

NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT:  
**NAVIGATING THE WAY OUT  
OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC  
CRISIS AND INSECURITY**



## FULL REPORT

**25TH MAY, 2024**

LADI KWALI HALL, OLD SHERATON,  
ABUJA CONTINENTAL HOTEL



# THE PAUL ALAJE COLLOQUIUM

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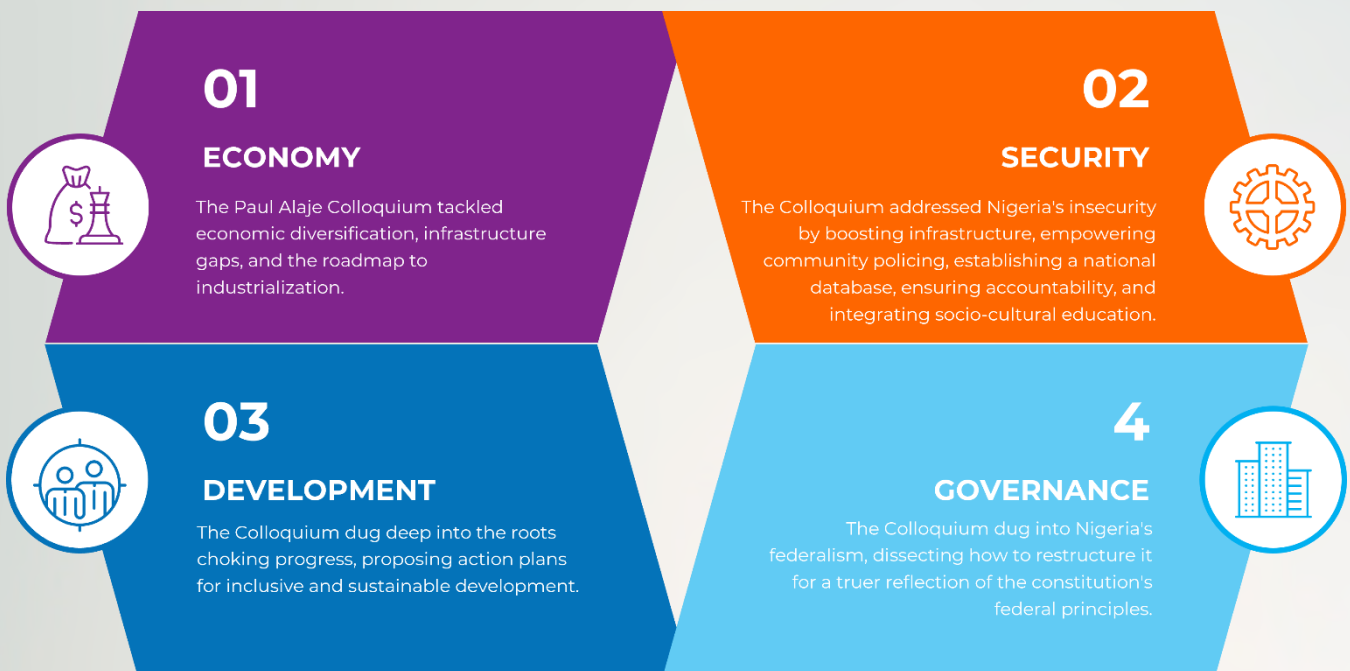
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# Subthemes





## Executive Summary

Nigeria is grappling with a complex situation – a struggling economy and widespread insecurity. Recognizing the need for comprehensive solutions, the Paul Alaje Colloquium (TPAC) was established as a platform to address these critical issues.

The inaugural TPAC, held on May 25, 2024, at the Ladi Kwali Hall, Abuja Continental Hotel, brought together prominent figures to discuss the theme: "Nigeria's Development: Navigating the Way Out of the Current Economic Crisis and Insecurity." The focus was on four strategic priorities: economy, security, social development, and governance. Key speakers included Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria; Chief Audu Ogbeh, former Minister of Agriculture; Professor Olufemi Saibu, Director Institute of Nigeria-China; and Mrs Hadiza Bala Usman, Special Adviser to the President on Policy Coordination.

### Key Insights from Chief Olusegun Obasanjo:

Chief Olusegun Obasanjo emphasized the need for a unified long-term socio-economic development plan, better conditions for private sector growth, compulsory education for all children, and guaranteed employment for adults. He also highlighted the importance of a balanced approach to security, policy consistency, transparent governance, and transformational leadership to foster economic growth and investor confidence.

### Key Insights from Chief Audu Ogbeh:

Chief Audu Ogbeh focused on reducing import dependency to strengthen the Naira, developing strategies against currency devaluation, and enhancing transparency and accountability in government. He called for abating the 1998 ECOWAS agreement to address food insecurity and promoting infrastructure development and education to drive economic growth.



### Strategic Priority 1: Economy

The session included a paper presentation by Professor Olufemi Saibu and a panel discussion. Key recommendations were:

- Enhance productive capacity through supply-side economics.
- Align development plans with annual budgets.
- Implement balanced fiscal policies promptly.
- Clarify sustainable revenue generation streams.
- Ensure policy stability and stakeholder engagement.

### Strategic Priority 2: Security

Dr. Adamu Kabir presented on "Navigating the Way Out of Current Insecurity," followed by a panel session. Key recommendations were:

- Invest in critical infrastructure to facilitate security operations.
- Foster partnerships with community policing initiatives.
- Develop and implement a national integrated database system for security management.

### Strategic Priority 3: Social Development

Mrs. Ibironke Olubamise presented on "Leadership and Good Governance," followed by a panel session. Key recommendations were:

- Promote a sense of nationalism among citizens.
- Invest in leadership development programs.
- Implement robust anti-corruption measures.
- Encourage tolerance and inclusiveness.
- Use inclusive media strategies to address economic issues.
- Engage in strategic advocacy for critical social and economic challenges.

