

**SECURE AFRICA (4TH EDITION)
AFRICA REGIONAL YOUTH CRIME PREVENTION &
DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE**

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**ABUJA, NIGERIA
AUGUST 30-31, 2016**

FOCUS: NATIONAL SECURITY, ANTI-CORRUPTION, PUBLIC SAFETY, SAFER SCHOOLS, PEACEBUILDING,
NONVIOLENCE STRATEGIES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

THEME:

**Achieving Peace and Sustainable National Security
Through Constructive Youth Engagement and Inclusive
Citizens' Participation**

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

PREAMBLE:

Based and upon the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) recognizing that today's generation of youth is the largest the world has ever known and that young people often form the majority of the population of countries affected by armed conflict; expressing concern that among civilians, youth account for many of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and that the disruption of youth's access to education and economic opportunities has a dramatic impact on durable peace and reconciliation; recognizing the important and positive contribution of youth in efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security; affirming the important role youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and as a key aspect of the sustainability, inclusiveness and success of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts; the Africa Centre for Citizens Orientation, its sister program, the Youth Crime Watch of Nigeria convened the 2016 and 4th Edition of the Secure Africa Conference – Africa Regional Youth Crime Prevention & Development Conference held at Merit House, Maitama, Abuja, Nigeria.

This year's conference is a two-day capacity building on Non-violence, Community Security and Public Safety on 30th-31st August, 2016 with the theme: ***“Achieving Peace and Sustainable National Security Through Constructive Youth Engagement and Inclusive Citizens’ Participation”*** aimed at supporting the efforts of governments at all level, security agencies and international partners in proffering proactive solutions that would bring about a safer, secure and developed environment in creating opportunities within the African continent for the common good of all.

The Africa Regional Youth Crime Prevention & Development Conference considered problems of common interest and concern to countries of Africa and discussed ways and means by which our people could achieve fuller economic, cultural and political growth in order to reduce conflicts, crises, corruption, child abuse, migration, drugs trafficking, trafficking in persons, violence against women, human rights, and armed insurgency in the Continent.

PARTNERS AND PARTICIPANTS

One Hundred and Fifty-Two (152) delegates participated in the event, in addition, the following organizations participated in the conference:

1. Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC)
2. Pan African Institute for Entrepreneurship & Community Development
3. Youth Alliance on ICT for Development
4. Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC)
5. African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council
6. Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Youth & Student Affairs
7. National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP)
8. The Office of the Chief of Army Staff, Nigerian Army
9. Nigeria Security & Civil Defense Corp (NSCDC) FCT Command
10. The Office of the Chief of Naval Staff, Nigerian Navy
11. National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)

12. Nation Builders Organization
13. International Peace Youth Group (South Korea)
14. Nigerian Agricultural Quarantine Service (NAQS)

RESOURCE PERSONS

The following eminent personalities or their duly representatives were in attendance:

Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta, Executive Vice Chairman/Chief Executive Office (EVC/CEO) of the Nigerian Communications Commission ably represented by Dr. Haru Alhassan, Director, New Media and Information Security;

Mr. Ayanyimika Ayanlola, President, Nation Builders Organization;

Ms. Onyechere Adaora, CDMC, MVPE; Broadcast Journalist & Coordinator GA (Gender Agenda on AIT);

Mr. Patrick E. Ukpan (JP), FCT Commandant, Nigeria Security & Civil Defence Corp (NSCDC), ably represented by Ms. Andupe Patience, Assistant Commandant of Corps;

Mr. Nasir Sa'idu Adhama, Senior Special Assistant to the President on Youth & Student Affairs, ably represented by Mr. Charles Olufemi Folahan;

Alhaji Abdulrazak Dangiri, Director General, National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), ably represented by Mr. Orakwue Arinze B.C. FCAI, Director, Public Enlightenment;

Lt. Gen. Tukur Buratai, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Nigerian Army, ably represented by Musa Obari;

Dr. Tunji Asaolu, Chairperson, Social Affairs & Health, African Union ECOSOCC ably represented by Mr. Paul I. Igbonere;

Mrs. Muhammed Mairo I., Nigerian Agricultural Quarantine Service (NAQS);

Col. M.M. Abdallah, rtd., Chairman/CEO, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) ably represented by Commodore Kayode Adeniyi, Commander of Narcotics (CN);

Keynote Speaker:

Bar. Ekpo Nta, Honourable Chairman, Independent Corrupt Practices & Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), ably represented by Mr. Demola Bakare;

Conference Chair & Keynote Address:

Prof Ado Ibrahim Abubakar, Former Dean, Leeds University, UK; who also declared the conference open.

