Civil Society insists on review of 1999 Constitution

....Discordant tones from NASS

By Boniface Kassam

The civil society in Nigeria has since the year 2000 continued to advocate for a process-led and participatory approach for constitutional reform in the country. Hence, the call for a review of the 1999 Constitution, which according to them, is largely flawed because the people did not take part in its making.

Under the auspices of Citizens Forum for Constitutional Reform (CFCR), a coalition of more than 100 civil society organizations and Global Rights, the civil society started the advocacy on the reform of the 1999 Constitution by developing a Model Constitution as an alternative that could close the identified gaps. The model, according to the Secretary General of the CFCR, John Ikubaje, has attracted the attention of the National Assembly such that some of them are beginning to take interest in it.

Subsequently, a window of opportunity became opened in 2005 with the convening of a National Political Reform Conference (NPRC) to discuss the various critical issues and come up with recommendations that would be forwarded to the National Assembly for amendment.

The civil society groups, led by Action Aid International Nigeria and supported by the Department for International Development (DFID), through an engagement secretariat back stuffed the conference delegates with civil society views and positions on some of the key thematic areas being discussed at the conference. The long years of agitation for a review of the constitution almost came to an end last year when recommendations of the conference were forwarded to the fifth National Assembly for amendment.

However, the illegal tenure elongation (a.k.a Third Term), which was smuggled into the recommendations, overshadowed all other positive amendments recommended for the 1999 Constitution. This resulted in the dumping of the constitutional reform report as a whole by the National Assembly, an action that was also supported by the civil society.

Though, most Nigerians were of the opinion that dumping the entire constitutional amendment was like ‘throwing the baby with the bath water’; many more lot still hailed the decision as, according to them, the attempt to include the ‘third term’ component was illegal, obnoxious and anti democracy. They strongly believe that another democratic government that was going to be enthroned would...Continued on Page 3

President Umaru Yar’Adua

Senator David Mark

Senate President

With support from USAID (ADVANCE Project) through a grant from PACT–Nigeria.
Constitution review on wrong start

The attempts to amend certain provisions of the 1999 constitution, and its manipulation for tenure elongation for former President Olusegun Obasanjo, contrary to the provisions of the law are still fresh in our minds.

Diverse interest groups, technocrats, experienced lawmakers, women, youth, the civil society groups and special interest groups were attracted by the debate on the review of the constitution during the National Political Reform Conference, which took place at the International Conference Centre, Abuja.

Now, both Executive and Legislative arms of government are contriving the constitutional amendment as a weapon to curry support from some elements in the society.

President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua and Senate President David Mark have differently harped on plans to review the constitution including legal status for traditional rulers.

Digest is worried that heads of the executive and legislature, brought into power in a globally recognized flawed election, are appropriating the authority to chart a statute for the country. It is a major threat to the growth of genuine democracy in our land.

Curiously, what constitutional role do they want traditional rulers to play apart from being custodians of cultures? Most of the traditional rulers in Nigeria today are either retired military officers or top technocrats with huge investments to their favour. The fact that some of them have resorted to providing bail bonds for corrupt former governors means that the rulers share something in common with those who have looted public treasury between 1999 and 2007.

We therefore, insist that it is neither the President nor the National Assembly that have the power to amend any portion of the constitution. They can set up an independent commission for that purpose whose job includes the collation of views from citizens and conduct of referendum for national consensus. It is only then that the lawmakers make their input and pass it to the President for his assent. Any alteration of the people’s view will be rejected like the 3rd term agenda.

Digest suggests that whatever constitution review commission that emerges should dust the report of the National political Reform Conference, to avoid unnecessary fiscal waste. The country has lost so much to aimless jamborees whose outcomes remain in the cooler.
PACT-Nigeria reviews ADVANCE project

By Boniface Kassam

PACT Nigeria under the USAID (ADVANCE) project recently convened a stakeholder’s evaluation and review meeting to provide an update of the program’s progress and evaluate its performance.

The two-day meeting which took place at Rock view Hotel, Abuja from 25th -26th July 2007, was aimed at discussing why progress towards planned results has been positive or negative, assessing how well needs of other different stakeholders are being met, identifying and analyzing unintended consequences and effects of assistance activities, examining sustainability of activities and their results, distilling lessons learned and seeking input and consensus for fiscal year 2008 work plan as a clear way forward for the program.

In her welcome address, the Country Representative of PACT Nigeria, Eve Thompson said the meeting was an opportunity to bring partners and other stakeholders in the process of democratic consolidation together with Pact Nigeria as they take stock of where they have come from and where they are headed.

She disclosed that they were at the midway point of the implementation of the program, adding that it was a moment to reflect comprehensively on all aspects of the implementation process. She therefore reviewed some of the many achievements that the Pact/ADVANCE program has registered since inception of the program.

The US Ambassador, Robert Gribbin in his remark commended Pact Nigeria and its partners for the excellent progress in their work with civil society organizations, pointing out that, one of the keys to a flourishing democracy is a vibrant civil society. He said, civil society’s commitment to playing a strong role in the process was very commendable.

Civil Society insists on review of 1999 Constitution

Continued from Page 1

conduct such a reform as widely desired by the civil society.

In the same vein, the leadership of the People’s National Conference (PNC), mid-wifed by PRONACO, recently decided to expand the frontiers of its campaign for constitutional change in Nigeria to include international bodies and foreign governments. This, according to them, is to ensure that Nigeria is governed by a people's constitution in order to entrench the country into true federalism which, it alleges, “has consistently been circumvented by successive Nigeria governments.”

These expectations by Nigerians aptly informed the position of the current President, Umar Musa Yar’Adua who, on assumption of office, reiterated the need to review the constitution. He, therefore, promised that his administration would ensure the constitutional amendment to soothe the frayed nerves of Nigerians who feel marginalized and also strengthen the democratic system for effective consolidation.

This position was further re-echoed by the President of Nigeria's Senate, David Mark, who barely three days on assumption of office, assured Nigerians that the upper legislative chamber under his administration was going to revisit the botched constitutional review. “We shall set in motion a machinery to correct the imperfections inherent in the 1999 Constitution,” he stated.

While receiving members of the Southern Kaduna People’s Union in his office, the Senate President remarked, “Let me assure you, and I believe that I am speaking the minds of those who are here: one of the first steps that this Senate will take is constitution amendment. I believe in it, people have held it against me, but I am convinced that in my heart of hearts that we need to look at this constitution. In the interest of Nigeria and democracy, we shall amend the constitution and we will do so honestly and transparently.”

Honourable Victor Lar, a former member of the Federal House of Representatives and Chair,
News

ACE conducts public hearing on April Polls

By Ahmed Ogwuche

With the country still grieving from the 2007 controversial elections and affected parties taking up actions in various election tribunals all over the country, Alliance for Credible Election (ACE) has organized a two day Citizens National Tribunal/Public Hearing.

The event featured testimonies and experiences from witnesses from the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria on the April elections. The public hearing was to provide Nigerians the opportunity to express how their franchise was denied, promote accountability for election fraud and galvanize the movement for people’s sovereignty.

