

DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND THE YOUTHS

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1. Introduction

The objective of this paper, is to determine the relationship between democracy and development and place of the youth in such an environment.

One of the expectations about Nigeria's return to democratic rule was (or, indeed, is) that the country would experience an economic boom, arising mainly from greatly increased foreign investment, as a result of the re-emergence of civil rule and democracy.

We are all still waiting for this positive impact on the economy and improvements in the general standard of living to be brought about by democratic rule. However, that civil rule and democratic governance are yet to make an impact does not mean that these expectations were not justified. It may simply be due to the fact that the period of return to civil democratic rule has been too short for the desirable impact to be felt. Two other intervening factors, corruption and the hostile relationship between the Executive and the Legislature, could be contributory issues to the delay in the predicted economic boom.

In a recent in depth survey of Nigerian public opinion, USAID sponsored researchers found that over 80% of Nigerians believe that democracy is preferable to any other form of government. 90% rejected the idea that the army should return under any guise. A similar majority also rejected the notion of a one-party state or personal rule by a strong man.

The survey further showed that the majority of respondents approve of the present Administration's stand on corruption. They also expect to enjoy not only political and personal freedom under democracy, but also economic benefits.

Finally, the survey indicated that less than 50% of Nigerians are satisfied with the economy. What is more, those that favour a strong economic role for the Government, 55.50%, are more than those who support a free-market economy.¹

2. Democracy, Development, Youth, - Defined

However, we must first define our parameters. What is Democracy? What is Development? Who is a Youth?

Democracy has been defined as “popular control over collective decision-making and decision-makers and an equal right to share in such control.”²

Another simple definition of democracy is offered by John Plannetaz who states that “Democratic Government means government by persons freely chosen by and responsible to the governed.”

These definitions appear to cover the essence of what democracy is about. The attributes of that essence are also well known and, by universal acclamation, they include:

- The Rule of Law
- The Independence of Judiciary
- Constitutional governance
- Separation of Powers
- Observance and Enforcement of human rights, amongst many others.

For democracy to reign, therefore, there must be entrenched, the rule of law, as a contradistinction to the rule of man.³

¹ ‘Crossroads, May 2000’, published by the Public Affairs section of the U.S. Embassy, Lagos, Nigeria. pp. 8 and 9

² D. Beetham ‘Key Principles and Indices for a Democratic Audit,’ London, Sage, 1994.

³ ‘The Role for the Judiciary in Africa’, Eso.

Development is a more difficult concept to define, because of the sharp disagreements amongst the experts. The orthodox concept or linear view is that development means growth, with trends in income per capita taken as the chief indicator of progress. But this has been criticized and its theoretical adequacy, empirical validity and value basis of its assumptions and models have been questioned. It has been postulated by radical economists that considerations such as social justice, and human satisfaction are essential components of any adequate definition of development.⁴

This increasingly accepted concept of development was expressed thus by James P. Grant. "We need development policies which benefit all strata of the population and not just a favoured minority"⁵

A child is defined by law as a person under 14 years of age, while a young person is stated to be a person between the ages of 14 and 17.⁶ On the other hand, the U.N. Convention on the Rights of a Child defines a child as a person below the age of 18 years.

From the above definitions, it is safe to say that the lower age limit of a youth is between 17 and 18. However, the upper limit is not easily determined. Could some clarification obtained from the Constitution? To qualify to seat in the House Representative or State House of Assembly a candidate must be at least 30 years old. To qualify for the Senate, the relevant age is 35 whilst that for the Presidency is 40.⁷ From the above, if we take the view that the Senate is meant for the relatively older politicians, and the House of Representative and State houses of Assembly are intended for younger politicians, then we might say that to qualify to be a youth, a person should not be more than 35 years of age.

⁴ See generally S.K.B. Asante in African Development: Adebayo Adedeji's Alternative Strategies, Spectrum Books Ltd, 1991, p. 3.

⁵ "Development: End of Trickle down?" in Foreign Policy, 12, (Fall 1973) p. 43.

⁶ Section 2, Children and Young Persons Act, Cap. 32, 1958 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria.

⁷ See Sections 65(1), 106 (b) and 131 (b) of the Constitution.

