

Africa And Her Diasporas: Building Global Partnerships For Development (A Case Study Of Nigeria)

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ABSTRACT: Today, governments of most African states have recognized the importance of the Diaspora to homeland development through its gained experience and know-how, valuable networks and access to significant technology and capital. Most African governments are therefore, poised to create the enabling environment for harnessing these human resources outside the continent by organizing the Diaspora into an effective community. Using Nigeria as a case study, this paper notes that the Federal government of Nigeria as well as many state governments in the country has established the Office of Special Advisers on Diaspora Matters with a view to organizing its citizenry abroad for purposes of homeland development. The Nigerian government has equally included the Diaspora in the nation's development agenda. This paper aims at studying the proactive roles which African Diasporas especially Nigerians have played in the socio-economic development of the continent through remittances, etc. The paper discusses the different steps taken by the Nigerian government to achieve its objectives.

Key words: Africa, Development, Diaspora, Migration, Nigeria, Partnership, Remittance

1. INTRODUCTION

Today as never before, the African Diaspora phenomenon has gained considerable currency in social science literature among scholars and policy makers as well. This invariably is not unconnected with the shifting dynamics of knowledge production and in the changing contours of material production, as well as the transformations that are simultaneously epistemic, as they are economic, and which are confined to, and connect the academy and society, and which are often as much national as they are transnational. In short, the interest in African Diaspora phenomenon can be attributed to, on one hand, intellectual and ideological imperatives, and on the other hand, developments in regional and global economies occasioned by globalization. Ideologically, Zeleza (2008: 4-21) asserts that "African Diaspora studies has benefited from black internationalism, the age-old imperative for collective liberation for African peoples at home and abroad, fostered in part by the collapse of the schisms of the cold war, the demise of apartheid and the renewed search for an African renaissance". Intellectually, Diaspora studies were facilitated from the 1980s by the rise of globalization and transnational studies as well as cultural studies particularly, with recourse to post-structuralism, post-modernism and post colonialism (Zeleza (349-358). Moreover, the interest in African Diaspora phenomenon is also motivated by the new found understanding that the Diasporas are now seen as "a potentially exploitable, if under- developed resource," Davis (2007: 59-76). Going by African development challenges, scholars and practitioners alike are searching for enduring solutions to the myriad problems of African development which the former South African President, Thabbo Mbeki (2003: 165) declares inter alia:

"Africa is today confronted by a world of financial investment and trade regimes which unfairly favour the developed world and which prevent the continent from improving the quality of life of its citizens. Over 40% of the people in sub-Sahara Africa live below the international poverty line of US 1 dollar per day. Africa's share of the World trade has plummeted, accounting for less than 2% and more than 140 million young Africans are illiterate; the continent has entered that 21st century still confronted by the hard realities of entrenched poverty, death from curable diseases, illiteracy, international marginalization and general underdevelopment, with little prospects for growth and development.

The continent is indeed in a sorry state. Imagine a situation where 40% of the people in the continent live below the international poverty line of US1 dollar per day! Interestingly, African governments have not rested on their oars as several solutions to the development quagmire of the continent have been sought for, devised and implemented. Unfortunately, past development policies and interventions were not indigenous as they were invented and driven from outside the continent. They lacked local content and local ownership by stake holders and were hardly based on genuine partnerships. They therefore failed to achieve their desired aims and objectives. In any case, the search for a sustainable solution to Africa's development problems continues and today, the African Union (AU) and African governments have called for partnerships and engagement with the African Diasporas and their host countries for the continent's development. The engagement of the African Diasporas in transactions that occur within transnational spaces, and their affinities and links with their countries of origin and destination are increasingly recognized. Governments are seeking for avenues to increase their collaboration with Diaspora communities in realizing their own aspirations and assisting them to maximize their potentials. This potential is not only

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related to remittances, but consists in a wide variety of resources that can be mobilized through transnational networks (IOM/MPI, 2013: 1). It is on this note that this paper appraises the experiences of Nigeria, by exploring what the government is doing/has done and/or is expected to do, to foster Diaspora involvement in the development of the country in particular, and Africa in general. The paper is divided into sections including an introduction, conceptualization of key concepts, a theoretical framework of analysis, and an overview of the African Diaspora phenomenon; how partnerships can be forged with the Diaspora for Africa's development especially the Nigeria experience, the challenges, problems and prospects, a recommendation and a conclusion.

2. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF RELEVANT KEYWORDS:

For proper appreciation of the subject matter of this paper and arising from contextual intelligibility, certain keywords of this paper are predisposed for clarification. These include: Africa, Diaspora and development.