### Strategic Priority 4: Governance

Hadiza Bala Usman, Special Adviser to the President on Policy and Coordination, presented on governance issues, followed by a panel session. Key recommendations were:

- Empower local governments with autonomy and resources.
- Reform local government elections and ensure financial independence.
- Promote internal democracy within political parties.
- Address the transactional nature of Nigeria's federal structure through transparent guidelines and cooperation mechanisms.

### Conclusion

The Paul Alaje Colloquium provided a platform for in-depth discussions on Nigeria's economic and security challenges, yielding strategic recommendations across various sectors. By implementing these comprehensive and collaborative measures, Nigeria can navigate its way out of the current crises towards a stable and prosperous future.



*The Former Minister of Agriculture, Chief Audu Ogbeh and the Convener, Dr. Paul Alaje*





THE  
PAUL ALAJE  
COLLOQUIUM

## Welcome Address

Angela Omeiza, Chairperson of the Paul Alaje Colloquium (TPAC) Planning Committee, delivered a stirring welcome address during the opening ceremony of the event's maiden edition.



Omeiza highlighted the critical challenges facing Nigeria, including economic instability and insecurity, emphasizing the urgent need for national dialogue and collaborative solutions. She explained that TPAC was conceived as a platform to address these issues, fostering "robust discussions, insightful analyses, and innovative solutions" focused on the nation's development.

The theme for TPAC 2024, "Nigeria's Development: Navigating a Way out of the Current Economic Crisis and Insecurity," sets the agenda for the colloquium. However, Omeiza emphasized TPAC's long-term vision, outlining a commitment to annual events focusing on four key pillars: Economy, Security, Social Development, and Governance.

The address detailed the various activities planned for the colloquium, including paper presentations, panel discussions, interactive Q&A sessions, and an

essay competition. Omeiza positioned TPAC as a "solution-oriented platform" distinct from other colloquiums, with a core mission to drive Nigeria's development and overcome its challenges.

A warm welcome was extended to a diverse range of attendees, including government officials, policymakers, civil society members, diplomats, students, NGOs, broadcasters, academics, military personnel, press representatives, and online participants. Their presence was lauded as a symbol of dedication to shaping Nigeria's future.

Omeiza concluded with a call to action, urging participants to actively engage in discussions and contribute valuable insights towards the shared goal of building a better Nigeria for future generations. She declared TPAC a space "where solutions are born, challenges are conquered, and the future of Nigeria is shaped."



## Convener's Speech

Dr. Paul Alaje, Convener of The Paul Alaje Colloquium (TPAC), set the stage for the inaugural event by highlighting the critical issues facing Nigeria and outlining the four strategic priorities—economy, security, social development, and governance—that will guide constructive dialogue and actionable solutions for a prosperous future.



*"TPAC is not a platform for government criticism but rather a space for collaborative engagement and forward-thinking solutions."*

*- Dr. Paul Alaje*

Dr. Paul Alaje began by highlighting the critical issues surrounding Nigeria's economy. He pointed out the alarming unemployment figures released by the National Bureau of Statistics: 5.2% for those who cannot work up to one hour a week and a staggering 35% for those who cannot work up to 20 hours a week. Additionally, the inflation rate stands at 33.96%, the highest in recent history. Given these economic challenges, it is crucial to reimagine and implement effective solutions.

Addressing the issue of insecurity, Dr. Alaje acknowledged the efforts of Nigeria's military and paramilitary forces in combating this pressing challenge. However, he emphasized that a collective effort from all Nigerians is necessary. Collaboration between citizens and security agencies is essential to address this pressing issue effectively.

Dr. Alaje underscored the importance of addressing developmental issues such as access to clean water, quality education, and inclusive healthcare. These fundamental rights remain elusive for many Nigerians and require concerted efforts to bridge the gap and ensure equitable access for all citizens. These issues will also be central to the discussions at TPAC.

Dr. Paul expressed his gratitude for the presence of notable figures, including:

- Former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo
- Former Minister of Agriculture, Chief Audu Ogbeh
- Director of the Institute of Nigeria-China, Professor Olufemi Saibu
- Special Adviser to the President of Nigeria on Policy Coordination, Mrs Hadiza Bala Usman
- PDP Chieftain, Chief Segun Showumi
- APC National Youth Leader, Mr. Dayo Israel
- Labour Party Spokesperson, Barr. Kenneth Okonkwo

Dr. Alaje reiterated that TPAC is not a platform for government criticism but rather a space for collaborative engagement and forward-thinking solutions. He urged Nigerians to remain resilient in the face of adversity and work together to build a nation that we can all be proud of.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Paul inspired the audience with a powerful message: "This is Nigeria. When they say, 'bring Nigeria,' I say, 'I have not seen Nigeria physically anywhere.' It is not the space, not the sand, not the buildings. I say, 'the true Nigeria is you and I.'"

He further encouraged resilience among Nigerians: "Ladies and Gentlemen, life may pound on you, life may beat you, life may be against you; but if you do not give up, life will be for you. As Nigerians, we must not give up, no matter our challenges, we must not give up."

Dr. Alaje expressed gratitude to all attendees for their participation and contributions to the inaugural edition of TPAC. He mentioned that their presence and commitment to constructive dialogue underscored the importance of the event and its potential to drive positive change in Nigeria.