The event held at Rock view Hotel, Abuja between 24th and 25th July 2007, which was chaired by Mr. Festus Okoye, a renowned legal practitioner had in attendance, development partners. Mr. Emma Ezeazu, General Secretary of ACE gave the opening remarks while goodwill messages were given by the Country Representative of Pact Nigeria of USAID, Ms Eve Thompson and the Country Director of Open Society Institute for West Africa (OSIWA), Nana Afadzinu. It was a knowledgeable and eye opening event as different experiences from all over Nigeria on the April elections were poured out by eye witnesses. Testimonies of how elections were rigged, the part security operatives, INEC officials and adhoc staff played in the last elections were told. In most parts of the country, the story was the same as witnessed by the testifiers. All pointed to the fact that the last election was seriously flawed and so to speak, not a free and fair one.

Testimonies were taken from witnesses from all the six geopolitical regions of Nigeria and questions and comments were taken from both the panelists and the floor. On the way forward, participants recommended that; INEC be financially independent, electoral laws be reviewed, reduction of political parties in the country to 2 or 3, intense training for security operatives on electoral laws, INEC to be recomposed, educating people especially at the grassroots level on the need not to sell their franchise, INEC officials not being card carrying members of any political party and, the immediate removal of the INEC Chairman from office. ACE promised to document all proceedings and exhibits so as to serve as a reference point for future elections and use.

CSOs tasked to engage with the EPA process

By Fatima Umar

For the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) to take root in Nigeria, it has been suggested that, NACCIMA, MAN, NECA should co-opt an adhoc committee that will in turn form an Organized Private Sector (OPS) standing committee on EPA. And the Committee and Trade Network Initiative (TNI) should make comprehensive submission to the National Assembly on a roadmap or the way forward on the EPAs.

This suggestion was made at the end of a one-day workshop organized by NACCIMA in collaboration with Trade Network Initiative held at in NACCIMA House, Ikeja, Lagos on 24th July, 2007 with support from Oxfam GB Nigeria recently.

In his opening remarks, the National President of NACCIMA stated that the workshop was meant to be an “eye opener” to all members of the Organized Private Sector (OPS) and designed to generate a common position on the EPAs.

On his part, the Director-General of Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Mr. O.A.Oshinowo while speaking in a similar vein asserted that the EPAs need to be carefully managed such as to ensure that local industries are protected and substandard goods prevented from being imported. He further stated that the OPS should be involved in the EPA negotiations and that the EU should develop the capacity of Nigerians to be able to participate in the negotiation processes.

At the end of the workshop, participants resolved among others that there was need to; consult widely and bring in more members of OPS to participate in the collective engagement of the EPA process in formulating a Nigerian position, popularize the EPA and make the general public aware of its meaning and implications so as to engage actively in it, to increase the participation of CSOs in the EPA process through wider consultations and capacity building, and carry out campaign to all stakeholders to ensure that the National Assembly and the Executive arm of the Federal Government of Nigeria do not sign on the EPAs by the end of December 2007.
By Fatima Umar

The Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) Lagos, carried out a research project aimed at evaluating the impact of elected legislators and their constituency offices at the four levels of representation (Ward Councilors at the LGA level; State House of Assembly members; as well as the Upper and Lower Houses of the National Assembly) on their constituents in Lagos State, Southwest Nigeria. The research which was conducted between 23rd and 24th May 2007 sampled the twenty LGA’s (including the 37 LCDA’s) within the three Senatorial Districts of Nigeria’s most populous city. In all, ten thousand (10,000) residents of Lagos State were sampled, at the rate of 500 adults per LGA.

Results of the analysis of data collected from the field indicated that the vast majority of respondents (i.e. 73%) generally perceive the impact of legislators in their various constituencies to be very poor (negative). Within this low rating, however, a comparative analysis shows that perceived impact is relatively greater from Ward Councilors at the local level than the ‘rural’ areas of the state. Participants observed that a major implication of these results is that, after eight years of civilian rule, there still huge gaps between the electorates and their elected representatives in Lagos State, and there is every indication that the situation is similar all over the country. That so far, Nigeria’s democracy tilts more towards ‘exclusive ruler ship’ than ‘popular participation’, and the people and communities are rarely consulted or carried along in governance issues that affect them. It would appear that the legislative arms of government at the four levels of representation have failed to live up to their statutory responsibility of ensuring that people’s interests and rights are well articulated and resources are allocated towards addressing them. These according to them have implications for transparency and accountability in governance, as well as for effective service delivery and poverty reduction.

According to the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Section 14(2)(b) “The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”. Do our legislators abide by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?, they further asked.

PACT-Nigeria reviews ADVANCE project

Continued from Page 3

Latanya Mapp, on her part disclosed that the ADVANCE program is a five-year $8 million activity that focuses on achieving three inter-related results; advocacy, awareness, and civic empowerment by building civil society’s capacity to advocate for policy reform, demanding good governance and building productive partnerships between civil society organizations and government of Nigeria institutions to fight corruption.

“We at USAID are impressed by the progress that our implementing partner, PACT and you the advocacy partners have made up to this point. Given that we are at the half-way mark, this stakeholders review meeting offers a unique opportunity for past, present and potential partners to take stock of accomplishments, opportunities and challenges and lessons learnt for plotting out the way forward”, she said.
NBA, NLC, NDI call for electoral system reform

By Aga Bature Bem

A n all Nigerian Civil Society Conference on the April 2007 Elections was recently convened by the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja.

The two day conference was an avenue for civil society in Nigeria to diagnose once more, the problems of the April 2007 general elections with the view to identifying major issues and setting the agenda for electoral reforms for Nigeria.

In her opening remarks, Mrs. Ayo Obe, NDI’s Programs Manager for the 2007 elections explained that the dire need for electoral reforms necessitated the holding of the conference. She was enthusiastic that the would-be recommendations of the conference may not be disregarded by the government after all, as both President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua and Senate President, David Mark have recently reiterated the urgency of constitutional and electoral reforms.

The Chairman of the plenary session for the first day was Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari, the immediate past Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, other distinguished members of the High table for day one were, Chief Akuro George, the first Vice President of the NBA, Comrade Peter Adeyemi, the Acting President of the NLC. Other members of the high table included the keynote speaker, Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, former Canadian Prime Minister, Dr. Keith Jennings, the NDI Country Director and Hon. Hamisu Shira, the immediate past Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on INEC. INEC was represented by Pastor Segun Adeogun the Director of Media and Publicity INEC headquarters, Abuja.

In plenary, the NBA presented its interim report on election petitions tribunals in Nigeria. The presentation was done by Chief Akuro George, NBA’s first Vice President. He acknowledged that the 2007 elections were flawed. He said in charitable words, the elections could be described as being less than free and fair.

He informed the conference that the NBA collaborated with the President of the Court of Appeal in choosing the members of the election petitions tribunal across Nigeria. He was of the view that the practice directions introduced by the President of the Court of Appeal would fast track the judicial process at the tribunals.