3. Relationship Between Democracy And Development

It used to be wrongly believed that economic development and democracy were mutually exclusive and that there was a “trade off” or a cruel dilemma governing the relationship between democracy and economic development.⁸

Lee Kwan Yew, the former authoritarian ruler of Singapore has often attacked democracy for its “undisciplined” ways, and credits his own “soft” authoritarian rule with saving Singapore from the debilitating and development-crippling effects of democracy. According to him, what a country needs is to develop discipline more than democracy. The exuberance of democracy leads to indiscipline and disorderly conduct which is inimical to development.⁹ The justification for this type of view can be found in the phenomenal success stories of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore itself and Malaysia, which all started at the same level of development with Nigeria, and all of which, until recent years, were ruled by authoritarian regimes.

However, equal note must be taken of the fact that Nigeria on which was inflicted dictatorial, military regimes for about 35 years out of 40 in its post-independence period, has regressed rather than develop under authoritarian, military regimes. Our income *per capita*, which was about US \$1,500 in the early sixties, went down to about \$ 200 at the end of the military era in 1999. There are far more authoritarian States with failed economies than the success stories of the so-called Far East Tigers. Indeed, the economic collapse of the greatest authoritarian and illiberal State on earth, the former Soviet Union, was responsible for the massive shift from authoritarianism and centrally-planned economies, to democratic governance and a free-market economy, amongst states, in the history of mankind.

⁸ Jagdish Bagwatti, “The Economics of Underdeveloped Countries’ London, Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1966. [This writier has since reversed his views on the subject]

⁹ ‘The Economist’, 27 August 1994, p.15. ‘Foreign Affairs’ (March - April, 1994), pp. 109-26.

4. Democracy As An Inexorable Force

The wave of countries converting from authoritarian systems of government to democracies has been tremendous since the middle seventies. From 1986, the world has undergone major changes, involving the inexorable march of democracy. The number of States which has embraced the democratic system now far outstrips the non-democratic ones. Indeed, the democratic system wind has swept through Southern Europe, Latin America. Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, Eastern Asia and even Africa in the last decade and a half.¹⁰

Africa, of course, has, proportionately, the largest number of dictatorship and despots of all the world's five continents. But even in Africa, the progress towards democracy since 1989 has been significant. According to Mcfrerson, in Africa there were only four democracies, as against forty dictatorships, in 1989. By 1992, the number of democracies had increased to eighteen and the number of dictatorships decreased to twelve. Additionally, the number of States in one stage or the other in transition to democracy had risen from three to twenty-two.¹¹ Unfortunately, there has been a regression in recent years. A 1997 Freedom House Survey of Freedom in the world, up-dated by me for the year 2002, shows that, as at now, there are only 12 true democracies in Africa, followed by a category of States that are partly free and partly unfree, referred to as "illiberal" democracies. There are 21 States in this group. The undiluted dictatorships in Africa are now only about 19 out of its existing 54 States. This fact is not as bad as it may appear at first sight. In the first place, many in the group of 21 partly-free States are in one form or the other of transition to democracy. Angola and Mozambique, which are also in this group, have successfully conducted internationally-supervised elections, but it is the poor security situation in these countries that has affected their rating as democracies.

¹⁰ James Crawford, 'Democracy in International Law', Inaugural lecture as Whewell Professor of International Law, University of Cambridge, 5th March, 1993, p. 14.

¹¹ Mc Frerson 'Democracy and Development in Africa' in Journal of Peace Research, vol 29, pp. 24-26. See also Crawford, Op. Cit, P.14.

Furthermore, the international community is in no mood to tolerate dictatorships anymore. The democratic trend seems unstoppable. It is a major historical revolution, world-wide. The statistics are very revealing. In 1974, less than 30% of the world's countries were democratic. By 1996 the figure was over 61%. For the first time in history, 54% of the world's population, i.e., the majority of human beings, was living under democratic systems.¹² In terms of countries, 121 out of the world's 193 countries were democracies as at December, 2001.

One can, therefore, truly say that we are living in a democratic age and that the democratic tide is moving inexorably, and will probably clear all obstacles in its path. The accelerating onslaught of the democratic train is well-illustrated in this passage in an article by Fareed Zakaria.¹³

"We live in democratic age. Through much of human history the danger to an individual's life, liberty and happiness came from the absolutism of monarchies, the dogma of churches, the terror of dictatorships, and the iron grip of totalitarianism. Dictators and a few straggling totalitarian regimes still persist, but increasingly they are anachronisms in a world of global markets, information, and media. There are no longer respectable alternatives to democracy; it is part of the fashionable attire of modernity."