Africa: The idea of 'Africa' is an exceedingly complex one with multiple genealogies and meanings, making any extrapolations of 'African' culture and identity, in the singular or plural; any explorations for African "Authenticity", quite slippery as these notions tend to swing unsteadily between the poles of essentialism and contingency. Africa is as much a reality as it is a construct whose boundaries, geographical, historical and cultural have shifted according to the prevailing conceptions and configurations of global racial identities and power, and African nationalism, including Pan-African, Zeleza, (2005: 349-358). The name 'Africa' is not African; it originally referred to the Roman province in present day Tunisia, and only later was it extended to the whole continent and much later still did the various peoples of the continent come to be referred to, or to refer to themselves as Africans; some still don't. Thus, exclusive claims to Africa based on the sands of the Sahara or doses of melanin represent the spatialization and racialization of African identity that is historically spurious. In the context of this paper, our Africa is the Africa of the African Union, corresponding with the racist epistemic cartography of Africa invented by European imperialism that divided Africa into two, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.

Diaspora: This simultaneously refers to a process, a condition, a space and a discourse; the continuous processes by which a Diaspora is made, unmade and re-made, the changing conditions in which it lives and expresses itself, the places where it is molded and imagined, and the contentious ways in which it is studied and discussed. It entails a culture and consciousness, sometimes diffuse and sometimes concentrated of a 'here' separate from a 'there'; a 'here' that is often characterized by a regime of marginalization and a 'there' that is involved as a rhetoric of self-affirmation, of belongingness to 'here' differently. Diaspora is at the same time a state of being and a process of becoming, a kind of voyage that encompasses the possibility of never arriving or returning, a navigation of multiple belongings, of networks of affiliation. A Diaspora is fashioned as much in the fluid and messy

contexts of social experience, differentiation and struggle, and through the transnational circuits of exchange of Diaspora resources and repertoires of power, as in the discourses of intellectuals and political elites. The Diaspora is generally defined as: "Emigrants and their descendants who live outside the country of their birth or ancestry either on a temporary or permanent basis, yet maintain effective ties to their country of origin (International Organization of Migration/Migration Policy Institute, 2012: 15). The AU on its own says: "the African Diaspora consists of peoples of African origin living outside the continent irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union" (AU 2005, cited in Bakewell, 2008: 5-27). Also the African Union (2004), at one time said that African Diaspora refers to the geographic dispersal of peoples whose ancestors within historical memory, originally came from Africa but who are currently domiciled, or claim residence or citizenship, outside the continent of Africa. This means that African Diasporas include all those peoples dispersed from the continent in historic and contemporary times, who have constituted themselves or been constituted into diasporas. The above definition also points to the complexities of the African diasporas and underscores Butters' (2000: 125-139) point that "conceptualizations of Diaspora must be able to accommodate the reality of multiple identities and phases of diasporization overtime".

Development: Social science literature is filled with various strands of thought on the meaning and nature of development. We shall not be saddled by this seeming confusion in thought and philosophizing. Our concern is to explain what development is, in a modest and concise manner. As was correctly noted by Okoli (2003: 15), "The Western or classical concept of development is premised on two amorphous concepts, modernization and political development". The proponents include Hoselits (1960); Almond and Powell (1966); Myrdal (1968); Parsons (1969); Whitaker (1970); Leonard et al (1966); Rostow (1961); Seers (1977); Todaro (1992) etc. These scholars subscribe to the modernization thesis. For instance, Myrdal (1968) viewed development as the upward movement of the entire social system. He believes that it involves the achievement of the ideals of modernization which include: A rise in productivity, social and economic equalization; Modern knowledge and a system of policy measures which can remove undesirable conditions. The modernization thesis encouraged the developing states to acquire imitative attitudes and look unto the ideals and structures of developed states to attain required development level (Okolie, 2003: 137). However, much of these explanations failed to take into cognizance the relevance of human factor in their conceptualization. As noted by Cairn Cross (1961) in Okolie (2003), "the key to development lies in men's minds, in the institutions in which their thinking finds expression and in the interplay of opportunities in ideas and institutions". This view was reinforced by Mabogunje (1981); Nnoli (1981); Ake (1996), etc. Deducing from the above strands of thought, we therefore within the context of this paper view development as man-directed and sustained socio economic and political transformations of self and the basic structures of the society from a

comparatively and/or present level to a more qualitative, quantitative and/or remarkably improved form. By transformation here, we therefore, refer to improvements of the materials and non material conditions of the citizenry.

