Nigerian youths to decide outcome of 2027 elections — Report



Public Relations and Communications Consulting firm, Chain Reactions Africa, has called on Nigerian politicians and the government to pay attention to evolving youth behaviour, as their electoral decisions would tilt the outcome of the 2027 election and shape Nigeria's destiny for the next four years. It highlighted the growing importance of the need for Nigerian politicians and government to understand the youth as a key segment of the population and a generation whose experiences are reshaping expectations of leadership, institutions and public life.

The firm underscored this during the public presentation of its periodic youth trends and culture intelligence report, themed Youth Futures 2026: A Culture Intelligence Report on African Youth, at the Sheraton Hotel, Ikeja. The event brought together young Nigerians, creatives, culture-shapers, marketing leaders, government representatives, and thought leaders.

Speaking at the event, the Managing Director and Chief Strategist of Chain Reactions Africa, Israel Opayemi, urged political leaders and government institutions at all levels to make efforts to study the report and understand it, pointing out that young Nigerians were no longer a constituency to be courted at election time only, but a generation whose lived experience set the terms on which power is judged. Opayemi emphasized that in the days ahead of the 2027 elections, the numbers explained the urgency of why politicians and government must act now. He referenced data by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which revealed that Nigerians aged 18 to 34 accounted for 37,060,399 of the 93,469,008 registered voters in the 2023 General Election, or 39.65 per cent, saying, "this is a significant number that can potentially determine the outcome of the 2027 elections if they turn out in good number to vote again." Opayemi also cautioned the Nigerian government at all levels and businesses about what the report identified as a widening mismatch between the speed of evolution and the speed of institutional response. "Culture now moves in hours and days, brands respond in weeks and months, and government policy in months and years," he said. He, however, cautioned that the only remedy was to embed cultural intelligence into business decisions and public policymaking processes rather than commission reports after the fact when the damage had been done. He warned that the #EndSARS uprising permanently altered the terms on which a generation of young Nigerians related to the Nigerian state, leaving those it politicized with an evidence-based framework for judging state behaviour. That skepticism, Opayemi warned, can only be answered by demonstrable change.

Speaking while unpacking the report, the Executive Vice President, Strategy and Innovation at Chain Reactions Africa, Franklin Ozekhome, disclosed that one of the bright spots of the report was that trust could be rebuilt. He cited the example of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (NRS) when it made tax processes genuinely digital and with a corresponding degree of voluntary compliance recorded, examples of state governments that delivered visible infrastructure, and agencies that answered public complaints with real resolution as instances that Nigerian youths can still be trusting if engaged with cultural intelligence. He warned that "young people are not simply participants in the economy; they actively shape how industries evolve, how communities form, and how culture travels. The decisions young people make today will influence the decade ahead." He further described the paradoxes that define this generation's relationship with authority as "Intimacy Without Trust, Visibility Without Safety, Belief Without Institutions and Mobility Without Arrival."