5. Benefits Of Democracy

Modern studies have now shown conclusively that" one does not have to choose between doing good and doing well, or to put it in a nutshell, that democracy does not handicap development and in the right circumstances can even promote it.¹⁴ Progressively, States have begun to realize not only that legitimacy of government is derived from free and fair elections, but that also the resulting dispensation is

¹² See Strobe Talbot, 'Democracy and National Interest' in 'Foreign Affairs' (Nov. - Dec.), 1996p. 47.

¹³ 'The Rise of Illiberal Democracy' in 'Foreign Affairs' (Nov. - Dec.) 1997, p.42.

¹⁴ Strobe Talbot, Foreign Affairs, Nov - Dec, 1996, p. 47.

immensely more beneficial for the social and material well-being of the inhabitants of the States.

In order to guarantee the integrity of the democratic processes of emerging democracies, the U.N. and International observers are now routinely invited to monitor and certify elections as free and fair and ensure the acceptance of the emerging government by the international community. Consequently, the last 10 years or so, the U.N. and other International groups have performed this monitoring role in many third-world countries. It is in fact now unimaginable for any country under an un-elected government to go through the transition process without the involvement of international observers. This is a far cry from the hey days of Article 2(7) of the U.N. Charter, when such matters were considered as being essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States.

Proponents of the erroneous view that democracy is incompatible with economic development, often forget not only that most economically-developed countries are democracies, but that apart from the pure bread and butter issue of economic growth and development, there is a plethora of other indicators of the well-being of citizens, not measurable in terms of money.

The benefits of a democratic society are so obvious that they need not be over-emphasized. The most obvious are the political and civil rights. The to take part in governance, the right to personal liberty, total absence of state coercion and repression by arbitrary arrests and detention without trial, the right to life and freedom from degrading and inhuman treatment, the right of assembly, freedom of speech, opinion, religion, the supremacy of the rule of law and respect for court orders, equality before the law, prohibition of retroactive laws and laws ousting the jurisdiction of the courts, the right to form political parties without registration, free competition between parties and between programmes, the right to contest elections, the freedom of the press and so on, are sharp indices of democracy. These are obvious benefits. But there are other numerous benefits, not so obvious. For example, one of the greatest scourges undermining development in African countries is the scourge of war and armed conflict.

Today, armed conflicts are raging or just ending between Ethiopia and Eritrea, within Burundi, Rwanda, Algeria, Angola, and Liberia, to name a few. This is reminiscent of what the Secretary-General of the O.A.U. had to say about armed conflicts in Africa, as long ago as 1992, to wit:

“The issue of conflicts is, in my view, the most pressing of all challenges facing Africa today. Conflicts have cast a dark shadow over the prospects for a united, secure and prosperous Africa which we seek to create. Conflicts have cost the continent enormously, in terms of the resources expended in prosecuting wars and the extensive destruction to property and infrastructure. Above all, is the human dimension and its long terms effects on the people of Africa. Conflicts have caused immense suffering to our people and, in the worst cases, death. Men, women and children have been uprooted, disposed, deprived of the means of livelihood and thrown into exile as refuges as a result of conflicts. This dehumanization of a large segment of our population is unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue. Conflicts have engendered hate and division among our people and undermined the prospects for long-term stability and unity in our countries and Africa as a whole. Since much energy, time and resources have been devoted to meeting the exigencies of conflicts, our countries have been unable to harness the energies of our people and target them to development.”

One major benefit of democracy which was revealed by researchers on conflict, looking at wars over the last 200 years, is that democracies do not wage war on each other.¹⁵ And therefore, one way “in which we might diminish and finally extinguish war between nations, therefore, might be to develop international law in such a way as to reinforce democratic government, to deter attempts to overthrow it and even to reinstate it in cases where it has been wrongfully overthrown”¹⁶

We saw this process in operation in Haiti in 1994 and Sierra Leone in 1997-98. It is one of the major developments of the new world order, which has sacrificed the former concept of State Sovereignty over domestic or internal matters, in favour of the

¹⁵ E. Weede ‘Some Simple Calculations on Democracy and War Involvement’ in *Journal of Peace Research*, 1992, p. 29. See Also Crawford, *Op. Cit.*, p. 3.

¹⁶ Crawford, *Op. Cit.* pp. 3-4

overriding supremacy of democracy, self-determination and human rights in modern international law.

As it is associated with peace and stability, democracy creates a conducive environment for social and economic development. Indeed, there appears to be a clear link between democracy and economic development. This is not merely because of the policy of the Western powers of giving economic assistance to democratic and democratizing States and the imposition of sanctions on States that do not conform. Indeed, the link between democracy and prosperity, has become established by empirical studies, although it is fair to add that democratization *per se* does not automatically lead to economic development.

