
**THIRD NIGERIA-EUROPEAN UNION MINISTERIAL MEETING
ABUJA, NIGERIA, 8 FEBRUARY 2012**

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

The Ministerial meeting between Nigeria and the European Union (EU) was held in Abuja, Nigeria on 8 February 2012 under the Co-Chairmanship of the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Ambassador Olugbenga A. Ashiru, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Denmark, H.E. Mr. Villy Soevndal, representing Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice-President of the European Commission.

The Parties reaffirmed their long-standing commitment to close cooperation based on shared values and interests, as contained in the Nigeria-EU Joint Way Forward, both believing in peace and security, human rights, democracy and good governance, equality and tolerance as ways of developing prosperous and egalitarian societies.

The Parties acknowledged their fruitful cooperation within the context of the existing dialogues on human rights, migration and development. They agreed to launch a new regular local dialogue on peace, stability and security.

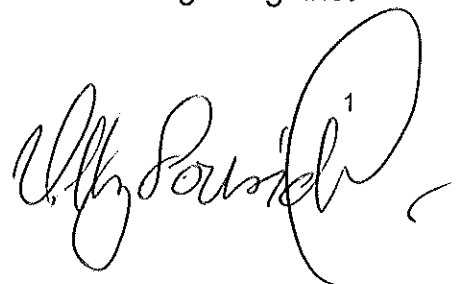
In accordance with the Nigeria-EU Joint Way Forward, the Parties agreed on the following Issues:

BILATERAL ISSUES

PEACE AND SECURITY

The Parties shared the same analysis as to peace, security and development challenges in Northern Nigeria, and in particular the threat of the extremist group known as Boko Haram. In that regard, they agreed to engage experts with a view to identifying a possible action plan and to enhance their cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism, while strengthening their efforts in addressing the root causes of the security challenge in the North.

The Parties agreed that the core values which Nigeria and the EU share are key to overcoming terrorism. These values include an open society, adherence to the rule of law and respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights. The EU expressed its strong support for efforts being made to address the causes of the current security threat, including socio-economic, governance and security issues. Both Parties agreed on the paramount importance of upholding the rule of law in the fight against terrorism.



The Parties agreed to maintain their dialogue and cooperation with a view to consolidating peace and stability in the Niger Delta region. They underlined the need to continue efforts to fully implement the amnesty programme initiated by the Nigerian authorities. They agreed on the need to increase efforts to tackle the poverty and environmental degradation the region currently faces, with due regard to the corporate social responsibility of the operating companies. The Parties shared concerns about maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea and welcomed in this regard the setting up of a Gulf of Guinea Commission and the ECOWAS draft Integrated Maritime Security Strategy. On violence in the Middle Belt, the two sides shared the view that the origin of the problem was related to poverty and competition between community groups and not religion.

TRADE, INVESTMENT AND EPA

The Parties agreed on the crucial importance of job creation, especially for youth. They shared the view that economic diversification, including the diversification of exports and the further development of the agricultural sector, as foreseen in the Transformation Agenda, is an important component in ensuring sustained growth of the Nigerian economy and in fighting unemployment. They underlined the importance to increase and diversify investments, including foreign direct investments. The EU reaffirmed the added value of an Economic Partnership Agreement as a long-term partnership offering opportunities beyond trade. Both Parties highlighted the need for improvements in economic governance. Furthermore, the importance of the economic relationship between Nigeria and the EU and the growth opportunities for trade and investment exchanges between them call for a more structured relationship for tackling potential obstacles their respective operators could face. The Parties consequently agree to intensify contacts and dialogue in the areas of trade and investment.

ENERGY AND MINING

Recognizing the importance of balanced reforms in the energy sector, Nigeria reaffirmed its commitment to reform the oil and gas sector. The Parties agreed that legal certainty and an appropriate framework were needed to encourage private investment, to contribute to energy security and to unleash the country's economic potential. Both Parties expressed their commitment to working together to reduce gas flaring, improve offshore safety, access to electricity and transparency in the energy sector. Enhanced participation of civil society will also contribute to ensure that the benefits from energy resources reach local communities and citizens. Both parties agreed on the need to further develop the use and exploitation of other natural resources, including mining resources.



