

FIRST QUARTER, 2024

QUARTERLY REPORT

**POLICY AND GOVERNANCE
DISCUSSION PLATFORM**

PGDP-02-01



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Introduction

The Policy and Governance Discussion Platform (PGDP) report comprises the key themes surrounding the Economy, Governance, Corruption & Rule of Law, Human Capital, Security, and Global Affairs deliberated during the first quarter (Q1) of 2024. The report presents the primary discussion points within each theme and corresponding policy recommendations to offer insights and guide policymaking. The discussions on the economy delved into critical issues such as rising inflation, continuous fall of the naira, increased interest rates and reduced foreign investment.

During the quarter, the PGDP discussed the rising state of Nigeria's external debt, the implication of the government's relationship with the IMF/World Bank, and the exit of Shell from onshore oil production. The newly established Renewed Hope Infrastructure Development Fund was also assessed considering existing institutions. To spur economic growth, the Platform proposed addressing insecurity issues to curb the increasing food inflation, focus energy on attracting foreign exchange inflows from exports, tourism, and FDIs, review interest rate policies and consider balancing rates to encourage savings.

Furthermore, discussions emphasized the need to conduct an impact assessment of Nigeria's public debt and explore innovative financing to reduce reliance on debt funding, while retaining existing institutional frameworks to handle the Infrastructure Development Fund. Similarly, PGDP urged the government to learn from the experiences of other countries like Vietnam in reducing poverty through gradual opening, state involvement and fiscal discipline.

Concerning governance, corruption and the rule of law, members on the Platforms raised concerns about the inconsistency and lack of long-term commitment to implementing government policies, the lack of transparency and possible mismanagement of public assets and the disregard for rules and regulations. The impact of government activities on the economy, particularly distortions in foreign exchange, was also examined. As a result, the Platform stressed the importance of promoting accountability in public funds management and decentralization to strengthen local governments' autonomy. Furthermore, thorough investigations into corruption allegations were advised, in addition to the development of appropriate legal frameworks and compliance with the rule of law in economic governance.

Introduction

On human capital development, the discussions were focused on the shortcomings in the Nigerian education system, the postponement of the Students Loan Scheme, the high rate of maternal mortality and the challenges of population explosion. As recommended by the Platform, there is a need to invest in maternal health services and infrastructure, increase funding for education, foster both public and private funding, and ensure quality education for both males and females, equipping them to make objective decisions on population control.

The discussion around security examined the rise in kidnapping rate and overall insecurity in the country, the implication of the conflicts related to mining activities, the capacity of security agencies to handle internal security matters, and the need to draw inspiration from China's model as regards the combination of food security efforts with national defense needs. The major recommendations include training and equipping the police to handle security threats and reducing reliance on the military while investing in security force capacity building. Also, the government should attempt to address the underlying drivers of conflict through inclusive dialogue and reconciliation initiatives.

Concerning the global affairs theme, PGDP deliberated on the potential implications and benefits following the addition of Saudi Arabia and UAE to BRICS. Emphasis was placed on challenges faced by Nigeria in executing her foreign policy priorities - Defence, Diplomacy, Development, and Democracy. Concerns about high debt levels, collapsing currencies, and the dual perception of Nigeria as a respected but internally struggling country were raised. The Platform advised on fostering strategic international partnerships and alliances that align with Nigeria's interests and goals while strengthening focus on external dynamics, particularly in West Africa, and positive international partnerships. More so, the country can diversify economic partnerships and explore alternative financing and development assistance sources.

The Policy and Governance Discussion Platform held two roundtable discussions in the first quarter of 2024, with the themes - "Security as Panacea for National Development" and "Fostering Good Governance through Strengthening the Fight Against Corruption". The Roundtable featured prominent economists and fiscal policy experts who engaged in discussions and brainstorming ideas to bolster the current administration's ongoing fiscal policy and tax reforms agenda. The proceedings of these two roundtables are also contained in this edition of the PGDP report.

The background of the slide features a dark blue color with a subtle pattern of light blue stars at the top. In the center, there are three dark silhouettes of people sitting around a table, appearing to be in a meeting or discussion. The person on the left is looking towards the center, the person in the middle is leaning forward, and the person on the right is looking towards the center. The text 'KEY ISSUES DISCUSSED' is centered over the silhouettes in a large, white, bold, sans-serif font. Below the text is a thick white horizontal line.

KEY ISSUES DISCUSSED

Highlights of the discussions on the economy during the quarter are provided below:

Inflation, Interest and Exchange Rates

- Concerns were raised over the December 2023 inflation statistics, highlighting rising food inflation and the inefficiency associated with food distribution across the states of the country.
- Skepticism among the members of the public about salary increases due to inflation and exchange rates was raised.
- The clearance of foreign exchange forwards liability by the Central Bank of Nigeria and the bank's independence and handling of treasury and foreign exchange reserves were deliberated upon.
- The implication of the continuous fall of the Naira and the need to declare an economic state of emergency were discussed.
- Discussions were had on the implication of the increase in the interest rate by 200 basis points by the Monetary Policy Committee of the CBN.
- The implication of the negative activities of BDCs on the economy was raised. The impact of the meeting of the EFCC with BDC operators in a bid to clamp down on the negative activities going on in the parallel market was also examined.
- Concerns were raised on the need to keep interest rates significantly lower than inflation rate in the country.

Investment

- The declining state of foreign investment in the country was among the key issues discussed on the platform.



Public Debt

- Concerns were raised on the state of Nigeria's external debt and its impact on economic sustainability.
- Discussions were made on the implications of federal government's bid to secure \$1.5 billion loan from the World Bank to stabilize the naira.
 - Likewise, issues were also raised on the \$20 billion IMF loan available for Nigeria to tap into for economic stabilization.
- The strategies AMCON aims to apply in dealing with bad loans were examined.

Oil & Gas

- The effect of distortions in fuel prices and the impact of Dangote refinery production on domestic petrol prices were discussed.
- Concerns were raised over the exit of Shell from onshore oil production and its contributing factors like high operational costs, pipeline vandalism, oil theft, among others.



