

# The Federal Republic of Nigeria

## Positions for the United Nations Human Rights Council

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### I. Combating Human Trafficking through Regional Mechanisms

As statistics have demonstrated, human trafficking is on the rise, continuing to pose a persistent obstacle to the rights of the individual in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Combating this form of modern-day slavery is an immense concern as human trafficking represents not only an egregious violation of human rights but also disrupts the stability and functioning of entire communities. Nigeria has repeatedly stressed its unwavering commitment to the global fight against all forms of human trafficking and the joint effort to alleviate its devastating effects. Nigeria has demonstrated great resolve in establishing itself as the first nation in Africa to have passed a national law criminalizing human trafficking and to have established the National Agency for Prohibition of Child Trafficking (NAPTIP).

Recognizing that trafficking of persons is a transnational crime, Nigeria has participated in several regional conferences and ratified a variety of regional bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements to combat trafficking. Most notably, in 2006, Nigeria entered the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in West and Central Africa. The ECOWAS/ECCAS Agreement provides that countries engage in information sharing to develop a common platform of action against human trafficking in the regions. Beginning in 2007, Nigeria has taken active steps to implement the provisions of this agreement, specifically reproducing the International Labor Organization-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO-IPEC) monitoring system, a vital regional mechanism allowing countries to assist each other in not only the investigation, arrest, and prosecution of trafficking offenders, but also the protection, rehabilitation, and reintegration of trafficking victims. Also in 2007, Nigeria participated in a \$9.5 million United States Department of Labor funded ILO-IPEC regional project to combat the trafficking of children in West and Central Africa, which effectively withdrew 4,240 children and prevented 7,213 children from trafficking in the region.<sup>1</sup> Another major development was the signing of a bilateral agreement to fight trafficking between Nigeria and Benin in 2005 with the assistance of UNICEF, which patrols the borders of both countries and facilitates joint investigation and prosecution of offenders as well as the protection and return of trafficking victims. Nigeria prides itself on steps taken to prevent the continuance of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Nigeria commends Member States that have signed and ratified the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Nigeria recommends that all nations become party to these instruments. Recognizing that human trafficking needs to be tackled through policy, action, and cooperation at different levels, Nigeria proposes continued monitoring and strengthening of the Counter Trafficking Module Database under the auspices of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as a mechanism to coordinate and standardize data collection systems and various indicators used by the numerous regional and national agencies. In creating harmony among existing data sources, the database will help to better create urgent responses to human trafficking to provide policymakers with a higher degree of certainty in formulating appropriate policy measures. The global fight against human trafficking ultimately requires consensus among all states in addition to focused and collective regional efforts.

### II. Human Rights in Conflict and Post-Conflict Zones

Since 1960, Nigeria has remained an active contributor to the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) by providing troops. Currently, Nigeria is the largest contributor of African troops and civilian police to UN missions.<sup>2</sup> Nigeria has also long been a leader of Africa's homegrown peace initiatives. Nigeria's commitment to regional peace and security is demonstrated by its numerous contributions to peacekeeping operations and reconciliatory efforts to restore peace to the region. The Nigerian government has also been commended for its display of high level support and commitment to the UN-AU hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), contributing approximately 2,000 troops.

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<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Labor, *2007 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor – Nigeria*

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Department of Public Information, *UN Peacekeeping Fact Sheet (DPI/2429/Rev.2)*, 2008

Recognizing that effective collaboration requires agreement on basic principles for guiding humanitarian intervention, Nigeria supports the codification of a universal understanding of the principle, “responsibility to protect.” In the 2005 World Summit outcome document, world leaders unanimously pledged that the international community is “prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, including Chapter VII, on a case by case basis” when it is recognized that states are “manifestly failing to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.” Nigeria agrees that the responsibility to protect civilians in armed conflict situations is a necessary and shared one. Military intervention for human protection purposes must be regarded as an exceptional and extraordinary measure. Militarized humanitarian intervention is warranted or justified in two broad sets of circumstances in order to halt or avert large scale loss of life, which is the product either of deliberate state action, state neglect or inability to act, or a failed state situation; or large scale ‘ethnic cleansing,’ actual or apprehended, whether carried out by killing, forced expulsion, acts of terror or rape.<sup>3</sup>

Nigeria urges states that have not done so, to adopt, ratify, and codify the various Conventions and Protocols on the law of armed conflicts within national law to ensure the implementation of the provision to protect human rights. If intervention for human protection purposes is to be accepted, it remains imperative that the international community develop consistent, credible, and enforceable standards to guide state and intergovernmental practice. Nigeria encourages all Member States to fully embrace the “responsibility to protect” as a basis for collective action against genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. There still remains, however, the question of a case-by-case determination for intervention necessity. To this end, Nigeria proposes the creation of an independent UN Humanitarian Intervention Evidentiary Committee charged with assessing developing crisis situations for satisfaction of the criteria of just cause. Staffed by various members of the epistemic community who specialize in humanitarian issues, the Evidentiary Committee will present the collected evidence and any expert advice to the Security Council to inform its decisions whether intervention is warranted.

### **III. Promoting Sustainable Human Development through Empowerment**

Since its independence, the Federal Republic of Nigeria has been dedicated to promoting and achieving sustainable development. Nigeria has shown such dedication by empowering its inhabitants in promoting and achieving such development. Due to such efforts, Nigeria’s economic development has increased at an average of approximately 6% per annum over the past twenty years, thus resulting in a decrease in the poverty level.<sup>4</sup> It is Nigeria’s position to facilitate the less privileged, as well as more vulnerable areas of society, in order to achieve sustainable living.

Leading the region by unprecedented example, Nigeria has lucratively implemented a team known as the “Cows to Kilowatts” program, which is an element of a pilot biogas plant that utilizes biogas technology in converting biological waste into energy while helping to improve the quality of life in this region. This program has provided energy to 5,400 families per month at an astonishing quarter of the cost of liquefied natural gas.<sup>5</sup> Further evidence of Nigeria’s dedication to sustainable development is the Supporting Entrepreneurs for Environment and Development (SEED). This program was created to empower citizens by creating incentives for locally led ideas for sustainable development. In 2005, Cows to Kilowatts and SEED received international recognition, proving that Nigeria’s efforts for sustainable development are effective. Nigeria has also implemented an Urban Basic Services Program that promotes environmental infrastructure. This program identifies core areas in Nigerian cities in need of water purification, improved sanitation, and drainage improvements targeted at women and children.

Assistance to underdeveloped areas can and must be achieved by empowering local populations to work toward a solution themselves, leaving power in the hands of the people. This bottom up initiative must begin with a concerted effort from local citizens in development projects. The Federal Republic of Nigeria supports the implementation of such local programs in order to promote empowering communities in striving for, and achieving sustainable human development. Nigeria calls upon the creation of Global SEED, an organization to facilitate the implementation of local programs aimed at empowering citizens to collaborate with one another in creating locally led ideas for sustainable development. Global SEED should provide resources as well as expertise and training in

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<sup>3</sup> The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect*; [www.iciss.ca/report-en.asp](http://www.iciss.ca/report-en.asp)

<sup>4</sup> UN Development Programme, Nigeria; [www.ng.undp.org](http://www.ng.undp.org)

<sup>5</sup> UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs – Division for Sustainable Development, *Innovation for Sustainable Development: Local Case Studies from Africa*

underdeveloped areas to ensure that each local program holds equal opportunity in achieving the global initiative of promoting sustainable human development.