
As the report shows, the Nigerian Political Bureau of 1986 established by General Ibrahim Babangida shortly after coming to power in the 1985 Nigerian coup d'état was inaugurated to conduct a national debate on the political future of Nigeria and was charged amongst other things to "review Nigeria's political history and identify the basic problems which have led to the failure in the past and suggest ways of resolving and coping with these problems." The exercise was dubbed the broadest political consultation conducted in Nigerian history.[8]

A key outcome of the Confab was adoption of the the Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance, Social Justice, and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) now National Orientation Agency. MAMSER was inaugurated on July 25, 1987; it was tasked with consultations with thousands of Nigerians and recommend to the Armed Forces Ruling Council, a respectable and methodical transition program. The ruling council also wanted a national orientation to enunciate the abstract ideas in its economic policy and promote value orientation.

Nine years after the political bureau report, the 1994/95 constitutional conference was organised by the Late Gen. Sanni Abacha. Abacha oversaw the reorganization of Nigeria into six geopolitical zones, in order to reflect cultural, economic, and political realities of the regions: North Central, North-East, North-West, South-East, South-South and South-West. A new constitution that came out of the conference was to take effect from 1998 when a new civilian government takes over. However, it became apparent that Abacha did not intend to relinquish power. By April 1998, Abacha had coerced the country's five political parties into endorsing him as the sole presidential candidate. The entire process including the opportunity to pass the amendments to the constitution into law truncated when he died suddenly on 8 June 1998.

However, while a hugely important opportunity seems to have been lost with the Abacha confab, the emergence of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo (Rtd) as the President in 1999 brought hope and yet another confab. Midway into his second term in 2005, he organized the National Political Reforms Conference. The National Political Reforms Conference kicked off with the President charging the delegates to talk and find ways of making Nigeria a more peaceful nation but insisted that the indivisibility of Nigeria was a no-go area. Each geo-political zone came with its position on key national issues that would be debated.

However, midway into the confab, delegates from the South-South, South-East and South-West staged a walkout over allegations of irregularities in the adoption of the report of the Joe Irukwu-led Committee of Leaders of the Conference. The South-South had challenged the 17% derivation on oil, demanding for 50% and later settling for 25%. The North had argued that the 17% was high but for the purpose of peaceful co-existence, that the status quo be maintained. The South-South delegates gave conditions that would make them return to the conference and threatened that they would revert to the 50% demand if those opposed to 25 per cent would not drop their stance. The delegates could not resolve the issues until the confab finally closed shop in July 2005.
The contentious issues at the conference include rotational presidency, derivation principle/resource control/fiscal federalism, devolution of powers, ban on former military head of government/military administrators from politics, use of electronic voting machine for elections, immunity clause for president, governors and their deputies, state creation (especially for the South-East), tenure of the office of the president and governors. These issues were largely left unresolved.

The nation took a shot at another National conference in 2014 under the Goodluck Jonathan’s administration. For this National Conference, delegates from 18 clusters of groups were announced by the then Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr. Anyim Pius Anyim. the Conference again noted that assigning percentage for the increase in derivation principle and setting up Special Intervention Funds to address issues of reconstruction and rehabilitation of areas ravaged by insurgency and internal conflicts as well as solid minerals development, require some technical details and consideration. The Conference therefore recommends that Government should set up a Technical Committee to determine the appropriate percentage on the issues and advise government accordingly.

Four years (2018) down the line, the APC inaugurated a Committee on True Federalism. The Committee has the following terms of reference:

- Take a studied look at the report of the various National Conferences and in particular that of 2014, its recommendations to identify areas of congruence with the Party’s promise in (1) above.

- Arising from (i- iii) above recommend a Party position and propose appropriate mechanism for implementing same if adopted.

- Make any other recommendation which in the opinion of the committee advances the unity, national integration and collective well-being of the country.

A key recommendation of the 2018 All Progressives Party report on True Federalism asserted that creation of more states is not expedient because doing so will merely create new sub-national bureaucracies and their attendant costs while reducing the share of federal statutory allocation accruing to existing and proposed new states that are already grappling with the high cost of governance, payment of salaries of workers and bringing development to their people. The creation of states could further weaken the federating units and thus run contrary to popular demands for “True Federalism” which the APC stands for. The creation of new states would weaken rather than strengthen true federalism in the sense of denying federating units enough resources and ability to discharge additional responsibilities that would be thrust on them.

**Analysis of Confab Reports by Focal Themes**

1. **NATIONAL UNITY**

The 1986 Political Bureau received over 27,000 submissions from Nigerians all over the country, on issues that bother on religion, ethnicity, and ideology.
The Confab adopted the Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance, Social Justice, and Economic Recovery (MAMSER). MAMSER was inaugurated on July 25, 1987; it was tasked with consultations with thousands of Nigerians and recommend to the Armed Forces Ruling Council, a respectable and methodical transition program. The ruling council also wanted a national orientation to enunciate the abstract ideas in its economic policy and promote value orientation. The central goal of MAMSER was to cultivate support for the transitional program of the Government. It was also an avenue to educate the citizens about the political process, mobilize them to participate in up-coming elections and political debates, and inculcate a dependence towards locally made goods and Nigerian products. The official policies are to re-orient Nigerians to shun waste and vanity, shed all pretences of affluence in their lifestyle, and propagate the need to eschew all vices in public life, including corruption, dishonesty, electoral and census malpractices, ethnic and religious bigotry. The responsibilities of MAMSER were placed under a directorate, with Prof. Jerry Gana as Chairman. Much is left to be desired on the impact of the agency. MAMSER was renamed National Orientation Agency. Headquarters is at the Old Secretariat, Area 1 Garki, Abuja. All the issues that the agency sought to address are still lingering and indeed some have aggravated. A number of these issues have resulted in increased national insecurity, impunity, poverty, injustice, social exclusion and gross inequality.

a. Creation/Merger of States

On the issue of creation of states, the 1994/95 Confab organized by the Abacha regime recommended the creation of 20 new states namely Gombe, Apa, Nasarawa, Hadejia, Tiga, Zamfara, Sardauna, Katagum, Ghari, Kainji, Bayelsa, Orashi, Anioma, Ekiti, Ebonyi, New Oyo, Ogoja, Itai, Ijebu-Remo and Rivers East. Of these, only Combe, Nasarawa, Zamfara, Bayelsa, Ekiti, and Ebonyi states were created.

The 2005 Obasanjo organized Confab in its own recommendation asserted that the 36 states structure is too expensive, and that the situation will worsen given the number of requests for the creation of new states some of which would need to be met for the sake of peace and stability of the economy. It thus chose to maintain status quo.

Although the 2014 Confab recommended the creation of 18 new states (three per geo-political zone), including Apa, Edu, Kainji, Katagum, Savannah, Amana, Curara, Ghari, Ekiti (South-East zone), Aba, Adada, Njaba-Anim, Anioma, Orashi, Ogoja, Ijebu and New Oyo. The recommendation was not implemented. The Conference also recommended one new state for the South-East to make the zone have equal number of states with the other zones except the North-West, which has seven. It also recommended that states willing to merge could also do so based on certain conditions.

The 2018 All Progressives Party report on True Federalism asserted that creation of more states is not expedient because doing so will merely create new sub-national bureaucracies and their attendant costs while reducing the share of federal statutory allocation accruing to existing and proposed new states that are already grappling with the high cost of governance, payment of salaries of workers and bringing development to their people. The creation of states could further weaken the federating units and thus run contrary to popular demands for “True Federalism” which the APC stands for. The creation of new states would weaken rather than strengthen true federalism in the sense of denying federating units enough resources and ability to discharge additional responsibilities that would be thrust on them.
It however, like the 2005 Confab recommended that a balance be struck in the isolated case of the South-East zone with other geo-political zones. It likewise in its report did not indicate a clamour for states merger. However, the committee strongly recommends that the Constitution should provide for legal and administrative frameworks for states that might in future wish to consider this option provided this does not threaten the authority or existence of the Federation. This recommendation is based on the growing regional economic cooperation that is being witnessed among states in various geopolitical zones of the country in order to maximise their potentials and opportunities. Furthermore, the committee recognizes that group of states who so desire can cooperate on a regional arrangement provided this does not threaten the authority or existence of the Federation of Nigeria in line with the language in Section 5 (3) of the Constitution.

b. Resource Control/Derivation Principle/Fiscal Federalism
The Abacha 1994/95 Confab recommended that the "National Assembly should take into account allocation principles especially those of population, equality of states, internal revenue generation, land mass, terrain as well as population density provided that the principle of Derivation shall be constantly reflected in any approved formula as being not less than 13% of the Revenue accruing to the Federation Account directly. Mineral resources should be controlled and managed by the Government of the Federation through an arrangement, which involves Oil Producing States and Communities. This recommendation was later enshrined in the 1999 constitution and implementation began around March 2000.
The 2005 Obasanjo Confab sought for an increase in the level of derivation from 13% to 17% in the interim pending the report of an expert commission set up to review the process. It recommended massive and urgent programme of development of infrastructure and that the Federal Government should embark on developing human resources of the Niger Delta.

At the 2014 National Conference, the Conference again noted that assigning percentage for the increase in derivation principle and setting up Special Intervention Funds to address issues of reconstruction and rehabilitation of areas ravaged by insurgency and internal conflicts as well as solid minerals development, require some technical details and consideration. The Conference therefore recommends that Government should set up a Technical Committee to determine the appropriate percentage on the issues and advise government accordingly.

The 2018 APC report recommended an upward review of derivation allocation. To promote the unity of the country and ensure that states are more financially empowered to deliver services to their residents, as well as ensure no one feels disadvantaged, the committee recommends that the federal government should expeditiously review the current derivation formula to reflect areas of national consensus which are adoption of “state control of resources and pay tax to the Federal Government”, upward review of the current formula in favour of states and adoption of similar derivation formula in favour of solid minerals and power generation.

This recommendation will entail the amendment of Section 162 (2) of the Constitution. It noted that there is no clear provision in any legislation assigning the specific responsibility for initiating the review of the derivation formula to any particular organ of government. It stipulates that the formula shall remain for a period of not less than five (5) years. The current formula has been in place for over 17 years without review. This is probably because of the failure to assign responsibility for initiating the review process on any organ of Government. It was thus recommended that the Revenue Mobilization and Fiscal Allocation Commission Act, 2004 be amended to vest the Commission with the power and responsibility to periodically review the derivation formula and make proposal to the President who shall then table same before the National Assembly for necessary legislation.

c. Public Finance/Revenue Allocation

The 1994/95 Political Confab said the National Assembly shall determine the Revenue Allocation Formula which shall each time remain in force for a period of not less than five years from the day the bill shall be assented to by the president. No specific recommendation by the 2005 Confab, it however advised that the number of local government in a state should not count as a criterion for revenue allocation. The 2014 Conference recommended that the sharing of the funds from the Federation Account among the three tiers of government should be done in the following manner: Federal Government – 42.5%, State Governments – 35% and Local Governments 22.5%. The current formula for sharing revenue is FGN takes 52.68 percent, the states 26.72 percent and the local governments, 20.60 percent with 13 percent derivation revenue going to the oil producing states.

According to the recommendation of the 2018 APC report on True Federalism, an upward review of the current revenue sharing formula in favour of the states is necessary. It stated further that the percentage given to
population and equality of states in the existing sharing formula be reduced while that assigned to social development be increased to a much higher percentage so as to ensure accelerated development of all parts of the country. This is in view and taking cognizance of the proposed control of resources by the States and the devolution of powers from the Federal Government to the states. To give effect to this recommendation, the Allocation of Revenue (Federation Account etc.) Act, 2002 will have to be amended in favour of the states.

d. Form of Government
The 1994/95 Confab recommended the presidential system and federalism. At the 2005 Confab, the retention of the Presidential System of Government was also recommended. However, it advised that the number of ministries at the centre should be reduced to between 15 and 18 and to a maximum of 10 at the state level. Appointment of Special Advisers should be pegged to six and not more than three at the state level and appointment of Special Assistants should be made from within the public service.

Delegates from the 2014 Conference recommended the Modified Presidential System, a homemade model of government that effectively combines the presidential and parliamentary systems of government. The President shall pick the Vice President from the Legislature. The President should select not more than 18 ministers from the six geo-political zones (in line with the 2005 pruning of ministries to a maximum of 18) and not more than 30% of Ministers from outside the Legislature. Reduce Cost of governance by pruning the number of political appointees and using staff of ministries where necessary, also similar to the 2005 recommendation. In the same manner, the 2018 APC committee on True Federalism recommended a continuation of the Presidential system at national and sub-national levels but concerns about corruption and high cost of governance must be addressed with seriousness.

The Presidential system of governance has been maintained but there is no gainsaying that cost of governance has increased rather than decrease with an over bloated cabinet and political aides at both federal and state levels. The creation of agencies like the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) is a way to curb corruption and impunity in government.

e. Legislature
The 2014 National conference recommended the Bicameral legislature, but all elected members of the legislative arms of all the tiers of government should serve on part-time basis. The APC committee recommended that tampering with the existing legislative arrangement would lead to political instability. It recommended full time legislative system on the basis that lawmakers need to spend more time on their legislative functions including oversight responsibilities that still fall short of expectations. It however asserted a downward review of the running cost."

f. Power Sharing/Rotation
The 1994/95 Confab recommended that the issue of Power Sharing/Rotation be enshrined in the Constitution with the same logic applied to rotation of the governors and chairs of LGs. It also recommended multiple vice presidents with a way to ensure that at least one comes from the same zone as the president.