Partnership: Partnership is a situation whereby two individuals, organizations, corporate or non corporate enter into relationships based on mutual interest and shared benefits which capitalize on the comparative advantages to both parties.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the theoretical literature on the causes, courses, and consequences of international migration, there are several theories, each employing radically different concepts, assumptions and frames of reference, which seek to explain the factors that first, initiate and second, perpetuate international migration and third, that attempts to assess the effects of international migration on both the sending and receiving countries. Some emphasize economic factors and motivations; others, offer political or sociological perspectives and propositions. The economic theories include the neoclassical economic model, the 'new economics of migration' theory, dual labour market theory, and world systems theory. These theories need not be mutually exclusive. A process as complex as international migration, is obviously the result of equally complex forces, operating at various levels in space and time. Migration flows are determined by conditions in both the sending and receiving countries, including the state of the economy, political stability and freedoms, and immigration laws, all of which are affected by broader forces in the global political economy. With due cognizance therefore to the plethora of existing explanatory frameworks on diaspora studies, this paper adopts the political economy approach as an imperative in the appreciation of African Diasporas in homeland/host land development. This approach gives primacy to material conditions particularly economic factors, in the explanation of social life (Ake, 1981). The methodological implication of this approach is that particular attention must be paid to the economic structure of society and indeed, it must be used as the point of reference for studying other aspects of society, be it the legal, political, religious, culture etc. Contemporary diasporization is a search for improved materials conditions which expectedly should propel homeland/host land development.

4. THE AFRICAN DIASPORA PHENOMENON

In order to understand the African Diaspora phenomenon, it is germane to explore the following questions: how did the concept Diaspora come to be? Who are the Diasporas and how did they come to be associated with that kind of appellation? It was George Shepperson (1968: 152) in a paper he delivered at the International Congress on African History held at the University Of Dar Salaam Tanzania, in 1965 who first alerted the world of the African Diaspora phenomenon. The implication of the word "Diaspora" can be located in the Holy Writ; Deuteronomy 28: 25 and Edward Alpers (2001) notes that until the 1960s, the use of the word "Diaspora" was confined to the scholarship of the Jewish and Christian religions. "Indeed," he says, "when George Shepperson first joined "African" to Diaspora and the dispersal of Africans as a consequence of the slave

trade, Shepperson argued that African American and Caribbean intellectuals themselves had for a long time recognized and actualized connections between their own people in exile and that of the Jews". Alpers (2001) argues that Shepperson's achievement here was to recognize the great similarities in the comparative histories of these two great dispersions especially the role of slavery and imperialism in the forced migration of both Jews and Africans and to name the one by the terms used by the other. Indeed, just like the Jews were forced into captivity so were many Africans forced into slavery and had become part of the societies into which they were taken to as slaves. Many of them can no longer trace their origins but they still have the psychological belief that they have a root in Africa. Therefore, "the African Diaspora", says Alusine Falloh (1966:3)", is born out of the voluntary and involuntary movement of Africans to various areas of the world since ancient times, but involuntary migration through the trans-Saharan, trans-Atlantic and Indian Ocean slave trades accounts for most of the black presence outside Africa today". In other words, Diasporas are of two distinct categories, those forced out of their homelands into other lands-Involuntary Diasporas and those who went out in search of better living conditions-Voluntary Diasporas. Many of those forced out of the continent into Europe or America during the slave trade, have lost their roots and can no longer be organized. They only think of Africa as their root from a psychological perspective while some of them erroneously hate Africa with a passion. Palmer (2000: 28) asserts that the African diaspora was a product of at least five, may be, more migratory drifts which he calls "diasporic streams". These drifts include:

- a. Prehistoric migration out of Africa about 100,000 years ago;
- b. Migration of Bantu-speaking peoples from the region of Cross River in Nigeria through central Africa into the India Ocean littoral about 3,000 BCE;
- c. Trading Diasporas created by African Merchants, slaves and soldiers in Europe, the middle East and Asia from about the fifth century BCE, whose major component was the increased migration occasioned by Islam in Arabia in the seventh century CE;
- d. The Atlantic slave trade to the Americas and Europe and
- e. The Contemporary migration stream which began after the end of slavery and picked up stream in the colonial and post colonial periods.

Going by this categorization in line with the streams or drifts, Palmer (2000:27) avers that, "The modern African Diaspora, at its core consists of the millions of African descent living in various societies who are united by a past based significantly but not exclusively upon "racial" oppression and the struggles against it, and who, despite the cultural variation and political and other divisions among