A 1989 World Bank Study found, for instance, that of the 24 countries with the highest *per capita* income in the world, 21 had democratic systems and that, conversely, of the 42 poorest Nations in the world, only two were democracies. This correlation between economic development and democratic government has been noted by the international community and it has increased the intensity of the pressures for the democratization of all States.

As one writer has put it, “.... Authoritarian regimes bottle up problems while democracies permit catharsis. Democracy’s apparent chaos, then is actually a safety valve that strengthens rather than undermines the State and provides the ultimate stability that is conducive to development.”¹⁷ Bhagwati further explains the subtle process through which democracy brings social and economic benefits to a society in the following passage:

“Development is many-sided; it is not just a matter of growing income. True social needs such as public health, protection of the environment, and the elimination or relief of extreme poverty cannot be met unless governments have the resources that only growth can generate.

¹⁷ Jagdish Bhagwati, ‘The New Thinking in Development’ in ‘Journal of Democracy’ October, 1995, p. 50.

But the use of these resources for such public needs will not automatically follow unless the political system provides the means and incentives to turn those needs into effective demands. Democratic regimes that afford political voice and access to those groups - many from the economic periphery - which stand to gain the most from social programs are the most likely to see social needs translated into effective demands.”

Democracy is, therefore, spreading because it helps countries to modernize their economies, ameliorate social conditions and integrate with the outside world. Under a representative type of government, rulers are more likely to be accountable to their people¹⁸ and there is no way US\$12.4 billion could have disappeared in dedicated accounts without explanation or drastic consequences, as allegedly happened under a military dictatorship in Nigeria.

Indeed, it has been argued that no substantial famine has ever occurred in a country with a democratic form of government and a relatively free press.¹⁹ India, for example, endured wide-spread famines, including one in 1943 that claimed between two and three million lives. But since becoming the world’s largest democracy in 1947, that country has not suffered any substantial famine, despite frequent crop failures and food scarcities. The reason is that in addition to good famine prevention programmes, there is a free press in operation in a free and open system and timely information about the prospect of famine is given publicity at an early stage, thus enabling swift and effective international assistance to be secured. Democracy also enabled Botswana and Zimbabwe withstand crop failures in the 1980s. By contrast, Sudan and Ethiopia in the 80s and North Korea in 1997, and Ethiopia in 2000, all of which are under the rule of authoritarian regimes, have suffered severe famines when faced with similar situations.²⁰

¹⁸ Strobe Talbot Op. Cit., p. 50

¹⁹ Amartya Sen, “Freedom and Needs: An Argument for the Primacy of Political Rights”, ‘The New Republic’, January 10, 1995, pp.34-35, also in Talbot Op. Cit. pp. 51-52.

²⁰ See generally, Se. Op. Cit.

It is, therefore, clear that the benefits of democracy on any society are varied and enormous. They are, indeed, unquantifiable. On the other hand, the cost of dictatorship, particularly, military rule, is terrible. There is complete loss of freedom and human dignity, suppression of human rights, gross abuse and mismanagement of the economy and polity, instability, tension and the danger of social and state disintegration. Nigeria moved from a middle-ranking State, in the same class as Malaysia, South Korea, etc., under civilian democratic rule in the sixties to the 13th least-developed country in the world, under military rule. The only civil war we have ever fought (1967-70) was brought about by a clash between military rulers who have only one solution to disputes: violence, armed conflict or war.

6. Democracy And A Free Economy

Traditionally, democracy has been associated with the most efficient form of economic practice, i.e., a free-market economy in which the price mechanism dictates supply and demand. This must, of course, be tempered with guidance by government, and when the occasion demands, by massive Keynesian type intervention in periods of severe crises. There can be no complete, uncontrolled market economy. It does not exist in London or Washington, and attempts to install that type of pure market economy in Nigeria is an invitation to economic slavery and unparalleled suffering of the masses.

However, subject to government intervention to correct imbalances and distortions, and to provide a safety net for the poor and underprivileged in society, the free-market economy, which is the hand maiden of democracy, has proved itself the most efficient form of economic management.

Furthermore, the removal of restrictive tariffs (subject to sensitive areas of the economy that still need protection) and privatization of the processes for the production of goods and services, positively promote democracy and a sound business environment. The major, on-going exercises in the privatization of power, telecommunications and

financial institutions in Nigeria will greatly enhance efficiency in the economy and will create a conducive atmosphere for both foreign and local private investment.