Equally, the 2005 confab recommended that the issue be enshrined in the Constitution so that executive positions rotate at federal, state, and local governments.
There should be legislation by the National Assembly to ensure that the office of the President should rotate between the north and the south as well as amongst the geo-political zones of the country based on equity, justice, and fairness. The principle should be applicable to states and local government on senatorial basis for the governorship and at ward or district for the position of chair of LGs.

The recommendation by the 2014 conference was also that presidential power should rotate between the North and the South and among the six geo-political zones while the governorship will rotate among the three senatorial districts in a state. The APC committee on its part recommends that the complexity of power sharing and rotation be managed at the party level rather than it being provided for in the constitution.

**g. Local Government Autonomy**

The Local Government shall be a third tier of government in Nigeria, but in order to save costs, a local government council shall consist of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and elected Councillors without a legislative arm. Each State shall maintain a special account to be called “State Joint Local Government Account” into which shall be paid all allocations to the Local government councils of the state from the Federation Account. State Houses of Assembly to create local governments and the life of local government officials will be three years. This is the recommendation of the 1994/95 confab.

The 2005 Confab rather retained the three levels of government comprising federal, state, and local government councils. In contrast, the recommendation in 2014 was to scrap the Local Government as the third tier of government.

The federal and states are to remain as the only tiers of government and states can now create as many local governments as possible they want. It sought for the Joint State/Local Government Account to be scrapped and in its place the establishment of a State Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission with representatives of Local Governments and a Chairman nominated by the State Governor. The Constitution should fix the tenure for Local Government Councils at three years. Conference recommended the scrapping of State Independent Electoral Commission. The 2018 APC committee on True Federalism recommended that Local Government should be removed from the federal constitution and the States be allowed to develop a local administrative system that is relevant and peculiar to each of them.

**h. Independent Candidacy**

All the Confabs of 1994/95, 2005, and 2014 respectively recommended the recognition of Independent Candidacy and that it should be enshrined in the constitution. As long as the specified condition in the Electoral Act is satisfied, every Nigerian should be free to contest elections as an independent candidate. The APC 2018 Committee on True Federalism went farther to recommend the parts of the constitution that would be amended accordingly, including Sections 65 (2), 106 (d), 131 (c), 142 (1), 176 (c) and 187.

Likewise, on the Electoral Act 2010, it recommended the sections for amendment particularly Section 87 to provide for strong eligibility criteria, which persons wishing to contest as independent candidates has to satisfy. These criteria shall include but not limited to the following:
a) Any person desiring to stand for an elective post as an independent candidate shall not be a registered member of a political party at least six (6) months before the date set for the elections in which he intends to contest.

b) His nominators must also not be members of any registered political party.

c) The said candidate must pay a deposit to INEC in the same range as the non-refundable deposit fee payable by candidates sponsored by political parties to their parties, which amount shall be determined by an Act of the National Assembly.

d) The candidate must also meet other qualification requirements provided for by the Constitution and any other law. It should be noted, however, the Committee is cognizant of the fact that the National Assembly in its current Constitution amendment exercise has adopted a proposal in favour of independent candidacy.

i. Governance

The 2005 Confab on governance recommended the separation of the offices of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice. It advocated that the Attorney General for the Federation shall be appointed by the President for a single term of six years subject to the confirmation by the Senate. By contrast, the 2014 Confab recommended that the office of the Accountant General of the Federation should be distinct and separate from the Office of the Accountant General of the Federal Government. The Office of the Accountant General of the Federation shall oversee the accruals of revenue into and disbursement from the Federation Account as and when due, and shall administer these funds as required by the Constitution, while the office of the Accountant General of the Federal Government shall oversee the accounts of the Federal Government.

j. Land Tenure System

The recommendation from the 2005 confab was that the Land Use Decree should be reviewed in line with the recommendations made by the Nigeria Law Reform Commission in 1991. It rejected the suggestion that the law should be completely abrogated. Likewise, the 2014 Confab recommended that the Land Tenure Act should remain in the Constitution but be amended to take care of those concerns, particularly on compensation in Section 29 (4) of the Act to read “landowners should determine the price and value of their land based on open market value.”

In its recommendations, the 2018 APC Committee opted to retain the Land Use Act in the constitution noting that it has served the nation very well, prevented unbridled acquisition by local and international speculators. The justice and legal practitioners in Nigeria have developed a strong and successful practice on the law and state governments are working with it without unsurmountable challenges. Therefore, the land use act should be retained in the constitution in the greater interest of national security and the protection of Nigeria’s arable land from international land grabbers.

2. NATIONAL SECURITY

a. Immunity Clause

The 2005 and 2014 Confabs recommended that immunity clause as enshrined in Section 308 be amended to remove immunity provision for crimes bothering on corrupt practices, economic and financial crimes to encourage accountability by those managing the economy and other serious offences such as suicide and murder.
Successive governments have largely ignored this so far. The APC 2018 committee recommended constituting a national committee of elder statesmen and Traditional rulers to work with security agencies on improving national security.

b. Anti-Corruption
Both the 2005 and 2014 Confabs recommended the setting up of Special Courts to prosecute cases emanating from corrupt practices and such cases should not last more than 90 days. The 2005 Confab specifically recommended that the authorities should investigate and confiscate corruptly acquired wealth of past rulers and bring them to justice; re-introduction of the War against Corruption. It also sought to make the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) members of the Screening Committees at all levels of government to screen all candidates aspiring to political office before elections. The 2014 Confab specifically recommended that a non-conviction-based asset forfeiture law be enacted with broad provisions to deal with all issues of proceeds of crimes by the anti-graft agencies and the courts. Neither of the recommendations have been implemented.

4. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION-GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP
This theme did not receive any attention nor recommendation by any of the Confabs. It was apparently not seen as an issue on the agenda. The most recent All Progressives Party driven conference in all its intent did not have this theme up for consideration. This brings to fore that the government has failed to recognize or appreciate the role of the civil society organisations (CSOs) as development partners and promoters of peace and stability.

During the military years and transition from military to civilian administration, the CSOs were mainly seen and known to be anti-government, as they were left to be the sole defenders of the citizens. Subsequently, most governments have always been suspicious of their activities. However, a lot has changed and with the new challenges of insecurity, terrorism, food insecurity, poverty, climate change, and decay in social amenities, CSOs have evolved from being just antagonistic of government and its policies. Many CSOs now focus on helping government set the right policies, create the enabling environment, and facilitate citizens’ inclusion and participation in governance.

3. YOUTH AND WOMEN DEVELOPMENT
The 1986 Confab deliberated on the issue of women’s participation in elections and politics and recommended that 10% of elected seats be set aside for women and labor leaders. This recommendation was largely not adopted, as there is still a wide gap in the number of men and women in elected positions in Nigeria. The current dispensation has seen quite an improvement in women’s participation in elections but still very few women occupy elected seats across the country.
SYNTHESIS OF MAJOR INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STATE-WIDE CONSULTATIONS

Convened from April 20 through May 7, 2021, the state-wide consultations contributed independent insights, analysis and practical, yet ambitious recommendations for political leaders across all levels of government. For each session, opposition figures, influential voices, farmers association, Christian Association of Nigeria-CAN, Oodua People’s Congress-OPC, academia, youth groups, right holders, media, landlord resident associations, civil society, Police Community Relations Committee-PCRC, security agencies, trade union, persons living with disabilities engaged in a candid dialogue (under Chatham House Rules) on issues, challenges, progress and recommendations to advance solutions towards the focal themes.

To this end, the six-part engagements in Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Osun and Lagos States took stock of actions to achieve the four focal issues of national unity, national security, youth and women development and civil-society government partnership. A not-for-individual attribution synthesis of the major insights and recommendations from each of the six consultations is here presented.
State-Wide Consultations: Highlight from Participants
This section highlights important reflections (unedited) from the consultations on the focal themes.

Ogun State
Continental Suites, Presidential Boulevard, Ibara, Abeokuta, April 19, 2021.

"The other one is for the National Orientation Agency to work on the psyche of Nigerian, that it is not all the time that we need to fight, or we need go to war to be able to achieve what we want to achieve. The next election is just by the corner, it is now left to us to be wise enough to be able to choose Nigerians as our leaders, we do not have Nigerians as our leaders at this time, what we have is either a Yoruba, or Hausa. We need Nigerians as our leaders."

"....but when we got there, we realized that out of like 50 that we have been supporting since 2016, 15 have relocated and that’s why we said we would see what is happening. When we got their most of the mothers and caretakers to these children (most of them are farmers they grow cassava and others) they came out and told us that they cannot go to the farm again that more than ten of them had been raped. Since the time it started, the governor had come, the commissioner had come, nobody had called any of the women to sit down and hear their story about the rape because most importantly there are no women in all the committees that had visited the critical areas where the problem is happening, so they are not comfortable to speak to a man that they have been raped. In other words, .... ....that the state government to make sure they include more women in all the committees that have been doing one or thing or the other on peace."

"The government should be up and doing and we should agitate for justice and equity in the distribution of our wealth and to let Nigerians see Nigeria as Nigerians business not a sectional business or for senators or some governors alone in the country."

"I don't know Sunday Igboho, he's agitating that the country should cease, Yoruba Nation, some are clamoring for Biafra, some are clamoring for this and that...let us leave the messengers and look at the messages, the messages they are putting forward, what led to it, we're talking of peace, we're not talking of equity, borders are closed here, borders are opened somewhere else...security agencies kill at will and there re automated condolence messages on ground to roll out. So, I think it's time we look at the issue of equity ...............in this country there's no unity.............."

"The issue of open grazing, as part of what we resolve at the public hearing, It is out-of-fashion and for us to allow peace and a sustainable world, we should all subscribe to the modern way, the ranching, that was what we agreed"

"You cannot be talking of economic gain without talking about the right to life of the people and that is why we said that not until the government stand to be serious, if they are ready to be serious to protect the lives of the people not just in front of camera, that we have secured this, we’ve secured that, they should look at the protection of lives and property before any economic benefit they get"
"I think it’s high time we started training our children so that if ever if we missed it, they will not miss it because this idea that we want to get it and I’m not getting it…..(24:59)…each time people will tell you what they are going to do and when to do it there must be a kind of, yes, somebody talked about National Orientation Agency yeah I agree with that. I think they should focus on the children, so that they will know what to do, we’re all doing what we met.

"If you ask me what is the greatest challenge of Nigeria today? I will tell you that it is security unconsciousness, we do not even bother, we do not bother, we don’t even want to spell it out other than just be running and panicking. One man probably with a toy gun, will pack about 17, 18 girls and rape them as if they were some packs of cockroaches, it is high time we also started taking responsibilities, they are doing it elsewhere. In the US ma, you know that by the time you are leaving your college, you are a bit of security person, you know what to do, you know the basic things to do”.

"...when we were talking about unity, it high time we go back home all these lessons that we tell them, 'don’t move closer to the Muslims, they are evil', 'don’t move closer to the Christians they are evil', the Hausas are bad, we keep on saying it, they are not deaf, they are listening to you, all those our discussions, phone calls with our brother, ‘awon oloriburuku yii ti de, awon darandaran darandaran’, they would keep on seeing them as that and they would be reacting too because their fathers, their mothers, their uncles have told them, so apart from blaming government or anybody, i think it’s high time we started self-reassessment and know that we are not getting it right but we should concentrate on the children while we are just doing some workshops and all that, I think our concentration should be on the youth and the children, yes they didn’t know the Nigeria of the past as my brother there said, now who will tell them? We have the responsibility to do that, and when we are doing it.”

"I’m very happy that the commandant as played down to personal responsibility, that each one of us has responsibility to security and national unity. And the children ...and also these traditional practices that are against security and unity, we have to begin to change our mindset about what is in our culture”.

“Anybody that wants to do cattle rearing must be able to provide space for their cattle, if what your cattle needs to eat and to become fat is green vegetation, then you must also have the means to plant this vegetation so that your cow will move to your farmland eat whatever they want to eat and come back home. People often ask about open-grazing, many years in Odeda here, we still have it up till today, government have a place where they put all the cattle’s that belong to government, if you go to that area there’s a large space that is actually green vegetation that is where, you’ll never see a government cow roaming about"
If we are talking about restructure, it’s the restructure of our security architecture so that each state should be able to control their security. You said a lot and I’m sure all of these had been captured but as we’re talking about equipping the security architecture, I also thought of looking at some of the examples...internationally where the police is so heavily equipped that...in America...as for equipping the security officers we will also be equipping other agencies that have relations to security like mental disabilities and other issues that can be taken care of by social welfare components where the police will call somebody who can deal with mental health or call somebody who can deal with some mental aspects of that incident going on so as we are equipping the police, let also equip other agencies that have impact on social welfare and security”.

“Thank you so much. Skills, skills, skills. Ehnn equipment, equipment and border control were very prominent in your recommendation and restructuring the security architecture and also these traditional leaders who are giving land without presenting reports to governor or whatever policy. So maybe our government or governor need to be a lot more ...in developing concrete policies that will govern the state. The state should actually have a plan, I was in Singapore many years ago for one of these con.../IMF conferences and they took me to a whole Ministry that is designed for development.”

“We also need to look at our education system and begin to train young people that are entrepreneurs, that should be a critical part of the education of the education system so that we are not training young people who are looking for jobs but young people who are creating jobs. Young people who have skills to set up furniture making, to set up technology initiatives/creative.