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

The special representatives of the Leadership Newspaper, BluePrint Newspaper, Independent Television (ITV), Lagos Television (LTV), TV Continental, Telecom Today and African Independent Television (AIT) were in attendance.

OBSERVATIONS:

The conference took note of the papers presented and keynote address by the speakers and Conference Chair to examine the root cause of multiple challenges facing Nigeria as a country and Africa as a whole.

Commending the quality of the presentations, as well as the relevance of the various recommendations set out therein, the government representatives as well as private institutions pledged their support to youth empowerment and reaffirmed their strong commitment to the development of the region by deepen institutional collaboration.

In his paper, Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta, EVC/CEO, NCC, said the pervasive nature of the Internet has facilitated its application to almost every aspect of the human existence. From the smart devices at home and work, to its use for learning, skills acquisition, commerce, entertainment, medical consultations, emergency situations coordination, governance and a whole lot of other applications which have contributed immensely to the growth and development of the sector. The Internet transcends physical geographic borders; this has made it easy for cyber criminals to operate across borders under an assumed cloak of anonymity making the task of bringing perpetrators of such criminal activities to justice.

In his brief, the Col. M.M. Abdallah noted that West Africa region is recognized as being the most affected by illicit drug trafficking in Africa. The high rate of crime often associated with drug trade is enough to scare away highly needed foreign investors resulting into lower employment opportunities. Drug smuggling and organized crime affect society by creating victims while directly generating large amount of wealth for criminals. If crimes in Nigeria and Africa are unchecked, it will undermine the rule of law; thus creating a situation where the government appears not capable of providing security for her citizens.

In his remark, it was noted that East Africa region is attractive to international drug trafficking syndicates as a result of porous land borders, weak border control, weak maritime surveillance and ineffective border boundaries along with limited regional cooperation.

In his paper, Commandant Patrick E. Ukpan (J.P) recalled the importance of citizenship education and participation – an informed citizenry will participate effectively in decision making processes of a nation and will naturally fulfill their obligation to respect such decision due to the fact that they own the process. There cannot be an egalitarian society without equity, justice and fairness which are the basic ingredients of peace and security.

Mr. Ayanyimika Ayanlola demonstrated the values needed to fast track Africa growth to include but not limited to integrity, hard work, vision, etc. We must all find our own selling

point. What each and every youth have that is unique to them and that can help to develop Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

Ms. Adaora Onyechere observed that many grassroots and non-violent civil society movements, as providers of critical humanitarian support are still neglected in any decision-making process. There will be no true liberation from war, terrorism or insurgency for any country if the most active population and its majority are ill considered and remain insignificant in our policy implementations and social-economic structuring. The economic strength for Africa, especially Nigeria lies within the greenery of gender.

The conference reiterated the power and voice of women to change any country. Women when included in peaceful resolution and the security agenda of their resident nation has enormous transformative potential. Their participation and voice is a tool for moving from conflict and violence to peace, from exclusive to democratic decision-making and from gender inequality to gender justice.

In his Keynote Address, Bar. Ekpo Nta noted that corruption is a catastrophe that is destroying education which is the real power of the Nigerian youth. Education is a public trust and social good that must be valued and protected at all times.

The conference reaffirmed that sustainable peace does not proceed from the barrels of guns or government declarations. It can only be achieved by engraving in the hearts and minds of people the need and strategies for peace. Since terrorism or violent crime begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defense of peace must be constituted. The National Orientation Agency should rise up to their responsibilities. There is need for them to carry out proper national orientation in the three major local languages in order for citizenry to understand their country better.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In view of the above observations, papers presented and contributions made during the conference; the following recommendations were made:

The conference applauded the efforts of the Nigerian Military, the Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Department of State Service and other security agencies in the fight against armed insurgency in the land; and affirmed that there is need for citizens to be proactive and be involved in the fight against insecurity in the land.

We noted the importance of women's equal and full participation as active agents in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding and peacekeeping. The processes of peacebuilding should albini to take into cognizance the structure of each geo-political area, economic distribution amongst both classes of gender and access to both redevelopment funds, startup capital, access to land and fiscal/financial literacy as well as basic education.

Peace and security does not exist in isolation, it must be part of our cultures, traditions and institutions, if it must be attainable. The African Society is very rich in diversity. The high level of social inclusion in our part of the world is second to none. Youths of different

classes, values and age demographics must be given the prime of place in our quest for peace and security in Nigeria and all other African communities. The youth can no longer operate from the back, especially in the 21st century.