Generally, therefore, deregulation of the economy and democracy go hand in hand. Thus, it was ironical that the Exchange Control Act of 1962, which imposed a very government control on foreign exchange transactions, was repealed by the most draconian military regime Nigeria ever had, the Abacha regime.²¹ This 'liberal' act of the deregulation was a desperate one employed by that regime to loosen the economic stranglehold of the international community on Nigeria.

Of course, in the last 20 years of the 20th Century, and right up till now, democracy has gradually become recognized as a legal right of the citizens of every State, and a State under undemocratic rule is regarded as being in breach of international law and the human rights of its citizens.

This is responsible for the new, legal regime of international economic sanctions against erring States whose crimes in extreme cases have involved crimes against humanity. In some cases, this has led to international armed intervention to remove the violating regime. The examples of Liberia (1990), Haiti (1994) and Sierra Leone (1998) can be cited to illustrate this new development in international law and relations.

During the Abacha regime, the grave breaches of human rights of the regime (particularly the murder of Ken Saro Wiwa - renowned social activist and playwright) and its refusal to engage in an honest process of transition to democratic rule resulted in Nigeria being inflicted with a punishing set of sanctions which included:

- Suspension from the Commonwealth of Nations;
- cessation of military training for Nigerian military personnel;
- embargo on the export of arms to Nigeria;
- denial of educational facilities and visas to members of the Nigerian military regime and their families; and

²¹ Exchange Control (Repealed) Decree (No. 8) of 1995.

- the down-grading of diplomatic missions to Nigeria, apart from total closure of the Canadian High Commission.

All these new developments in international law and relations, make democracy the only prudent form of government and, therefore, the type of governance most conducive to business both domestic and international. The inflow of foreign investment capital is also greatly enhanced by a democratic and stable polity.

7. Expectations of Youths in the Nigerian Democracy.

The Nigerian democratic order per se, does not specifically make any provision for youths other than the general protection of social, economic and cultural rights contained in Chapter 2.

The same applies to development. However youths of the age range of 30 - 35 years can become members of the House of Representatives, State Houses of Assembly and Local Government Councils. Even better still, Youths can join the organized civil society through Non-governmental organizations (NGO) to promote Human Rights, Democracy, the environment and sustainable development, conflict resolution etc. In this way, the youths can make a decisive impact on society.

Concerning the place of Youths in this environment of democracy or transition to democracy, chapter 2 of the Constitution is the only one that comes close to providing certain rights for youths, if even in an indirect manner. It has provisions promoting and protecting the right to health, education, food, employment. Whilst it does not specifically limit its provisions to youths, it does attempt to provide cover and protection for the most vulnerable groups in our society, namely, children, young persons, the aged and the disabled. Thus sections 16(2) and 17(3) provide as follows;

16(2) he State shall direct its policy towards ensuring -

- (a) the promotion of a planned and balanced economic development;

- (b) that the material resources of the nation are harnessed and distributed as best as possible to serve the common good;
- (c) that the economic system is not operated in such a manner as to permit concentration of wealth or the means of production and exchange in the hands of few individuals or of a group; and
- (d) that suitable and adequate shelter, suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage, old age care and pensions, and unemployment, sick benefits and welfare of the disabled are provided for all citizens.

17(3) The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that -

- (a) all citizens, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment;
- (b) conditions of work are just and humane, and that there are adequate facilities for leisure and for social, religious and cultural life;
- (c) the health, safety and welfare of all persons in employment are safeguarded and not endangered or abused.;
- (d) there are adequate medical and health facilities for all persons;
- (e) there is equal pay for equal work without discrimination on account of sex, or on any other ground whatsoever;
- (f) children, young persons and the aged are protected against any exploitation whatsoever, and against moral and material neglect.

Unfortunately, by Section 6(6)(c) of the Constitution, these provisions are not illegally enforceable against any government.

Technically, non-implementation by a government can be used as a political weapon for getting rid of that government at the next elections and no more. There is however a well orchestrated and creative project presently being carried out by young Lawyers under the Shelter Rights Initiative, an NGO, to give legal teeth to these provisions.

These are obviously not the best of times for our youths. A long period of military rule has brought devastation, not only on Nigeria's economy and physical infrastructure, but even worse than that, it has destroyed our value systems inherited from our traditions and the best of our colonial culture.