He added that the NBA had relayed the concerns of the Nigerian people on the election petitions to the President of the Court of Appeal. He also told the conference that the NBA at the workshops held for the various members of the election tribunals across Nigeria impressed on them the need to, shun technicalities and discourage undue delays. The first Vice President of the NBA said the tribunals have conducted themselves very well so far. He concluded by saying the expectations of Nigerians from the tribunals may not be met as most of the irregularities observed on the field could not be proved. He urged all stakeholders in the Nigerian project to embrace electoral reforms as the next course of action.

In his remarks the Country Director of the NDI, Dr. Keith Jennings said, although the inauguration of the new President represents the first civilian to civilian transfer of power, serious irregularities marred what could have been a landmark achievement. He was of the view that the 2007 elections represents a significant step backwards in the conduct of elections in Nigeria, adding that it was unclear whether the outcome of the elections represented the will of the Nigerian people given the irregularities that took place. He therefore maintained that, the conference was part of the efforts that must be participatory and sustained, to ensure that no future elections in Nigeria ever saddles the ‘victors’ with the burden of dubious legitimacy. He insisted that the promises of electoral reforms in Nigeria have become an avenue to acquire legitimacy. He urged President Yar’Adua’s administration to embark on genuine electoral reforms.

In his own comment, Comrade Peter Adeyemi, the Acting President of the NLC recalled that the 2007 elections were characterized by late voting, declaration of results where elections did not hold, snatching of ballot boxes and hoarding of electoral materials. He restated the commitment of the NLC to work with CSOs in bringing about sincere electoral reforms in Nigeria. While Comrade John Kolawole, the Secretary of TUC, said the problem of elections in Nigeria is beyond laws. He said the on-going conference was a “preparation stage” and urged NDI to support such conferences till the next elections.

In his keynote address, Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, former Canadian Prime Minister, urged the civil society not to use the on-going conference as an avenue to recite their outrage or personal injuries. He challenged the civil society to set the agenda for electoral reforms in Nigeria. He was pained that after monitoring the elections in Congo and Nigeria, it
appeared the elections held in Congo were more credible than the ones in Nigeria.

Other speakers at the conference included Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari, former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Justice Mohammed Lawal Uwais, former Chief Justice of Nigeria and Professor Jadesola Akanda, a Constitutional Lawyer, Mr. Clement Nwankwo and Comrade Adams Oshiomole.

At the end of the two-day conference, participants observed and recommended that:
* INEC as presently constituted can not deliver free, fair and credible elections in Nigeria.
* The National Judicial Council (NJ C) should have the sole preserve of nominating federal INEC Commissioners and the Chairman to the National Assembly.
* INEC should have a first line charge funding from the consolidated revenue fund.
* INEC federal commissioners should not be card carrying members of any political party.
* Civil Society can only drive electoral reform in Nigeria by forming an all inclusive coalition that will have grassroots and multi-sectoral representation.
* 10% of the members of a constituency should have the locus standi to file an election petition.
* Election petitions should be completed before the swearing-in of victorious candidates.

The National Judicial Council (NJC) should have the sole preserve of nominating federal INEC Commissioners and the Chairman to the National Assembly.

With these recommendations, the conference on the 2007 elections came to an end, and Dr. Keith Jennings, NDI’s Country Director, who was leaving the country on a transfer to Washington, agreed that the conference should hold in the six geo-political zones to allow for wider participation.

The GCAP Coordinator in Nigeria, Sarah Ochekpe, gave a brief background on the MDGs and GCAP’s scope of work, which covers the eight (8) thematic areas of the MDGs. On MDGs midpoint, she said it has become critical for all governments and stakeholders worldwide and indeed, the Nigerian government to take stock of the efforts towards attaining the MDGs so far.

While identifying measures taken by the Obasanjo administration in Nigeria to facilitate the attainment of the MDGs, she however, said that the score board for Nigeria does not show signs of clear victory by 2015 and that something drastic had to be done and in a sustained manner if Nigeria was to achieve the MDGs by 2015. She expressed the belief by Civil Society that the present strategies of government need to be redefined and articulated for a scale up of efforts and commitment that would involve all tiers of government in active implementation of projects that are people centered.

She further disclosed that, there will be a high level review meeting with all stakeholders to be organized by GCAP/MDGs Nigeria Working Group in collaboration with the OSSAP/MDGs on the 26th and 27th July 2007. She said the meeting which would access the MDGs in Nigeria is expected to galvanize a renewed commitment by government at local, state and national level with the involvement of civil society and development partners.

She concluded by calling on the media to join hands with GCAP Nigeria to campaign against poverty in the midst of plenty in Nigeria.

In his remark, Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim said that the address delivered by the GCAP Coordinator was fundamental to the development concern in Nigeria which according to him revolves around the crisis of governance. He lamented the manner of governance in the past.

GCAP/MDGs Nigeria canvasses media support against poverty

The media in Nigeria has been called upon to partner with civil society towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and also focus attention on issues of poverty and challenges facing the Global Call Against Poverty (GCAP).

The call was made at a recent press conference held by Global Call Against Poverty (GCAP) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Nigeria to address the media on the visit of the UN Millennium Campaign Director. In attendance were, UNDP Country Representative, Turhan Saleh, Deputy Director, Millennium Campaign, Tajudeen Abduraheem, Director of Centre for Democracy and Development, Dr Jibrin Ibrahim, GCAP Coordinator, Sarah Ochekpe, representative of OSSAP/MDG office, Rebecca Doherty, President Nigerian Union of Teachers, Ochime Nelson, Secretary General, Islamic Council of Nigeria, Alhaji Lateef Adegbite, and representatives of Action Aid Nigeria Tom Odemwingie and Ojobjo Atuluku.

The GCAP Coordinator in Nigeria and Policy Advisor of CSACEFA, Sarah Ochekpe gave a brief background on the MDGs and GCAP’s scope of work, which covers the eight (8) thematic areas of the MDGs. On MDGs midpoint, she said it has become critical for all governments and stakeholders worldwide and indeed, the Nigerian government to take stock of the efforts towards attaining the MDGs so far.

While identifying measures taken by the Obasanjo administration in Nigeria to facilitate the attainment of the MDGs, she however, said that the score board for Nigeria does not show signs of clear victory by 2015 and that something drastic had to be done and in a sustained manner if Nigeria was to achieve the MDGs by 2015. She expressed the belief by Civil Society that the present strategies of government need to be redefined and articulated for a scale up of efforts and commitment that would involve all tiers of government in active implementation of projects that are people centered.

She further disclosed that, there will be a high level review meeting with all stakeholders to be organized by GCAP/MDGs Nigeria Working Group in collaboration with the OSSAP/MDGs on the 26th and 27th July 2007. She said the meeting which would access the MDGs in Nigeria is expected to galvanize a renewed commitment by government at local, state and national level with the involvement of civil society and development partners.

She concluded by calling on the media to join hands with GCAP Nigeria to campaign against poverty in the midst of plenty in Nigeria.

