

## Nigeria: The way forward

Written by Vincent Ogboi  
Thursday, 26 May 2011 13:28

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Now that Nigeria has completed what is perceived by many as a relatively free and fair election, even though the elections cannot be termed as uneventful or completely free or short of its usual short-comings such as elections fraud, religious riots, as is common with many elections, it can still be judged a success by most standards.

It appears that Nigeria's Independent electoral Commission and the electorate are determined more than ever to continue on this trajectory of free and fair elections that is needed to entrench their democracy which although still in its infancy can now begin to mature.

President Jonathan Goodluck, the newly elected President must now let his good luck charm which he is known and widely judged to possess through his short history of 48 years to shine on Nigeria. Mr. Jonathan Goodluck while ushering in a new era must create an enabling environment that will allow Nigeria to unleash her potential both in human and natural resources to the full benefit of her masses with a large population base and take its rightful place in the African continent and then the world at large. Nigeria must tap her human and natural resources for massive infrastructural development that will create massive unparalleled employment for the millions of educated but unemployed youth that could be considered a ticking time bomb if continued to be ignored.

This massive employment venture through a bold and massive capital infrastructural construction projects will raise Nigeria's GDP, boost her much needed infrastructural development, and boost her economic stance, thereby creating a positive domino's effect which will also raise the standard of living for the masses. The masses of the Nigerian populace, for a long time, have either been stagnant or hovering below the poverty lines while the few and corrupt elite continues to amass wealth by any means necessary, especially through corrupt practices with impunity. This only creates an environment of arrested development when very few live at the expense of very many, it stifles the growth and creation of the middle class. It creates so much inequity in the system that will eventual give rise to the current situation presently going on in the middle east and North Africa (Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco and others) if not properly tackled.

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It could be a blessing in disguise for Nigeria that a good number of her highly qualified and well educated human resources abound outside her shores in the Diasporas and President Jonathan Goodluck must seize this golden opportunity to turn this once brain drain to her brain gain. This well educated base of Nigerian citizens who are scattered across the globe as a result of a mass exodus during the repressive and corrupt military regimes of the seventies through the Nineties are now ready for Nigeria. These citizens in the Diasporas who are now matured, well seasoned, well educated and highly experienced can do to Nigeria what the Chinese and Indian Diasporas have done for their countries' economies and Asia in the last ten years. This opportunity, if properly harnessed, can be a win-win situation for Nigeria and President Jonathan Goodluck will be well judged by posterity. This is his moment to write his name in gold in the sand of history. Visionary leaders only get this kind of opportunity once if any in a generation. Nigeria can move from a third world oil based economy to a thriving second world diversified economy if the current crop of leaders can get serious....if Brazil can do it within a very short time span so too can Nigeria!

These Diasporas, who are now highly exposed to the advances in technology in all fields, enlightened in economic activities and have lived in functioning democratic laboratories, can now help stir the Nigeria ship of affairs in the right direction. I am sure that they will be more than happy to give back to their country of birth. Many of these Diasporas left the shores of Nigeria on Government funded scholarships and Nigeria has failed to reap the benefits of her investments, largely due to her myopic vision or lack of visionary leaders ...Another of many wasted opportunities.

With the price crude oil hovering between 90 and 100 dollars a barrel, Nigeria being a member of the OPEC, should be flush with the financial resources assuming it is well managed, so without further delay or worry about the cost of this venture, Nigeria should begin to engage the educated populace both at home and in the diasporas. This can be the catalyst that will bring her vision of being one of the greatest economies by the year 2020 to fruition. It may not be a cheap proposition but guaranteed it will be an investment that is worth its salt that Nigeria cannot afford not to make, because both the present and the future generations will benefit immensely from this huge but expensive venture. China and India have done it and why must Nigeria be different and continue to be the dumping ground for poor outdated, failed or rejected technologies from the world over just because she adamantly refuses to engage and reward her qualified and educated citizens. The very essence of good governance is to take care and look out for your citizens first and foremost then everything else is secondary. Until Nigeria leaders understand this common and basic philosophy they may never get it right. A zero tolerance for corrupt practices with impunity should be adopted immediately.

Nigeria's soon to be sworn in crop of new leaders, from May 29, 2011 must begin to lift her people up from the present stagnation that they have unfairly suffered as a result of bad

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governance and un abating corruption since independence from Britain through no fault of their own. Nigeria's other important task ahead must now be to garnish all the tools at her disposal to confront and take down this monster called corruption, provide steady and reliable electricity , a very important and basic ingredient for industrialization. It will not be easy; sacrifices will have to be made by all. Nigeria leaders must start by giving up the "immunity clause" guaranteed in their constitution that prevents prosecutions of corrupt or inept office holders while in office. It is just an unfair passport to loot the nation's treasury all you can while in office and it has not helped Nigeria in any fashion. Nigeria can also start by building layers of checks and balances in a system where there is none while transparency should be their working motto...President Jonathan Goodluck must make this a priority in Abuja.

Goodluck and Congratulations to President Jonathan Goodluck for the success in the elections!!

**Mr. Vincent Ogboi, is an advocate for transparency good governance**