It was a very disturbing experience for me, when recently, I came across a key-note address I gave in October 1995, i.e., during the dark and brutal era of Abacha. Let me read one passage from that 1995 address:

"With each succeeding regime, Nigeria has been plunged deeper and deeper into a socio-political wilderness, or worse still, a jungle, overwhelmed by indiscipline, greed, depravity, inhumanity, insensitivity, violence and oppression. It is tragic enough that a territory, naturally endowed by God with limitless resources and wealth, should wallow in poverty, destitution and abject misery. But to crown this catalogue of misfortunes with a complete loss of a sense of values, leading to a cult of money worship and obsessive acquisition of other material things as our new religion, is a great catastrophe. Today we live in a Nigeria, in which there is no democracy, no rule of law, no observance of human rights, no freedom, and no compassion by our rulers for the suffering of other fellow countrymen and women.

Nigerians are daily subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment, and deprived of the means and opportunity of earning a decent living. The public hospitals are no longer functioning even as ordinary clinics, but as derelict mortuaries. The educational system and institutions have broken down almost irretrievably. Electricity supply is erratic and epileptic, only excelling in destroying our few remaining electronic equipment and facilities. As for roads, all we can say is that they once existed. Even roads leading from the exploited, abused and polluted oil-producing areas are not motorable. So the controllers of the wealth of the oil-producing

areas are completely indifferent to the condition of the people and of access roads to the oil-producing colonies.

We have finally reached a stage when the Federal Government of this country appropriates all our oil, and other resources, imposes punitive taxes on petroleum products, imposes VAT on services or goods, collects money at toll gates on all major roads, and yet produces no service whatsoever in return to the people of this country. Not even the money collected from toll gates are used to maintain the roads concerned. Today Nigeria is in the worst state of decay, disrepair and dilapidation in its 35-year post-independence history. Everything has broken down; our political system, our economy, our social cohesion, or societal values, our pride, dignity and self-respect, our legal, medical and educational systems and our infrastructural facilities have all broken down."

To the catalogue of misfortunes above, we can now add looting of the National Treasury, oppression of minorities particularly of the Niger Delta, and the forceful appropriation of their resources by a predator Federal Government and a rogue ruling class, ethnic conflicts and sharia - the sword of damocles hanging over Nigeria.

For the youths in particular, three issues must be most troubling to them, namely (i) collapse of the educational system; (ii) prospects of employment or unemployment and (iii) their future which appears to have been destroyed in advance by a greedy mindless and ruthless ruling class, which appropriates everything in its environment like invading locusts leaving a trail of devastation behind and destroying the heritage of future generations. And tragically the younger generations of Nigerians are being born and brought up in an environment of collapsed values, in which the vicious and ruthless acquisition of material things represents the one and single aspiration of society.

This then is the context in which the youths of today are expected not only to survive unscathed , but to go on to provide good leadership in their later years. This is almost impossible but it must be achieved, if our country is to have a future. Perhaps some

way forward can be found by adopting the concept of leadership put forward by Ms. Bisi Adeleye - Fayemi of the African Women's Leadership Institute UK/Uganda. According to her,:

“Leadership can be defined in many ways. It can be defined as a process whereby individual either on a collective or personal basis, take strategic steps towards shaping the destinies of their communities. It is not necessarily the kind that comes with mainstream political leadership, neither is it elective or populist. It might be any or all of these things, but most importantly leadership should be seen as taking responsibility for processes of change, challenging existing paradigms, creating new ones, and building consensus along the way. Leadership should cease to be defined as a mainstream political phenomenon with all the power and privilege it entails. Fundamental principles of leadership entail service, positive change and accountability, and good leadership necessitates clarity of thought and purpose, vision and integrity. Also, the conceptualization of leadership has to be decentralized to enable us visualize new stakeholders and leaders.”

The emphasis, here is (i) taking responsibility for the processes of change; (ii) challenging existing paradigms; (iii) creating new ones; (iv) building a consensus along the way; (v) and that leadership entails SERVICE; (vi) positive change and accountability (vii) clarity of thought and purpose; (viii) vision and (ix) INTEGRITY!

And so rather than seek what Nigeria can do for you right now, Nigeria needs you to take it out of its abyss, and put it back on the March towards progress and development again.

The struggle towards the re-enthronement of good values and standards of conduct and the general rehabilitation of Nigeria is a task that the youths should embrace with enthusiasm and vigour. They are the future leaders of this country and what they make of Nigeria today will determine what Nigeria will be tomorrow. This seminar must devise a plan and a road map for the prosecution of that march into the future.