them, share an emotional bond with one another and with their ancestral continent, and who also, regardless of their locations, face broadly similar problems in constructing and realizing themselves." Adebayo (2011:62) adds yet another stream which he calls "the new African Diasporas", i.e. the one created after independence, fostered by globalization and especially fuelled by various economic, political and social forces within Africa in the 1990s. This is the category of Diasporas which this paper is mainly concerned with. These are mainly the voluntary Diasporas who on their own volition, migrated out of Africa into other continents in search of greener pastures. This kind of migration is motivated by man's desire to better his lot in life. Man by nature is ever in search of good living condition and no man ever compromises his well being. Hence, every man's activity on earth is an existential quest for opportunities to better his living conditions. Thus, survival instinct remains a major law of nature for every living being. "This law", according to Enwerem (2011:90), "is at the heart of the "Diasporas phenomenon" from time immemorial." The new African Diasporas are therefore, a group of people of the African descent who in quest of better living conditions, migrate from their countries of origin to other countries of the world and at the same time maintain links with their kiths and kin at their homelands. For Esman (1986:333), the diasporas refer to a group of people somewhere in the world who were forced by a situation of political or religious persecution or adverse economic circumstances to relocate from their original homeland to settle and live out their lives in a foreign country or voluntarily make a similar move in search for possibilities of a better economic and socio-political well being while maintaining the link with their homeland. The African Union as noted earlier has many definitions of the African Diasporas but they all point at willingness to contribute to African development. At any rate, the African Diaspora generally include all those people dispersed from the continent in historic and contemporary times who have constituted themselves, or been constituted into diasporas. However, it is important to note that Africa is one of the major producers of Diasporas in the world. This is mainly as a result of the harsh economic realities of the continent. Ogom (2009:166) contends that it is estimated that there are roughly 35 million citizens of African descent (both voluntary / involuntary immigrants and African Americans) living in the United States with a collective purchasing power of about \$450 billion per annum, a sum that, if represented by a single country would make it one of the 15 largest economies in the world. Not only that African immigrants are legion, the continent boasts of the highest educational attainment of any immigrant groups, featuring well over 250,000 scientists and physicians in the United States alone (Bridgewater 2003). No doubt, the African Diaspora is capable of orchestrating the Paradigm shift required in African development in the 21st century if properly harnessed. Development experts like the World Bank (2007) have stressed the point, and they believe it, that "the African Diaspora constitutes an amazing army of talents to develop the continent and it is essential to form a partnership with this amazing African brain lying outside the continent which has the capacity to lift development of the continent to the next level in order to enable Africa increase its capacity to acquire, use and apply knowledge and increase its access to financial resources".

5. BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Diasporas engage in development efforts in the homeland mainly through their own initiatives unless they are mobilized and when they get involved in such development efforts, they select their own projects not minding whether such projects are the needs of the people at home at that point in time or not. Moreover, they only get involved in development efforts on their own initiatives when all things are equal, that is, when they have made enough money in their host country and then want to contribute to homeland development. This then underscores the importance of proactive measures by governments of African countries to mobilize their Diasporas by awakening them from their existential slumber to the realization of the point that the time is ripe for them to contribute to homeland development in any manner possible irrespective of their financial status. Every Diaspora/and or Diaspora organization has one thing or the other to offer for the development of the homeland. As against leaving Diasporas to their fancy on when and how to get involved in homeland developments, building partnerships for developments becomes necessary. Partnerships are entered into by two or more individuals or organizations with each making his/her/or their own contribution to the success of an agreed venture or project. In the case of the homeland and the Diaspora, the initiative should come from home because the project will be executed at home and it is the home people who know what is needed more than those abroad. Again, it is the home people who need this project more than those abroad. They need to inform the Diaspora of what is needed and request them to assist. They need to design the project themselves and the Diaspora can make inputs. However, it is important to note that there is always a mutual suspicion between the Diasporas and people in the homeland, but a partnership helps each party to be more confident, serious and accountable. Since the development of Africa is an issue of mutual interest to both African governments and her Diasporas, government institutions, community organizations etc in Africa can enter into partnerships with the Diasporas in order to bring about development in the homeland. Both can capitalize on the comparative advantages of the other to facilitate developments of various strands to African nations. An indubitable fact of reality is that immigrants leave their homeland physically but remain there emotionally. A general characteristics shared by all Diasporas is that they have emotional ties with their homeland, which prompt them to maintain links with their home countries. These ties often translate to obligations and concrete commitments, actions and activities like transferring of money, ideas, information, knowledge, skills and know-how back home, prompting peace dialogues, supporting post-conflict reconstructions, governance processes as well as private development projects (UNDP, 2008). The extended family system that is peculiar with people of Africa makes the preponderance of these ties more compelling for the African Diasporas. Ipso facto, the African Diasporas have ever been engaged in African development efforts from colonial times. In fact, concrete African development efforts started from the African Diasporas. Thabbo Mbeki (2003,5-27) traces the origins of African decolonization, integration and unity to the

activities of the African Diasporas who provided the ideological and motivational basis of both the African emancipation, unity and development projects which came to be championed by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), in the 1960s through the 1990s and by the African Union (AU) today. Against the backdrop of developmental challenges in Africa today, Mbeki (2003, 5-27) charges; "the time has come for the African intelligentsia in the Americas, Caribbean, Europe and Africa to come together again and search for ways and means by which to confront the problems of Africa in the 21st Century, under development and poverty". However, much as this engagement of the African Diaspora is necessary and expedient, governments of different African nations must as a matter of utmost importance, be proactive and take the lead to galvanize and mobilize the Diaspora as well as create the enabling environment for the Diaspora to partner with them in homeland development.