“Of course, direct allocation from the purse of the federation account to the account of judges and all the security architecture that we’ve been talking about, in Britain the commissioner of police earns more than a Prime Minister, the salary is more than a Prime Minister. So that reform of the security architecture has more to do with the fact that the change within the architecture, what are the specific things that need to happen. Having a policeman earning enough. When I go to police barrack, I don’t even go to police barracks. I ran for the Senate some years back, 2011 and I campaigned in security barracks, the police barrack and I said that how can people, human beings, be allowed to live this, it is the most dilapidated, least equipped, the most miserable place that you can ask anybody to live and you want him to wake up in the morning and be thinking about how to secure the rest of us, it’s not possible, so political people in political class, with the political will that you have begun, to make sure that the police, the police structure is effectively equipped and supported so that they are that confident..."
Recommendations for Action

As representatives of critical stakeholders in Ogun State, we have met at the Continental Suites, Presidential Boulevard, Ibara, Abeokuta, Ogun State on 19 April 2021. Reflecting on our experiences and work in Ogun State and drawing on our deliberations at the dialogue attended by 26 participants from across Ogun State, we issue our Call to Action --- inclusive citizens engagement and participation for a renewed Nigeria.

People participation, inclusion, justice, and equity is crucial to the attainment of our national unity, national security, youth and women development and CSO-Government partnership. But exclusion has become accepted across our communities through injustice, discrimination, marginalisation of women and the vulnerable, corruption, lack of political will and deepened inequalities. Weak institutional capacities have rendered all arms of government ineffective.

There is an arc of insecurity and instability across South-West communities and beyond. We face a range of security challenges and national unity threats that originate from lack of citizens participation, weak intergenerational dialogue, tribal and religious sentiments, weak security architecture, democratised economic opportunities, and corruption, among others. Our security is also deeply affected by youth unemployment, lack of people centered development plans, democratic systems—weak inter and intra party politics. Kidnapping and banditry have risen to unprecedented level of intensity in the South-West region and now represents an immediate and direct to our national unity.

Nigeria confronts a wide range of issues that pose a direct threat to its security, unity and regional stability and prosperity more broadly. In the past, we have seen weak political will on the part of the Federal Government to take a firm stand, in this context it is important for Federal authorities to show strong political will in promoting policies and programmes to ensure inclusivity including the defence and security of our land.

We call on government at all levels to work collectively with citizens and citizen organisations to end inequality including gender inequality and persons living with disability, exclusion, tackle injustice and commit to transparency and accountability.
1. **Constitutional Review**
We call on the national assembly to accelerate a constitutional reform that:

- Reflects the yearnings and aspirations of Nigerians from all works of life, gender, region, political affiliation, ethnicity, religious background etc.

- Respects the right of citizens to fundamental freedoms and recognises citizens participation through referendums

- Reinforces the country's diversity as a strength and creates a path for managing this in ways that brings about national unity.

2. Legislative reform that captures and clearly addresses issues of land as an asset and a resource including those associated with land use act. Furthermore, the legislative reform should also reflect an electoral reform that will lay the foundation for a strong democratic progress and growth across the county.

3. We face enormous challenges in mobilising the needed financial resources for our development which is of importance to the delivery of programmes and projects for youth and women development. Nigeria continues to run an expensive system of government with benefits accruing to small number of elites who has largely ignored the welfare of the masses. We call for a constitutional reform that supports reduction in the cost of governance, prudent public management measures and administrative reforms.

4. **National re-orientation**
A national culture that can reshape national character and image including ethics and values is now a national imperative. The National Orientation Agency has an important role to play in ensuring that we can re-orientate our national value system, promote national image, encourage intergenerational dialogue, respect for human life including respect for religious belief, cultural and corporate values.

5. Support and strengthen the role of voluntary organisations like Boys Scout and Girls Guide etc. with a view to reinforcing social values and ethics in young people across Nigerian communities.
6. Investment in Security Infrastructure

>> Prioritise the funding of the nation’s security within the Federal, State and Local Government budgets.

>> Reform the country’s security architecture to include better welfare for security personnel

>> Security education and awareness for citizens starting from primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions.

>> Strengthen border control and effectively regulate the movement of people, animals, and goods across the Nigerian border including the use of technology.

>> Ensure appointments of service chiefs is based on merit and it reflects the ethnic balancing.

Decentralise the police architecture to give more powers and oversight to the state governors and citizens.

7. Effectively govern un-governed spaces or territories such as our forest reserves. Create programmes and initiatives that makes the best of flora and fauna in curbing climate change and in addressing desertification.

8. Civil service reforms are important to the growth and development of the country. Corruption within civil service defined as “selling and buying influence within and outside civil service” has deepened inequality and entrenched ethnic rivalry and impunity. A disciplined and professional civil service is necessary for implementing and monitoring effectively national, state, and local development plans.

9. We call for a foreign policy that places a significantly greater emphasis on bilateral and regional economic integration, enhanced regional political and security architectures, and enhanced mechanisms for regional crisis management.
10. We call on government at all levels to:

- Review the educational landscape in ways that ensures young people can be employable and can pursue entrepreneurial ventures.

- Encourage intergenerational dialogue

- Reinstate extra-curricular activities in primary and secondary schools

- Ensure women inclusion and participation in all key committees solving issues of national, insecurity, peacebuilding, and trust creation.

- Promote, support and implement policies and programs that will lead to industrialisation, economic development and growth

11. We welcome the passage of laws against persons living with disabilities in the region and call for an immediate implementation of the laws including the creation of state disability commissions especially in Ogun State ably spearheaded by a person with disability.

12. Inclusion of sign language interpreters in government institutions and agency to bridge communication gap between hearing impaired persons and the government. Braille versions of government policies should also be explored for the visually impaired.
13. We encourage the establishment of a civil society-government platform or commission with senior ranking political leadership to interface with civil society on an ongoing basis and to create systems for feedbacks that are institutionalised.


15. Civil society organisations must be visible in their communities in ways that helps to build trust and ease of intelligence sharing for onward transmission to security agencies and government.

16. We welcome the role of the Savannah Center and Nigeria Network of NGOs in complementing efforts of different stakeholders in promoting stability throughout the country. We appreciate the leadership and contribution made by Fr. John Patrick Ngoyi and Ms. Yemisi Ransome-Kuti.

17. We have made key decisions to reinforce our call for government action. Through our unity, solidarity and strength demonstrated at this meeting, we look forward to meeting again to discuss next steps and to review how our suggestions are being implemented by both government, civil society, business, and other critical stakeholders.
"I want to talk about this issue of national unity. There's this popular saying among Nigerians that, especially politicians, they would say, 'Nigeria unity is non-negotiable' so I would like to now say that 'Nigeria unity should be negotiable because if we don't negotiate unity there will be problem. We will be missing... cooperation amongst the ethnic groups and nationalities" "

"If truly we want unity in this country there are a lot of things we have to address. this issue of federal character... Look at the issue of appointments East and South...everything is lopsided into the North. I think we have to address this so there will be equity and there will justice in whatever we do in Nigeria. When we talk about lop-sidedness it covers everything appointments, job opportunities and whatever even in security force, army. If the government of the day is very plain in what they are doing ... about what they are that is what I have concerning national unity”

‘Are we truly united, are we on course? just like my brother had said, national character, a President promised us to uphold national character, federal character and then we see in your body language that you prefer a certain group of people to others in government, in civil life, in finance, in security, in education, I think the president should be sincere with himself and be sincere with Nigerians, is he truly in support of our unity?....

“But we have to come back that is to the government, to the lawmakers and the others, we have to come back to the people themselves, are we ready as people. We should be thinking of doing something better than what we've been doing before. Selling our votes, we should forget about. To get the money today and suffer for the next four years”

At times I sit down and conclude that the political will is not all that there by those people at the helms of affairs. Their approach is a kind of lip service. For instance, at the height of the regime of Chief Obasanjo, a group of people were gathered, they came out with what they feel can be a resolution or a way out of that lack of unity and they came up with certain proposal. Up till now there were agitations for implementation of that policy. During Jonathan era, they were just playing upon our intelligence. That is how it went away. Also, people are still agitating during the present administration, and they are yet to come out with certain policy. What I have in mind is this, we are talking about 1999 constitution which was put in place by the military...they were just playing on one's intelligent.”
"There will be need for us to look at the election pattern that makes our leaders. Are they grassroots leaders? Do they identify with the people in their community so that they will be able to find out what are the pressing needs of the community they are going to represent, so that they will be able to represent them well and that will bring about the kind of unity? The kind at the grassroot.

We are only looking at the top, are we actually united in the community that constitutes the local government? The local government that constitutes the state? And then the states that leads to the federal level? So the election pattern needs to be looked into. There's no unity in such a situation where there's discrimination, and then we have evil men".

“For Nigeria not to go into extinction, we need to fight for our unity”.

“On the issue of national unity, I think the way forward, if we want to go further in the country, there needs to be a national reconciliation, why do I say this? The Igbos are there, Yorubas are here, and the Hausas are there. So just because I was from a certain state in a country, I was not given admission whereas I saw someone that scored far below my own mark and that person was given admission and you expect me to be happy about the country?

“What can we say is our national value system? What can we say Nigeria really stands for? If we asked a primary student today, "what is the meaning of Nigeria to you, what do you think he'll say about Nigeria?”

“I want us to look at our history, because a lot of people are re-writing history, if we are talking about national unity and we are not talking about history then we have a problem because if you want to destabilize any country of the world just tamper with their history. I served in Anambra, and I taught Government, so I was able to interact with students SS3 students, I took SS3 and SS2. So, when we got to civil war in government, i asked them, what do you know about civil war? they had their own stories, histories, about civil war of which, going by the fact that someone, ehm, Awolowo was a bad person, that made them lost the war this and that. A lot of people are narrating different stories about Nigeria, about our ethnic formation, that younger ones like we have a different mindset about Nigeria.”
"I had a thought that if we cannot ensure justice, equity, fairness, we can never have peace in this country, and if we don't have peace we can never have development, so the issue of justice should be an issue we should look into. I see no reason why there should be inequality, I see no reason why there should be disparity, I see no reason why there should be differences in the way a southerner and a northerner is being judged."

"I need to add that there should be no disparity in the educational standard of our children. If our children sit for exams into universities the cut-off mark from the west very high, the one for those from the north very low and we are talking of national unity where do we go from that. Somebody from southwest, until you have 77% you cannot go, somebody from the north, 15% look at the gap and the person with 15% will now be made your boss at the end of the whole day so there will be no unity, there will be disaffection, so we should be treated equally, what prevents the person from the north from reading and scoring 80% like those in the south west or those in the south-south so everybody should be on the same pedestal."

We were able to visit every Fulani location in that local government and I remember one of them telling that this is the first time since ever he came into that local government that a government official will relate with them one-on-one, at the end of that meeting as we engaged with the Fulani people, we engaged with farmers representatives in that local government we have about 11 wards and at the end of the visit we had a workshop where we asked them to bring ...to make representation to that meeting and throughout the six months that study was carried out there was no single conflict in that local government and we came to some useful recommendation which we passed to the then Commissioner for Agriculture.

It came to a point that when a Fulani man that is just toppling in that area, he toppled a particular farmer’s farmland once, twice, when it's twice we blacklisted that Fulani from that local government and if he can do it the third time he would be taken out of that place and they all agreed ...and we ensured that all the traditional rulers in that area when there’s a migrant Fulani coming in there, they must have their data and recommend to the committee that we are having this people coming in here so we engage and make them to see the rule of engagement to stay in that local government and everything went well but the day the political head in that local government showed displeasure that they don't have enough fund because to be able to manage police, to be able to manage civil defense, for these all we are doing, it required about 50,000 naira per month because they need to fuel their car, the chairman said he doesn’t have the money after the sixth month, so the following month, the Security officer of British American Tobacco just came to my office and said, “oga what is happening? What we thought has ended has started again, this Fulani they begin to cut our melina trees for their” and I explained what happened to him, you don’t expect me to be using my money to fund what is supposed to be the responsibility of government, that was how that initiative died.
"After the civil war about 50 years ago, Nigeria, Gowon started what we call the 3 Rs, Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, I think if we have really done that, I think Nigeria would have been a better place today. In 1945 I remember when they dropped the 1st atomic bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. Now the Japanese are even more developed than we are and we have not even experienced any bomb blast except the ones from Boko Haram and all these. So, when we are talking about reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction, are we truthful about it?"

"I want to raise the issue of state policing because we can't talk about national security and not really settle that issue and on that premise, if I have the opportunity to meet the President, I would just tell him that he should grant each state or the senate or whatever should grant each state that power to have state policing because if there is a big security challenge in any state the governor would have to crawl to Abuja to kneel to the President to beg him for security apparatus."

"Then I think Nigeria I fighting the war of insecurity with 12 or 14 A.D apparatus, how are we gathering our intelligence? What is the level of modern arms, modern security arms, gadget, arms are we employing to fight this insecurity...?"

"Now I happen to be at Fiditi when I was having my children, so which means they were born in Afijio Local government. What is applicable to me that I cannot contest in Ogbomoso South is equally applicable to my children that they cannot lay claim to Afijio LG because their father is not from Afijio LG so where is the unity we are talking about? Whereas we see our people that have migrated to the US and UK and they are mayors we all know the history of Barack Obama that his parents were from Kenya, but they live in America but he became the President so and we are trying to compare ourselves with them. So we need to do away with discrimination, we should do away with discrimination."

"I want to tell you that if you fixed electricity, 20% of the boys you see running around will work, those who learn welding, those who learn hairdressing simple simple skill that depend on NEPA for generation to power whatever they need. It is because most these boys and girls can’t afford to buy the generators that they can use, it’s the reason why they left their jobs and now on okada and they have even seen that okada even pays as they drove, let government fix electricity, let electricity be as far as Ijio in the remote corners of villages, you see people will settle down in their remote communities, you’ll see the artisans and craftsmen they would be engaged, if a boy or girl works from 8 o’clock till 6pm in the evening he will not have the strength to go and waylay anybody on the express road."