Agriculture

- The potential of irrigated farming in contributing to increased agricultural productivity, revenue generation, job creation, and food security concerns were discussed.
- Discussions were made on the need to boost food production in the country. The case of paddy rice fields in Jere, Borno State was cited.
- Concerns were raised on the effectiveness of the Green Imperative Project in achieving mechanization of the agricultural sector in the country.

Economic Reforms and Policies

- Discussions were made on the effectiveness of the direct cash transfer policy in achieving poverty alleviation among citizens in the country.
- Comparisons were made on the more effective policy to be implemented between Tax Increase and Subsidy Removal and the negative impacts of subsidy removal and free-floating exchange rate on vulnerable populations.
- The necessity of the newly established Renewed Hope Infrastructure Development Fund, considering existing institutions such as the Bank of Industry.
- Deliberations were made on Dr. Muhammad Sagagi's thesis on the country's revenue sharing formula which proposed a facelift for the current sharing formula.
- Issues were raised as regards the absence of consensus on the effectiveness of import substitution policies as a development strategy for Nigeria.



Other Economic Issues

- Concerns were raised on the impact of the current economic challenges on businesses, job loss, and tax revenue in the country.
- Issues of public safety and overloaded trucks plying road infrastructures were discussed.
- The abuse of Nigeria's national currency by the citizens and the call for legal consequences and criminalization of certain financial activities were among the issues raised.
- Discussions were made on the recognition of Nigeria as the fourth fastest-growing economy and the projection of the IMF on the potential shift in the nation's economy.
- The importance of infrastructure, education, and leadership in achieving economic growth were among the issues discussed.
- Concerns were raised on the need to promote and preserve public good in Nigeria.
- Discussions were made on the legality and management of Ways and Means Advances in the country.
- The challenges faced by Nigerian Universities in generating revenue internally were highlighted.
- Concerns were also raised on the allocation of TETFUND research grants for various sectors in the country.
- Concerns were raised over the introduction of the Expatriate Employment Levy which was perceived as ill-timed and a threat to foreign investment inflows.
- Bangladesh's economic success story was discussed. The country's economic success was attributed to the following factors; fiscal discipline, low debt-to-GDP ratio, and export-led growth in the manufacturing sector.
- Vietnam's success in achieving poverty alleviation was also discussed. Gradual economic opening, state involvement and fiscal discipline were three key factors that contributed to this success.

GOVERNANCE, CORRUPTION & RULE OF LAW

The discussions on governance, corruption, and the rule of law in Nigeria covered various key issues including:

Governance

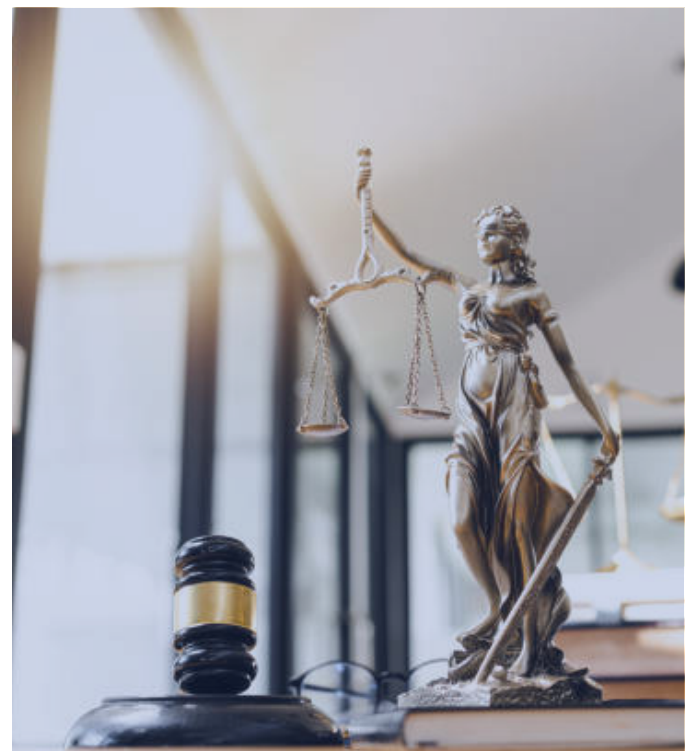
- Concerns were raised about the cost of governance concerning the allocation of public funds for the purchase of SUVs for legislators and underfunding of essential services.
- Contradictions in the promises made by the government and the actions carried out as regards revenue generation and financing of debt were highlighted and discussed.
- Deliberations were made on the impact of the activities of the government on the economy, of which the distortions in the foreign exchange were topmost.
- The need for cultural retention, ethics, and etiquette in leadership at all levels within the country was discussed.
- The scrutiny of governance at the state level was discussed and was deemed to be weak and less effective currently, thereby requiring much improvement.
- Inconsistency and lack of long-term commitment to the implementation of policies by the government was identified as an obstacle to continuity and strategic planning in governance.
- The ineffectiveness of circulars in managing currency substitution and dollarization, which posed a challenge on effective control of monetary policies, was discussed.
- Transparency and accountability concerns were raised as regards issues such as the constituency allowances for legislators, the alleged N3.7 trillion budget scam, and the appointment of Chapel Hill Denham, a firm linked to the finance minister, as a consultant to the federal government for a proposed \$1 billion Eurobond loan.

Rule of Law

- The disregard of traffic rules and regulations by persons holding political offices as well as those who are not informed about the standing laws was raised.
- Concerns were raised about the behavior of political figures in the country and the impact it has on public perception.

Corruption

- Concerns were raised over the current state of public finance management. In reference to the alleged handover of the Port Harcourt refinery to private operators, questions were raised about the issue of transparency and possible mismanagement of public assets.
- Issues such as government appointees receiving questionable payments and corruption being perpetrated through the fuel subsidy policy were discussed.