*Dr. Alaje encouraged resilience among Nigerians: "Ladies and Gentlemen, life may pound on you, life may beat you, life may be against you; but if you do not give up, life will be for you. As Nigerians, we must not give up, no matter our challenges, we must not give up."*

## Keynote Speech

Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, the Former President of Nigeria delivered a keynote speech addressing the pressing issues of economic crisis and insecurity in Nigeria at The Paul Alaje Colloquium (TPAC). He began by posing critical questions essential for understanding and navigating the current challenges: "Where were we, and how did we get to where we are today?"

***"To navigate out of these economic crises, we need to have a 25-year socio-economic development agenda that will be generally agreed upon by political parties and leaders and signed into law".***

***- Chief Olusegun Obasanjo***

Source: David Plas Photography

The Former President highlighted the root causes of Nigeria's economic woes, citing poor policies, lack of sustainable initiatives, corruption, discontinuity, lack of knowledge, and a deficiency in patriotism. He pointed out that the same statements and proposed actions to stop fuel scarcity given 45 years ago are still being questioned today.

To effectively navigate the economic crisis, Chief Obasanjo proposed a 25-year socio-economic development agenda. This agenda, he suggested, should be universally agreed upon by political parties and leaders and enacted into law by both the National and State Assemblies. The implementation should occur in five-year phases, covering priorities such as education for all, food and nutrition security through agribusiness, energy, health, industrialization, manufacturing, science, technology, innovation, and artificial intelligence. The Former President stressed the importance of creating a conducive

environment for the private sector, with the government acting as a policy maker and enabler in public-private partnerships, where the government should be the junior partner.

Regarding security, the Former President advocated for a "stick and carrot" approach. The "stick" should address those irredeemably committed to criminal activities, while the "carrot" should focus on training and rehabilitating those who can be reformed. He also emphasized the importance of compulsory education for all Nigerian children for 11 years and making employment a right for all Nigerians aged 18 to 65.

Adult education was another critical area highlighted, with a goal to eradicate illiteracy within 10 years. By providing education, skills, and empowerment to over 20 million out-of-school children, Chief Olusegun argued that these individuals could be diverted from criminal activities and social misfits.

Chief Olusegun also addressed the economic policy, stating that manipulating the exchange rate is not the solution. Instead, he called for consistency and continuity in good policies to ensure stability and predictability, thereby incentivizing domestic and foreign investment. Transparency and honesty in government dealings and contract awards were deemed essential for gaining the private sector's trust, which is necessary for increased production and productivity.

He critiqued the current government's handling of three key decisions: the removal of subsidies, closing the gap between black market and official exchange rates, and dealing with the military coup in Niger Republic. The Former President argued that these actions have been wrongly implemented, leading to economic hardships. He emphasized the need for production and productivity, underpinned by trust in government leadership.

The Former President concluded by urging a shift from transactional to transformational leadership. He stressed that change is possible with the right policies and leadership characterized by integrity and honesty. This shift, he argued, is crucial for attracting and retaining investor confidence, as illustrated by Total Energies' decision to invest \$6 billion in Angola instead of Nigeria due to the latter's unstable policies.

The Former President called for a holistic approach involving long-term planning, policy consistency, and integrity in governance to navigate Nigeria out of its current economic crisis and insecurity challenges.

In summary, the following were the key recommendation from Chief Olusegun Obasanjo at TPAC

- Develop and implement a 25-year socio-economic development agenda agreed upon by political parties and leaders and enact it into law at both the National and State Assembly levels. This plan should be executed in five-year phases.
- Create a conducive environment for the private sector to operate and thrive. The government should function as a policy maker and enabler, engaging in public-private partnerships as the junior partner.
- Make education compulsory for all Nigerian children for 11 years. Ensure that employment is a right for all Nigerians aged 18 to 65. Embark on adult education to eradicate illiteracy within 10 years.
- Implement a "stick and carrot" approach to security, using strict measures against irredeemable criminals while rehabilitating and training those who can be reformed. Ensure all Nigerian children are kept out of criminal influences through education and empowerment.

*“We need to change our leadership approach from transactional government to transformational and genuine servant leadership”.*

*- Chief Olusegun Obasanjo*



- Maintain consistency and continuity in good economic policies to ensure stability and predictability, thereby encouraging domestic and foreign investment.
- Ensure transparency and honesty in government dealings and contract awards to build trust and confidence in government leadership among investors and the private sector.
- Transition from transactional to transformational and genuine servant leadership to foster change and gain the confidence of investors.
- Prioritize production and productivity to stimulate economic growth, supported by stable and trustworthy government policies.

## Special Address

Chief Audu Ogbeh, the former Minister of Agriculture, delivered a special address at The Paul Alaje Colloquium (TPAC), focusing on Nigeria's economic challenges and the urgent need for strategic interventions.



Chief Ogbeh began by highlighting Nigeria's heavy reliance on imports and minimal export activity, warning that continuing this trend will not resolve the country's economic problems, regardless of how many seminars are held. He emphasized that high import volumes weaken the nation's currency and called for protective measures to reduce importation and preserve the Naira's value. Chief Ogbeh noted that protectionism is practiced globally, even by countries that promote free-market economics.

Addressing currency devaluation, Chief Ogbeh explained its detrimental impact on the economy and the populace, leading to increased cost of living and rising criminality. He recounted the history of Naira devaluation, which began in earnest in 1986 following World

Bank recommendations, and highlighted the subsequent economic decline, with the Naira falling to N9 per \$1 by 1990.

Chief Ogbeh also discussed the removal of fuel subsidies, noting that while the subsidies are gone, they have given rise to new challenges, including inflation, higher living costs, increased poverty, anger, criminality, and rural-to-urban migration. He expressed concern over the ongoing clashes between farmers and herdsmen in northern Nigeria, exacerbated by a 1998 ECOWAS agreement allowing free movement of pastoralists across borders. Chief Ogbeh urged the President, who also serves as the chairman of ECOWAS, to revoke this agreement to address food insecurity and conflict.