In his remark, Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim said that the address delivered by the GCAP Coordinator was fundamental to the development concern in Nigeria which according to him revolves around the crisis of governance. He lamented the manner of governance in the past.
Civil Society insists on review of 1999 Constitution

Continued from Page 3
Northern Forum in the lower chamber, at a recent function convened by CFCR and Global Rights, disclosed that the National Assembly has the powers to call for the amendment of the constitution. He, therefore, tasked civil society groups to engage the legislators and to also capture the views of Nigerians on the issue.

Consequent upon this, the CFCR after a recent meeting held at Gubabi Hotel, Abuja called on Yar’Adua’s government and the leadership of the National Assembly to ensure that the Constitutional Review process was completed on or before May 29, 2009. They also called for the establishment of a 25-member Constitutional Review Commission, whose responsibility will be to collate the views of Nigerians. The membership, according to them should be drawn from government, civil society, professional groups, labour and students.

But in what appears to be a discordant tone coming out of the National Assembly, the Senate Chief Whip, Kanti Bello (Katsina), expressed some fears on the review of the 1999 Constitution while addressing the media recently. According to him, embarking on constitutional amendment at this time will give rise to many agitations that may heat up the polity. He was so particular about the agitation for increased derivation that would come from the South-South zone of Nigeria. He believes that the Yar’Adua government should be given more time to stabilize first, adding that such was his personal view and not that of anybody.

While responding to the opinion expressed by Senator Kanti Bello, Senator Ayogu Eze, the Chair, Committee on Information and Media re-affirmed the resolve by the Senate to amend the 1999 Constitution by insisting that majority of the members of the Senate shared the views of the Senate President on the constitutional review. He added that the Senate was not divided over the issue of constitutional amendment. “The present Senate is committed to doing those things which Nigerians expect of us, no amount of blackmail or subterfuge will distract us from this chosen course of action,” he said.

To further add vent to that, the Senate President, while being honored by friends in Lagos recently, re-assured Nigerians that the process of amending the 1999 Constitution will begin as soon as the Senate resumes from its recess in September. According to him, the amendment would target priority areas of the country’s statute.

GCAP/MDGs Nigeria canvasses media support against poverty

Continued from Page 7
eight years which he said had exacerbated poverty due to inimical macro economic policies imposed by International Financial Institutions.

He observed that contrary to the index given by the government recording slight improvement in poverty, visits by CSOs to communities and testimonies gleaned from the people reveal deepening poverty thereby making it mandatory for government to squarely address the issue of poverty. Consequently, he noted that government needs to interact with the people to verify the true situation of things. He advised that fulfilling the desires of Nigerian citizens should be primary in the agenda of the new government even as he also urged the government to allocate resources to address the needs of Nigerians through re-orientation of resources to enhance the attainment of the MDGs.

On his part, Dr. Tajudeen Abdurahimeh said statistics do not necessarily speak well because some countries in Africa are making a lot of effort to eradicate poverty. He cited Mozambique and Uganda’s progress in education and South Africa’s commitment to meeting the MDG by 2014 as self-evident. Lending evidence to the belief that the inability of Nigeria not to attain the MDGs could never be blamed on lack of resources but on bad governance, he cited the example of Funtua Local Government in Katsina State which receives N85 million every month from the Federation Accounts but with no impact whatsoever to show. He said it would be scandalous for Nigeria not to attain the MDGs, adding that it is the responsibility of all at local, state and national level to make the Nigerian government accountable to the people.

While Alhaji Lateef Adegbite voiced the position of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) on the MDGs saying it is a sin before God to ignore the poor adding that Nigerian leaders are more engrossed in self-enrichment. He said it is the duty of CSOs to attack the issue frontally and advised the GCAP Working Group to involve FBOs in its activities. He suggested an alliance for credible governance to measure the performance of the Nigerian government.

In his response, UNDP Country Representative, Turhan Saleh reminded the meeting that the MDGs are all about issues of concern that affect every Nigerian such as jobs, education, maternal mortality, quality health delivery and improved environmental agenda. He expressed confidence that the MDGs are achievable citing the example of countries like Egypt which has recorded rapid progress in maternal mortality and Ghana which is also making progress in other spheres of the MDGs. He said opportunity exists in Nigeria to attain the MDGs particularly with the emergence of NEEDS.

He urged the Civil Society to ensure that NEEDS 2 thoroughly address issues of poverty even as he disclose that efforts to invest in the MDGs in Nigeria will be supported by the UNDP but he advised that Nigeria will also have to invest in its own country.
ActionAid International Nigeria recently organised a national policy dialogue on Legitimacy, Governance and Development: The Role of Elections, at Denis Hotel, Abuja. The one-day dialogue was chaired by Professor Nuhu Yaqub (3rd from right) while on his right and left are; Dr. Otive Igbuzor, Country Director, ActionAid International Nigeria and immediate past Senate President, Ken Nnamani who presented a keynote address.

Alliance for Credible Elections (ACE) recently conducted a public hearing on the 2007 April polls in Nigeria. From left: Innocent Chukwuma, Chair Transition Monitoring Group (GMT), Emma Ezeazu, Secretary General, ACE and Barr. Bamidele Aturu, Human Rights activist.

Publish What You Pay (PWYP) members in a group photograph with Eve Thompson, outgoing Country Representative of PACT-Nigeria during a farewell dinner organised in her honour at Gubabi Hotel, Abuja recently.

Recently, Zero Corruption Coalition (ZCC) with support from PACT-Nigeria organised an interactive dinner with legislators at Transcorp Hilton, Abuja. Standing: Lilian Ekenyanwu, National Co-ordinator, ZCC, Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim, Director, Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), Senator Nkechu Nwagwu, Hon. Aminu Tambuwal and Justice Ayoola, Chairman, ICPC.
## Senate Committees of the Sixth National Assembly

### For the Record

#### 1. SELECTION
1. David Mark - Chairman
2. Ike Ekweremadu - Vice Chairman
3. T. K. Folarin - Member
4. M. Kanti Bello - Member
5. Victor Ndoma-Egba (SAN) - Member
6. M. Mana - Member
7. M. M. Lawal - Member
8. O. A. Mamora - Member
9. Ahmed Rufai Sani - Member
10. Kabiru I. Gaya - Member

#### 2. DEFENCE & ARMY
1. Ibrahim Ida - Chairman
2. Chris Anyanwu - Vice Chairman
3. M. Mana - Member
4. Anyinchukwu Ude - Member
5. Caleb Zagi - Member
6. A. T. Ayuba - Member
7. A.A. Adedibu - Member
8. A. I. Umar - Member
9. Satti D. Gogwin - Member
10. Bode Olajumoke - Member

#### 3. POWER
1. Nicholas Ugbanne - Chairman
2. Uche Chukwumerije - Vice Chairman
3. Kanti Bello - Member
4. Nnamani C. - Member
5. W. A. Ake - Member
6. S. Oduoye - Member
7. A. D. Kuta - Member
8. M. Mana - Member
9. J. I. Akaagerger - Member
10. Ma'aji M. Lawal - Member
11. Mohammed Bello - Member
12. H. Ehinlanwo - Member