5.1 BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

The Diaspora is a citizen of two worlds, the world of the host country and the world of the homeland. He is therefore an agent of global development in the sense that his activities have the propensity to impact on many citizens of the world. One of the major aims for which the Diaspora migrate is to work in the host country and improve himself and that of the immediate family. Experiences have shown that most Diasporas are professionals and experts in their various fields. This means that they invariably contribute to the development of their host country through their works and also contribute to the development of their homelands through remittances of cash and ideas, etc. Mohan's (2007:77) three-fold interdependent but clearly different typologies on the global development roles of the Diaspora is instructive here. These are: development in the Diaspora, development through the Diaspora and development by the Diaspora. On the one hand, development in the Diaspora refers to the benefits that accrue to the host locality as a result of the presence of international migrants. Such benefits are independent of the fact that these workers are members of a Diaspora and relate simply to their functions as workers or professionals who propel economic growth within the host country as a result of the ongoing transactional connections that are peculiar to Diaspora groups. Finally, developments by the Diaspora refer to benefits that diasporas communities bring to their countries of origin. Diasporas, then, contribute to socio-economic well-being and economic growth to the host country as well as their homelands, thereby redefining the nature and scope of development (Mercier, Page and Evans, 2008:53-54). If this is the case, then, it means that both countries stand to benefit if the Diaspora is adequately harnessed for subsequent exploitation of his capacities and capabilities. The need for building partnerships for the holistic development of the Diaspora therefore becomes expedient. This is because the partnership is for the mutual interest of both countries of origin and destination. Therefore, for better result in Diaspora engagement, African governments should be disposed to, also engage the different countries where Africans migrate. This is an issue for further research by scholars concerned with African Diaspora engagement as there is scanty literature on Diaspora engagement.

5.2 INITIAL STEPS IN BUILDING PARTNERSHIP

In any case, if this engagement or partnership or whatever it is called, must be fruitful as it must be; certain principles or rather conditions must be fulfilled. Knowledge about the magnitude of the capacity of the African Diaspora is still limited. The International Organization for Migration/Migration Policy Institute Handbook on Diaspora Engagement (1OM/MPI, 2012) stresses the importance of "knowing your Diaspora" as a *conditio sine qua non* in this regard. In order to win and serve a customer adequately, one must know and understand the customer very well. This is a marketing maxim worth borrowing for the relationship between Africa and her Diasporas. Knowing the Diasporas is crucial in achieving the following inter-related objectives.

1. Generating more reliable data to assess the situation of the Diaspora in a given country, for instance, through mapping exercise. Demographic and socio economic data provide precious insight into the magnitude and the profiles of Diaspora members, and help in constructing indicators related to integration. These data are of strategic importance for both countries of origin and destination in designing policies related to aspects that range from labour market analysis and forecasts, to immigration, trade, and so on.
2. Understanding the motivations and modalities of Diasporas' engagement in development. The essence is to evaluate not only the willingness of Diaspora members to engage in development but also the modalities in which such engagement is envisaged and/or actually undertaken. It is thus crucial to ascertain the existence of Diaspora-driven initiatives, to understand the expectations and needs of Diasporas prior to engagement.
3. Designing effective communication channels. Since diasporas are in many cases not organized entities, but rather, groups of individuals who are not necessarily related to each other, outreach strategies are crucial to establish or maintain communication and should be designed according to the existence and nature of Diaspora groups and organizations; Diaspora media or other structures that federate diasporas (1OM: 2013: 4).

Having prepared the ground by knowing the strength and weakness of the Diasporas as well as understanding their motivations and modalities for engagement coupled with designing effective communication channels, the stage is then set for mobilization of the Diasporas. The government can now create an enabling environment for mobilizing the Diasporas for development. Generally, an enabling environment for non-state actors' participation in development requires:

- a. An effective policy, legal and regulatory framework
- b. Institutional capacity across sectors and at various levels

- c. An inclination for governments to seek out and respond to citizen's needs and preferences
- d. And public resources and investments (Brinkerhoff 2007: 83).