He stressed the need for accountability across all tiers of government, stating that the President alone cannot solve Nigeria's problems. Ogbeh called for transparency, accountability, and prudent use of allocations at the local government level. He criticized the poor infrastructure that hampers industrialization and advocated for prioritizing education and hostel accommodations.

On agriculture, the Former Minister of Agriculture pointed out that despite Nigeria having 90 million hectares of arable land, less than 5% is currently being cultivated. He called for concentrated efforts by the government to address food insecurity and rising food inflation.

Chief Ogbeh concluded by urging media houses to scrutinize the performance of local governments more closely, as they play a crucial role in national development and are currently underperforming.

***“We need to demand transparency, accountability, and judicious use of funds at all levels of government, particularly local governments”.***

***- Chief Audu Ogbeh***

#### **Key Recommendations from Chief Audu Ogbeh's Address**

- Implement protective measures to cut down on importation and preserve the value of the Naira.
- Develop strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of currency devaluation on the economy and the populace.
- Urge the President to abate the 1998 ECOWAS agreement allowing free movement of pastoralists to reduce food insecurity and farmer-herdsmen conflicts.
- Demand transparency, accountability, and judicious use of funds at all levels of government, particularly local governments.
- Prioritize infrastructure development to stimulate industrialization and economic growth.
- Invest in education and hostel accommodations and increase agricultural cultivation to address food insecurity and inflation.

By implementing these recommendations, Ogbeh emphasized that Nigeria can navigate its way out of the current economic crisis and build a more stable and prosperous future.



# NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT: NAVIGATING THE WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS AND INSECURITY

ECONOMY



**Prof. Olufemi Saibu**  
Director Institute of Nigeria-China

**PRESENTER**



**Chief Audu Ogbeh**  
Former Minister of Agriculture



**Mr. Segun Ajayi-Kadir**  
D.G. Manufacturer's Association of Nigeria

PANELLISTS



**Dr. Olusegun Omisakin**  
Chief Economist @NESG



**Mr. Boason Omofaye**  
(Arise TV)

**MODERATOR**



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**Chief Olusegun Obasanjo** GCFR  
Former President of Nigeria

**CONFIRMED**

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**



Sat. 25th May 2024



9:30am to 4:30pm



Ladi Kwali Hall,  
Old Sheraton,  
Abuja Continental Hotel.



## Economy: Paper Presentation

Professor Olufemi Saibu provided an insightful academic analysis of the challenges facing the Nigerian economy at The Paul Alaje Colloquium (TPAC). He emphasized that key macroeconomic indicators—such as the inflation rate, unemployment rate, exchange rate, and poverty index—are not the core problems but symptoms of deeper issues that need to be addressed.



### Key Indicators of Economic Challenges

Professor Saibu pointed out that the Nigerian economy suffers from:

- **Poverty:** Driven by a lack of opportunities rather than a lack of income. A system with low or no productive capacity cannot generate employment, leading to widespread poverty. Initiatives like N-Power, which focus on short-term palliatives, are inadequate; instead, there should be efforts to enhance the economy's productive capacity.
- **Currency Devaluation:** The problem stems from the supply side rather than the demand side. Without competitive exports, sustainable policies to stabilize the Naira are unattainable.
- **Insecurity:** Rooted in the lack of quality education and limited opportunities, leading to increased criminal activities.



## Pathways to Addressing Nigeria's Economic Crisis

Professor Saibu outlined two main approaches to addressing macroeconomic issues: demand-side and supply-side strategies. He emphasized the need to focus on the supply side to tackle Nigeria's primary issue of low productivity. Key recommendations include:

- **Shift to Supply-Side Economics:** Prioritize long-term development plans over short-term microeconomic policies. Align the annual budget with the National Development Plan, creating a strategic link between the mid-term macroeconomic framework and national development goals.
- **Improve Coordination:** Address coordination failures among government agencies and between the public and private sectors. Recognize the different motives of private (profit-driven) and public (welfare-driven) sectors and harmonize their objectives for optimal outcomes.
- **Rethink Monetary Policy:** The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) should re-evaluate its active role, focusing on its core mandate and minimizing monthly pronouncements that may cause economic instability. The CBN should advise the government rather than act as its spokesperson.
- **Active Fiscal Policy:** The government should be prompt and balanced in implementing both positive and negative policies. For instance, while the removal of fuel subsidies and exchange rate adjustments were swiftly implemented, responses to policies like the minimum wage were delayed.
- **Reduce Policy Lag:** Speed up the implementation of capital projects to ensure their impact is felt, especially at the local government level.
- **Rethink Revenue Generation:** Avoid excessive taxation on both inputs and outputs, which increases the tax burden on consumers and inflates prices. Clarify revenue streams and avoid policies that hurt the economy.
- **Stable and Consistent Policies:** Frequent policy reversals undermine trust and confidence in government policies. Before announcing policies, it is crucial to secure the buy-in of relevant stakeholders to ensure consensus and smooth implementation. Policies should be driven by consensus, especially from the grassroots level.

*“We need to shift to supply-side economics, prioritizing long-term development plans over short-term microeconomic policies. By aligning the annual budget with the National Development Plan, we create a strategic link between the mid-term macroeconomic framework and national development goals”.*

*- Professor Olufemi Saibu*

### Key Recommendations from Professor Olufemi Saibu's Address

- **Enhance Productive Capacity:** Shift focus from demand-side to supply-side economics to boost productivity and create employment opportunities.
- **Align Development Plans with Annual Budgets:** Ensure the annual budget is driven by the mid-term macroeconomic framework and national development plans.
- **Improve Government Coordination:** Harmonize the objectives of private and public sectors for welfare maximization and optimal outcomes.