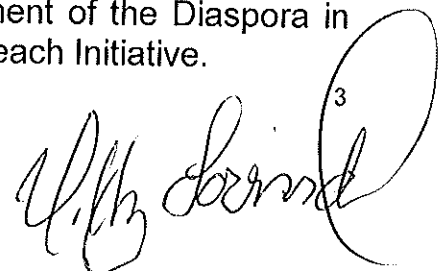
MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

The parties reaffirmed their commitment to implement the Millennium Development Goals. They recognised the value of their development cooperation, in this regard. They shared the view that enhanced efforts were needed in the North and more particularly the North East. The Parties underscored the impact of the latest global crises, including the food, energy crises and the ongoing financial and economic crisis, on the capacity to reach the MDGs. Both parties expressed concern about the challenges ahead of Nigeria in achieving its objectives in the field of education.

DEMOCRACY, GOOD GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND MIGRATION

Both parties welcomed Nigeria's commitment to good governance, democracy and human rights principles. They underlined the importance of ensuring that all electoral processes are held in a democratic and transparent manner and that the outcome of elections is respected. The two parties expressed their satisfaction with the conduct of the local human rights dialogue which held its most recent session on 3 February 2012. The two Parties reaffirmed their engagement to promoting and implementing international human rights standards and to fight torture and ill-treatment. The EU stressed the importance of ensuring the enjoyment of all human rights by all, including persons belonging to minorities. The views of the two parties fully converged as to the need to ensure respect for freedom of religion or belief. The two Parties reaffirmed its commitment to promote gender equality. The EU welcomed the Government's commitment to good governance and encouraged Nigeria to pursue its efforts in fighting corruption.

The Parties underlined their satisfaction with the conduct of their local dialogue on migration and developments and noted the successful outcome of the 5th meeting, which took place on 27 January 2012. Both Parties reaffirmed their readiness to advance cooperation in the field of border management, especially in regard to the current security challenges in the Sahel region. The Parties welcomed in this regard the recently signed Working Arrangement between Nigeria and FRONTEX, the EU's border security agency, on integrated border management. Nigeria stressed in this regard the need to facilitate legal mobility between Nigeria and Europe. The Parties welcomed their ongoing cooperation in order to maximise the development impact of migration and mobility, to organise and facilitate legal migration, and to prevent and reduce irregular migration and trafficking in human beings. Regarding remittances, the Parties also agreed to promote cheaper, more transparent, more competitive and more reliable transfers to Nigeria. They also agreed to promote the engagement of the Diaspora in the development of Africa, through the Diaspora Outreach Initiative.



Both Parties agreed on the importance of maintaining efforts to ensure the justice sector functions in an independent and effective manner, with the purpose of consolidating rule of law and good governance. The EU underlined, in this respect, its readiness to further support reforms in the justice sector.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

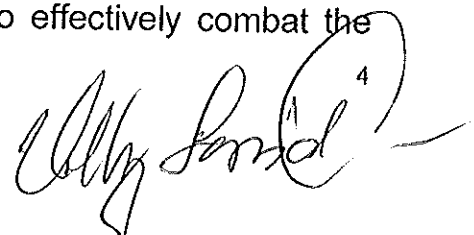
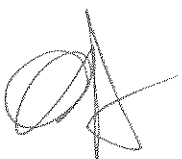
The Parties deeply regretted that due to the latest veto of the Russian Federation and China, the UNSC was unable to support the call of the Arab League for an inclusive, Syrian-led political process conducted in an environment free from violence. The Parties condemn the ongoing bloodshed. Both sides expressed concern over the deteriorating situation in Syria and the systematic violations of human rights, and welcomed the League of Arab States Resolution of 22 January 2012, and its initiative to seek UNSC support for a political solution. They urged Syria to fully comply with the League of Arab States Action Plan and respect their commitment in that regard to stop all acts of violence against civilians, free political detainees, remove troops, tanks and weapons from cities, and allow independent observers and the media, to freely travel in and report. Both parties also reiterated their support to the yearnings of the Syrian people for an orderly transition to a democratic, stable, and all inclusive government that would guarantee the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

Noting the fragile security situation in Libya, particularly the allegations of human rights violations, the Parties undertook to support international human rights organisations to ensure that Libya adheres to International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law. While noting the aftermath effect of the Libyan crisis leading to small arms and light weapons proliferation across the Sahel, the Parties agreed to remain in close contact with regards to the developments in Libya that might affect peace and security in the wider region.