#### 4. FCT
1. Abubakar Sodangi - Chairman
2. Anthony Agbo - Vice Chairman
3. Caleb Zagi - Member
4. H. Lokpobiri - Member
5. Idris Umar - Member
6. S. Adeyemi - Member
7. Femi Killa - Member
8. A. H. Talba - Member
9. B. Ewa-Henshaw - Member
10. Usman Wowo - Member
11. Sola Akinyede - Member

#### 5. MARINE TRANSPORT
1. Gbemi Saraki-Fowora - Chairman
2. Abubakar Argungu - Vice Chairman
3. Kauw P. Dukku - Member
4. H. M. Guasu - Member
5. M.A. Muse - Member
6. T. K. Folarin - Member
7. Grey I. Ngaji - Member
8. A. M. Maccido - Member
9. Ayogu Eze - Member

#### 6. INFORMATION & MEDIA
1. Ayogu Eze - Chairman
2. A. G. Manzo - Vice Chairman
3. A. K. Adedibu - Member
4. Z. A. Kure - Member
5. A. H. Talba - Member
6. O. S. Ohize - Member
7. Victor Ndoma-Egba (SAN) - Member
8. Saminu Turaki - Member
9. Nuhu Aliyu - Chairman
10. Simeon Oduoye - Vice Chairman
11. K. P. Dukku - Member
12. M.K. Jubril - Member
13. S. A. Adokwe - Member
14. Edobo Uzamere - Member
15. Iyabo I. Bello - Member
16. Abdulaziz Usman - Member
17. S. S. Ajibola - Member

#### 7. SECURITY & INTELLIGENCE
1. Nuhu Aliyu - Chairman
2. Simeon Oduoye - Vice Chairman
3. K. P. Dukku - Member
4. M.K. Jubril - Member
5. S. A. Adokwe - Member
6. Edobo Uzamere - Member
7. Iyabo I. Bello - Member
8. Abdulaziz Usman - Member
9. S. S. Ajibola - Member

#### 8. NAVY
1. Bode Olajumoke - Chairman
2. Tanko Ayuba - Vice Chairman
3. Odion Ugesia - Member
4. W. A. Ake - Member
5. I. S. Turaki - Member
6. S. A. Adokwe - Member
7. J. N. Shagaya - Member
8. Kaka Maliam Yale - Member
9. A. M. Maccido - Member
10. Usman Wowo - Member
11. A. I. Lawal - Member

#### 9. DOWNSTREAM PETROLEUM
1. Emmanuel Paulker - Chairman
2. Abubakar U. Gada - Vice Chairman
3. E. Abaribe - Member
4. Edobo Uzamere - Member
5. A. M. Maikarfi - Member
6. S. A. Adokwe - Member
7. J. N. Shagaya - Member
8. Bode Olajumoke - Member
9. Joy Emordi - Member
10. Sahabi Ya’u - Member

#### 10. LAND TRANSPORT
1. Garba Y. Lado - Chairman
2. Suleiman Nazif - Vice Chairman
3. I. J. Obiora - Member
4. Ayinn Ude - Member
5. T. U. Wada - Member
6. Iyabo O. Bello - Member
7. D. A. Kuta - Member
8. Mohammed A. Bello - Member
9. S. O. Oduoye - Member
10. A. E. Babalola - Member
11. E. Uzamere - Member
12. J. N. Shagaya - Member

#### 11. SOLID MINERALS
1. George T. Sekibo - Chairman
2. John Shagaya - Vice Chairman
3. Joy Emordi - Member
4. A. Killa - Member
5. Odion Ugesia - Member
6. M. K. Jabiril - Member
7. Buka A. Ibrahim - Member
8. M. A. Muse - Member
9. S. M. Nazif - Member
10. Anthony Agbo - Member
### For the Record

#### 12. WORKS
1. **Julius Ucha** - Chairman
2. **Adefemi Killa** - Vice Chairman
3. **James Manager** - Member
4. **A. E. Babalola** - Member
5. **E. Abaribe** - Member
6. **U. J. Wowo** - Member
7. **Ganiyu Solomon** - Member
8. **Kabiru I. Gaya** - Member
9. **Bukar I. Ibrahim** - Member
10. **S. O. Oduoye** - Member
11. **Satti Gogwin** - Member
12. **S. D. Dantong** - Member
13. **Ahmed R. Sani** - Member
14. **Suleiman Nazif** - Member
15. **Anthony Agbo** - Member
16. **Jibril Aminu** - Member

#### 13. SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
1. **Grey I. Ngaji** - Chairman
2. **Caleb Zagi** - Vice Chairman
3. **N.B. Amange** - Member
4. **J. D. Ikenyा** - Member
5. **O. A. Hamgbada** - Member
6. **A. T. Ayuba** - Member
7. **J. N. Shagaya** - Member
8. **Buka Ibrahim** - Member
9. **S. N. Anyanwu** - Member
10. **Hassan M. Gusu** - Member
11. **I. O. Obasanjo B.** - Member

#### 14. RULES & BUSINESS
1. **Aloysious A. Etok** - Chairman
2. **T. K. Folarin** - Vice Chairman
3. **Bala A. Mohammed** - Member
4. **J. I. Akargerger** - Member
5. **M. M. Lawal** - Member
6. **Ibrahim Ida** - Member
7. **U. Dahiru** - Member
8. **Osita Izuasoso** - Member
9. **G. O. Solomon** - Member
10. **A. S. Garo** - Member
11. **Gbemi Saraki** - Member

#### 15. HOME AFFAIRS
1. **Lekan Mustapha** - Chairman
2. **N. Barigha Amange** - Vice Chairman
3. **Nkechi Nwaogu** - Member
4. **A. M. Maccido** - Member
5. **O. A. Hambagda** - Member
6. **O. S. Ohize** - Member
7. **M. A. Muse** - Member
8. **A. D. Sodangi** - Member
9. **A. Usman** - Member
10. **M. K. Jibril** - Member
11. **Kaka M. Yalé** - Member
12. **S. Oduoye** - Member

#### 16. APPROPRIATION
1. **Iyiola Omisore** - Chairman
2. **Ahmed Maccido** - Vice Chairman
3. **Patrick Osakwe** - Member
4. **Smart Adeyemi** - Member
5. **Ayogu Eze** - Member
6. **Mohammed I. Ahmed** - Member
7. **Kanti Bello** - Member
8. **T. K. Folarin** - Member
9. **J. D. Ikennyα** - Member
10. **Ahmed R. Sani** - Member
11. **A. S. Garo** - Member
12. **T. K. Bajomo** - Member

#### 17. DRUGS NARCOTICS, ANTI-CORRUPTION
1. **Sola Akinweye** - Chairman
2. **Dahiru Kuta** - Vice Chairman
3. **G. I. Ngaji** - Member
4. **Adefemi Killa** - Member
5. **S. O. Oduoye** - Member
6. **Satti Gogwin** - Member
7. **S. D. Dantong** - Member
8. **Ahmed R. Sani** - Member
9. **Suleiman Nazif** - Member
10. **Anthony Agbo** - Member
11. **Jibril Aminu** - Member