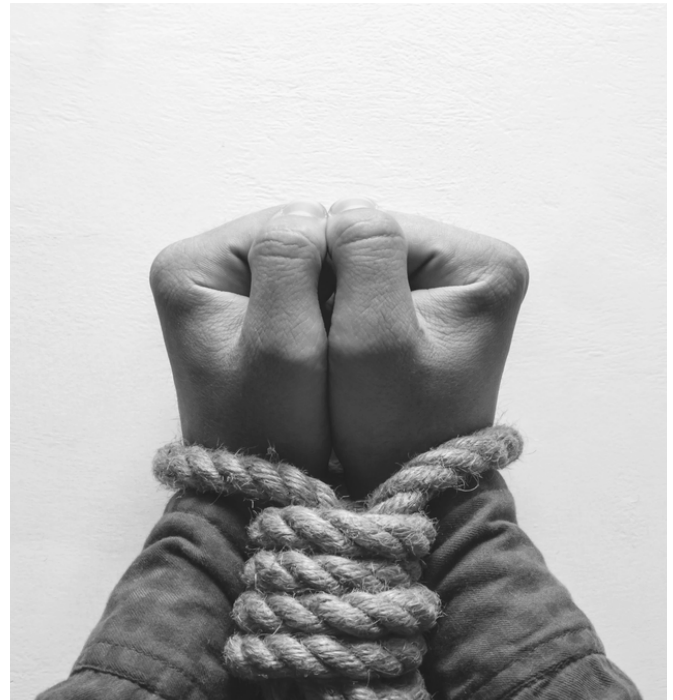
The discussions on human capital during the quarter covered various key issues such as:

- Concerns about the shortcomings in the Nigerian education system such as possession of fake degrees, underfunding, and reduction in the quality and relevance of university education;
 - the decline in the attractiveness of universities in Nigeria to foreign students and the lack of good role models that can be emulated were discussed.
- The indefinite postponement of the Students Loan Scheme and the potential positive impact of significant funding for education by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.
- Deliberations were made on the lack of books in school bookshops and libraries that can aid effective learning among students.
- Concerns were also raised as regards concentration on theoretical degrees in place of practical vocational skills such as carpentry and masonry among others.
- The rate of maternal mortality in the country was raised as a concern.
- The challenge of population explosion and achieving effective community engagement were discussed.



The discussions on security highlight the significant impact of insecurity on the economy. Key issues discussed include;

- Concerns were raised over the rise in the rate of kidnappings and overall insecurity, as reported by Financial Times (UK) and specifically, the case of Kaduna school students who were recently kidnapped.
- The implication of the conflicts related to mining activities, the proliferation of armed groups fuelled by ethnic tensions and resource conflicts, and the security implications of the escalating cost of living protests were among the issues discussed.
- Issues surrounding the capacity of security agencies to handle internal security matters in Nigeria, the dwindling capacity of the state capacity, high poverty, the role of the media in escalating disunity, weak security architecture, and non-state actors' control were discussed as factors that exacerbate insecurity in Nigeria.
- Deliberations were made on the need to draw inspiration from China's model as regards the combination of food security efforts with national defense needs.
- The impact and potential threats of the coup's anniversary on Nigeria, the appropriateness of receiving security advice from retired generals, and the various views on Confederacy as a solution to separatist agitations, were among the top issues discussed.
- Concerns were raised over the departure of Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali from the ECOWAS and the failure of the sanctions made by ECOWAS which emphasizes the need for effective enforcement in subsequent times.



The discussions on global affairs highlighted some key issues which are summarized below:

- Concerns were raised over the potential implications and benefits following the addition of Saudi Arabia and UAE to BRICS.
- Discussions were made on the challenges faced by Nigeria in executing her foreign policy priorities (Democracy, Development, Diaspora, and Demography). In addition, a reflection was made on Nigeria's declining position in international politics.
- The role of the Nigerian President as the Chairman of ECOWAS was critically evaluated while discussions were raised on the exit of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso from ECOWAS with its consequences for regional integration as well as the security in the Sahel.
- Issues bothering around criticisms of the Bretton Woods Institutions (World Bank and IMF) and their negative impacts on the economy of African countries were discussed.
- Economic weakness, insecurity, and corruption were highlighted and discussed as the domestic challenges affecting Nigeria's global influence.
- Concerns were raised about high debt levels, collapsing currencies, and the effectiveness of economic policies as factors to be considered in promoting inclusive economic growth for economies.
- The correlation between global visa-free access and its implication on GDP was examined.
- Skepticism surrounding the possibility of Nigeria's receiving support from other African states in securing a seat at the United Nations Security Council was made.
- Deliberations were also made over the dual perception of Nigeria as a respected but internally struggling country.
- The economic slowdown being experienced by China and the implication it has on the Nigerian economy and the world at large was raised as a concern.
- The victory of Bassirou Faye, Senegal's young new President was discussed and highlighted as a motivation to the Nigerian youths.





KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Highlights of recommendations on the economy during the quarter are stated below;

Inflation, Interest, and Exchange Rates

- Implement comprehensive economic reforms for low revenue, and foreign exchange crisis as a priority for economic stability.
- Review and strengthen measures related to treasury handling, borrowing practices, and foreign exchange reserves management.
- Review and strengthen legal frameworks governing Central Bank actions, emphasizing adherence to lending limits.
- Tackle challenges in the agricultural sector and address insecurity issues to curb the increasing food inflation.
- Focus energy on attracting foreign exchange inflows from exports, tourism, and FDIs among others, as deploying the EFCC to the parallel market could be counterproductive.
- Address underlying causes of inflation like structural bottlenecks and low domestic food production, improve productivity and diversify exports to strengthen the Naira's value in the long term.
- Ensure that BDCs are properly monitored by the CBN. The current effort to reduce their number is laudable.
- Recognize the need for a delicate balancing act when implementing monetary policy. The fiscal authorities should complement the efforts of the CBN in this regard including by fixing the refineries and improving power infrastructure in the country to reduce the rising cost of energy which contributes to inflationary pressure.
- Review interest rate policies and consider balancing rates to encourage savings, investment, and growth in the real sector while controlling inflation.
- Assess the social and economic impact and best practices from other resource-rich nations to optimize management of excess oil revenue in Nigeria.