- Re-evaluate Central Bank's Role: Limit CBN's pronouncements to reduce economic instability and refocus on its core mandate of advising the government.
- Implement Balanced Fiscal Policies: Be prompt and balanced in executing both positive and negative policies, reducing policy lag and improving the impact of government programs.
- Clarify Revenue Generation Streams: Avoid excessive taxation and prioritize sustainable revenue streams that do not harm the economy.
- Ensure Policy Stability and Stakeholder Engagement: Avoid frequent policy reversals and secure stakeholder buy-in for a consensus-driven approach to policy implementation.

By addressing these recommendations, Professor Saibu emphasized that Nigeria can effectively tackle its economic challenges and pave the way for a more stable and prosperous future.

***"The government should be prompt and balanced in implementing both positive and negative policies. While measures like the removal of fuel subsidies and exchange rate adjustments were swiftly executed, responses to policies such as the minimum wage have faced delays".***

**- Professor Olufemi Saibu**





## Economy: Panel Session



### Key Issues:

**Limited Value Addition:** Nigeria's heavy reliance on exporting raw materials results in missed opportunities for processing and generating greater revenue domestically.

**Inadequate Power Supply:** The current energy and power infrastructure is insufficient to support economic activity and discourages investment.

**Weak Manufacturing Sector:** Nigeria imports a significant amount of goods it could potentially produce domestically, hindering job creation and economic diversification.

**Lack of Awareness of Government Programs:** Citizens are often unaware of existing government initiatives designed to support economic development, which limits their effectiveness.

### Underdeveloped Digital and Creative Economy:

Limited investment in digital infrastructure, skills development, and fostering a creative sector hinders the potential for innovation and growth in agricultural production.

**High Cost of Agricultural Inputs:** The high cost of fertilizers, seeds, machinery, and other essential inputs makes agricultural production less profitable and discourages investment in the sector.

### Key Recommendations

**Shifting Towards Value Addition:** Nigeria's current economic structure relies heavily on exporting raw materials. This limits the value captured by the country and hinders job creation. The panel emphasizes the need to move towards a value-added economy. This involves processing raw materials into finished or semi-finished goods before export. For example, exporting cocoa beans

instead of cocoa powder represents a missed opportunity for added value. Increased processing boosts local industries, creates jobs, and generates more revenue.

#### Prioritizing Energy and Power Sector Development:

Inadequate power supply significantly hinders economic activity and discourages investment. The panel highlights the importance of a robust energy and power sector. Reliable electricity is essential for running businesses, attracting investment, and fostering innovation. The government needs to prioritize investments in power generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure. This could involve exploring renewable energy sources alongside traditional methods to ensure a sustainable and reliable power supply.

#### Focusing on Manufacturing and Industrialization:

A strong manufacturing sector is crucial for job creation and economic diversification. Nigeria currently imports many goods it could potentially produce domestically. The panel emphasizes the need to develop a robust manufacturing sector, particularly focusing on domestically consumed goods. This strategy reduces reliance on imports, stimulates local production, and creates employment opportunities. The government can support this by providing incentives for manufacturers, investing in technical education, and ensuring a business-friendly environment.

#### Educating Citizens on Government Programs:

Limited awareness of government initiatives and support programs can hinder their effectiveness. The panel recognizes the importance of informing citizens about existing government programs designed to support economic development. This could involve public awareness campaigns, utilizing various media channels, and simplifying access to information on available resources. By bridging the knowledge gap, citizens can better take advantage of government initiatives that can empower them to participate more actively in the economy.

#### Investment in Digital and Creative Economy to Aid Production:

The digital and creative economy offers new avenues for economic growth and job creation. Investing in digital infrastructure, skills development, and fostering a vibrant creative sector can unlock new opportunities for agricultural producers.

#### Reduce Cost of Input for Agricultural Production:

High input costs, such as fertilizers, seeds, and machinery, can hinder agricultural productivity and profitability. The panel suggests exploring strategies to reduce the cost of agricultural inputs. This could involve promoting local production of agricultural inputs, government subsidies or tax breaks, and improved access to credit.





# NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT: NAVIGATING THE WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS AND INSECURITY

SECURITY



H.E. Gov. Uba Sani  
(Exc. Gov. Kaduna State)



Mrs. Maupe Ogun-Yusuf  
(Channels TV)

MODERATOR



Dr. Kabir Adamu  
Security Consultant



Captain Aliyu Umar  
Security Consultant

PANELLISTS



Mrs. Chigozirim Okoro  
Security/Justice Professional



Mr. Nuhu Ribadu  
PRESENTER



Rear Admiral OM OLOTU  
Commandant National Defence  
College Nigeria

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Chief Olusegun Obasanjo GCFR  
Former President of Nigeria

 **CONFIRMED**

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

 Sat. 25th May 2024

 9:30am to 4:30pm

 Ladi Kwali Hall,  
Old Sheraton,  
Abuja Continental Hotel.



## Security: Paper Presentation

At the Paul Alaje Colloquium, Dr. Adamu Kabir delivered a comprehensive presentation on the topic "Navigating the Way Out of Current Insecurity." Dr. Kabir highlighted the various security challenges facing Nigeria, stressing their profound impact on national development, economic stability, and social cohesion.

