

HWPL releases Progress Review Report of Peace on Western Africa Peace Initiative

Last February, Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light (HWPL) a South Korea - based International Organization conducting peace activities for world peace and cessation of war (associated with the UN DGC and ECOSOC) published 'HWPL Peace Progress Review Report' of Ghana and Nigeria. The report records the results of the Western Africa Peace Initiative for 2 years since 2021 and presents the future directions in 2023.

It also shows 5 Peace Initiatives including a total of 11 times of Peace Development forums where leaders from various sectors of human rights organizations, international law, media, educational institutions, and youth groups in Western Africa discussed how to achieve peace, the introduction of HWPL Peace Educator Empowerment Training, Peace Education in action, etc. Through peace educator empowerment training, 101 sessions in 2021 and 111 sessions in 2022 were implemented in Ghana and Nigeria. An HWPL official said its peace initiatives will expand in Western Africa, starting with HWPL Peace Educator Empowerment Training and Peace Education in action. By signing the MOUs and cooperating with both governments and non-government organizations, it will engage more educational institutions in peace education and establish peace networks. In addition, it will raise awareness of peace as a memory through the construction of parks and monuments reminding people of peace in 2023. Mr. Donghui Lee, head of the HWPL Southern Seoul and Gyeonggi Branch Africa team, said, "HWPL Progress Review Report is meaningful that it records the results of Peace Initiatives that people in Western Africa found out the peace activities that they could do individually and voluntarily without material supports. I believe this will become the driving force for peace initiatives and expand the peace activities in Ghana, Nigeria, and the whole African continent by being delivered to educational institutions, media, and government bodies." On Feb 11, the report was presented first at HWPL Western Africa Peace Development Forum. Collins Uwaomaetan Newuwumi, Executive Director of Peace and Community Empowerment Initiative (PCEI), said "HWPL Progress Review Report shows how much HWPL values each individual and organization and it works transparently to achieve the goal of peace together." In addition, other people in Western Africa who read the report, responded that "It is very impressive and encouraging to propagate the movement of peace all over the world.", "It shows a clear picture of what is a goal to achieve for peace and co-existence."

2023 Poll: INEC Announcing 'Doctored' Results

...PDP, LP, other party agents allege, storm out of collation centre

**Insist on electronic transmission of results*

Several opposition parties, among them the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Labour Party (LP) and Action Alliance (AA), late Monday afternoon stormed out of the National Collation Centre for the February 25, 2023 presidential election. This followed the refusal of the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Mahmoud Yakubu, to suspend the process pending the transmission of the results to the INEC server as provided by the Electoral Act. They were led by Senator Dino Melaye, a former chairman of the Senate Committee on the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) an agent of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). The agents of ten opposition parties had earlier insisted that the results being announced at the National Collation Centre in Abuja are different from what were recorded at the states during the Saturday Presidential election. They had caused a stir at the National Collation Centre when they rejected the presidential election result declared for Ekiti State, alleging over-voting. The drama started before the beginning of collation when Melaye, who is also the agent of PDP, raised an observation that the figures of results announced by INEC for Ekiti State does not correlate. INEC had declared the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Bola Tinubu, winner for Ekiti State with 201,494 defeating his closest rival Alhaji Abubakar Atiku of PDP, who scored 89,554. Peter Obi of LP polled 11,397 votes while Rabiu Kwankwaso of New Nigeria Peoples Party polled 264 votes; 1703 votes were cancelled due to bye-pass of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation Systems and over-voting. But making his observation, Melaye, said after calculation done by the PDP, there was a discrepancy of an increase of 887 in the total number of figures from Ekiti State. The agents of AA, Kenneth Udeze and Labour Party, Umar Farouk agreed with the observation made by Melaye. But INEC, chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu insisted that the commission stood by the result declared by the collation officer of Ekiti State, Prof. Akeem Olawale Lasisi, who is the Vice Chancellor, Federal University of Health Sciences, Ila Orangun, Osun State.