- Address the root causes of high cost of food such as supply chain issues and agricultural inefficiencies. Long-term solutions such as investing in infrastructure, promoting local food production, and reducing post-harvest losses should be prioritized.
- Address the inefficiency in short-term food palliatives by exploring alternative approaches that promote transparency and reduce leakage.

Investment

- Promote economic diversification and attract FDI through policy improvements.

Public Debt

- Conduct an impact assessment of Nigeria's public debt and explore innovative financing to reduce reliance on debt funding.
- Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of AMCON's approach to bad loans. Perhaps a balance can be found between foreclosure and strategic investments to revive viable companies.
- Apply local context and understanding when implementing IMF-prescribed policies to ensure they align with Nigeria's specific needs and challenges.

Oil & Gas

- Advocate for data-driven fuel pricing reforms.
- Attract more private investment in the oil industry and ensure a level playing field for all fuel retailers.

Agriculture

- Invest in irrigation infrastructure, provide incentives for farmers to adopt modern irrigation techniques, and promote integrated agro-industrial development.
- Encourage and support innovative initiatives like AgriTech to modernize and empower the agricultural sector. Also, address financing challenges, training on equipment operation and maintenance, and establish rural service centers for repairs and spare parts.
- The private sector should seek ways to complement the efforts of the government on the need to boost food production despite prevailing risks in the sector.
- Focus on processing and adding value to agricultural products before exporting them to boost the potential revenue from agriculture. Look to successful agricultural models like Egypt's for inspiration.

Economic Reforms & Policies

- Foster business growth and investment-friendly environment.
- Prioritize data reliability and transparency in government ministries, especially in making financial decisions, such as borrowing and monetary policies.
- Prioritize subsidy removal as a better option than increase in tax rates.
 - However, subsidy removal should follow a more thought-out process and should be accompanied by citizens' empowerment to enable them afford what they need.
- Focus on improving trade balance & boosting local industries competitiveness.
- Conduct research and evaluations to assess import substitution policies and adapt strategies to current economic realities.

- Expand and strengthen existing social safety net programs to support vulnerable populations and consider short-term targeted price stabilization measures on essential goods, while prioritizing long-term solutions like promoting market competition and investing in agricultural productivity.
- Retain existing institutional frameworks to handle the Infrastructure Development Fund.
- Reduce the financial dominance of the FG by increasing the States' share of the national revenue

Other Economic Issues

- Adopt similar prudent economic policies for sustainable development such as that of Bangladesh.
- Strengthen enforcement of weight restrictions on roads and penalize violators.
- Propose legislations criminalizing currency abuse and prompt action should be taken by EFCC.
- Develop policies for immediate commercialization or privatization of government-built infrastructures.
- Prioritize and preserve public good for societal benefit.
- Assess legality and limits of Ways and Means Advances and establish clear guidelines and transparency in reporting Ways and Means Advances balances.
- Encourage universities to promote innovation, entrepreneurship, and explore partnerships with private sector, alumni contributions, among others to reduce reliance on government funding.
- Reconsider the introduction of the Expatriate Employment Levy (EEL) as it is ill-timed and has the potential of stifling foreign investment inflows against the backdrop of exit of multinational companies.
- Study Vietnam's experience in reducing poverty through gradual opening, state involvement and fiscal discipline and adapt it to Nigeria's context.

Recommendations were made regarding the human capital sector of the economy and they are highlighted below:

- Invest in maternal health services and infrastructure; revive initiatives for national orientation and good citizenship.
- Reform university accreditation process to ensure stricter quality control measures, high-quality education, and academic integrity and establish a continuous curriculum review framework.
- Increase funding for education and foster both public and private funding to support priority courses and emphasize "pillar courses" aligned with national priorities (e.g., agriculture, engineering, medicine, and ICT) through heightened funding, scholarships, and private sector partnerships.
- Consider giving study grants to students with such grants split into tuition, books, and sustenance instead of giving loans.
 - while funds are made available directly to the Institutions to cover tuition and books, the proportion meant for sustenance can be given to the student and tied to school grades.
- Ensure quality education for both males and females as this will enable them to make objective decisions on population control.
- In addition, sponsored marriages should be accompanied with scholarship for the number of children the marriages would produce.
- Also, integrate vocational training, establishing partnerships with industries for practical skill development.
- Promote initiatives that highlight and celebrate exemplary individuals.
- Revive programs like MAMSER and WAI for citizenship education, and foster a culture of integrity and ethical conduct.
- Ensure inclusive and diverse ministerial orientation and implement internationalization strategies.
- Partner publishers and private donors to improve access to educational resources



The report on security present a series of recommendations to address the key issues discussed. These recommendations aim to tackle the root causes of insecurity, strengthen security institutions, and promote collaboration among stakeholders. Highlights of the recommendations are presented below:

- Train and equip the police to handle security threats, while investing in security force capacity building and community-oriented policing strategies to deter armed group activities.
- Promote collaboration and information exchange among diverse security agencies.
- Relieve the military of routine policing duties by strengthening the police force and equipping them for internal security threats.
- Prioritize recruitment and training to expand the capacity of security agencies.
- Charge the security agencies to come up with effective strategies to deal with the seemingly intractable menace of kidnapping.
- Deploy technology in tackling the menace of kidnapping, working closely with telecom companies.
- Establish a specialized force like the US Navy SEALs to combat the growing threat of organized crime in Nigeria.
- Address the underlying drivers of conflict through inclusive dialogue, reconciliation initiatives, and equitable resource distribution, poverty reduction, and community development initiatives.
- Implement policies to address conflicts related to mining activities. Work with local communities to improve security and hold the government accountable.
- Implement multi-pronged security approach, combat hate speech and disinformation, optimize security framework and build public trust.
- Emphasize the importance of enhanced communication & coordination to mitigate risks and recognize the interconnectedness of development and security, adopting a holistic approach.
- Adopt a multifaceted strategy, including improved intelligence, targeted operations, community policing, and economic security measures (poverty reduction, job creation).
- Emphasize leadership committed to accountability and the rule of law to effectively address security challenges.
- Develop a national security strategy addressing the root causes of insecurity and government should put in place adequate measures to ensure that the huge allocations to the security services are used for the purposes for which they are meant and not diverted to private pockets.
- Consider temporary food imports to prevent the sporadic protests in some parts of the country from spreading across the country and engage unemployed youth in agricultural production, boosting food security and creating jobs, while contributing to national defense preparedness.