#### 18. POLICE AFFAIRS
1. **Gbenga Oggunniya** - Chairman
2. **Mohammed K. Jibril** - Vice Chairman
3. **A. Okonkwo** - Member
4. **H. Lokopobi** - Member
5. **Chimaroke Nnamani** - Member
6. **A. Y. Ayuba** - Member
7. **O. S. Ohize** - Member
8. **Nuhu Aliyu** - Member
9. **A. G. Manzo** - Member
10. **M. A. Muse** - Member
11. **Gbemi Saraki** - Member
12. **I. Omosire** - Member

#### 19. FEDERAL CHARACTER & INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
1. **Smart Adeyemi** - Chairman
2. **Adeleke Mamora** - Vice Chairman
3. **A. M. Maccido** - Member
4. **M. M. Mallam** - Member
5. **Ahmed R. Sani** - Member
6. **G. T. Sekibo** - Member
7. **Ayogu Eze** - Member
8. **B. F. Henshaw** - Member
9. **Gbemi Saraki** - Member
10. **A. A. Adediwura** - Member

#### 20. ESTABLISHMENT & PUBLIC SERVICE
1. **Mohammed I. Ahmed** - Chairman
2. **K. M. Yalé** - Vice Chairman
3. **Kawu P. Dukku** - Member
4. **Joy Emordi** - Member
5. **E. A. Efereka** - Member
6. **F. K. Bajomo** - Member
7. **A. M. Maikarfi** - Member
8. **L. L. Maeba** - Member
9. **A. U. Gada** - Member
10. **Effiong Bob** - Member

#### 21. FOREIGN AFFAIRS
1. **Jubril Aminu** - Chairman
2. **Chimaroke Nnamani** - Vice Chairman
3. **Z. A. Kure** - Member
4. **F. K. Bajomo** - Member
5. **A. D. Sodangi** - Member
6. **Grace Bent** - Member
7. **S. S. Ajabola** - Member
8. **Bode Olajumoke** - Member
9. **A. G. Manzo** - Member
10. **Osita Izuasosa** - Member

#### 22. AGRICULTURE
1. **T. U. Wada** - Chairman
2. **A. Babalola** - Vice Chairman
3. **Annie Okonkwo** - Member
4. **M. A. Aliero** - Member
5. **S. S. Ajabola** - Member
6. **Z. A. Kure** - Member
7. **L. L. Maeba** - Member
8. **G. I. Ngaji** - Member
9. **Otaru Ohiwe** - Member
10. **Ahmed Rufai S.** - Member
### For the Record

#### 23. PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
1. A. I. Lawal - Chairman
2. Bukar A. Ibrahim - Vice Chairman
3. H. Lokpobiri - Member
4. U. A. Argungu - Member
5. N. Y. Ugbanne - Member
6. A. A. Babalola - Member
7. H. M. Gusau - Member
8. Caleb Zagi - Member
9. Bala A. Mohammed - Member
10. Sahabi Yau - Member
11. S. N. Anyanwu - Member

#### 24. AIR FORCE
1. Idris Umar - Chairman
2. M. Muse - Vice Chairman
3. Odion Ugbesia - Member
4. Ikechukwu Obiora - Member
5. U. A. Argungu - Member
6. S. O. Oduoye - Member
7. I. A. Adeleke - Member
8. M. K. Jibril - Member
9. A. G. Manzo - Member
10. S. N. Shagaya - Member
11. R. O. Mustapha - Member

#### 25. WATER RESOURCES
1. B. Ewa Henshaw - Chairman
2. S. S. Ajibola - Vice Chairman
3. S. M. Nazif - Member
4. A. S. Arise - Member
5. Garba Y. Lado - Member
6. A. U. Gada - Member
7. Dahiri B. Gassol - Member
8. Anthony Agbo - Member
9. Satti D. Gogwin - Member
10. Chris Anyanwu - Member

#### 26. EDUCATION
1. Joy Emordi - Chairman
2. M. A. Aliero - Vice Chairman
3. Jibril Aminu - Member
4. M. A. Ahmed - Member
5. O. A. Hambagda - Member
6. W. A. Ake - Member
7. Effiong Bob - Member
8. T. U. Wada - Member
9. Kaka Mallam Y. - Member
10. Ahmed Lawal - Member
11. I. Obasanjo B. - Member

#### 27. AVIATION
1. Anyim Ude - Chairman
2. Bala Mohammed - Vice Chairman
3. G. T. Bent - Member
4. U. Dahiri - Member
5. I. J. Obiorah - Member
6. Gyang D. Dantong - Member
7. I. Omosore - Member
8. K. P. Dukku - Member
9. M. M. Mallam - Member
10. N. Y. Ugbanne - Member
11. Gbemisara - Member

#### 28. COMMUNICATIONS
1. Sylvester Anyanwu - Chairman
2. J. I. Akaaegerger - Vice Chairman
3. Bala Mohammed - Member
4. O. M. Ugbesia - Member
5. M. A. Aliero - Member
6. Nuhu Aliyu - Member
7. Yisa Braimoh - Member
8. Suleiman M. Nazif - Member
9. P. M. Awashiki - Member
10. A. U. Gada - Member
11. Abdulaziz Usman - Member
12. U. A. Argungu - Member
13. A. Tanko - Member

#### 29. ENVIRONMENT
1. Grace Bent - Chairman
2. Annie Onokwo - Vice Chairman
3. E. U. Ekaette - Member
4. B. A. Ahmed - Member
5. E. A. Eferekaya - Member
6. Chris Anyanwu - Member
7. U. A. Argungu - Member
8. G. T. Sekibo - Member
9. A. G. Talba - Member
10. Buka Ibrahim - Member
11. O. B. Dantong - Member

#### 30. GAS
1. Osita Izunaso - Chairman
2. Patrick Osakwe - Vice Chairman
3. H. Ehinlanwo - Member
4. M. A. Mohammed - Member
5. Abdulaziz Usman - Member
6. G. D. Dantong - Member
7. G. T. Sekibo - Member
8. Hassan M. Gusau - Member
9. T. U. Wada - Member
10. M. K. Jibril - Member
11. D. A. Kuta - Member

#### 31. Niger Delta
1. James Manager - Chairman
2. A. S. Garo - Vice Chairman
3. Uche Chukwumerije - Member
4. H. Lokpobiri - Member
5. S. N. Anyanwu - Member
6. M. A. Aliero - Member
7. G. Ogumniya - Member
8. Patrick Osakwe - Member
9. N. Y. Ugbanne - Member
10. R. O. Mustapha - Member
11. Mohammed Bello - Member

#### 32. SENATE SERVICES
1. Effiong Bob - Chairman
2. S. Adokwe - Vice Chairman
3. E. H. Abaribe - Member
4. Patrick Osakwe - Member
5. Julius Ucha - Member
6. G. Ogumniya - Member
7. D. B. Gassol - Member
8. T. U. Wada - Member