"I still insist that the figure presented by the state collation officer for the presidential election for Ekiti state of the total number of accredited voters is 315,058. This is what is on the spreadsheet that we screened yesterday. And this is also what is on the actual result manual recorded by the scope and signed by the PDP agent and agents of other political parties back in Ekiti state. "But having said that, I've taken note of your observations, let us make progress on that one. But what we have here is exactly what I've said. And any other figure that is at variance with this one cannot supersede the official result presented. Let's make progress."

BoI, AFD Sign Agreement to Fight Climate Change in Nigeria

The Bank of Industry (BoI) and the French Development Agency (AFD) have signed a grant agreement for €2.5m, delegated by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), to boost their partnership to fight climate change in Nigeria. France has committed more than €1.5bn to the Green Climate Fund since 2019 and on August 23rd, 2022, BoI and AFD signed a €100m credit-line for the expansion of green finance in Nigeria. This was approved under AFD's Transforming Financial Systems for Climate (TFSC) Programme with the Green Climate Fund (GCF), a USD650m-Programme developed in 17 countries for 100% climate investment projects.

The TFSC Programme focuses on financing investments that contribute to climate change mitigation or adaptation; specifically, projects focused on renewable energy, low carbon and efficient energy generation, climate smart agriculture technologies, clean urban transportation and others. The grant agreement, which was signed at a meeting at the French Embassy under the primary patronage of the French Ambassador to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Madame Emmanuelle Blatmann, sets up a technical assistance scheme for BoI. Both signatories acknowledge the importance of mainstreaming Climate Finance within BOI's strategy and operations. The objective is to build the capacity of BoI, thereby providing tools for effective identification and development of eligible bankable climate-related projects as well as improving the readiness of the bank's customers to implement green practices in their operations. The implementation of the Environment and Social Governance framework provided for in the credit agreement, therefore becomes an important part of the technical assistant mandate. "Given the serious threat that climate change poses to equitable and sustainable development in Nigeria, it is critical for us at BoI to take the lead in mobilizing capital for green and sustainable investment. In addition to the line of credit, the € 2.5m Technical Assistance funds will support capacity building for BOI and its customers, thereby enabling the scaling of current efforts by BOI towards climate change mitigation and adaptation. This will contribute significantly to reducing Nigeria's carbon foot print. With specific reference to Gender Equality, the technical assistance will support BoI in the development and implementation of professional gender equality and gender lens investing policies" said Mr. Olukayode Pitan, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Bank of Industry, at the grant agreement signing ceremony.

Bearing in mind the Paris Agreement, Mr. Xavier Muron, Country Director for AFD, recognized BoI's commitment to embed sustainability in its business practices to drive strategic social, economic and environmental impact in the communities the Bank serves. Needless to say, that for BoI, a key financial actor supporting the country's goal to reach carbon neutrality, having a strong technical assistance to build its climate finance strategy is paramount. Mr. Pitan acknowledged the dedication of AFD, the GCF and its strategic partners to ensure a smooth and efficient implementation of this deal: "BOI welcomes its partnership with the AFD and GCF as it continues to implement President Muhammadu Buhari's policies with respect to climate finance. We commend the professional approach adopted by

these partners in delivering this technical assistance package. We are confident it will enhance BoI and its customers' capacity and readiness for climate finance. We believe this is the beginning of a long and mutually beneficial relationship." Mr. Muron appreciated the strong relationship BoI and AFD have been building and looks forward to further support the BoI in its activities towards achieving the SDGs.

NESG, UNICEF Partner for SDG Achievement

The Nigeria Economic Summit Group (NESG) and United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) have partnered to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that focus on education, health and other child rights issues in Nigeria. Representatives of the organizations in their respective submissions explained that the partnership was targeted at securing the posterity of Nigeria by providing quality health and empowerment opportunities for the children that would run the affairs of the country in years to come.