*"To foster development in Nigeria, it is essential to address the current security challenges by developing strategic initiatives and policy frameworks that integrate security and development objectives, including a comprehensive implementation plan for Nigeria's 2019 National Security Strategy (NSS 2019)."*

*- Dr Adamu Kabir*



In his introduction, Dr. Kabir identified a range of security threats, including terrorism, insurgency, militancy, armed robbery, banditry, kidnapping for ransom, communal clashes, cattle herder-farmer conflicts, cultism, cybersecurity issues, abuse of authority by security forces, and social vices such as drug abuse and gender-based violence. These issues have increasingly compromised the nation's security environment, with severe consequences for lives, properties, and overall national stability.

### Current Security Challenges in Nigeria

Dr. Kabir elaborated on the specific security challenges:

**Terrorism:** He pointed to Islamist insurgencies like Boko Haram and ISWAP, international terrorist organizations such as ISIS, Al Qaeda, and Al Shabab, and domestic terrorist groups like Yan Bindiga and

Yan Ta'adda, along with secessionist and extremist groups such as IPOB and IMN.

**Civil Unrest:** He noted ongoing protests, ethno-religious and sectarian violence, and socio-political upheaval.

**Armed Conflict:** This includes ethnic militias, gangsterism, cultism, herder-farmer conflicts, banditry, and secessionist agitation.

**Crime:** He detailed issues such as kidnapping for ransom, violent crimes (armed robbery, burglary, rape).

**Security Forces Operations:** Dr. Kabir highlighted problems such as human rights abuses, collateral damage, excessive use of force, and non-adherence to rules of engagement.

### Impact of Insecurity on Nigeria's Development

Dr. Kabir underscored the multifaceted impact of insecurity:

**Economic Implications:** Insecurity disrupts business operations, agricultural activities, and displaces millions, leading to economic losses. In 2019, the economic cost of terrorism in Nigeria was 2.4% of the GDP.

**Social Implications:** Forced displacement has increased the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), particularly affecting children. Health and education sectors suffer from violent attacks, resulting in school closures and psychological trauma among victims.

**Political Implications:** Insecurity weakens state institutions, fosters public distrust, and hampers public service delivery. Non-state armed actors and corruption undermine the government's authority and operational effectiveness.

### Recommendations

Dr. Kabir proposed several recommendations to address these challenges.

To create a permissive environment and foster development in Nigeria, it is essential to address the current security challenges. This requires developing strategic initiatives and policy frameworks that integrate security and development objectives, including a comprehensive implementation plan for Nigeria's 2019 National Security Strategy (NSS 2019). Measures should be comprehensive, systematically driven, transparent, and accountable, incorporating both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches to address economic, social, and political issues.

**Rapid Incident Response (RIR):** Establish protocols for swift action in the face of security breaches to minimize damage and facilitate quick recovery. Integrate early threat detection, intelligence-gathering mechanisms, and security surveillance (e.g., geospatial technology) to form the foundation of effective RIR strategies. An RIR approach is recommended to reduce the impact of security emergencies, demonstrating the value of readiness and quick mobilization.

**Enhancing Regional Cooperation:** Regional collaboration is essential for addressing development challenges. Leverage existing regional frameworks, such as ECOWAS and the African Union (AU), to

strengthen information sharing, joint operations, and capacity-building initiatives among neighbouring countries, which are essential for a coherent security strategy.

**Prioritizing Human Capital Development:** Address underlying issues of insecurity by investing in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and skills training programs. This enhances human capital, creating a more resilient and productive society. Human capital development programs also indicate good governance and strengthen institutions, essential for maintaining law and order and providing a secure environment for businesses and communities.

**Fostering Sustainable Development:** Create an enabling environment that attracts investment, promotes economic diversification, and empowers marginalized communities. Improve infrastructure nationwide, enhance the ease of doing business, and implement targeted policies to stimulate growth in key sectors. Strategic investments in critical infrastructure, such as energy, transportation, and telecommunications, will enhance the nation's capacity to deliver essential services and maintain social stability.

**Strengthening Governance and Institutions:** Reinforce the capacity and integrity of state institutions to manage and mitigate conflicts, enforce the rule of law, and ensure the delivery of public services. Promote accountability and transparency to build trust in the state, deter corruption, and foster social cohesion. Reform the security sector to ensure professionalism, integrity, and respect for human rights, and enhance the capacity of judicial and law enforcement agencies to combat corruption and impunity. Promote inclusive governance to address the needs and aspirations of diverse populations, mitigating grievances and reducing the likelihood of conflict.

**Community Engagement and Empowerment (CEE):** Involve local communities in the identification, planning, and implementation of development initiatives to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility for local security initiatives. Establish community policing programs, platforms for dialogue between security forces and community leaders, and encourage local participation in decision-making processes. Integrating CEE strategies can create



more effective and responsive governance structures, enhancing the federal system of government in Nigeria.