Trafficking in Persons (TIP) constitutes a serious threat to human and national security. In this age of social media, human traffickers have more power but less expensive and less dangerous means of trafficking our children and girls. Proper orientation and education must be developed by relevant agencies such as NCC, NAP TIP, Nigeria Police for the citizenry to prevent this ill in our schools and communities.

To control corruption within our system, we must invest in education which is anticorruption in nature. Education is a must to restructure our system. We should invest in the education of our young people at all times. Government should insure educational infrastructures to ease its burden and to enable protection and maintenance of educational infrastructures. There should be multifaceted approaches to education and learning materials should be translated to local languages for quick and speedy transfer of knowledge and protection of local languages.

Government should bring sustainability to all the ICT Library Centres established by NCC, National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs and the Federal Ministry of Communication Technology in the rural communities to reduce migration of young people from rural areas to urban centres and for skill acquisition and learning.

The conference concluded that there is need for the establishment of National Crime Prevention Council to mobilize the support of corporate citizens, corporate entity, groups, business organizations, civil societies, Non-Governmental Organizations and individuals from the community to work closely with the Nigeria police and other security agencies on crime prevention and public safety awareness, education and education without the financial involvement of government at all levels.

The conference recommended also the following:

- Nigerian youths should demonstrate their patriotism and contribute meaningfully to peacebuilding and peaceful co-existence of all Nigerians.
- Government should create enabling environment for young people to develop their talents and skills.
- Government should fund also; all the Anti-graft agencies in the country to enable them carry out their functions as enshrined in their acts to arrest the high increase of corruption and financial crimes in the country.
- Delegates at the conference called for improved power generation and distribution to promote entrepreneurship and discourage unemployment among Nigerian youths.

- The effort of the Nigerian Communications Commission is noted in the establishment of all-inclusive multi-stakeholder approaches Nigeria Child Online Protection initiative and in the creating necessary awareness among our children. The conference encouraged NCC to create an e-safety Group which will compose of different stakeholders from all concerned entities to address the issue of child online protection and safety for children and young people.
- National Identity Management Commission should put more effort in the registration of all Nigerians in order for us to have a common and acceptable national identity database.

The African Union and other regional bodies should develop effective control mechanisms to tame the wildfire of illicit drugs, illegal trafficking, importation and use of Methaqualone across African countries.

The establishment of West African Joint Operation Initiative (WAJO) by West African governments is a welcome development and the conference encouraged other regional bodies to form same in order to reduce incidence of drug trafficking in Africa.

The conference noted that the present economic and political predicament affects a large number of young people more. Arising from this, the youth become more vulnerable and are easily lured into different kinds of criminal activities and instead of becoming powerful tools for the upliftment of our society, they are becoming a threat to society and instrument in the hands of unscrupulous violence-inclined leaders. Government at all levels should rise up to their constitutional responsibility to situations around for the teeming population of youth, women and children.

The conference concluded that alongside what our leaders and military formations are doing, citizens must also participate and cooperate with necessary stakeholders in building the needed peace and promotion of national security and development. It was noted that our situation call for a collective strategy and collective actions to bring out the desired peace and tranquility needed for economic growth and development.

It was also observed that the root of many conflicts across Africa can be traced to exclusion. African Union and other Regional Bodies should ensure their member states work together to lessen the distance that exists between government and wider society in order to fast Track Africa growth and development.

The Conference stands for prevention, believing that citizens who have the rights to protect both local constitutions and international laws should also be allowed to contribute to decisions that affect them. We must promote enhanced cooperation and multi-stakeholder approaches to peacebuilding, community security and crime prevention. If we are affected by crime and insecurity, it is high time we took the lead against all forms of violence and crime; we must arm ourselves with the tools of prevention and nonviolence strategy to promote sustainable security, safer cities and secure communities at all levels.

The conference urged African governments to work towards educating every child and make adequate policies to keep them in school. They should also strengthen existing laws and policies which prevent child marriage, A strong legal system will provide a very good environment for women and girls' empowerment, service improvements, and changes in social norms.

The conference urged all African governments and leaders to sign and append their signatures in support of the Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War to end the scourge of conflicts and wars and ensure swift implementation of the Declaration.

Development, human rights, peace and security are indivisible and interrelated. We are committed to supporting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions.

We will reconvene in 2018 to be hosted by the Republic of Ghana.

Abuja, Nigeria; August 31, 2016

Secure Africa 2016