#### 33. SPORTS
1. H. Lokpobiri - Chairman
2. I. S. Turaki - Vice Chairman
3. K. P. Dukku - Member
4. G. Y. Lado - Member
5. T. U. Wada - Member
6. Buka Ibrahim - Member
7. Oturu S. Ohize - Member
8. Aminu S. Garo - Member
9. Osita Izunaso - Member
10. M. I. Mallam - Member
11. G. O. Solomon - Member
12. U. A. Argungu - Member
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>34. INEC</th>
<th>35. NATIONAL PLANNING</th>
<th>36. HOUSING</th>
<th>37. CULTURE &amp; TOURISM</th>
<th>38. COMMERCE</th>
<th>39. WOMEN &amp; YOUTH</th>
<th>40. JUDICIARY &amp; HUMAN RIGHTS</th>
<th>41. HEALTH</th>
<th>42. FINANCE</th>
<th>43. INTER- PARLIAMENTARY</th>
<th>44. EMPLOYMENT, LABOUR &amp; PRODUCTIVITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### For the Record

#### 45. ETHICS & PETITION
- **O. Hambagda** - Chairman
- **E. Ekarekaya** - Vice Chairman
- **Mohammed A. M.** - Member
- **Garba Yakubu Lado** - Member
- **L. L. Maeba** - Member
- **Anthony Agbo** - Member
- **A. E. Babalola** - Member
- **G. T. Bent** - Member
- **A. T. Bent** - Member
- **S. Akinyede** - Member
- **T. U. Wada** - Member

#### 46. INDUSTRY
- **Adekunle Adedibu** - Chairman
- **Talba Garba** - Vice Chairman
- **E. Paulker** - Member
- **George Akume** - Member
- **A. S. Arise** - Member
- **Caleb Zagi** - Member
- **Annie Okonkwo** - Member
- **J. D. Ikenna** - Member
- **D. A. Kuta** - Member
- **S. D. Gogwin** - Member
- **Smart Adeyemi** - Member

#### 47. STATES & LOCAL GOVERNMENT
- **Sahabi Yau** - Chairman
- **K. D. Dukku** - Vice Chairman
- **S. M. Nazif** - Member
- **Dahiru A. Kuta** - Member
- **G. D. Dantong** - Member
- **M. A. Muse** - Member
- **S. T. Anyanwu** - Member
- **A. Killa** - Member
- **P. M. Awashiki** - Member
- **Kabiru Saya** - Member
- **James Manager** - Member
- **Chris Anyanwu** - Member

#### 48. UPSTREAM PETROLEUM
- **L. L. Maeba** - Chairman
- **Usman I Wowo** - Vice Chairman
- **Annie Onkonkwo** - Member
- **M. A. Leval** - Member
- **Victor Nduma-Egbe (SAN)** - Member
- **I. S. Turaki** - Member
- **I. A. Adeleke** - Member
- **Adefemi Killa** - Member
- **O. A. Mamora** - Member
- **S. S. Ajibola** - Member
- **Kabiru I. Gaya** - Member

#### 49. BANKING, INSURANCE & OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
- **Nkechi Nwaogu** - Chairman
- **Felix Bajomo** - Vice Chairman
- **James Manager** - Member
- **Chimaroke Nnamani** - Member
- **A. I. Umar** - Member
- **A. M. Maccido** - Member
- **P. M. Awashiki** - Member
- **Gbenga Ogunniya** - Member
- **Patrick Osakwe** - Member
- **Mohamed A. Mohammed** - Member
- **Ayo Arise** - Member

#### 50. CAPITAL MARKETS
- **Ganiyu Solomon** - Chairman
- **Mohammed Bello** - Vice Chairman
- **N. B. Amange** - Member
- **Uche Chukwumerije** - Member
- **R. O. Mustapha** - Member
- **Dahiru Gassol** - Member
- **Zaynab Kure** - Member
- **S. A. Adokwe** - Member
- **Aloysious Etok** - Member
- **Anyim Ude** - Member

#### 51. PRIVATIZATION
- **A. S. Arise** - Chairman
- **M. Kanti Bello** - Vice Chairman
- **S. D. Gogwin** - Member
- **A. E. Ekerekaya** - Member
- **F.K. Bajomo** - Member
- **M. Maliam** - Member
- **Smart Adeyemi** - Member
- **Caleb Zagi** - Member
- **U. A. Argungu** - Member
- **A. Killa** - Member
- **Effiong Bob** - Member

#### 52. NATIONAL I.D. CARD & POPULATION
- **H. Ehinlawo** - Chairman
- **Satti Gogwin** - Vice Chairman
- **Odion Ugbesia** - Member
- **K.M. Yale** - Member
- **Anthony Agbo** - Member
- **A. Killa** - Member
- **I. S. Turaki** - Member
- **D. A. Kuta** - Member
- **Ahmed M. Maikarfi** - Member
- **Ikechukwu Obiorah** - Member
- **N. Barigha A.** - Member

#### 53. INTEGRATION & CO-OPERATION
- **G. A. Akume** - Chairman
- **M. Mana** - Vice Chairman
- **Y. Braimoh** - Member
- **G. Solomon** - Member
- **A. G. Manzo** - Member
- **A. U. Gada** - Member
- **S. D. Gogwin** - Member
- **A. T. Ayuba** - Member
- **Moh’d A. Mohammed** - Member
- **I. A. Adeleke** - Member

#### 54. LOCAL & FOREIGN DEBTS
- **Edobo Uzamere** - Chairman
- **Kabiru Gayya** - Vice Chairman
- **Osita Izunaso** - Member
- **Ayodile S. Arise** - Member
- **Adamu Garba T.** - Member
- **John Nazif Shagaya** - Member
- **Uche Chukwumerije** - Member
- **Suleiman Nazif** - Member
- **Eme Ufot Ekaette** - Member
- **Nuhu Aliyu** - Member
NEEDS: A re-examination

Continued on Page 16

Now the most sought after in the NEEDS programme, which is foreign capital was once rejected in the government economic planning under a programme called indigenization. With indigenization, foreign businesses were compelled by law as proposed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo in his days as Nigeria Finance Minister in the 70s to hand over their businesses to Nigerians.

Nigerians were to acquire shares up to central levels in those companies; but since Nigerians who went into those businesses were not capitalist themselves and did not know how to manage such enterprises, most of them collapsed, those that survived were only such as were given over to Nigeria frontmen by their foreign owners.

The greatest good in even capitalist growth theory has always resided in the notion of nationalism and patriotism. In other words, the American economy however free the market may be must always belong to the American. The British economy no matter how free the market may be, must always belong to Britons. Anything short of possession of a national economy by a people of a nation and its control by them is not only unsatisfactory but also insulting, condescending and provocative.

The seizure of any national economy by foreigners is an invitation to conflict between nationalist forces and foreign interest and the fact that Nigerians are slow to react to oppression and exploitation which current economic mismanagement entails is largely because of the oil boom, which has meant liquidity in the economy.