Highlighted below are notable recommendations put forward by members during the discussions on global affairs in the quarter:

- Foster strategic international partnerships and alliances aligned with national interests and goals.
- Advocate for a comprehensive and balanced implementation of the 4Ds in foreign policy, prioritizing democracy, development, diaspora engagement, and demographic considerations.
- Engage in diplomatic efforts; prioritize reforms and improvements in domestic policies to improve Nigeria's global standing, emphasizing economic benefits.
- Advocate for strong and upright leadership in global affairs.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for engaging with other African states on UN Security Council aspirations.
- Strengthen focus on external dynamics, particularly in West Africa, and positive international partnerships.
- ECOWAS should adopt a different approach other than 'gunboat diplomacy' which appears to have failed and collaborate with ECOWAS members to bolster regional cooperation, democratic values, and institutional capacity.
- Diversify economic partnerships.
- Explore alternative sources of financing and development assistance beyond the Bretton Woods institutions.
- Build regional cooperation by collaborating with other African countries to strengthen negotiating positions and influence global economic institutions.



PROCEEDINGS OF ROUNDTABLES



**POLICY AND GOVERNANCE
DISCUSSION PLATFORM.
2ND ROUNDTABLE**

Date:
**Saturday,
January 13,
2024**

Time:
**4pm
5:30pm**

Theme:
**SECURITY
AS PANACEA
FOR NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT.**



Gen. Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau CFR
Round Table Chairman



Prof. Jibrin Ibrahim
Speaker



Dr. Suleyman A. Ndanusa OON



Air Cdre Darlington Abdullahi (Rtd) PhD



Dr. Akeem Baba Ahmed



H.E Amb Kayode Garrick

Moderator:
Prof. Uche Uwaleke
Rapporteur:
Dr. Afolabi Olowookere



Meeting ID:
812 2983 9824

Passcode:
614940

A. Introduction

The Policy and Governance Discussion Platform held its second roundtable session on 13th January, 2024, focusing on the theme; "Security as Panacea for National Development". The session aimed at examining the intersection between security and national development in Nigeria, providing a comprehensive review of the challenges and opportunities in ensuring national security and its integral role in fostering sustainable development.

In his opening remarks, the Roundtable Chair, General Bello Dambazau, CFR, underscored the need to broaden the conversation on security, moving beyond the traditional state-centric focus to encompass human security, food, and economic security such as food, health, education, and housing. He noted that the round-table discussion was framed to examine security from both state-centric and non-state-centric perspectives, acknowledging the complex landscape of non-state actors and issues of bad governance that contribute to insecurity.

Distinguished experts with vast experience in security matters engaged in the discussions comprising the main speaker, Professor Jibrin Ibrahim, and the panellists, Dr Suleyman Ndanusa, OON, Dr Hakeem Baba Ahmed, Air Commodore Darlington Abdullahi and Ambassador Kayode Garrick. The Roundtable was moderated by Professor Uche Uwaleke.

The active participation of attendees enriched the discourse and provided recommendations that are expected to serve as valuable policy inputs for the government and stakeholders involved in shaping the security and developmental landscape of Nigeria. This report therefore captures key highlights of the discussion and the policy recommendations provided by the discussants.

B. Major Highlights and Contributions

The panelists discussed security issues in Nigeria, among which were:

Nexus between security and national development

- The challenges faced by Nigeria, including insurgency, terrorism, corruption, unemployment, and poverty pose significant obstacles to meaningful development.

- The lack of thoughtful macroeconomic policies exacerbates economic insecurity, contributing to underdevelopment and social unrest.
- There is a need to move beyond problem identification to crafting meaningful solutions, setting the stage for a collaborative and solution-oriented roundtable discussion. This call for meaningful solutions reflects the forum's commitment to addressing the complex challenges faced by Nigeria in its pursuit of sustainable development.
- On Nigeria's challenges, high unemployment rates, rapid population growth, healthcare and education issues, infrastructure deficits, and corruption were discussed. It was emphasized that security and national development are like conjoined twins, sharing the same internal organs, with neither able to survive without the other.
- Security and national development are interconnected, they are mutual preconditions for each other. The nation's ability to provide essential needs sustainably, especially jobs, quality healthcare, education, and housing, directly influences its developmental trajectory and overall security.

Political Leadership/Governance

- There is a troubling political-economic crisis in the country, where resources meant for public goods are diverted for personal use. Questions were raised on the purpose of political leadership and the need to reassess the political landscape. Issues related to the decline in the quality of leadership over the past decades and the crucial role of political parties and elections in shaping the trajectory of governance and security in the country were also discussed.
- The security of citizens is paramount for the legitimacy of the state and its leadership. The discussants also highlighted the erosion of state legitimacy when citizens feel unsafe and questioned the commitment of leadership to their protection.