UNICEF Country Representative, Ms. Cristian Munduate, who spoke at signing of the MoU in Abuja, said that UNICEF is committed to any cause that would guarantee and improve the quality of life and wellbeing of Nigerian children, hence it's open for partnership with organizations and individuals that are committed to similar course. She made reference to recent data that indicated that children in Nigeria suffer various forms of deprivations both monetary and non-monetary, adding that about 47.7 per cent of children face monetary poverty by virtue of belonging to household living with less than N137, 400 per year (about 375.6 naira a day).

"Furthermore, the multidimensional child poverty analysis approach revealed that approximately 54 per cent of children in Nigeria are multidimensionally poor because they face at least three deprivations across seven dimensions of child rights including nutrition, healthcare, education, water, sanitation, adequate housing, and information.

"Evidently, multidimensional poverty in children is more prevalent in the rural (65.7 %) than urban areas (28.4 %). There are also high state disparities in Nigeria that, if not addressed, can persist from one generation to the next, thus creating an inter-generational cycle of poverty."

Chief Executive Officer of NESG, Mr. Laoye Jaiyeola, in his remarks, said the Group intend to highlight some of the identified challenges working against the interest and wellbeing of Nigerian children so the country can have a healthy and productive population that would, in future, be able to compete favourably in global arena.

He said: "We can go on to make investments in all kinds of infrastructures, notably, roads, rails, bridges and several others. But if we fail to invest in the human beings that would manage the infrastructures, then we have failed." He, thus, solicited the support of all stakeholders including the media to propagate the messages of human capital development, particularly the female children. "The recent data has said it all. It's a call for more collaborative work to salvage the posterity of Nigeria. It's doable and we would do with the help and support of all." At NESG, we are non-profit, non-partisan, private sector led think tank with a mandate to promote and champion the reform of the Nigerian economy into an open, globally competitive economy."

NG CARES set to release N79bn to States to alleviate poverty

The Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (NG-CARES) Programme is set to release N79 billion to states and FCT as refund to assist in the implementation of the programme and reduce poverty in the country. This was made known in Abuja, when a four-man team from NG-CARES paid a "Thank you" visit to the Minister of State, Budget and National Planning, Prince Clem Ikanade Agba. The NG-CARES Programme is a World Bank- State support operation with the objective to "to expand access to livelihood support and food security services and grants for poor and vulnerable households and firms." The team was led by the World Bank Task Team Leader for NG-CARES, Prof. Foluso Okunmadewa, the Chairman Federal CARES Technical Committee, Mr Aso Vakporaye and the National Coordinator NG-CARES, Dr Abdulkarim Obaje. The team briefed the Minister on the implementation of the NG-CARES Programme and also thanked him for the support the NG-CARES Programme is getting from the Ministry. They informed the Minister of the submission of the Report of the Independent Verification Agents (IVA) exercise to the states and FCT. The report, which was validated by the Federal CARES Technical Committee, is to be used to reimburse the 36 States and FCT Governments for funds expended on the implementation of NG-CARES Programme. The programme uses Performance for Result (Pfor R) which means states and FCT would have to expend their resources on programmes that target the poor and vulnerable. Once the results are verified and found to be in line with the verification protocol, states and FCT then get reimbursement. "It is, indeed, heartening to know the commitment of the World Bank to the \$750m intervention to address very critical areas of the local economy and the needs of the poor and vulnerable," the Minister stated

Nigeria under Buhari fall's again corruption under TI Index

Nigeria has again fallen by four places on the latest Corruption Perception Index, CPI, ranking released by Transparency International, TI. Although in the 2022 ranking, Nigeria scored 24 out of 100 points, it fell from 150th to 154th out of 180 countries assessed in the 2022 ranking. The CPI is TI's tool for measuring the levels of corruption in the systems of various countries around the world. A country can score maximum points 100 points, and the least is zero. Zero signifies the worst-performing government, and 100 is the best-ranked. The latest ranking may indicate that President Muhammadu Buhari's fight against corruption has yet to yield enough results. Many consider the Buhari administration's pardon granted to two jailed former governors – Joshua Dariye of Plateau State and Jolly Nyame of Taraba State – in 2022 as a significant setback in the country's anti-corruption efforts. As the two former governors were pardoned in April 2022, the Supreme Court affirmed their convictions and sentencing, and they had yet to serve half the length of their jail time. Also, corruption has continued to permeate the public and private sectors despite the government's efforts to deter the menace. Transparency International Chair, Delia Rubio, said governments worldwide

have failed to progress against corruption.