### Conclusion

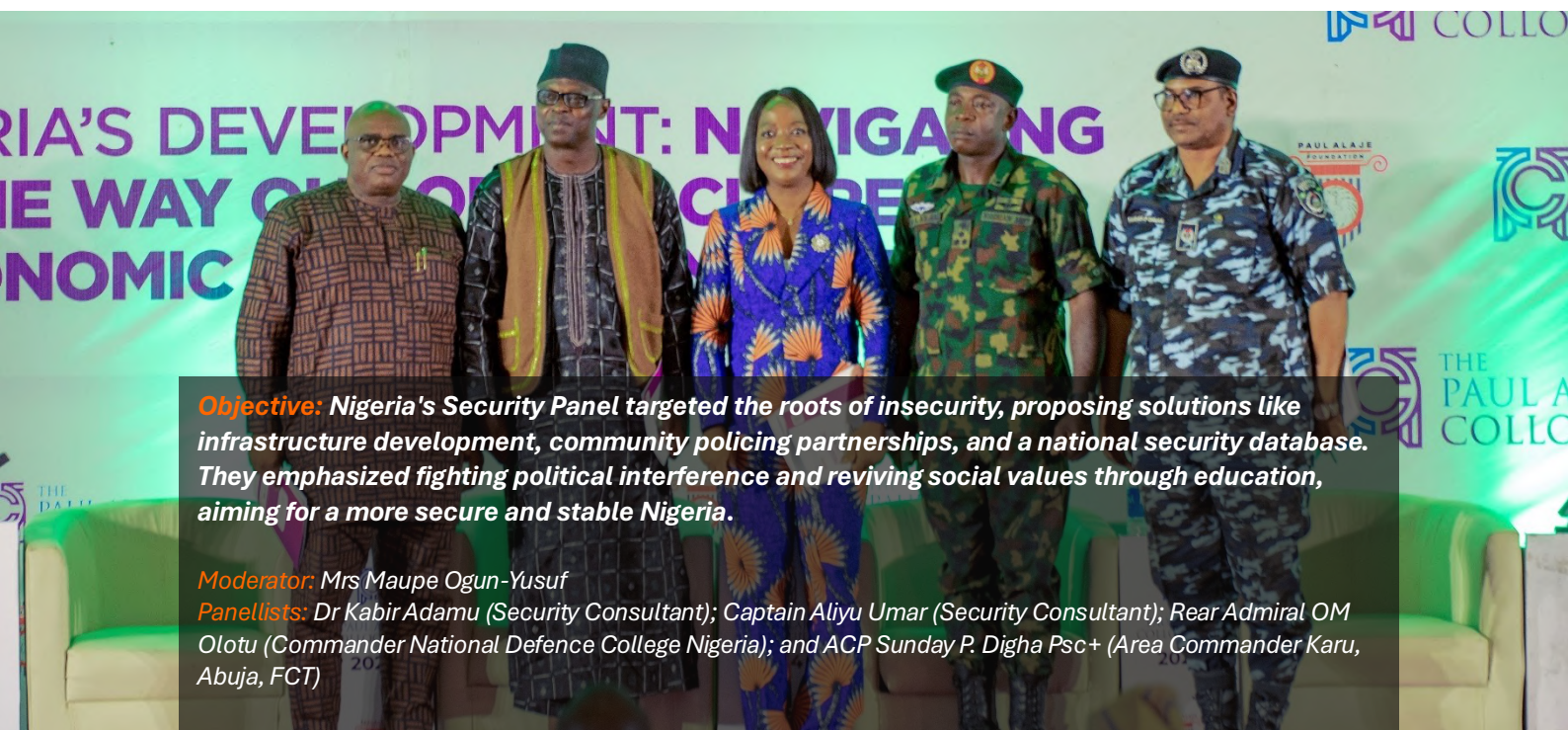
Dr. Kabir concluded by emphasizing the necessity of a comprehensive, systematic approach to tackle insecurity in Nigeria. By addressing root causes and

fostering collaboration across all societal levels, Nigeria can create a secure environment conducive to sustainable development, thereby overcoming its current economic and security challenges. The presentation received strong approval, highlighting the urgent need for strategic action to ensure Nigeria's stability and growth.





## Security: Panel Session



**Objective:** Nigeria's Security Panel targeted the roots of insecurity, proposing solutions like infrastructure development, community policing partnerships, and a national security database. They emphasized fighting political interference and reviving social values through education, aiming for a more secure and stable Nigeria.

**Moderator:** Mrs Maupe Ogun-Yusuf

**Panellists:** Dr Kabir Adamu (Security Consultant); Captain Aliyu Umar (Security Consultant); Rear Admiral OM Olotu (Commander National Defence College Nigeria); and ACP Sunday P. Digha Psc+ (Area Commander Karu, Abuja, FCT)

### Key Issues

**Lack of Infrastructure and Funding:** In Nigeria, the deficiency in infrastructure and inadequate funding are major contributors to the persistent insecurity. The panel noted that the lack of well-developed infrastructure, such as roads, communication networks, and security facilities, hinders effective surveillance, rapid response, and law enforcement. Poor infrastructure makes it difficult for security forces to access remote areas where insurgents and criminals often operate. Furthermore, inadequate funding of security agencies leads to insufficient training, lack of essential equipment, and poor welfare for personnel, all of which undermine the capacity to combat insecurity effectively.

**Lack of Manpower:** The issue of insufficient manpower within Nigeria's security forces exacerbates the country's insecurity challenges. The panel mentioned that the existing personnel are often overstretched and unable to effectively cover the vast and diverse territory. This shortage of security personnel limits the government's ability to maintain a robust presence in conflict-prone areas and respond swiftly to security threats.

### Lack of Robust Database System and Technology:

The absence of a comprehensive and integrated database system hampers effective security operations in Nigeria. Emphatically, the panel mentioned that without a robust database, tracking and managing information related to criminal activities, suspects, and security incidents becomes challenging. Moreover, the lack of advanced technology and tools for intelligence gathering, surveillance, and data analysis limits the efficiency of security operations.

**Political Hijack in the System:** Political interference in the security apparatus of Nigeria undermines the effectiveness of security operations. The panel highlighted that when political interests dictate the actions of security agencies, it leads to biased law enforcement, protection of certain groups, and neglect of others. This politicization of security undermines public trust and hampers the impartial execution of security duties.

**Lack of Socio-Cultural and Communal Values:** The erosion of socio-cultural and communal values has contributed to the rise of insecurity in Nigeria. The panel recognized that traditional values that once promoted community cohesion, mutual respect, and collective security are being undermined. This

decline in socio-cultural norms and communal bonds leads to increased social vices, reduced community vigilance, and a fragmented society.