- This was illustrated by pointing out the extensive security measures, including convoys with armed escorts, indicating a disconnect between citizens and the leadership.
- The discussants further articulated the absence of security. According to them, this delegitimizes the state and its leadership and they, therefore, cautioned against the rising trend of non-state actors forming armed militias, a departure from the state's monopoly over the legitimate use of violence. The current security challenges are eroding confidence in the state, posing a fundamental threat to its continued existence.
- A valuable international perspective was brought to the discussion, shedding light on how global dynamics intersect with Nigeria's national security. The consensus that national security and economic development are interdependent was echoed. Good governance is the driver for both, fostering stability and prosperity while poor governance leads to political turmoil, economic chaos, and societal distress.
- The long-standing issue of unimplemented policies, such as the unrealized industrial policy from 50 years ago and the persistent challenges in the power sector despite a well-crafted policy in 1999 was discussed. In particular, the recent suspension of the social investments policy, suggests that funds allocated for social development ended up benefiting individuals rather than achieving their intended goals.
- Despite having extensive policy discussions and documents, Nigeria is experiencing a significant gap between policy pronouncements and their effective implementation. Nigerian policymakers have not given adequate attention to the implications of poor macroeconomic policy on economic security and national development.
- The need for economic policy to centre around real people and align with the political and security realities of the nation and aligning economic policies with national interests and security, condemning the prevailing issues of corruption, waste, and other ills that hinder effective policy implementation was highlighted by the discussants.
- There is a need for restructuring the security apparatus to effectively address security challenges, particularly focusing on the first responder role of the police. The frequent summoning of Security Chiefs by the National Assembly was also identified as a challenge.

Cross-border crimes, proliferation of small arms and regional security outfits

- Attention was drawn to cross-border crimes and the proliferation of small arms. Additionally, the importance of collaboration between security agencies and regional security outfits like Amotekun and Operation Rainbow was also emphasized. The crucial role of community involvement and early warning systems in supporting the armed forces was identified.
- A diverse security threat is prevalent in West Africa. Political instability, economic hardships, terrorism, insurgency, banditry, organized crime, and piracy were identified as challenges in West Africa. The retreating state of democracy in various West African countries is a cause for concern.
- From low-grade conflicts to high-intensity violent conflicts around Lake Chad, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, the region faced complex challenges. The ongoing battle against Boko Haram in Nigeria, the changing geography of violent conflict, and the impact of climate change exist. Illegal activities like mining, oil theft, and smuggling to violence and insecurity not only posed immediate security threats but also contributed to environmental degradation and revenue loss for national development.

Nexus between corruption and security

- Corruption emerged as a recurring theme. Corruption eats away at the heart of Nigeria, affecting institutions, structures, and systems within security agencies. It was also argued that addressing corruption is crucial to improving citizens' security.
- There is an inseparable link between personal human security, corruption, and the legitimacy of the state. The plea for urgency and a counter-elite echoed the need for proactive measures to ensure Nigeria's future stability and prosperity.
- The significance of personal human security in the broader context of national well-being, centres around basic life requirements for existence. Finally, they argued that any security system's primary focus should be on the individual citizen, their community, society, and the nation.

Summary of discussions

- Generally, the roundtable benefitted from insightful contributions and discussions of the Speaker and Panellists. Summary of the major discussion points are:

Various perspectives of security (multifaceted nature of national security)

- The critical aspect of economic security within the broader context of national security, the multifaceted nature of national security was acknowledged, emphasizing that economic security plays a pivotal role in safeguarding a nation's interests, including military security, environmental security, cyber-energy security, and more.
- There is a significant gap between policy pronouncements and effective implementation.
- There is an urgent need to shift from traditional state-centric security to fourth-generation warfare involving state and non-state actors.
- Personal human security is of paramount importance in the broader context of national well-being. Personal human security is important as the security of the individual citizen is the foundation of the state's existence. Human security is linked to the legitimacy of the state, measuring value of an individual's life to the state and leadership.

Evolving nature of security in Nigeria

- The need for a holistic and collaborative approach, nationally and internationally, to address the multifaceted security challenges facing Nigeria and West Africa was emphasized.
- The absence of security leads to delegitimization of the state and its leadership. This was illustrated through examples of convoys heavily guarded by security forces, emphasizing the disconnect between the leadership and the citizens' security concerns.
- Corruption is a pervasive issue affecting various aspects of society, including security institutions, leadership selection processes, and overall governance emphasizing that Nigeria has no future unless the issue of corruption is addressed and frees itself from a political class that has hijacked the system, and cultivates a counter-elite movement to reshape the political landscape.
- The military security was thoroughly examined, emphasizing the evolving nature of security paradigms in the contemporary world. With the importance of security in attracting investments and the detrimental impact of conflicts on both existing and potential investors, the shift from traditional state-centric security to fourth-generation warfare involving state and non-state actors emerged. The discussants underlined the constitutional responsibility of the police and armed forces in maintaining public safety, and order, and defending the nation and expressed concerns over the inadequacies in the security system, manifested through rising criminal activities such as terrorism, insurgency, banditry, and kidnapping.

- Addressing corruption was highlighted as fundamental to enhancing human security.
- The importance of economic well-being as the second purpose of the state was emphasized, that without ensuring the security of the citizen, the pursuit of economic welfare becomes meaningless. This aligns with the constitutional mandate of the state to provide security and create conditions for citizens' economic well-being.
- Nigeria's national security is linked to regional and global challenges. The diverse security threats faced by West Africa, such as political instability, poverty, terrorism, piracy, and organized crime have cross-border effects on Nigeria.
- Economic security and national development are interconnected with effective macroeconomic mechanisms playing a critical role in achieving high employment, stability, growth, and development.
- National security and development have an inseparable link, with challenges such as unemployment, rapid population growth, healthcare, education, infrastructure deficits, and corruption affecting both.
- The impact of climate change, illegal mining, oil theft, and smuggling on security and environmental degradation pose threats to national development and require a holistic and collaborative approach.
- There is an urgent need for improved governance, enhanced security capacity, regional partnerships, and proactive measures. Good governance is essential for stability, economic growth, and addressing discontent.

C. Policy Recommendations

Following the presentation, panelists' discussions and comments sessions, below are some of the key resolutions and recommendations from the Webinar:

Nexus between security and national development

- Addressing the issues of impact assessments, commitment, discipline, continuous plan implementation, good governance, and a genuine love for the country in ensuring economic security and sustainable development is crucial for Nigeria to break free from the persisting challenges of insecurity and underdevelopment.
- The crucial role of effective macroeconomic mechanisms in achieving high employment, economic stability, growth, and development is paramount.
- It is important to understand current threats to citizens and their perceptions of the state for designing effective strategies.