Now nobody knows what will be the future of the oil industry both on the international scale where prices are determined and at the domestic level where production takes place. The failure of government to use huge amounts available to it from the oil industry to pursue rapid industrial development is indeed the major problem, the fundamental issue in national economic management today. This is so because as has been explained, the more large scale industries there are, the more is the economic potential to replace imports with domestic goods and this is very essential if we recognize the reality that that revenues accruing from oil industry is most squandered in the area of massive importation of goods. The sooner this revenue is ploughed to the pursuit of economic development especially in industries the better for us.

"The way out therefore is to reorganize government on technical and professional lines so that it can fruitfully participate directly in economic development"

Withdrawal of government from investment in enterprises is going on without a timetable for replacement; it should have occurred to economic managers that in the absence of massive domestic investment there should be investments in directions which produce immediate results appropriate to solutions to economic problems.

The common people cannot wait indefinitely for theories of capitalist growth which are ill digested by government to produce results. The emphasis in investment in infrastructure has been nothing more than an aid to corruption in government, this is because infrastructural assets are perishable or impossible to account for in terms that are impressive to common people not only is economic growth only a matter of accelerated development of the productive sector of the economy it is also the means of providing society with visible and enduring assets, when large-scale industries are established, mechanized farms established, they put large number of people in jobs who earn income that manifest on their purchasing ability which also reflects in their ability to maintain their families in good health.

When public funds are only meant for building roads and hospitals, production is not involved nor do such institutions produce profit; they are hardly reckoned with in measuring the rate of growth of an economy in terms of quantity of goods produced and benefits accruing to the common people. In fact, what the emphasis on infrastructural constructions has meant over the years is more self enrichment for people in government and contractors, the more money is stolen in such ways the more there is capital flight. IMF loans and other such funds are not democratically processed all over Africa including Nigeria in any case they are not meant for real growth which can only be in the productive sector i.e. more goods for the market and therefore employment for more people thereby reducing poverty growth rate.

Again, it is important to note that restriction of government participation in the economy to provision of infrastructural facilities, which is function of contractors, creates idleness in government without the civil service playing a direct role in economic management and productive activity in the economy.

The common people cannot wait indefinitely for theories of capitalist growth which are ill digested by government to produce results. The emphasis in investment in infrastructure has been nothing more than an aid to corruption in government, this is because infrastructural assets are perishable or impossible to account for in terms that are impressive to common people not only is economic growth only a matter of accelerated development of the productive sector of the economy it is also the means of providing society with visible and enduring assets, when large-scale industries are established, mechanized farms established, they put large number of people in jobs who earn income that manifest on their purchasing ability which also reflects in their ability to maintain their families in good health.

When public funds are only meant for building roads and hospitals, production is not involved nor do such institutions produce profit; they are hardly reckoned with in measuring the rate of growth of an economy in terms of quantity of goods produced and benefits accruing to the common people. In fact, what the emphasis on infrastructural constructions has meant over the years is more self enrichment for people in government and contractors, the more money is stolen in such ways the more there is capital flight. IMF loans and other such funds are not democratically processed all over Africa including Nigeria in any case they are not meant for real growth which can only be in the productive sector i.e. more goods for the market and therefore employment for more people thereby reducing poverty growth rate.

Again, it is important to note that restriction of government participation in the economy to provision of infrastructural facilities, which is function of contractors, creates idleness in government without the civil service playing a direct role in economic management and productive activity in the economy. Government as a whole is useless as a developmental factor; this is the reason why most government officeholders have nothing to do.

The way out therefore is to reorganize government on technical and professional lines so that it can fruitfully participate directly in economic development. Inefficiency in past governments cannot be an excuse for economic inefficiency in the present government, in other words, time has come to redefine the role of government in economic development so as to replace its unproductive tendencies with productive ones.

Mr. Nwaogwu writes in from No.16, Karaye Close, off Aminu Omanze Street, Garki II, Abuja
NEEDS: A re-examination

By Ezenwa Nwaogu

Nigeria’s new President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua in the run of the campaigns used every opportunity and during his swearing in ceremony on the 29th May 2007 reiterated his promise to sustain the Obasanjo reforms. The bible of these reforms we were made to believe are the NEEDS I & II documents. But the obvious contradictions in the reforms agenda make compelling the need for a reversal and as someone argued “correcting noticeable errors is also part and parcel of sustaining a programme”.

The NEEDS document, as we perceive it is based on the Structural Adjustment Programme, the purpose being to ensure rapid economic growth but not growth that a long exploited pre-capitalist economy need. What is direly needed now is development and not growth.

The more growth is made the object of economic programmes, the more there is increase in poverty. The basis of any economic development even in terms of capitalism is industrialization. You industrialize then you find it easy to provide infrastructure.

It entails creating solid basis for infrastructural construction; anything in a pre-capitalist economy will run into a hitch when you impose manufactured components from foreign industries and businesses. This is why investment by government is the first requirement for economic development. Government investment on a large-scale is recommended because government itself is the largest reservoir or repository of capital, which accrues to it in the form of public revenues. All the indigenous capitalist enterprises the sum total of their capital if obtained does not come anywhere the magnitude of funds for development available to government.

It is fallacy to argue that because previous governments failed to manage public enterprises efficiently, all subsequent government must also fail. This amount to abdication of responsibility for furthering public interest in the part of any government.

It is an unstatistical standpoint considered on a global basis and in terms of economic world history of recent times. Whereas it is true that the so-called Asian tigers have made economic progress in recent years, their rate of progress is nowhere comparable to those of Soviet Union or China, whose development were based on state investment or government funding.

These two countries emerged from acute backwardness to achieve super-power-status. Apart from this historical facts which is backed by impeccable statistics none of the Asian tigers be it Malaysia, Singapore or Indonesia was beset at the time of their take off by a massive burden of capital flight, in other words, when we talk of the possibility or potentials of a country for growing in a typical capitalist sense we cannot gloss over the question of whether such a country has attained a suitable or appropriate level of bourgeoisie of its business community. Lack of investment capital and an investing class capable of using that capital to advance national economic growth are of course factors which are detrimental to economic growth in whatever degree.

The option as proposed by IMF & the World Bank is to globalize investment i.e. throw investment open to foreigners and it is important to note that these two international finance organizations being that they serve the interest of international capitalism are not unaware of the fact of emptiness in the domestic economy in terms of the unavailability of domestic capital.

What is uppermost in the minds of the sponsors of the IMF & World Bank is urgent pursuit of their re-colonization programmes under the disguised banner of globalization. To talk freedom of indigenous market forces in the absence of ownership of most enterprises by national forces be they government or indigenous capitalist is to accept re-colonization policy of the advanced western nations.

If privatization continues as pursued under NEEDS, the outcome will certainly be that foreign enterprises will become predominant in all vital sectors of the national economy. Since it is a matter of fact that the indigenous wealthy classes are afraid to invest their stolen money in the domestic economy. UNIDO, in a recent report confirms the enormity of these problems of capital flight and the impossibility of making a pseudo-capitalist indigenous investor-class the basis of economic growth programme such as NEEDS.

It is also important to note that NEEDS is unhistorical in its foundations. It sets aside the lessons of Nigeria economic development and grounds its reasoning on textbook theories. Otherwise how can anyone who is an economist forget that what is Continued on Page 15