"Then I think Nigeria I fighting the war of insecurity with 12 or 14 A.D apparatus, how are we gathering our intelligence? What is the level of modern arms, modern security arms, gadget, arms are we employing to fight this insecurity...?"
As representatives of critical stakeholders in Oyo State, we have met at the Plaza De Haruna on 23 April 2021. Reflecting on our experiences and work in Oyo State and drawing on our deliberations at the dialogue attended by 17 participants from across Oyo State, we issue our Call to Action --- an equitable Nigeria, unified by our diversity and clearly defined identity.

Nigeria’s unity is negotiable: If we are to remain united in a country that enjoys unparalleled freedom, peace, security, and shared values, including individual liberty, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. We recognise the need for citizens to discuss extensively the kind of constitution we want. To protect and defend our indivisible unity we must set on a journey of national reconciliation. The task of national ownership through a national value system remains fully relevant. The evolving insecurity and disunity across our region demand the ability to meet challenges and threats based on principles of reconciliation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.

The greatest responsibility for addressing our challenges rests with active citizen’s and citizens awareness on their rights, duty and responsibilities. At the same time, justice, equity, and fairness is important in promoting policies and programmes to ensure inclusivity at all levels of government including addressing challenges around national unity, national security, youth and women development and civil society-government partnership.

The ongoing threat to our national unity and security knows no region or religion. We call on government at all levels to prioritise citizen’s consultation and engagement in local, state, regional and national issues bothering on our national life and development. As participants we are mindful of the need to address the conditions conducive to the spread of disunity, insecurity, challenges associated with youth and women including civil-society government partnership and therefore call on government, business, civil society, and citizens to:
1. Election Process
Reform our election process to reflect the desires of Nigerians as expressed in election results. As we agreed during our dialogue, the election process must be reformed to include:

>> Proportional representation, referendum campaigns and recall elections

>> Internal politics among political parties, party democracy

>> Eligibility to vote based on factors such as where you are born, where you are living, marital status amongst others

>> Ballot design to accommodate electronic voting, equipment, and technologies.

>> Enforcement of measures against vote buying, bribery, coercion, and conflict of interests.

>> Voter participation (voter turnout)

2. Constitutional Review
We call on the President to by an Executive Order ask the National Orientation Agency to hold citizens consultations on the type of constitution Nigerians want. A people’s constitution developed based on the voice and aspirations of Nigerians is an important condition for a clear and constructive change in our democratic system. Until then we cannot return to “business as usual”. As part of the review make provisions that accommodate independent candidature

3. National re-orientation
Enlightenment of citizens on their responsibilities and those of our elected officials and political leaders.

4. Federal Character
Review the Federal Character system in ways that ensures our diversity can be effectively and responsibly managed to achieve equity in the distribution of political appointment, use and allocation of our commonwealth.
5. Decent works and economic growth as a tool for addressing insecurity

Through an executive order re-energise the National Directorate for Employment to create programmes that can deliver higher levels of productivity and technological innovation, encourage entrepreneurship and job creation as they are effective measures to eradicate insecurity and poverty.

6. Promote use of locally made goods and create a national preference for the government to procure only domestic materials used for public construction among others unless a waiver had been granted by the President.

7. Strengthen efforts improve identity management system, citizens data management through civil registration and vital statistics including migration data.

8. Address issues of religious intolerance through sensitization and engagement of religious leaders. Counter religious extremism.

9. Include values and ethics from the family unit as part of a national campaign aimed at sensitising Nigerians on basic values that can reinforce national peace.

10. Build police community trust and reduce crime in communities through policing that provides officers with leadership and communication skills, relationship-building strategies, and problem-solving approaches.

11. Autonomy of the judiciary must be respected, and citizens must join the campaign for ensuring state governments respect the role of the judiciary in a democracy,
We call on government at all levels to:

12. Aggressively reform the Nigerian education system that provides students the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century world and helping them grow the confidence to practice those skills needed to work live and work anywhere.

13. Fundamental freedoms and principles guaranteed by the constitution taught to students at all levels from primary, secondary to tertiary education.

14. Gender equity should be reinforced based on ability, capacity, and gender consciousness.

15. Reorientate young people on the need for hard work and against get rich syndrome.
16. We encourage civil society organisations to increase their awareness on getting citizens to stop putting undue pressure on the political class demanding unnecessary favours. This way reducing the cost of governance becomes easier.

17. Collaboration and partnership among civil society organisations in ways that reduces unhealthy rivalry is the foundation for an effective civil society government partnership.

18. Self-regulate to ensure the nonprofit sector can deliver effectively on their vision and mission
“It’s important we discuss this issue at this point in time, Nigeria is hemorrhaging badly and with grave implications for us as Nigerians and even more importantly for the west African sub region, I think we have no option than to work for the unity of the country, I don’t think there’s any West African country that can cope with an influx of refugees from Nigeria, Ghana that seems to be like peace haven or peace island will even be subdued”.

“Nigeria’s biggest problem and part of what’s contributing to heightened tension and disunity is impunity” Nigeria’s biggest problem, not corruption, in fact impunity formed corruption, the fact that I do something and I know that the Chairman is my kinsman who defends me will enable me to do worse things some other time and encourage people around me to do same thing but overtime we believe that the A to Z of Nigeria problem is corruption and so we turn a blind eye to impunity which is the worse form of corruption itself”.

“What is the essence of universities that you have that cannot be funded? It’s in the quality, it’s not in the numbers, you have NDA that is dying but you are building a Nigerian Army University, Nigerian Police University, now Civil Defense, you have Road Safety, vigilante will have at the end of the day, you see, there’s only one Havard University in the world, if you go to UK where we are going to, if it’s only three universities in south west let it be. So my challenge is this, let us begin to develop practical solutions, solutions that can work, we’ll not say because we must police, we’ll not eat o, for instance, we’ll not say because we want to eat when we are sick we’ll not go to hospitals”.

“Before this colonial people establish political something democracy and some other things, the Obas and the Baale community leaders they are the ones that is ruling us, now we do not hear their voice again, they do not do anything again”.

You cannot something on nothing and that is exactly what we are trying to do now, we are trying to build something on nothing, and it cannot stand, I tell you, there are four natural vocabularies, these four natural vocabularies are no longer there, two come first and the two affects the other two what do I mean? We have listening and reading, these are the two natural vocabularies that come first, talking about the remaining two, we’re talking about writing and speech, I tell you check products of schools today they are nothing to write home about, and if you don’t have something you cannot give it out. Majority of our youths today, they are empty heads, then how do you want them to behave, what do you want them to do?

All of us, both in government and individuals, we need to actually think about the way we handle issue of education, and it goes very far, to the mosque, to the church, to the homes where we raise children, technically the children we raise at home grow to be youths and these youths are the ones that grow to become adults in future. So if they don’t that have anything in their heads then there’s nothing. If you develop economically and those who will manage the economy don’t have anything upstairs, then what do you expect?
There is this issue that we have to speak frankly about, we don’t beat about the bush, the non-state actors are supposed to complement whatever government wants to do, support government one way or the other and not the beggars to government.

“Please I really appeal to those who are here, do not wait for someone to convene a dialogue, you have met yourselves here today, please continue that conversation, bring other people into the conversation and own the result, what you have recommended today that you’ll be signing up to, own the implementation thereof, don’t wait for USAID, World bank, anybody to come and convene another
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

As representatives of critical stakeholders in Osun State, we have met at the Aenon Suites and Hotel held on 27 April 2021. Reflecting on our experiences and work in Osun State and drawing on our deliberations at the dialogue attended by 21 participants from across Osun State, we issue our Call to Action --- autonomous region, localised development, resource control and effective justice system.

The world cannot cope with a Nigeria that is in war or disunited. Based on our collective abilities, solidarity and the diversity of our country, justice, protection of civic space, behavioural change and effective local government administration remains the foundational framework for strong collective and united Nigeria. And so, there is the need for renewed emphasis on our national unity. At the same time, as citizens, government, business, we must be open and frank about the issues that disunite us and threaten our national unity.

We face evolving challenges in the South-West region as well as across other regions of the country. Poverty, unemployment, economic, environment, and climatic factors are strong drivers of insecurity. These developments have resulted in increased unpredictability of the relative peace enjoyed in the past. As civil society we will work with all critical stakeholders to enhance our situational awareness of issues and to develop common approaches to solving them.

Recognising the challenges of the issues within the Lake Chad region and ongoing conversations in addressing this. Civil society must work with government to proffer solutions and closely monitor the situation in the Chad region. Our response to issues of national unity, national security, youth and women development and civil-society government partnership must be tailored objectively and scientifically to specific circumstances and issues in each part of the country.
NATIONAL UNITY

>>Respect the autonomy of regions as we have in the first republic through restructuring including issues of resource control.

>>Reform the Nigerian constitution to make provisions for state policing system with jurisdiction over the relevant sub-national jurisdiction and cooperate in law enforcement activities with municipal and national police structure.

>>Strengthen the local government system and respect autonomy of the local government.

>>Behavioural change and national reorientation programmes for instilling good values in the younger and older generation of Nigerians.

>>Urgently address the lop-sidedness of appointments starting with the leadership of the country’s architecture to reflect our diversity.

>>Develop a stakeholder engagement process anchored on bringing dissenting voices and that of the opposition into policy development and implementation.

>>Reform the justice system and guarantee autonomy of the judiciary.

>>Improve and respect civic space through the full implementation of the Federal Government’s Open Government Partnership’s commitment on civic space.

>>Launch awareness campaigns against vote buying and selling across the 774 local governments.
NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

- Improve budgetary allocation and prompt release of security spending throughout the year.
- Reorientate the society towards values that entrench discipline and hard work.
- There is a clear link between the proliferation of small arms and the threats to our national security, which urgently needs to be combated through a national, state, and local government tracing and licensing system. This should go beyond a mere procedural review of and withdrawal of arms and ammunition during elections.
- Review the ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons in ways that strengthens national security and the fight against terrorism and trans-border crime.
- Cattle rustling led to the arming of herders carrying guns. The effects of climate change and the challenges of draught in the lake chad region cannot be ignore, to address the farmer-herder crisis, government should promote ranching as an alternative
- Show the political commitment and action needed by government at all levels to implement the provisions of these various instruments aimed at addressing marginalisation.
- Transparently address issues of poverty.
- Effectively police the Nigerian border through investments on modern border security and immigration controls.
- Pay attention to the issues of the Chad region and address the political, environmental, and economic tensions in the region.
- Increase manpower, train, and provide 21st century equipment including the use of drone, CCTV and other available technologies in policing communities across the country.
- Address issues of online radicalisation through countering the narrative campaigns led by the Ministry of Information in partnership with the National Orientation Agency, media organisations, civil society, and influencers.
- Orientate the policing system and structure to rights-based policing.
- Reform the role of traditional leaders in national development and security.
- Review the present education quota system to accommodate all disadvantaged communities across the country.
Address issues of youth employment through industrialisation supported by an enabling environment.

Address the productivity crisis through skills development, vocational training, entrepreneurial support, mentoring, coaching and service.

Increase the education budget and ensure our education institutions can deliver on human capacity/capital development with the understanding that there is a difference between enrolment and learning.

Review the curriculum along 21st century realities, thinking and future of jobs.

Women, youth economic empowerment and inclusion anchored on well-defined policy and programmes on youth and women led businesses.

Address discrimination against persons with disabilities and issues of gender-based violence such as rape including justice for persons with disability.

Grow our local resources and invest in the real sector of the Nigerian economy. Launch a buy local campaign.

Create a youth development needs assessment exercise across different Nigerian communities to develop targeted youth development programmes and projects.

Sports (across its value chain) for youth development, peace building and as a business including talents development initiatives through scholarships.

Youth in politics – INEC and civil society organisations should encourage political parties to develop youth succession planning in politics programmes and initiatives.

Address issues of drug abuse amongst Nigeria youths, effectively equip and fund NDLEA.

Parents as enablers of personal development, responsibility, and growth should reminded through mass-awareness programmes by NOA on their role in moulding their wards to become better citizens.

Citizens, business management organisations and civil society organisations should continue to strengthen and monitor the ease of doing business initiative across the local, state, and federal government level.

Address issues of vote buying and selling in our electoral system through the creation of the electoral offences commission.
CSO-GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

Complementary relationship, approach to issues by government and civil society must be different, evidence driven based on a deeper understanding of the issues, and citizens engagement, aimed at providing solutions and mobilising for policy change.

Independence of the civil society sector respected and encouraged across government levels.

Government should be more open to civil society and work to improve the frosty partnership that exists through the institutionalisation of platforms for engagement that respects each other’s roles and responsibilities.
Each time we talk about national unity, I wonder where we lost it because we started right, for me it hinges on two things; tolerance, when we see each other as someone whose opinion, beliefs, their way of life matter, it counts, then there won’t be any situation or any opportunity for us to look down or belittle or feel that we are of better value than others.

We talked about peace, we are very very funny when we talk about peace education, how many peace clubs are functional unless the oyinbo man comes and fund it as civil society, when they leave, it’s gone. Are we genuinely talking peace to our kids, are we bringing them up?

“Now to my experience, in the early part of my life, the NYSC of the typical day, then I served in Sokoto State despite coming from the south. On getting there after my service year, I took up a teaching appointment Sokoto State Teaching Service Board but when we were finalizing the employment, I realized that I was employed on contract and I said “why?” and he said I am a non-indigene as far back as 1994, so in Nigeria, I’m a non-indigene. I was employed as a teacher, every two years I must go and renew my contract, it means I’m not entitled to pension even if I work for 50 years, no pension, no gratuity, every two years I apply to renew my contract...now that’s not the real story, the real story is that I taught for ten years as a science teacher then at a point they called me sir, we have to terminate your contract, I said why? They said the children I have been helping them to teach they have now graduated so they needed jobs so non-indigenes must go so that they can employ their own and my appointment was terminated just like that.”