Rubio called for all governments to work for all people, not just an elite few. "Corruption has made our world a more dangerous place. As governments have collectively failed to progress against it, they fuel the current rise in violence and conflict – and endanger people everywhere. The only way out is for states to do the hard work, rooting out corruption at all levels to ensure governments work for all people, not just an elite few", Rubio stated.

Nigeria's public debt stock increases to N44.06trn in Q3 2022 – NBS

Nigeria's public debt stock increased from N42.84 trillion (103.31 billion dollars) in the second quarter of 2022 to N44.06 trillion (101.91 billion dollars) in the third quarter of 2022. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), said this on Tuesday in its Nigerian Domestic and Foreign Debt Report for Q3 2022 released in Abuja. The report said Nigeria's public debt stock which includes external and domestic debt grew by 2.84 per cent in Q3 of 2022. It said that External debt stood at N17.14 trillion (39.66 billion dollars) in Q3 2022, while domestic debt was N26.91 trillion (62.25 billion dollars). "However, the share of external debt to total public debt stood at 38.92 per cent in Q3 2022, while domestic debt was recorded at 61.08 per cent."

In addition, the report showed that the Federal Government's share of domestic debt was 80.07 per cent in Q3 of 2022. In a breakdown by states, the bureau said that Lagos State recorded the highest domestic debt of N877.03 billion in the third quarter of 2022. It was followed by Delta with N272.61 billion and Ogun with N241.78 billion. The report showed Jigawa recorded the lowest debt at N44.40 billion, followed by Kebbi and Katsina at N60.13 billion and N62.37 billion.

USAID at the forefront of promoting nonviolent conflict resolution in Northeast Nigeria

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has successfully concluded the two-year conflict mitigation activity' "Building Community Resilience to Violent Extremism and Conflict in Northeast Nigeria," also known as "Northeast Connection, that worked to counter violent conflict. Since 2021, Northeast Connection has promoted non-violent conflict resolution from the grassroots to state government levels in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states. The activity provided over \$2.1 million in small grants to almost 40 local organisations to strengthen local civil society capacity and promote local solutions to violence. Speaking at the close out event, Conflict Specialist USAID/Nigeria, Mukhtari Shitu said: "USAID is committed to enduring partnerships with Nigerian government institutions and civil societies to mitigate violent conflict in the country."

Implemented by Creative Associates, the USAID-supported \$10.1 million activity worked in 90 communities across 15 local government areas in the three states. Northeast Connection established 181 peace platforms that supported community

organizers to identify and advocate for social priorities; trained more than 22,000 people in conflict mitigation and cross-community dialogues; and provided trauma-informed psychosocial support to more than 4,300 community members. In Yobe State, the activity worked with the emergency management agency to launch the first-ever two-year Early Recovery Plan which equipped the agency with the ability to respond to and recover from disasters more effectively.

Violent conflict has devastated social and governance structures and local markets in Northeast Nigeria. The ongoing insurgency by violent extremist groups such as Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa has killed over 35,000 and displaced 2.2 million people. The region also struggles with regular intercommunal clashes between farmers, herders, and other groups over land and water resources. The Northeast connection activity is part of USAID's strategic effort to decrease conflict and

IMF Predicts Nigeria's Economic Growth to Hit 3.2% in 2023

The International Monetary Fund says Nigeria's economy is set to grow from 3.0 per cent in 2022 to 3.2 per cent in 2023 due to measures made to address insecurity in the oil sector. The IMF disclosed this in its World Economic Outlook Update (January 2023) report. It stated that growth across sub-Saharan Africa will moderate at 3.8 per cent in 2023 amid prolonged fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. South Africa's economy will fall from 2.6 per cent in 2022 to 1.2 per cent in 2023.