In order to mobilize the Diaspora for homeland development effectively, the government can do a number of things including the following:

1. Leveraging legal and regulatory frameworks that affect Diasporas like citizenship rights and voting right, as well as formal political representation as done in Mexico. For Africa to achieve the desired goal of engaging the Diaspora in homeland development effectively there must be a give and take or symbiotic relationship. The Diaspora must get what they need in order for the continent to get what it needs.
2. Government can also provide incentives to diasporas such as recognizing them as important constituents and one of the missing links in development. Government can also go an extra mile by protecting them in their countries of abode by providing them with consular services, thereby seeking to improve their quality of life wherever they are; government can also organize diplomatic visits to find out their problems and help to solve such problems and also by creating specialized government agencies or institutions to interface with the Diaspora. Government can also organize Diaspora summits. This will give the Diaspora the confidence that their homelands accept what they are and what they can do and are also interested in their welfare.
3. Counterpart funds for Diaspora development initiatives. Government can provide counterpart funds for different categories of Diaspora development initiatives like individual and groups whereby the Diaspora provides a certain percentage and government provides the other in order to get the project executed.
4. Waive policies on tax and tariffs for Diaspora initiatives: Government can encourage Diaspora contributions to development of the homeland by granting tax and tariff waivers to Diaspora initiatives.
5. Rewarding Diaspora groups and individuals. Government can encourage Diaspora involvement in homeland development by rewarding Diaspora groups and individuals who execute development projects in the homeland. This will spur others to see what they could do for the homeland.

8. THE CASE OF NIGERIA AND HER DIASPORAS

Nigeria is unarguably the giant of Africa in terms of her status as the most populous nation in Africa and in terms of her endowments with natural resources. Using Nigeria as a case study in the discussion on the African Diaspora is therefore justified. Even though reliable statistics on the quantum of Nigerians residing abroad is generally lacking due largely to poor record keeping by the Nigerian authorities, host country statistics are also incomplete (Akinrinade and Ogen 2011: 74), probably because they are not interested in immigrants on country basis, it must be said that there are substantial number of Nigerians who can be classified as Diasporas. It is claimed that there are about 5 million Nigerians living abroad (Hernandez-coss et al 2006, as cited in de Haas, (2006, n9). The Nigeria Ministry of External Affairs gives an estimate of about 20 Million Nigerian residents in Europe and the United States. In fact, it has been estimated that about 3.4 million Nigerians are living in the United States (Adebayo, 2010:9). In any case, despite the unreliability of the above figures, one fact that is very clear is that a considerable number of Nigerians are living abroad and they belong to the elite class and not the class of over 90 million Nigerians living below the poverty line and earning less than a dollar per day (Akinrinade and Ogen, 2011: 75). Of course, the major motivation for migration of Nigerians abroad could be explained by the views expressed by de Haas (2006: 85) that migration is a function of the laws of uneven development and that the high level of economic development attained by industrialized countries confer on their people and workers in particular, a high level of per-capita income which attracts migrants from less developed countries. The conclusion is that since international migration is a key element of globalization, the phenomenon of global demographic mobility has been facilitated by the negative consequences of globalization as exemplified in glaring inequality in economic and political power between immigration and emigration countries, Castle (2007: 1-2). Poverty is certainly not the major inducement of Nigerians for migration, as Akinrinade and Ogen (2011: 75) note. It is interesting to note that majority of Nigerian migrants are not the poorest and are from relatively educated and reasonably well off background especially if we take into consideration, the high cost of the journey. Moreover, empirical and theoretical evidence strongly suggest that higher incomes and improved education and access to media and information will give more people capabilities and aspiration to migrate. (De Haas, 2008, 1305-1322). It is the unemployment rate in Nigeria and the desire for more improvement in life rather than poverty which propels Nigerians to migrate to Europe and America.

8.1 NIGERIAN DIASPORAS AND HOMELAND DEVELOPMENT

Nigerians wherever they are found, are fond of congregating among themselves. They normally come together in both formal and informal ways through associations based on faith, trade, occupation, politics, gender, home place and more on ethnic origins as Igbos, Yorubas or Hausas etc. This spirit of association by Nigerians is reinforced by the ethnic sentiment in the homeland. Nigerians have very strong ties to their ethnic

origins. Ethnicism and tribalism are special features of political dynamism in Nigeria and Nigerians have more loyalty to their ethnic origins than they have for the Nigerian nation. In fact, ethnicism and tribalism are two of the major problems of the Nigerian nation. The same sentiment are found in Nigerians outside Nigeria; but outside Nigeria, all Nigerians see themselves first, as Nigerians more, than they think of wherever they are domiciled. The same ethnic and tribal sentiment are transferred to their host country. They fight to bring "home" whatever they get from their host countries as they never see those places as their "homes". Therefore, in face of racist and xenophobic hostilities which are often the lot of migrants, the different formal and informal associations which Nigerians belong to facilitate their integration into their host states (Akinrinde and Ogen 2011: 75).