“Governors don’t want the judiciary to go, they want judiciary to be under their foot and then constitution says let these people stay in their own lane, national assembly, house of assembly, they are there, the governors, the executive would not want them to go, what are we talking about and then we have said that the issue is within us here, when we have constitution and then we are not following the constitution.”
Number one, for the youth empowerment, we need to review our educational curriculum. Most people go to university by the time they are graduating they don’t have anything upstairs unlike in the foreign land where we borrowed some of these educational curriculums from, they have graduated to the level that by the time you finish for instance first degree in America, you can stand on your own but there are a lot of opportunities that are even attached. So if our educational curriculum is designed in such a way that by the time you are graduating you have already made market you can go into and make money from, you'll no be looking for a white collar jobs which are not even available anyway.

“National security is in the hands of every one of us. There’s what we call the non-state actors. The inputs of these non-state actors are very germane when we want to have security in a nation”.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

As representatives of critical stakeholders in Ondo State, we have met at the Royal Birds Hotel held on 30 April 2021. Reflecting on our experiences and work in Ondo State and drawing on our deliberations at the dialogue attended by 34 participants from across Ondo State, we issue our Call to Action --- citizens’ responsibility, peaceful co-existence, tolerance, and respect for the rule of law.

Fake news, injustice, inequality, tribalism, nepotism, insecurity, ethnic profiling, over politization of issues, religious intolerance and hate speech across the south-west region and by extension the entire country continues to threaten our national unity and security. The national posture of the national government to issues of security non-proactive in nature—showing a lack of political will.

All the challenges we face as a nation require appropriate investment on the part of all stakeholders and the development of national re-orientation programmes, awareness, and campaigns to instil national values and ethics. Our overall unity and security depend on both how much we use our human and natural resources. Increased awareness on the role of citizens and their responsibilities including in how much we spend and how we spend it on improving issues of national security and directed towards meeting the nation’s security capabilities.

In this context, we call on government to
NATIONAL UNITY

>> Address issues of hate speech, fake news, misinformation, ethnic profiling, religious extremism, tribalism, nepotism, discrimination, and disinformation

>> Less politicization of issues especially those associated with national security.

>> Support programmes and initiatives that encourage religious tolerance and respect for other people's opinion and thought.

>> Institute peace education and club in schools and address stereotypes and prejudice.

>> Awareness programme on the roles of citizens and attitudinal change.

>> Fully implement the federal character principle of the 1999 constitution to the letter.

>> Intergenerational dialogue on national moral rebirth.

>> Review the 1999 constitution to reflect the will and yearnings of the people around referendum.

>> Carry out justice sector reforms and reduce the cost of seeking and getting justice.

>> Review of the national conference reports of the past years and implement recommendations.
NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGE

- Invest in the security needs of the country, starting with a detailed security needs assessment.
- Ensure the nation’s security architecture reflects federal character.
- Expedite action on community policing.
- Mop up arms and small arms and combat the proliferation of small arms.
- Address issues around the nation's porous borders.
- Constitutional amendment to reflect state policing.
- Community based intelligence gathering including landlord resident associations.
- Strengthen the PCRC system through an executive order to the Ministry of Police Affairs.
- Use of technology in security management and expedite action on the citizens identity management system.
- Citizens must ensure the protection of our critical infrastructure.
- Improve the welfare package of all security forces.
- Define and enhance the role of traditional institutions within the Nigerian constitution.
Job creation for young people

Diversify the Nigerian economy

Young people must ask critical questions around activities of state governors especially those relating to security votes.

Proper supervision of government empowerment schemes to ensure it is making impact including carrying out a need’s assessment and baseline surveys for proper programme implementation and results delivery.

Solve the electricity problem in the country.

Develop agriculture as a business along the agriculture value chain.

Monitor agriculture loans get to targeted beneficiaries.

Accessibility to loans for youth enterprises.

Revisit the launch of skill acquisition centers and adequately fund the centers to provide vocational skills to young people and as safe spaces for talent development.

Involve women and young people in planning, implementation, and actualisation of government policies at all levels.
Government and civil society must work together to develop a compact that set out key principles and establishes a way of working that improves their relationship for mutual advantage to cover areas such as involvement in policy design and consultation, funding arrangements (including grants and contracts), promoting equality, ensuring better involvement in delivering services, and strengthening independence.
“We know the problems; we are more or less looking for the solutions. So one of the solutions across board is that arms should be mopped and so we were happy yesterday when we saw that the federal government has created an office within that of the NSC asking them to coordinate the mop up of small arms across the country.”

“Nigeria was originally a colonial contraction and interestingly in moments of truth all the three leaders in colonial era Awolowo, Azikwe and Ahmadu Bello had occasions to voice out that Nigeria is geographical expression. Today in Europe we have the Yoruba unions where every state knows the power of collaboration. What’s the problem with us going our separate ways and if there’s need to collaborate it comes from our own part?”

“I believe that for there to be national unity, for us to see ourselves as one just like it has been said earlier, there has to be fair play, there has to be justice, that is the foundation upon which there can be unity”.

“.you have to do what has to be done to engender citizenship that comes with patriotism and effectiveness of state. Now this problem did not start today it started way before independence. Number one, the Nigerian state itself is not a naturally born state, it’s a colonial project on one hand, on another hand it was hunting ground for nationalists, I call it a hunting ground when we look at our history we found out that even though our nationalists were united in the struggle to have a Nigerian state, they were not united in what will be the future of that state itself and we see that in the crisis that ensued between and amongst them the moment independence was gained”.

“Government will always talk about development journalism which entails trying to publicize the good side of your country and downplay the bad side, but I want to say that when we talk about development journalism it should also go side by side with responsible governance, if a bad husband would tell his wife that why did you tell pastor that I beat you, then you shouldn’t also have beaten your wife, the two should go together, if you have been very responsible your wife would not expose you, so government must really sit tight, it’s not about guarding the media, it’s not about telling the media, don’t tell the world that we are brutalizing people here but it’s about doing the right thing first before you preach to journalists to adopt your sermon of development journalism”.  

“The youths are known to be energetic, they are known to have passion, zeal is an attribute of the youth, they are also very excitable, they are equally impressionable, they learn from the environment, they can reproduce, they are also creative and there is imagination in what we describe as youth. When we look at all of these attributes together, the youth can be an asset and can also be a disaster, if you teach your youth in a proper way, they become an asset, if you teach them the other way round, they become a disaster and liability.”
“Now we have seen the youth increasingly become exposed to a self-preservation instinct, somebody talked about yahoo, at least forewarns us not expect an end to the yahoo generation because if that end comes we would likely see more disaster than what we are seeing here and I permutate from there that he is alluding to the fact that the low intensity of yahoo up north is the reason why we see more militancy on that maybe logically.”

“Now another thing that I see as a contradiction is the value degradation of the youth in an increasingly globalizing world, you are learning, acquiring knowledge people can develop bombs now from the internet but Nigeria is not harnessing its own youth intellectually for a productive engagement, we have left them to grow from their own instinct and they are growing in dysfunctional ways, I’m not leaving out the women, there is also what I describe here as unbridled liberalism of youth culture in a receiving state, the state is withdrawing from every responsibility that we used to know the state for. In sometimes past, the state knows that every graduate will be produced from institutions, and they’ve engaged with the corporate world and the public sector on how to get the youth together, engage them productively but today if they still care of what happens for about millions of graduates that the institutions churned out every year, so the state is withdrawing and then for welfare we’ve talked about that, the state is nowhere to be found.”
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

As representatives of critical stakeholders in Ekiti State, we have met at the BON Hotel on 05 May 2021. Reflecting on our experiences and work in Ekiti State and drawing on our deliberations at the dialogue attended by 21 participants from across Ekiti State, we issue our Call to Action --- fairness, justice, sincerity of purpose, resource control as foundations for our national unity and citizens diplomacy as an avenue to create economic opportunity, contributes to peace and stability.

We affirm our history as a region and the level of disunity that has come to be part of our foundation as well as our politics. Bearing in mind that as citizens we are divided along religious and ethnic lines. Every crime is local.

In this context, we call on government to:
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

>> Address issues of favouritism, religion, and ethnic divide

>> Engender sense of citizenship and citizens diplomacy through national re-orientation, nationalism, and effectiveness of state.

>> Reform the Nigerian constitution making it a people’s constitution

>> Address issues of injustice, lop-sidedness, favouritism, ethnicity, fairness, and inequality

>> Reform the governance model with parliamentary system as an option including resource control

>> Prior to the constitutional reforms, operate the current constitution effectively by adhering to the spirit and letter of the constitution.

>> Respect the separation of powers

>> Strengthen the fight against corruption
NATIONAL UNITY SECURITY

- Address issues of porous borders and cooperation with other countries in the region.
- Government should show political will and commitment.
- Ensure the Boundary Commission re-assess the nation’s borders for ease of control.
- Use of technology such as CCTV, drones, fingerprint and voice data.
- Productive engagement of young people.
- Address issues of radicalisation such as those associated with religion and ethnic exceptionalism.
- Institute surveillance measures that respect the right of citizens.
- Address issues of poverty through social protection systems.
- Stop sweeping generalisation about the conduct of security officials.
- Improve the educational system through curriculum development and skills acquisition.
- Properly fund the police and other security agencies, training and retraining of the security architecture.
- Ranching as the solution to farmer-herder crisis- revisit the RUGA project.
- Decentralise policing to include regional, state, and local policing system.
- Address issues of police recruitment and re-orientation of the police for crime control.
- Develop a robust electronic voting system.
- Strengthen the local government system.
- Incorporate traditional rulers in the security architecture.
YOUTH AND WOMEN DEVELOPMENT

- Address unemployment
- Youth re-orientation – ethics and values
- Reform the higher education system
- Tax fairly
- Youth involvement in politics and succession planning in governance.
- Intergenerational dialogue
- Women empowerment through skills development
- Correct stereotypes about women in politics
- Discourage get rich quick syndrome
- Address issues of drug abuse and misuse of alcohol
- Quality Mentoring and coaching programmes
- Address issues of internet affordability, accessibility, and meaningful connectivity.
“The issue of security should go under confidentiality, most discussions always bounce back on the discussants because when you tell the truth, what you will see after it is arrest and whenever you are arrested, who bears the grudge? We need state security outfit to be working very well to be directed by the state government without ill-will”.

“We need local government too because the local government, they are the closest to the grassroots there is no way they should not be involved in security, security matters must start from them because they know who they are governing”.

“... empowerment of the youths should be paramount to federal government, state government and local government. Some women they are widows, they are working alone, the husband died, and the husband four children and the women were not taken care of, definitely he must join a gang”.

“We call ourselves CSOs, are we really CSOs or money-monger CSOs? Are we not the same type of politicians that look for billions in order to get our own share, can we come out sincerely as CSO that has approval from the government? Not the kind of CSO, can it talk after he had been paid salary? How can that CSO talk when the governor has given it a mandate? Let us search our conscience”.

“If we do not kill corruption, definitely corruption will kill us and we'll not want the corruption to kill us, we need to tackle it in the real sense of knowledge not the lip services you know that we’re doing right now, and so the issue of unemployment government has to do something making livelihood, like the issue of poverty look at the whole thing now in a nation everything is just expensive”.

“I think we the NGOs we need to do more of engagement, more of tutoring the younger people now because by the time they start growing, it becomes a problem”.

“I think one of the things we need to do is put together town hall meetings that will start to re-emphasize community parenting, that is very important. She was talking about tackling this issue from the grassroots, it is from the grassroots”.
“We have our own roles to play, CSOs and government, for a very long time there's this misconception when it comes to security, people think it's job of the government but it's a lie because whether you like it or not because you also whether you are a religious leader whether you are a community leader, CSOs we all have roles to play.”

On our way from Ibadan to Lagos when we had traffic we saw youths, boys and girls probably in their thirteen fifteen hawking water, hawking biscuits and we were asking ourselves, school is in session, what are these boys doing in traffic? You know whether we like it or not those are the standing army if anything goes wrong today in south-west, those boys, all you need to do is just tip them with N1000, N500, tell them to do anything they will do it because they are not doing anything we are not educating them, they are not going to school. So quite a lot of work that we need to do here, the work or the chunk of that work is with the CSOs, CSOs for a very long time have been described as the voice of the voiceless so if they are the voice of the voiceless more than ever before this is time for us to wake up to our responsibility to let government, to work hand in glove with the government in making sure that we get some things right and as regards the CSO partnership well we know that quite a lot of CSOs, the reputable ones work with government but for people at home as someone said, iya Chukwuemeka, Baba Bashira do not even know that CSOs exist or when they hear CSO, what comes to their mind is they too want to collect from national cake but with the current situation on ground and that the major focus of this meeting, I think one of the things I look forward to is how CSOs can make themselves more visible to the general public.

We must go back to the foundation, start education, I think one of the things again is the National Orientation Agency that we have, they are not, they are moribund, I was in a meeting last year and the chairman yes, the Chairman of NOA, Lagos is saying they don't have budget, so as we are here invite them, they will come but will tell you for them to buy something, they don't have money, so we need to equip that agency of the government to begin advocacy. Our youths are unemployed and because of that there cannot be peace in the country.
As representatives of critical stakeholders in Lagos State, we have met at the Amber Residence on 07 May 2021. Reflecting on our experiences and work in Lagos State and drawing on our deliberations at the dialogue attended by xxx participants from across Lagos State, we issue our Call to Action—effective local government administration, grassroots development, effective civil society, justice, brotherliness, and long-term thinking.