It said, "In sub-Saharan Africa, growth is projected to remain moderate at 3.8 per cent in 2023 amid prolonged fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, although with a modest upward revision since October, before picking up to 4.1 percent in 2024. "The small upward revision for 2023 (0.1 percentage point) reflects Nigeria's rising growth in 2023 due to measures to address insecurity issues in the oil sector. In South Africa, by contrast, after a COVID-19 reopening rebound in 2022, projected growth more than halves in 2023, to 1.2 percent, reflecting weaker external demand, power shortages, and structural constraints." The Washington-based lender explained that growth in the global economy will slow down in 2023 before bouncing back in 2024. This is as the global fight against inflation and Russia's war in Ukraine weigh on activity. Growth is forecasted to slow from 3.4 per cent in 2022 to 2.9 per cent in 2023, then rebound to 3.1 per cent in 2024. According to the money lender, its January forecast is a lot less gloomy than its October forecast and could hint at a turning point, with growth bottoming out and inflation declining. It said, "Economic growth proved surprisingly resilient in the third quarter of last year, with strong labour markets, robust household consumption and business investment, and better-than-expected adaptation to the energy crisis in Europe. "Inflation, too, showed improvement, with overall measures now decreasing in most countries—even if core inflation, which excludes more volatile energy and food prices, has yet to peak in many countries. "Elsewhere, China's sudden re-opening paves the way for a rapid rebound in activity. And global financial conditions have improved as inflation pressures started to abate. This, and a weakening of the US dollar

from its November high, provided some modest relief to emerging and developing countries." Recently, the United Nations projected that a robust commodities trade and dynamic consumer goods and services markets would push Nigeria's economic growth to three percent in 2023. In its own prediction for 2023, the World Bank stated that the Nigerian economy would grow at 2.9 per cent in 2023. Due to pipeline vandals and oil thieves, Nigeria's crude oil production plunged in 2022. Production crashed to a low of 0.937mbpd in September 2022 but rebounded to 1.235 million barrels per day in December 2022.

In 2023, Nigeria Will Experience More Flooding – NEMA

The Federal Government has declared that Nigeria would experience another round of flood in many states this year, noting that early preparations had commenced to avoid some of the mistakes that were made in 2022. It also revealed that 662 persons were killed by the devastating flood situation in 2022, adding that state governors would be informed early this year about disaster-prone areas. The Director-General, National Emergency Management Agency, Mustapha Ahmed, disclosed this in Abuja at the executive seminar for NEMA employees and senior members of staff selected from State Emergency Management Agencies and critical disaster management stakeholders.

Speaking to journalists on the side-lines of the event, he said, "This is January and by tomorrow NiMet (Nigeria Meteorological Agency) is releasing their seasonal climate prediction and after that I believe that in the next week or two, NIHSA (Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency) will release their own flood outlook.

"And immediately after that we will gather stakeholders to critically analyse the reports and interpret it and attach it with the vulnerable areas mapping, and send it out to states. "We are starting early because we have seen one or two mistakes that were done last year. So we have to work together and collaborate with all the states. We can't work if NEMA is moving on one side, while the states are on the other side." Asked whether NEMA was interfacing with the Nigeria Governors Forum on how to manage floods in states, Ahmed said replied in the affirmative and stressed that there would be floods this year. He said, "When we finish with this (seminar), and NiMet releases its climate prediction, and NIHSA releases its own outlook, and we analyse them and then conduct the vulnerable areas mapping, we will then interact with the governors directly, all of them. "We don't do that for just once, rather we identify the likely areas of disaster. It is going to flood again this year, there is no doubt about that. It is going to flood. How severe it will be is what we don't know for now, but it's actually going to flood again."

In his address during the event, he said the devastating 2022 flood disaster across the country was unprecedented in the history of Nigeria.