Considering the tensions created by proliferation in the Middle East and the serious threats posed by the Iranian nuclear programme, both Parties expressed support for a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue and welcomed efforts by the EU High Representative, on behalf of the E3+3, to engage Iran in negotiations without accepting preconditions from the latter. Iran has to address the serious concerns of the international community by fulfilling its international obligations and by complying with the requirements of UNSC and IAEA Board Resolutions.

GLOBAL FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS

The Parties expressed concern over the lingering global financial and economic crisis that has defied solutions. They acknowledged the importance of concerted and coordinated action to effectively combat the



crisis. The Parties therefore called for a united front to address the form and consequences of the crisis. They also called for more support for the G20, as the premier forum for international economic cooperation. They looked forward to the next summit of G20 leaders in Los Cabos and the presentation of Africa Union views on the matter at the meeting.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RIO + 20

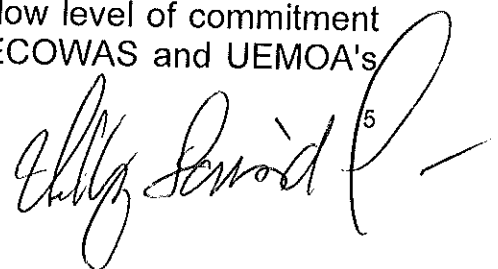
The EU and Nigeria affirmed their commitment to continue to work together in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - Conference of Parties (COP) process to ensure that a clear roadmap, leading to a legally-binding agreement, for resolving all outstanding issues is adopted by 2015. . In this framework, Nigeria and EU agreed on the importance of the Rio+20 Conference to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012. On the basis of these shared objectives, the Parties agreed to consult further and more frequently during the preparatory phase of the Rio+20 Conference in view of ensuring tangible, effective and action-oriented results.

REGIONAL ISSUES

The Parties welcomed the strong and increasingly effective leadership ECOWAS is playing in promoting Peace, Security and Stability in West Africa and commended its key role in supporting democracy in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Niger, and in other countries of the West Africa sub-region. The parties pledged their commitment to support further ECOWAS efforts in addressing security and developmental challenges in the Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea, as well as the consolidation of democracy and good governance under the principles of African leadership and ownership. The Parties notably recalled their fruitful collaboration during the Ivorian crisis. Regarding the situation in Guinea Bissau, the parties invited ECOWAS, the CPLP and the Government of Guinea Bissau to conclude negotiations on the Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the Security Sector Reform.

The Parties called upon all ECOWAS Member States to step up their engagement and commitment towards their Organisation, which should result in a substantial development of its capacities and a sound public finance and administrative management. They expressed their conviction that further progress in the integration of West Africa will result in increased Peace and Security, Democracy, Good Governance, Stability and Prosperity in the area.

The Parties called on ECOWAS and on WAEMU to step up their efforts to accelerate implementation of the 10th EDF Regional Indicative Programme, which has currently a very worrying low level of commitment by them. In this context, the parties welcomed ECOWAS and UEMOA's



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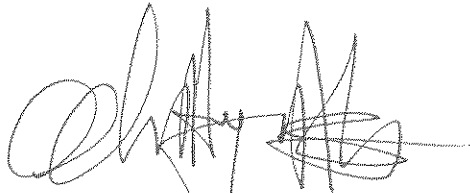
commitments during the December 2011 in Brussels and urged both Organisations to implement them as a matter of top priority.

SECURITY THREATS IN WEST AFRICA

Noting the serious security challenges of terrorism, organized crime, violent extremism, and radicalization as well as the unintended consequences of the Arab Spring on the Sahara-Sahel region, in the face of poverty and deprivation, both Parties agreed to contribute jointly to support regional and national strategies, taking into account the EU's Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel.

FOOD CRISIS IN THE SAHEL REGION

Both Parties expressed satisfaction with increased engagement by the EU, doubling its humanitarian aid and the substantial increase (+Euro 150 million) in support of food security in response to the Sahel food crisis. The Parties noted the need to keep borders open to ensure free flow of food across these in line with the recommendations from the "Comité Permanent Inter-Etats et de Lutte Contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel (CILSS)".



Ambassador Olugbenga A. Ashiru, MFR
Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs
Of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Abuja, February 8, 2012

Mr. Villy Soevndal
Minister for Foreign Affairs of
the Kingdom of Denmark for
the EU