In this context, we call on government to:
NATIONAL UNITY

- Implement recommendations from past CONFABS
- National interest over personal interest
- Citizen’s diplomacy and engagement – a Nigeria that works for all
- Neighbourly love and care campaign
- Address religious and cultural divide through campaigns that address radicalisation and brainwashing involving religious and traditional leaders.
- Community parenting initiatives
- Address issues of mutual mistrust among all ethnic groups
- Re-energise the national orientation agency
- Improve government communications
NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

- Enforce police neutrality and address complicity and infiltration of security officials.
- Electoral system reforms
  - Reduce cost of governance and invest in equipping the security architecture to combat crime.
- Address over politization of issues
- Address issues of unemployment
- Regional cooperation on issues of security in the West African region
  - Address issues of poverty, properly implement the 100 millions out of poverty agenda of government--- National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy
- Strengthen and sustain the fight against corruption
- Address mismanagement in all government intuitions
- Security is everybody’s business and citizens must be made to understand this through campaigns and awareness
- Address issues of street child through enforcement of laws that ban street hawking and the street child syndrome.
- States like Lagos State should properly implement the Amotekun system
- Improve communication networks across the country including internet affordability, accessibility, and meaningful connectivity.
- Political interference in the policing system.
- Focus on grassroots economic development initiatives.
- State policing
YOUTH AND WOMEN DEVELOPMENT

- Address underrepresentation of women in leadership positions
- Affirmation action legislated to include youth involvement
- Mobilise women for women support
- Synergy and monitoring of your empowerment programmes
- Tax fairly in ways that help business to do more for young people
- Productive engagement of young people including volunteering opportunities. (Nigeria National Volunteer Service)
- Social protection system legislated and properly implemented.
- Develop and promote technical and vocational education
CSO-GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

>> Mobilisation and organisation of citizens around issues

>> Issues of civic space amongst labour movements.

>> Evidence based engagement with government and platforms for dialogue

>> Unhealthy rivalry within the civil society sector

>> Counter the narrative on civil society stereotypes

>> Citizens education on elections.
High-Level Solutions Conference under the auspices of Savannah Center and Nigeria Network of NGOs

Before the advent of COVID-19 pandemic, Nigeria has faced growing tension, new forms, and patterns of violence against the backdrop of rising national challenges: security, youth unemployment and restiveness, cultural contestation, and ethnic conflicts, deepening inequality with growing pockets of unrest. These challenges put at risk the hard-won gains of the past 21 years of the country’s democracy. While her increasing influence within the comity of nations cannot be underestimated, Nigeria is constantly faced with the challenge of finding its own bond of unity. Historical trends have shown that unity is never easy to be achieved, Nigeria’s ability to unify its citizens have been hindered or aggravated by personal issues between different people speaking different languages, by social and religious customs which often are bolstered by prejudice and obstinacy. Whereas a sustainable democracy is hinged on unity, the ability of political leaders to manage the nations ethnic diversity to its advantage in addressing issues such inequalities, injustices and discrimination is an important imperative.

The imperative of national dialogue for unity, security and development conference builds upon the consultations held across the 6 South-West states (Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo) with critical stakeholders drawn from traditional rulers, kidnap victims, opposition figures, farmers association, farmers, OPC, CAN, trade union, women groups and market women associations, community development associations, right holders, academics, youth groups, media, security, landlord resident associations, traditional rulers, figures in the ruling party, Miyetti Allah, influential voices and traditional nonprofits on issues bothering on the country’s unity, security, youth and women development and civil society government partnership and follows the initiatives of the Savannah Center and Nigeria Network of NGOs to find citizens based(civil society) solutions to the myriads of problems facing the county particularly those associated with national unity, national security, youth and women development and civil society government partnership.
The “Imperative of National Dialogue for Unity, Security and Development” conference was a hybrid solutions conference (physical, online and 1hr live radio) organised in the framework of the current challenges facing the country. It focused on finding solutions to the focal challenges of national unity, national security, youth and women development and civil society government partnership as framed by important recent developments within the south-west region, as well as other significant initiatives undertaken by other civil society organisations in other regions of the country.

The conference was an opportunity to:

>> Make recommendations to different stakeholders responsible for addressing these matters. Including government, business, civil society organisations and citizens.

>> Provide an overview of existing policies and programmes aimed at addressing the focal challenges, identify main trends and emerging concerns. Share good practices and suggest solutions to enhance the country’s national unity, security and development.

Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08.30-9.00am</td>
<td>Registrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening Session</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9.00-9.30am    | - Fr. John Patrick Ngoyi- Executive Director, JDPC  
                 - Ms. Yemisi Ransome-Kuti, Founder, NNNGO  
                 - Savannah Center |
| 9,30-10.30am    | **National Unity and Security from the Corporate Lens**  
                 >> Mr. Laoye Jaiyeola, CEO, Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG)  
                 >> Mrs. Toki Mabogunje, President of Lagos Chamber of Commerce, and Industry (LCCI) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10.30-11.00am| **Nigeria's Geography and Ungovernable Spaces.**  
**Professor Olukayode Oyesiku**, Pioneer Vice Chancellor of Tai Solarin University of Education and Provost, College of Engineering & Environmental Studies, Olabisi Onabanjo University. |
| 11.30-12.00pm| **Tea Break/Networking Session**                                                           |
| 12.30-1.00pm | **Cattle rearing and ranching in Nigeria, a case study of Mayegun Royal Resort.**  
Experience sharing by xxx.  
The violent conflicts between nomadic pastoralist and sedentary farmer communities in Nigeria have caused several deaths and economic losses. To address the crisis, ranching has been suggested as a solution. This session will review the XX Resort’s model of breeding cows as a case study. |
|              | **Lunch**                                                                                  |
| 2.00-3.00pm  | **Religious tolerance as a panacea for national unity, security, and development**  
This session will set the tone for actions needed to entrench religious tolerance in the promotion of peaceful coexistence in a religiously plural society like Nigeria.  
**Bishop Francis Wale-Oke**, President Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria  
Chief Imam of Ibadan Land. |
| 3.00pm       | **End of Day 1/Networking**                                                                |
| **Day 2**    |                                                                                             |
| 08.30-9.00am | **Registrations**                                                                           |
| 9.00-10.00am | **Civil Society Government Partnership**  
The relationship between government and civil society is fragile and complex. This complexity is driven by lack of trust, unprincipled behaviour, lack of information, failures in communications, and/or unwillingness on the part of one or both to take responsibility as and when necessary. This session will discuss the basic principles and responsibilities necessary to enhance civil society government partnership while respecting the independence and autonomy of CSOs.  
**Mr. Femi Pedro**, Former Deputy Governor of Lagos State |
| 10.00-11.00am| **Youth and Women Development**  
Recent studies suggest that unemployment rate in Nigeria has taken a shocking increase from 14 per cent in 2012 to 33.3 per cent in 2021. It also revealed that unemployment rate is undoubtedly contributed to the high wave of insecurity in the country. The session will also counteract the conventional neglect of women's need and contributions with respect to security and development including infusion of gender perspective to the focus of the conference. The session will explore suggestions to issues of youth and women development.  
**Mrs. Bunmi Dipo-Salami**, Executive Director, Baobab for Women Development  
Toyosi Akerekle |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.30-11.00am</td>
<td>Nigeria’s Geography and Ungovernable Spaces. Professor Olukayode Oyesiku, Pioneer Vice Chancellor of Tai Solarin University of Education and Provost, College of Engineering &amp; Environmental Studies, Olabisi Onabanjo University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00-10.00am</td>
<td>Civil Society Government Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The relationship between government and civil society is fragile and complex. This complexity is driven by lack of trust, unprincipled behaviour, lack of information, failures in communications, and/or unwillingness on the part of one or both to take responsibility as and when necessary. This session will discuss the basic principles and responsibilities necessary to enhance civil society government partnership while respecting the independence and autonomy of CSOs. Mr. Femi Pedro, Former Deputy Governor of Lagos State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30-12.00pm</td>
<td>Improving the security architecture, what role for civil society and citizens. Listen to AIG Olasupo Babatunde Ajani as he shares his thoughts on the role of citizens and civil society organisations in improving the security architecture for the south-west. AIG Olasupo Babatunde Ajani, AIG Zone XI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tea Break/Networking Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30-1.00pm</td>
<td>Rethinking the role of the media in promoting national unity and in supporting national security. This conversation will explore the use of effective communication using traditional and non-traditional media as a potent instrument for fostering peace, security, and national unity in the light of the prevailing national problems and needs. Aremo Olusegun Osoba, Former Governor of Ogun State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00-2.00pm</td>
<td>Communique Presentation- Live Radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oyebisi, B. Oluseyi- Executive Director, Nigeria Network of NGOs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY OF IMPERATIVE OF NATIONAL DIALOGUE FOR UNITY, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Upon invitation by the Nigeria Network of NGOs, the imperative of national dialogue for unity and development conference brought together xx critical stakeholders from 6 states of the South-West. Following on from the state-wide consultations, this was the second activity to gather more input and feedback from stakeholders, some of the participants from the state consultations were present at the conference. The conference alternated between high level keynotes and presentations, plenary debate and fire side chats.

Whereas the meeting focused primarily on solutions around four focal themes of national unity, national security, youth and women development and CSO-Government partnership, several moments were organised with key voices, figures and leaders to generate further insight and stimulate conversations. On the first day, NNNGO’s Founding Executive Director and Trustee (Annex 2) and Sir Bola Abimbola greeted conference participants followed by a panel session on national unity and security from the corporate lense led by Mr. Laoye Jaiyeola, CEO, Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) and Mrs. Toki Mabogunje, President of Lagos Chamber of Commerce, and Industry (LCCI) and discusses the internal pressures emerging in the South-West including how the concept of security is evolving to economic security. Their session further looked at series of emerging issues and offer suggestions to the question of national security from the lens of private sector and business leaders (Annex 3).

As a next step Mr. Jaiyeola pointed to coordination amongst security agencies, enhanced citizens communication and coordinated national dialogues. Increased consultation at the community level, incorporating leadership at the community level, well coordinated and thought-out national development plan for a “future that can happen for us today” submitted Mrs Mabogunje.

The second session highlighted “Nigeria’s Geography and Ungovernable Spaces” from the perspective of Professor Olukayode Oyesiku, Pioneer Vice Chancellor of Tai Solarin University of Education and Provost, College of Engineering & Environmental Studies, Olabisi Onabanjo University focusing on how through the understanding of south-west Nigeria’s geographic domain, population growth, agricultural development and food security, environmental challenges, water and water resources, unsustainable use of forest resources, the depletion of water from the Lake Chad region, migration and its implications for ungoverned spaces across the country and how this can be effectively controlled. As next steps Prof. Oyesiku recommended “Across-the-board review of the nation’s security architecture to address the lapses in coordination, collaboration and synergy among security agencies and adaptation of modern technology into the core of Nigeria’s national security architecture and management structure and embracing adaptation strategies and appropriate mitigation strategies based on technology, innovation, and sustainability that can help to tackle resource conflicts and other challenges of climate change” (Annex 4).
Aremo Olusegun Osoba, Former Governor of Ogun State via a pre-recorded fire side chat shared his thoughts on the theme: Rethinking the role of the media in promoting national unity and in supporting national security exploring the use of effective communication using traditional and non-traditional media as a potent instrument for fostering peace, security, and national unity in the light of the prevailing national problems and needs. Aremo Osoba noted that xxxx. He concluded that xxx (Annex 5).

The first plenary session highlighted 2030 Agenda implementation experiences from the perspective of young activists, social entrepreneurs and the regional dimension of the United Nations reform process. While framework conditions are very different, Ellen Lindsey Ayoku from Ghana, Riina Pursiainen from Finland and Rebecca Freitag from Germany discovered how similar their respective work is, which aims at changing social behaviour to realise sustainable development. They concluded that intergenerational negotiations about how a society wants to live in the future are necessary. Gomer Padong from the Philippine Social Enterprises Network presented social entrepreneurship as a means for inclusive development where the poor and the vulnerable become owners of the social enterprises. As next steps Gomer pointed to parliamentary debates on a social enterprise policy and to talks with government to include consideration of social enterprises in public procurement procedures.

Philipp Schönnrock from CEPEI was interviewed on a recent study conducted for the UN Secretary-General on the regional dimension of UN reform. According to Philipp, regions had been underestimated before, although they are the most suited fora for mutual learning and cooperation on common regional challenges.

The meeting alternated between plenary debates and teamwork in outbreak sessions. Whereas the meeting focused primarily on the transnational exchange among Open SDGclub.Berlin participants, several moments were organised to engage with German stakeholders. On the first day, a representative of the German Chancellery greeted Open SDGclub.Berlin participants. On day two, the Open SDGclub.Berlin meeting participants had a meeting with the Advisory Committee on Sustainable Development of the German Bundestag to discuss about the role of Parliaments in implementing the 2030 Agenda. On day three, a dozen German sustainability actors joined the meeting to present their projects and initiatives and to exchange experiences with Open SDG club.Berlin participants. The meeting ended with a debate with representatives of the two responsible German ministries, the Federal Ministry for the Environment and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation.
We, representatives of civil society organisations and other non-state actors/stakeholders from the six south-west states of Nigeria, have come together at this crucial moment in our national life to call on the Federal, State and Local Governments, Private Sector, Civil Society, and Citizens to work together in agreeing a bold and ambitious agenda for national transformation that puts people and planet at the center of the nation’s quest for unity, security, and development. We remind the President, Governors, Local Government Chairmen, National and State Assembly Representatives, and members of the Judiciary of their oath to defend the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

We call on all to respect the tenets of the 1999 Constitution and demand an urgent action to get back on track to fully implement all its sections in the short term. We acknowledge the need for a review of the 1999 Constitution underpinned by the principles of: (1) inclusivity, guaranteeing the participation of all Nigerians in line with our diversity; (2) a transformative shift in the use, allocation, and sharing of our national resources; and (3) decentralised system of power, control and decision making.
On 19 and 20 May 2021, the Savannah Center and the Nigeria Network of NGOs convened, virtually and physically, the “Imperative of National Dialogue for Unity, Security and Development” regional conference in Ibadan at a time of unprecedented challenges facing the country.