8.2 REMITTANCES

One of the factors which propel Nigerians to migrate abroad is the quest to improve their standard of living and that of the extended family. Nigerians abroad are therefore always thinking home. They are bothered by what is happening at home, the welfare of dependants left at home. All their savings is for home. They try to assist those left in Nigeria by sending money home which is used for food, health services and for setting up local businesses which boost local infrastructure and promote trade and enterprise. The implication is that by so doing, they help in the development of the homeland through such remittances. Members of the Diaspora are known to send a lot of money home through a number of ways like investment, purchase of real estate, humanitarian support etc. The International Organization for migration (IOM, 2013: 9) notes that remittances can help to reduce poverty by providing families in countries of origin with additional income that can be used for consumer goods and for investment in education and health. Remittances are also used to finance community projects such as hospitals or schools, or are invested in business ventures. Increased general resources can also lead to the reduction of child labour and help households to be better prepared for adverse environmental shocks such as droughts, earthquakes and cyclones. One study found that "on the average, a 10 percent increase in the share of international remittance in a country's GDP will lead to a 1.6 percent decline in the share of people living in poverty", (Adams and Page, 2005). Globally, recorded remittances are now significantly larger than overseas aids flows and comprise an annual flow of around US\$240 billion into the Global South (Mercier, Page and Evans, 2008:7). Nigeria is the largest recipient of remittances in sub-Saharan Africa. The country receives 65 percent of officially recorded remittance flows to the region and 2 percent of global flows. In fact, as far back as 1999, Nigerians living abroad remitted the sum of US\$ 1.3 billion (Babawale 2008: 28). The Central Bank of Nigeria reported approximately US\$ 2.26 billion in remittance for 2004 after it had begun collection of data in 2002, (Hernandez – Coss, 2006: 3-4). In 2005, the figure stood at \$6.5 billion and doubled in 2007, rising to \$17.9 billion after the 2006 figure of \$10.5 billion and \$ 18.2 billion was remitted into the country in 2009 (Oboh, 2011). It must be noted that this whopping amount of money that came into Nigeria between the periods in question must have in one way or the other

affected the development of the nation significantly. Apart from this, it is important to note the fact that it is not only money that the Diasporas send home. They also send information and ideas as well, and all these go to enrich the country. Not quite long, scholars and policy makers were decrying the negative consequence of migration which they branded "brain drain", but today, they are talking of "brain gain". According to Adebayo (2011: 68) as a term and as an idiomatic expression, brain drain originated in the 1960s when European professionals emigrated to the United State in search of better pay. It has been applied to the "departure of educated or talented persons "from a developing country to the industrialized nations in search of better pay and better condition of service. In this regard, brain drain is presented in terms of a loss, a drain of "skilled intellectual and technical labour through the movement of such labour to more favourable geographic, economic, or professional environments" (Answers. Com, 2010). Today, scholars are rethinking this negative connotation attached to migration in general and to brain drain in particular. This is because history of Diasporas has taught us that migrations laid the foundation for the rise and development of new centres of civilization and power. Thus history of Middle East and North Africa would be incomplete without the Post-Islamic Arab Diasporas created in the seventh through the tenth centuries. Along the same line, the history of the United States, Australia and Latin America would be incomplete without the European Diaspora. Indeed, the term "Diaspora" would not have emerged without the spread of the Jews from Palestine to Europe and other parts of the World (Adebayo, 2011: 68-69). The rethink of brain drain has produced "brain gain" which is predicated on the idea that "intellectual and technical elites from the Third World who immigrated to an industrialized country represented potential resources for the socio economic development of their home country (Hunger, 2002: 1). In other words, through brain gain, the negative effect of brain drain are reversed, rolled back, and turned into great advantages. Resource loss under brain drain "can be converted into a long-term resources profit (brain gain) for the developing country (Adebayo, 2011: 71). Thus, brain drain is not seen as the (dead) end of a negative development that intensifies the economic and social crisis of developing countries (Hunger, 2001: 1). Nigeria has keyed into the brain gain hypothesis and has taken a number of steps to convert brain drain into brain gain.

8.3 NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS AT DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

Realizing the gains derivable from Diaspora engagement in national development as a result of their strengths which are embedded in their skills, expertise and ability to attract capital for development, in the production of goods and services, in the creation of jobs and in helping to build capacity and strengthening of institutions and in transforming the management system by the infusion of best practices into the way things are done in Nigeria, the former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo took the bull by the horns by being the first Nigerian President to address the Diaspora engagement issues.