Political leadership/governance

- Leadership selection processes, especially at the party level, should be highly scrutinized. Leadership positions should be occupied by individuals who have been academically, professionally, and morally tested, echoing the need for meritocracy.
- Revisiting and re-evaluating the legal basis of state organs to prioritize the security of individuals and society is sacrosanct.
- There is a need to adopt a forward-looking approach in addressing security concerns with proactive political dialogue, effective conflict resolution mechanisms, peace-building efforts, and inclusive governance structures.

Cross-border crimes, proliferation of small arms and regional security outfits

- Effective identity management, better border control, and security awareness campaigns are also important in addressing insecurity.

- Regional cooperation, diplomatic engagement, and intelligence-sharing are encouraged as a means of tackling cross-border security threats.

Evolving nature of security in Nigeria

- The capacity of law enforcement and security agencies should be enhanced to handle emerging threats and protect the population.
- An overhaul of the policing system, incorporating technology as a force multiplier is critical. Strategic resource allocation, investing in technology and community-centric security measures are important to tackling the security crisis in the nation. Enhanced collaboration among security agencies is encouraged.

- National Defence Council should convene more frequently for comprehensive discussions on tackling insecurity issues in the country.

Nexus between corruption and security

- Addressing corruption within institutions, structures, and leadership selection processes is fundamental.
- Following all the discussions and comments, the Rapporteur, Dr Afolabi Olowookere, summarised the key points from the Roundtable, while the Chairman, General Bello Dambazau CFR, gave his closing remarks, emphasizing the relevance of the Roundtable and its key recommendations to Nigeria. He further expressed his appreciation to the speaker and paternalists as well as the participants at the Roundtable.



3rd Policy & Governance Discussion Forum (PGDF) Roundtable

Date:
Saturday,
23rd March
2024

Time:
11am
-
12:30pm

Theme
**FOSTERING
GOOD GOVERNANCE
THROUGH STRENGTHENING
The Fight Against
Corruption**



Prof. Atahiru Jega CFR.
Round Table Chairman



Dr. Ibrahim Ida, CON (Wazirin Katsina)
'Discussant'



Prof. Babafemi Badejo
Speaker



Dr. Goke Adegroye
'Discussant'



Dr. Akeem Baba Ahmed
'Discussant'



Clement Izuchukwu Igbunugo,
Head of Economic Think Tank
@ Financial Derivatives Company
'Discussant'



Mrs. Folaşade Akinmuşire, LLM
'Discussant'

Moderator:
Prof Uche Uwaleke

Rapporteur:
Dr Afolabi Olowookere



Meeting ID:
608 653 2279

Passcode:
PGDF

A. Introduction

The Policy and Governance Discussion Platform held its third roundtable session on 23rd March 2024, focusing on the crucial theme of "Fostering Good Governance through Strengthening the Fight Against Corruption". The session explored various dimensions of corruption and its impact on the governance systems, public trust, and socio-economic development of Nigeria. The different strategies and measures necessary to address corruption were discussed at the event.

Presentations and discussions were given by distinguished experts with vast experience in governance and policy matters, comprising the main speaker, Professor Babafemi Badejo, and the panelists, Dr. Ibrahim Ida, Dr. Goke Adegoroye, Dr. Hakeem Baba-Ahmed, and Mrs. Folasade Akinmusire. Other contributors were Dr. Suleyman A. Ndanusa, OON, Professor Mainoma, Dr. Obaje, and Professor Omotayo Olaniyan. The Roundtable was chaired by Professor Attahiru Jega, CFR, and moderated by Professor Uche Uwaleke.

In his opening remarks, the Chairman welcomed the speaker, panelists, and participants, and urged everyone to contribute and obtain lessons that could be used to solve Nigeria's corruption problem. As a background, he highlighted how corruption is a major problem in Nigeria and stressed the need to frontally combat the menace. He noted that corruption is found in both the public and private sectors of Nigeria, but there is a need to pay close attention to the public sector, as this is where the nation's common resources are found and can be mismanaged through corrupt practices.

B. Major Highlights of Presentation and Discussions

Below are the key highlights of the presentation and discussions at the Roundtable:

Corruption exists at all levels and places in Nigeria: The speaker and panelists raised concern about the level at which corruption permeates Nigerian society. It was agreed that the definitions, discussions, and diagnostics of the problem should not be limited to the public sector, but should encompass the private and social aspects of the country. Specific corruption cases were

cited at the federal, state, and local government levels as well as at the executive, legislature, and judiciary tiers of government. Some of the corruption cases referenced also involved the private and the social sectors, comprising the business, religious, traditional, and civil society institutions in the country.

Corruption is the bane of good governance and economic development of Nigeria: Nigeria's potential as a great nation, capable of giving better lives to its citizens is grossly limited by corruption. Having observed what the leaders are doing, the citizens are also beginning to accept corruption as a way of life. This makes the fight against corruption more difficult for the institutions created to solve the problem. Equally, the system to monitor the anti-corruption institutions is weak, leading to situations where they and some of their officers have also been found culpable in certain corruption cases.

Nigeria's leadership deficit and citizens' failures to hold the leaders accountable are sustaining the country's high corruption level: Poor leadership, and lack of transparency and accountability fuel corruption in Nigeria. Moreover, weak and complicit followership, characterized by a failure to demand for accountable leadership, further encourage corruption in the country. Also, the inability to combine the operation of a traditional African leadership style with the modern participatory democracy is hindering the functioning of Nigeria's political system, and encouraging corruption. This is further aggravated by a weak monitoring and evaluation system that fails to reward good and punish bad behaviors.

Corruption thrives more when the institutions are weak and the state is captured: The speaker and panelists agreed that although corruption can be found in every system, it is more prevalent where institutions are weak, particularly as the situation is currently in Nigeria. Institutional failures and state capture therefore create avenues for corruption to thrive in the country, making it appear as the oxygen of Nigeria's political and democratic systems. Looking at how political appointments are made in the country, in terms of factors that qualify the appointees and their capacity to deliver on the job further underscore the nature of the problem.