The conference discussed issues of national unity, national security, youth and women development, and civil society-government partnership. The conference acknowledged the shared understanding that government at all levels, private sector, civil society, and all of society have a role to play in addressing the myriad of challenges facing the nation. The conference reviewed the state of our nation in view of the recent agitations by the Yoruba nation owing to incessant cases of kidnappings for ransom and ritual killings, insecurity, and drug abuse amongst young people amidst broader issues of border control, ungoverned spaces, injustice, religious intolerance, farmer-herder crisis, open grazing and ranching, fake news and misinformation, citizens dis-engagement, non-inclusion, inequality, erosion of ethical and moral values, community parenting, and the blurred roles of non-state actors such as leaders of faith, nonprofits, traditional rulers and the media, among others.

The conference welcomed the convening of virtual and in-person consultations with critical stakeholders, held by the Nigeria Network of NGOs from 18 April to 7 May 2021 across all of Nigeria’s South-West states. Participants affirmed the primary role of government to be that of securing lives and property and welfare in accordance with Section 14, subsection 2(b) of Nigeria’s 1999 Constitution. They also reaffirmed the imperativeness of dialogue in preventing conflicts, fostering national unity, collaborating for development, and shaping the Nigeria of our collective dreams.

To this end, the development of this Communique has been coordinated by the Nigeria Network of NGOs – the first generic membership-based organisation for Nigerian nonprofits. The statements and recommendations contained therein reflect collectively agreed solutions, recommendations, and policy positions proposed by the over 60 civil society organisations from Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti, Ondo and Lagos States that came together at the 2-day conference to proffer solutions to our common challenges on security, unity, and development.
Our recommendations, as set out in this Communique, outlines our assessment of some of the critical political, socio-economic, and development challenges facing our region – and, by extension, the entire country – with concrete proposals for how the present administration and opposition at the national and sub-national levels can address these challenges. This outcome document compliments and supports the different Communiques issued during consultations with other stakeholders in the six South-West states as well as the recommendations that will be prepared independently by the Nigeria Network of NGOs as part of the solutions process. We support recommendations coming out of the Southern Governors meeting on ban of open grazing and call for an agenda that responds to the respect for the autonomy of the judiciary and local government by our political leaders at the state level.

Our ambition is to address the immediate unity, security, and development needs of the region, to offer solutions to support a strong and better Nigeria and reinforce the urgent need to address injustice and inequality as seen in all facets of our national life. In the noticeably short time, solving the distinct, yet interconnected four-pronged scopes of national security, national unity, youth and women development, and civil society-government partnership remain a priority before the 2023 general elections. We will strive to keep creating the platform that brings together relevant stakeholders while fostering collaboration in order to ensure that this process is not a “talk and go” but a “talk and act” based on the understanding that this is a pivotal time in our history to keep our nation together for “united we stand”.

Suffice to state that the year 2021 has a lot riding on it as we strive to recover from and continue to wiggle our way through the pangs of COVID-19 and the fallout of the #EndSARS protests. With many Nigerians’ pinning their hopes for the year and the future on good health, improved finances, access to better services and a good life, these needs are better achieved in a period of calm and quietness when citizens can go about their business without fear and insecurity.
Understanding that "no one is safe until everyone is safe", we recognise that our common security can only be guaranteed through active participation of people living in communities across the country. Therefore, we call for the acceleration of the community policing initiative across all wards and local government areas in Nigeria. This must be complemented by addressing the disrespect for the Constitution and laws of the country by the Federal Government in not convening a meeting of the Police Council as required by law.

2. We call for more investment in policing the country, training, and retraining of the police and other security agencies in crime prevention as this will strengthen our ability to respond to our security challenges and threats.

3. We support the establishment of state policing and advocate for the inclusion of this in the ongoing review of the Nigerian constitution.

4. Our forest reserves remain a national asset and a source of flora and fauna; however, owing to its neglect, they are fast becoming hideouts for terrorists and kidnappers. We call on the Federal and State Government to reactivate the forest ranger’s system and invest adequately in the forestry, agro-forestry, forestry technology and training as a means of reclaiming our forest reserves and alternative sources of revenue.

5. Civil society is calling on government at the national and sub-national level to address issues of street children and to fully implement the Child Rights Act. Drug abuse is now a growing menace across the country and requires an urgent national response.

6. We call on national and subnational governments to accelerate implementation of the safe school’s programme across the country.
NATIONAL UNITY

1. Owing to concerns about the lopsidedness in appointments by the President Buhari-led administration, which has further deepened disunity across the country, there is need to manage the country’s diversity. Hence, we call on President Buhari to respect the Federal Character principle as enshrined in Section 14, subsections 3 and 4 of the 1999 Constitution.

2. The conference desires a just, equitable, tolerant, open, and socially inclusive Nigeria where the needs of the vulnerable are met. Achieving this requires justice, without which unity, security and development will be frustrated. We, therefore, call on the 36 State Governors to respect autonomy of the judiciary and allow the full implementation of Executive Order No. 10 signed into law in 2020 by President Muhammadu Buhari on the implementation of financial autonomy for state legislature and judiciary.

3. We call on civil society, political and business leaders to prevent and resolve the justice gap by working with the judiciary in evolving a justice system that helps individuals, groups, and communities fulfil their full potential.

4. At the heart of every conflict and war lies propaganda, fake news, disinformation, and misinformation. The conference is concerned about the growing trend of these issues, which can further deepen our national challenges. While admonishing the media to depart from propaganda-based models of journalism and practice solution-based, conflict sensitive and peace journalism, we call on government to work with civil society, including media and academia in partnership with technology experts, to develop a robust oversight strategy for curbing this menace.

5. In furtherance to the above, we recognise the importance of open government, procurement and contracting, effective response to freedom of information requests by citizens, along with robust citizens engagement and communication strategy in addressing this menace. We call on States that have not joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP) process to voluntarily do so without further delay.
6. We call on civil society to strengthen its advocacy to combat the influence of money in politics and to work with the INEC and the Inter-Party Advisory Council in addressing the issues of campaign financing. We welcome ongoing call for the passage of the Electoral Amendment Bill and join our voices with other civil society actors to call on the National Assembly to urgently pass the Bill as a matter of legislative priority and electoral reforms.

7. People are empowered when they know their rights and feel able to act on them. We call on the National Orientation Agency to wake up to its responsibility of sensitizing and raising citizens’ consciousness and awareness on their rights, freedoms, and duties. The Federal Government should prioritise and invest in citizens communication and engagement through NOA towards implementing value and ethics reorientation campaigns including awareness of government activities and actions.

8. We call on all members of State and National Assemblies to respect and fully implement the constitutional provision for constituency offices and engagement with their constituents on a regular basis. Civil society organisations have a duty to monitor and ensure this citizens feedback and accountability mechanism is upheld.

9. A new model of economic growth that prioritises economic security for all Nigerians especially the vulnerable is urgently needed. We call on national and sub-national governments to develop and implement economic strategies that delivers prosperity to all Nigerians without discrimination.

10. The President should address the nation expressing his commitment to addressing the nation’s current problems and to evolve a better communication strategy for communicating with Nigerians regularly.
1. State Governors should respond positively to the call for local government autonomy rooted in fairness and sustained democratic principles. We call on all the 36 State Governors to return democracy to local communities and pursue democratic reforms across States in ways that puts service to the people, and needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable people, at the center of development. Every development should be local without “leaving no one behind”.

2. We welcome the development of the National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy, aimed at lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty. We recognise poverty as one of the underlying factors of insecurity, and, therefore, call on the Federal Government to work with civil society and other sectors in co-designing a robust Social Protection System. This should entail sustainability of specific programs, increase respect, dignity and social harmony, including an effective monitoring and evaluation system through common good-practice indicators for the number of programs that benefit the poor, while supporting households, micro, small and medium enterprises.

3. Lessons from COVID-19 has reinforced the importance of the internet in connecting, finding information, and accessing economic activities. Digital connectivity is now an enabler, just like access to roads and electricity. The conference acknowledges the development of the national broadband plan and reduction in the cost of right of way by State Governors. We want to see a Nigeria where internet is affordable and accessible with citizens meaningfully connecting using affordable hardware.

4. We ask for inclusive development and social security targeting the vulnerable and persons with disabilities.
5. Women and young people in Nigeria today face an uncertain future in terms of discrimination, employment, and income. Government’s employment support programs are temporary and can only reach few out of the millions who need this critical support. To give hope for the future, we call on national and sub-national governments to invest in vocational skills development programs for women and youth that build up assets, matches community assets, and align with the rapidly evolving future of work.

6. National and sub-national governments must invest in education, including equality and inclusiveness of education outcomes for all Nigerians, as this is an antidote to addressing historically inherited structural inequalities.

7. All elected office holders, political appointees, and civil servants must do more to recognise that corruption undermines our national development, while working to address issues such as human rights, healthcare, education, social justice, among others. We call on the EFCC and ICPC to conduct background checks on senior government officials from the Director level and political appointees at first and then cascade it to lower cadre through their asset declaration forms and account examinations including through the beneficiary ownership system.

8. We call for a human security approach to issues of women and youth development issues. Incorporate employability skills into the curriculum in line with the future of work. Sport and youth centers are important spaces for accommodating unstructured social interaction among different age groups and providing instructional classes all in a safe, supervised environment. We demand investment in sports for development and youth centers as a way for curbing youth restiveness.

9. Civil society and the private sector should work together on programmes that celebrate success differently away from entertainment especially programmes that encourages and celebrate academic excellence.
1. We welcome the Open Government Partnership (OGP) commitments of the Federal Government to addressing issues of civic space. We call for a new model of partnership between civil society and government that is delivered through a compact rooted in mutual trust, inclusion, and respects for fundamental rights and freedoms, while respecting the independence of the sector and the need for open civic space.

2. Civil society is calling on sub-national governments to, in safeguarding the civic space, acknowledge the role and provide adequate protection for human right defenders.

3. The civil service is the engine room of service and policy delivery. Oftentimes, the level of redundancy and corruption in the civil service has been largely ignored with too much focus on political leaders. National and sub-national governments must develop, alongside civil society actors, a framework for monitoring and reviewing gaps in public service. For example, prompt police response time, dignified doctors- and nurses-patient relationship, sufficiency of ratio of teachers per pupil/student, etc, while working with relevant institutions to re-balance until targeted indicators are achieved. Performance management (service charter) should be introduced across the civil service and an independent inspectorate that monitors efficiency.

4. Civil society organisations continues to shy away from engaging with political, parties. We ask for a bold civil society engagement strategy with political parties and a code of conduct that can guide this engagement in ways that safeguards the principles of civil society independence and non-partisanship.

5. We encourage citizens and civil society organisations to engage with the ongoing constitution review process towards a gradual but consistent amendment of the Nigerian constitution towards true Federalism and a constitution people can own.

We call on civil society organisations to develop a self-regulatory framework for safeguarding trust in the sector.
AGENDA FOR ACTION

Drawing on the outcomes of the desk review of the various confabs, state-wide consultations and regional conference, this report provides a first estimate of concrete recommendations serving as an agenda for action to the Federal Government of Nigeria.

National Security

Host a Bi-Partisan Conference on National Security
Convene through the Inter Party Advisory Council a bipartisan conference on national security that will bring together political, security and development partners to crowdsource ideas and develop a national road map for joint action to addressing the nations security challenges. The conference will among other things focus on:

- identifying security risks and how to address them as early as possible
- agree solutions on the worst forms of violence and strategies for increasing safety for the most affected communities and people.
- recommendations for strengthening the justice and security institutions in ways that ensures disputes are managed peacefully
- ideas for increasing inclusion and responding to the grievances that undermine security.
- develop strategies for protecting human rights and support gender equality and promote a culture of peace and non-violence.

Issue an executive order designating NCCSALW as the implementing agency for the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) https://undocs.org/en/A/CONF.192/15(SUPP) and to prioritise the following plans in the PoA in the next 12 months:

1. Policy guidance, research and monitoring of efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. This should include

2. aspects of the illicit manufacture, control, trafficking, circulation, brokering and trade, as well as tracing, finance, collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons.

3. To put in place, where they do not exist, adequate laws, regulations and administrative procedures to exercise effective control over the production of small arms and light weapons within their areas of jurisdiction and over the export, import, transit or retransfer of such weapons, in order to prevent illegal manufacture of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, or their diversion to unauthorized recipients.

4. To adopt and implement, in the States that have not already done so, the necessary legislative or other measures to establish as criminal offences under their domestic law the illegal manufacture, possession, stockpiling and trade of small arms and light weapons within their areas of jurisdiction, in order to ensure that those engaged in such activities can be prosecuted under appropriate national penal codes.