1. In 2002, the “Presidential Dialogue with Nigerians Abroad” aimed at incorporating the Nigerian Diaspora into national development was launched where the President interacted with the Diaspora.
2. Thereafter, the government took step forward by encouraging the establishment of the Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO) with an office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Abuja. This Organization was set up to mobilize all Nigerians in Diaspora, particularly, professionals in a more coherent and orderly manner and to encourage their participation in development process. Secondly, it is to serve as an umbrella organization of all Nigerians abroad and a vehicle through which Nigerians in the Diaspora can be galvanized to transfer their technical skills as a means of laying strong foundation for Nigeria’s technical capacity (Keshi-2008:4). As conceptualized and designed, NIDO which now has branches in all major cities of the world especially in Europe and America is to operate as an umbrella organization of all Nigerians, Nigerian Organizations and associations, similar to the Jewish Public Affairs Committee, better known as the “Jewish Lobby”, and also as a platform of networking among Nigerian professionals, similar to the Silicon valley Indian Professionals Association of California which is perceived as being instrumental to India’s nuclear and information technology advancement (Keshi 2008: 5). NIDO has set up a network of branches in all Nigerian embassies abroad. NIDO is now a full organization with a lot of membership and executive body; and usually organize meetings and rallies. NIDO has since made remarkable achievements since inception.
3. Further to the establishment of NIDO, the Federal Government of Nigeria set up the Nigerian National Volunteer Service (NNVS) as an institutional framework for involving the Diaspora in national development. NNVS has the direct responsibility of facilitating the involvement of the Nigerian Diasporas in the development of the nation. The NNVS in 2005 initiated the Annual Diaspora conference which focused on science and technology but has today been extended to accommodate other issues like investment, education and youth empowerment.
4. The Federal Government of Nigeria since Obasanjo era has also established an Office of Special Adviser to the President on Diaspora Matters who coordinates the activities of the Diaspora in the Presidency. The Senate and the House of Representatives also now have Committees on Diaspora Matters who deliberate on issues pertaining to the Diaspora and ways of engaging them in the development of the nation. Many State Governors have also appointed Special Assistants to the Governor on Diaspora matters who try to harness the Diaspora from their various States for the development of their States.
5. As a way of drawing attention to the critical issues pertaining Nigerian Diaspora engagement and as a way of celebrating the large pull of Nigerians across the orb, the Nigerian Government had earmarked July 25 of every year as the National Diaspora Day.

In summary, the simple philosophy behind Nigeria’s current efforts to engage the Nigerian Diaspora was borne out of the recognition of the huge capital and resources of the Diaspora and the need to tap into that vast reservoir of knowledge, skills and experiences for national development. The fact that some countries, notably, India, China, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines have successfully utilized their immigrant nationals for their rapid development is a pointer to the fact that Nigeria is following a notable path. Indeed, the Indian example has shown that the Diaspora Communities can serve as an important sources of foreign direct investment, trade linkage, knowledge and technology transfer (Keshi: 2008:5).

9. CHALLENGES

A journey of one thousand miles begins with a step. Nigeria has begun the process of engaging her Diaspora for development, but not much has been done in terms of building partnership for development. It is actually in engaging the Diaspora in development through partnership that Nigeria’s development can be fast tracked as a result of the enormous capacity of the Diaspora waiting to be exploited. It is recommended that Nigerian Government and nongovernmental organizations follow the steps enunciated in this paper and the effects will be fantastic.

10. CONCLUSION

The foregoing has attempted to explore the urgent need for the Diaspora to be involved in African development. It is the contention of the paper that for long now, African Diasporas engage in development projects in Africa mainly on their own initiatives. African governments and community organizations in Africa have not discovered that they need not wait until the Diasporas engage on any development projects; rather they should be proactive and remind the Diasporas of their obligations to the homeland. They should also extract commitments from the Diasporas by engaging them seriously. The paper therefore recommends that for the much awaited miracle to happen to African development through the Diaspora, African governments, community organizations, groups, etc should build partnerships with the Diasporas. Being at home, they are in a position to know the needs of the people more than the Diasporas who are abroad. The paper contends that the partnership will bring about the much needed confidence between the Diaspora and the homeland and will also bring about accountability. The paper also tries to fill up the lacuna in the scientific body of knowledge in relation to engagement of the host country in the Diaspora/homeland engagement. There is scanty literature on homeland and/host land engagement in harnessing the Diaspora for global development. The Diaspora, who in many instances, is a man of multiple citizenship, is in a position to bring about development in the host country and also in the homeland. Therefore, it is the joint responsibility of the

homeland and the host country to harness the capacity of the Diaspora so as to bring about global development. Both countries should therefore build partnerships for the proper development of the Diaspora. Inasmuch as the paper discovered the enormous capacity of the Diaspora to fast track African development, the paper contends that the Diaspora can only make contributions in the development process of Africa; they are not in a position to solve the multitudinous problems of African development. This is the task of the political leadership.

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