Something needs to be done urgently to address Nigeria's corruption problem:

Defining corruption as the pervasion of any trust for personal benefit, discussants argued that the problem of corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian society. The country needs to devise and deploy effective strategies to solve the problem as it is now manifesting in areas that threaten its existence. Examples were cited on how corruption is causing and aiding the current insecurity problem that the country is witnessing and that if this is not quickly resolved, it may lead to further deterioration and disintegration of the Nigerian state.

C. Recommendations to Address Nigeria's Corruption Problems

From the presentation, panelists' discussions, and comments sessions, it was recommended that Nigeria needs to:

Educate the masses and intensify the political consciousness of the citizens

- The masses as the major voters in elections should be educated to improve their level of political consciousness to demand transparent and accountable leadership.
- The citizens and leaders of the country need serious value re-orientation, and the National Orientation Agency has a lot of work to do in this regard.
- The citizens, especially the young and future leaders, need to undergo relevant sensitization and training programs for improved political consciousness and understanding of what good leadership entails.
- Add a new stanza to our National Pledge, especially for public officials and contractors, that will speak on the ills and repercussions of engaging in corrupt practices.

Improve the leadership selection process

- Reform the process of selecting leaders, emphasizing the need for quality leaders with integrity and using them as good examples for others to emulate.
- Organize practicable leadership courses and training for aspiring political leaders and make the satisfactory completion of such programs a requirement for assuming leadership positions.

- Ensure aspiring leaders first pass through a constitutional judicial leadership screening process to obtain a clearance certificate before they are allowed to contest leadership positions. The aim is to use meritocracy and integrity as the principal basis for political leadership in the country.
- Advocate for a counter-elite group to rival the existing system and use such a new platform to campaign against corruption and source exemplary leaders that will replace the current bad leadership.

Promote good governance and leadership in all aspects of the society

- Imbibe principles of good governance in the management of the country's affairs and introduce robust evaluation and measurement systems.
- Enforce ethical standards and code of conduct among public and private sector officials to promote integrity, punish violations, and reduce corruption.
- Embrace transparency, accountability, efficiency, openness, and ease of accessibility to public information as a way of rebuilding public trust among the citizens.
- Create and publicize a "Black Book" of corrupt leaders. Naming and shaming corrupt elites and declaring them unfit for public office.

Reform the legal and judicial system

- Ensure true independence of the judiciary and give it adequate resources, both material and human, to be able to effectively uphold the rule of law and introduce the necessary reforms to the electoral process.
- Ensure that anti-corruption agencies are equipped with capable individuals and operate without political interference, to effectively combat corruption.
- Develop a system that can effectively regulate the regulators and anti-corruption agencies, particularly to check that institutions set up to tackle corruption operate within the boundaries of the law.

- Evolve a political system and constitution that de-emphasizes ethnic and religious allegiance in favor of the national interest

Strengthen the civil society organizations (CSOs) to effectively fight corruption

- Develop a system that encourages CSOs to operate independently and be proactive in their contribution to solving Nigerian corruption problems.
- Engage credible CSO in the process of selecting community representatives and leadership grooming.
- Take away the appointments of certain sensitive public office holders from the executive and legislature and vest such in the hands of CSOs, clergy, and other non-political stakeholders to encourage independence and avoid political interference.

The Roundtable ended with the Rapporteur, Dr Afolabi Olowookere, summarizing the key points of the discussions while the Chairman Professor Attahiru Jega, CFR, gave the final remarks, emphasizing the need to address issues around state capture, electoral reforms, independence of the judiciary, and the rule of law. He reiterated that a low-hanging solution is to engage in the judiciary and electoral reforms while encouraging Nigerian elites and CSOs to mount pressure on the government to appoint people of integrity to the relevant institutions.

ABOUT THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE DISCUSSION PLATFORM (PGDP)

BACKGROUND

The return to democratic rule in 1999 was marked by great expectations regarding Nigeria's growth and development. These expectations appear to dim with each passing regime not least because of identified weaknesses in policy and governance. In search of the way forward, entities in both the public and private sectors have made useful suggestions over the years most of which have gone unimplemented. The Policy and Governance Discussion Platform (PGDP) will not only contribute to this pool of resources from which the government can draw but will also adopt a methodology that ensures that discussion outcomes are mainstreamed into government policies and programs.

MEMBERSHIP

The PGDP shall bring together recognized experts and highly respected individuals in the Society with impeccable records who have distinguished themselves in the various callings. New members are only admitted to join the platform on the recommendation of an existing member.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the PGDP is to provide a unique platform for discussion on the policy and governance issues in Nigeria including, but not limited to, the Economy, Security, corruption, rule of law, global Affairs, and human capital development. The forum will also serve to raise awareness among members about the latest developments in these areas. The motto of PGDP is 'Building a prosperous Nigeria through effective policies and good governance'.

MODUS OPERANDI

This will comprise:

- Robust discussion on the PGDP WhatsApp platform with strict rules to ensure that discussions are consistent with the expected objective.
- Use of Rapporteurs to summarize dominant views/comments made on the platform at the end of each week in all thematic areas.
- Quarterly virtual roundtable on topical policy and governance issues in Nigeria and beyond.
- Publication and dissemination of communique to the relevant authorities, based on the outcome of the discussions and the roundtable.
- Strong advocacy and follow-up on communique to ensure implementation by relevant authorities through the PGDP high-level Inter-governmental committee.

CONCLUSION

The Policy and Governance Discussion Platform is designed to be what the name connotes: strictly a place to share ideas on issues of governance with a view to contributing to the development of our dear country Nigeria.



Dr. Ahmed Salik
Report/Platform Admin.



Prof. Uche Uwaleke
Report/Platform Admin.



Dr. Suleyman A Ndanusa OON
Platform Coordinator



Amb. KAYODE Garrick
Platform Admin.



Dr. Afolabi Olowookere
Roundtable Rapporteur