While the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW) has been established,

we recommend the President issues an executive order designating NCCSALW as the implementing agency for the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA)
5. To identify, where applicable, groups and individuals engaged in the illegal manufacture, trade, stockpiling, transfer, possession, as well as financing for acquisition, of illicit small arms and light weapons, and take action under appropriate national law against such groups and individuals.

6. To adopt where they do not exist and enforce, all the necessary measures to prevent the manufacture, stockpiling, transfer and possession of any unmarked or inadequately marked small arms and light weapons.

7. To ensure that comprehensive and accurate records are kept for as long as possible on the manufacture, holding and transfer of small arms and light weapons under their jurisdiction. These records should be organized and maintained in such a way as to ensure that accurate information can be promptly retrieved and collated by competent national authorities.

8. To ensure responsibility for all small arms and light weapons held and issued by the State and
Due to its neglect, the nations forests have become hide-outs for kidnappers and terrorists making citizens to conclude that they are "ungoverned spaces". We recommend the President directs the Federal Ministry of Environment to review the mandate of the Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria and bring back the forest guard system under FRIN's sustainable forest management, forest conservation and management department.

Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN) was established as Federal Department of Forestry Research in 1954. The Institute's Decree 35 of 1973 and order establishing Research Institute of 1977 changed the status of the Department to an institute being supervised by the Federal Ministry of Environment, but the only Research Institute of the Ministry. FRIN has seven specialized research departments: Sustainable Forest Management, Forest Product Development & Utilization, Forest Conservation & Protection, Forest Economics & Extension, Environmental Modelling & Management and Wildlife & Tourism (each having various specialized sections), three support departments, ten outstations spread across all ecological zones of the country, three service units and four ND/HND awarding colleges. FRIN owns an Herbarium (FHI) with over 100,000 collections and playing the role of a National Herbarium for Nigeria. It also has an Insect Museum. Research Focus includes Biodiversity Conservation, Utilization, Coordinator of MAB activities in Nigeria, GBIF Node Institution for Nigeria. https://frin.gov.ng/

FRIN in times past had courses and trainings for forest guards. Forest guards within the nation's forestry architecture were recruited and trained to secure the forests from illegal felling, poaching, bush burning, grazing and other illegal activities.

The President may consider using an executive or other executive directives to:

- resuscitate the forest guard system at both the federal and state level.
- designate FRIN to propose an executive bill on Forest Guards for consideration of the National Assembly. Bill must have input of citizens that have worked as forest guards, department of forestry and civil society organisations in order to tap into their experience. Note: A Forest Guard Bill is at the second reading stage at the House of Representatives. "The piece of legislation seeks to charge the agency with the responsibility, among other things, "to detect and prevent crime, banditry, kidnapping, terrorism and violence."
  https://allafrica.com/stories/202003200747.html

- mandate FRIN to undertake a forest inventory-- collect, analyse and report information on the status and trends of Nigeria's forests: how much forest exists, where it exists, who owns it, how it is changing, and how the trees and other forest vegetation are growing, how much has died or been removed, and how the harvested trees have been used in recent years.

- Develop a national protection and conservation plan including adapting the Nation's forests and grasslands to a changing climate and proactively suggest resilience and mitigation strategies.

- FRIN to come up with a national forestry plan to ensure the nation's forests can sustainably provide timber, improve wildlife habitat, watershed protection and recreational opportunities.

- Convert the Federal Colleges of Forestry managed by FRIN into degree awarding institutions to attract citizens interest in forest management and technology as a career.
This action on the part of the President will have the following catalytic effects:

>> reclaim the nation’s forests, turning them to governed spaces.

>> address issues of climate change and

>> protect the nations wildlife.

>> Job creation, if plans are created.
The Police should be on the frontline of preventing violence and crime. The Police Act 2020 provides a framework for shifting from reactive policing towards problem solving models. To play the full preventive role, the police must work in close partnership with local communities, specially those that are subjected to the highest levels of violence. The annual policing plan by the Inspector General of Police and establishment of community policing committee enshrined in the Police Act of 2020 provides this shift in ways that ensures data and evidence are used to target police resources where they are needed the most. A full implementation of the Police Act 2020 provides a promising hope for addressing the nations security and access to justice challenges.

The President should set up a multistakeholder working group on the full implementation of the Police Act 2020 co-chaired by the Ministry of Police Affairs along with a civil society organisation with the membership of the police force, police service commission, civil society organisations---, labour, national associations including national and thematic NGO networks, National Human Rights Commission, National Orientation Agency and other agencies with the aim of developing and monitoring indicators towards implementation of the Act. The working group will report directly to the President on a quarterly basis through the Co-Chairs and its reports will be publicly available.
EXPAND MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL POVERTY REDUCTION WITH GROWTH STRATEGY

The National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy of the Federal Government if fully implemented can help rebuild the country after many years of hardship, aftereffects of the COVID-19 pandemic and increase resilience so that conflicts and crisis become less likely. The President should consider expanding the membership of the National Steering Committee to include civil society—labour, private sector, media and multilateral agencies. The President may also consider as an alternative a technical working group for civil society organisations to mobilise resources for implementation, provide citizens feedback and monitor implementation of the strategy.
At the heart of the conversations around the nation’s unity are issues of discrimination, injustice and inequality. Many of the participants we interacted with are convinced that a just society must be an inclusive one where diversity is respected, and rights are protected. The Nigerian constitution contains a charter on Federal Character though non-justiciable the President has the opportunity of working through the Federal Character Commission to address the yearnings of citizens around diversity and inclusion in ways that recognises the country’s ethnicity, multicultural character, gender balance, vulnerability and disability inclusion. **In response the President can issue a Presidential directive to the Federal Character Commission to develop to:**

Develop a costed and fully funded national diversity and inclusion strategy through citizens engagement with especially those with lived experience of discrimination. Strategy must include:

- **>> a set of guiding principles**

- **>> a whole-of-government approach to diversity and inclusion through Federal leadership**

- **>> highlight a menu of government actions to identify and coordinate responsive initiatives, identify gaps, assist in developing new initiatives and consider the impacts of new and existing policies, services and programs on diversity and inclusion.**

- **>> a diversity and inclusion monitoring framework for reporting publicly whole-of-government outcomes on diversity and inclusion on a quarterly basis.**

- **>> building awareness and attitudinal change.**

- **>> strategies for liaising with state and local governments, engagement and work with civil society partners, disability and vulnerable groups and communities to identify and develop further areas for action.**

Coordinate with the National Orientation Agency to implement a national public education and awareness campaign to increase public understanding of how the Federal Government is taking leadership in advancing equal access to, and participation in Nigerian society.
Better justice, diversity and inclusion data through National Bureau of Statistics

The public debate on diversity, inclusion and justice gap provides a starting point for the Buhari administration to build a more strategic approach to building an inclusive society that puts people at the centre. Developing, measuring and reporting progress on nationally agreed diversity, inclusion and justice indicators by the National Bureau of Statistics that can be used to assess national progress towards diversity, inclusion and justice.

President Buhari is encouraged to issue an executive order to the National Bureau of Statistics to collect, analyse and share with government and non-government partners diversity, inclusion and justice related data.

Reinvigorate SERVICOM through a Presidential Directive on Frontline Public Servants.

The breakdown of service systems in the education, health, justice and rule of law continues to inflame grievances that may be mobilised for conflict and create incentives for violent behaviour. Effective prevention is clearly important for people living in extreme conditions of poverty and injustice.

Through SERVICOM’s service charter, the President has an opportunity to prevent conflict and instability by issuing a Presidential directive to SERVICOM to prioritise, review and develop (where applicable) a service charter for frontline public services and public servants such as teachers, health workers, the police and lower-level courts in delivering accountable and responsive services. This will include:

- Guaranteeing minimum service standards that defines what users can expect and how they build trust and support by demonstrating a growing ability to meet people’s needs and help promote consistent standards.

- An independent performance monitoring and evaluation framework that includes an online citizens perception and satisfaction survey.

A national program of public education and awareness campaign coordinated with the National Orientation Agency to increase public understanding of the service charter for these frontline public servants.
Establish a Multistakeholder Presidential Steering Committee on Content Moderation

Internet platforms facilitate citizens right to freedom of expression as can be seen from the hundreds of millions of posts, messages and hundreds of thousands of hours of videos uploaded on these platforms in ways that are globally assessable everyday. A common thread of legitimate concerns was raised by participants regarding harmful behaviours, including hate speech, harassment, security threats, incitement to violence or discrimination. Balancing the rights and fundamental principles when dealing with such abuses on the internet is a challenge. An example of this is the Twitter ban.

The President should at first set up Presidential Steering Committee on content moderation consisting of experts from government, internet companies, digital platforms, technical operators, civil society—NBA and National NGO Networks, leading universities, citizen bloggers, youth and women groups, private sector and disability groups with the aim of:

Developing a shared framing of the issues and build a standard shared narrative in ways that helps to develop a common understanding of the policy problem, set common objectives and identify key areas for cooperation where stakeholders can work collaboratively to develop practical and operational solutions.

Develop concrete scalable policy solutions in the form of operational norms- to help actors organise their own behaviour and mutual interactions; operational criteria- to guide actors who develop, evaluate and implement solutions and operational mechanisms- that offer concrete avenue for cooperation.

Communicate and aid the implementation of the policy through a national education program of awareness and campaign coordinated with the National Orientation Agency (reference toolkit cross border content moderation).

Facilitate access to justice for citizens starting with communities affected by conflicts and violence.

The access to justice journey starts with empowering citizens so that they can resolve their justice problems for themselves, their families and their communities. As noted by participants justice is frequently too slow, time consuming, too expensive and unnecessarily stressful for those who need help. These challenges allow justice problems to become more serious. The President is encouraged to issue a Presidential directive to:
National Orientation Agency

> Initiate programmes in coordination with the National Human Rights Commission and the National Communications Commission to help citizens (starting with communities affected by conflicts and violence) know their rights (understand the law) and make them feel able to act on them using citizen helplines and algorithms and other choice tools like USSD and SMS to provide consistent advice to more people.

Invest in legal aid for the most vulnerable

> Issue a Presidential directive that provides impetus to the Legal Aid Council (LAC) of Nigeria to deliver on its mandate and further develop its national paralegal movement.

> Increased and timely release of funds to LAC

> Develop victim and witness support services and services that guide unrepresented litigants through a court case.

> Mentoring program that support people from at risk groups who are in conflict with the law, not only during a legal process but also in prisons and during their re-entry to society.

> Produce on a quarterly and annual basis for submission to the Attorney General, President and publicly on its website the LAC annual statistics of applications received, application granted, application rejected, cases completed and cases pending.

Strengthen the Nation’s Peace Infrastructure through the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council and National Peace Committee.

Engage the National Inter-Religious Council from time to time on issues of religious tolerance, peaceful elections and reduce political tensions. Work through their structures to develop and implement a national education and awareness program on religious tolerance and peaceful elections alongside a Presidential Committee on Religious Tolerance and Peaceful Elections established for this purpose.

Foster Peace and Inclusion through the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution.

Through a Presidential directive provide impetus to the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution’s strategic vision of “become a Global Intervention Agency in conflict situations” starting with:

> developing and implementing a national peace plan or strategy that fosters peace,

> establishing a conflict prevention and response network which identifies early risks of conflict across the country through partnerships between government ministries, local government and civil society.

> providing data on indicators of potential conflicts to the network for addressing same.

> developing mechanism for addressing rising tensions.

> developing a national program of education and awareness on peace and conflict resolution.
Participants identified the need for national orientation and ethics in addressing some of the societal issues the country is faced with. The National Orientation Agency is specially placed to lead on this and other areas of meaningful citizens participation and engagement in national development including fulfilling the three main levels of participation: 1) access to information 2) consultations and 3) active involvement of the public through dialogue and partnership

The President is encouraged to issue a Presidential directive that gives impetus to NOA in fulfilling all its functions and objectives as listed in the NOA Act. This includes the provision of adequate and timely releases of funding to the agency.

**Youth and Women Development**

Issue a Presidential directive to all Ministries, Department and Agencies on youth and women inclusion. Where practical develop a quota system for women and young people in their programmes and projects.

Support through the Ministry of Women Affairs campaigns such as “Elect Her” - [https://elect-her.org/](https://elect-her.org/) that encourages and prepares women for political leadership.

In setting an example for the nation and other political parties, the President should consider leading a personal campaign within the APC in partnership with the APC women wing to move the APC to have 30% women in its electoral list. If successful, the President may initiate a draft law to make it obligatory for parties to have 30% women for the constituent assembly and on their electoral list.

Mandate the Ministry of Youth and sports to fully implement the National Youth Policy and develop a framework for monitoring and evaluating the plan.

Re-energise the Committee set up by the National Executive Council in 2020 headed by the Vice-President, Committee to work with private sector and civil society to develop and implement a national jobs plan.
Civil Society Government Partnership

Through the Office of the Special Assistant to the President, work with national nonprofit networks, traditional nonprofits and associations to develop a civil society compact aimed at ensuring Government and CSOs work effectively in partnership to achieve common goals and outcomes for the benefit of communities and citizens in Nigeria.

Continue to make public commitments to the Open Government Partnership and the full implementation of the 2nd National Action Plan.

Redesignate the Minister for Special Duties and International Affairs as Minister of Special Duties, International Affairs and Civil Society with an additional portfolio of coordinating, engaging and ensuring meaningful participation of civil society in government programmes and projects.

This will show the President's commitment to civil society and:

- Enhance government’s limited capacity to engage proactively with civil society

- Allow for improvement of processes for civil society engagement which vary greatly across Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government.

- Allow the government to hear from diverse and representative cross-section of civil society voices by proactively seeking out their views through the Ministry, consultations physically and through virtual participation to level the playing field, access to information and dialogues.