### Key Recommendations

#### Invest in Critical Infrastructure Development:

Investing in critical infrastructure development is essential to facilitate better access and communication in regions affected by insecurity. Improved roads, communication networks, and transportation facilities enable security forces to respond swiftly and effectively to incidents, reducing the operational advantages that criminals and insurgents often exploit. Enhanced infrastructure also supports the deployment of advanced surveillance technologies and coordination among security agencies. Additionally, better infrastructure contributes to overall economic growth and stability, reducing the socio-economic conditions that often fuel insecurity. This holistic approach ensures that both immediate security needs and long-term developmental goals are addressed simultaneously.

#### Foster Partnerships with Community Policing Initiatives:

Fostering partnerships with community policing initiatives can significantly augment manpower and enhance local intelligence gathering. Community policing involves local residents actively participating in ensuring their own security, which helps build trust between law enforcement and the community. These partnerships allow for more effective monitoring of suspicious activities, quicker identification of security threats, and the mobilization of local resources in response to emergencies. By leveraging the knowledge and cooperation of local communities, security forces can cover more ground and operate with better contextual understanding, ultimately leading to more efficient and culturally sensitive security operations.

#### Develop and Implement a National Integrated Database System:

Developing and implementing a national integrated database system is crucial for the

efficient tracking and management of security-related information. A comprehensive database allows for the centralized collection, storage, and analysis of data on criminal activities, suspects, and incidents, facilitating more coordinated and informed decision-making by security agencies. This system enhances the ability to track patterns, predict potential threats, and share information across different law enforcement and intelligence bodies.

#### Foster Accountability and Oversight Mechanisms:

Fostering accountability and oversight mechanisms is vital to monitor and address any instances of political hijacking within the security apparatus. Independent oversight bodies should be established to ensure that security agencies operate without undue political influence and adhere to principles of fairness and impartiality. Transparent processes for the appointment and evaluation of security officials, along with regular audits and public reporting, help build trust in the system. By holding security agencies accountable for their actions and maintaining rigorous checks on their operations, these mechanisms prevent abuses of power and ensure that security efforts remain focused on protecting the public rather than serving political interests.

#### Integrate Socio-Cultural Education into the National Curriculum:

Integrating socio-cultural education into the national curriculum is a strategic measure to instill values of respect, responsibility, and community service from an early age. Educational programs that emphasize social cohesion, cultural understanding, and civic responsibility help to cultivate a generation that is more aware of and committed to positive societal values. By teaching children, the importance of mutual respect, tolerance, and active citizenship, schools can play a crucial role in preventing the erosion of communal values that often lead to insecurity. This foundational education not only addresses immediate social challenges but also promotes long-term national unity and stability by fostering a well-informed and responsible citizenry.



# NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT: NAVIGATING THE WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS AND INSECURITY

PANELLISTS  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Mr. Isaiah Bozimo  
(SAN)



Mrs. Ibironke Olubamise  
(UNDP)

PRESENTER



Mr. Jake Epelle  
(Founder, TAF Africa)



Mrs. Nancy Nnaji  
(AIT)

MODERATOR



Akinropo Omoware Esq.  
(GIZ)



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Chief Olusegun Obasanjo GCFR  
Former President of Nigeria

✓ CONFIRMED

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Sat. 25th May 2024



9:30am to 4:30pm



Ladi Kwali Hall,  
Old Sheraton,  
Abuja Continental Hotel.



## Social Development: Paper Presentation

At the inaugural Paul Alaje Colloquium, Mrs. Ibironke Olubamise delivered an incisive presentation on "Leadership and Good Governance: Necessary Tools for Nigeria's Development." Her address underscored the critical role of effective leadership in fostering development and progressive society, emphasizing that the quality of leadership at all levels is pivotal to national success.



In her introduction, Mrs. Olubamise invoked the adage "a fish rots from the head" to highlight the significance of leadership in governance. She noted that leadership challenges have long plagued Nigeria, stifling its sustainable development despite the nation's abundant resources. She asserted that Nigeria's leadership crisis is foundational rather than structural, citing a biblical reference, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" to stress the urgency of addressing these core issues.

Mrs. Olubamise identified the root causes of Nigeria's leadership problems, arguing that the lack of vision, widespread corruption, and prioritization of politics over governance are symptoms of a deeper issue: a lack of nationalism. She emphasized that effective

leadership should cultivate a sense of belonging among citizens, rather than pursuing personal or group agendas. She argued that Nigeria's challenges are not primarily due to ethnicity, religion, or resource management but rather the absence of a nationalistic mindset.

Highlighting the importance of nationalism, Mrs. Olubamise cited Webster's dictionary, defining it as loyalty, devotion, or allegiance to a nation, with national obligations outweighing individual or group interests. She maintained that bad leadership leads to bad governance and that promoting a sense of nationalism is crucial for Nigeria's progress.

**Mrs. Olubamise outlined several steps towards achieving good governance and social development:**



**Promote a Sense of Nationalism:** She stressed that all citizens, from grassroots to the presidency, should prioritize nationalism. This effort builds hope, trust, and motivation among citizens, fostering unity and societal cohesion.

**Leadership Development:** Investing heavily in leadership development programs for current and future leaders is essential. These programs should emphasize ethical leadership, vision, and strategic planning, alongside effective mentorship to nurture responsible leadership among the youth.

**Anti-Corruption Measures:** Implementing robust mechanisms to track public funds, ensuring transparency, and holding corrupt officials accountable are critical. Strengthening anti-corruption agencies, enforcing laws, and ensuring justice will build citizen confidence.

**Tolerance and Inclusiveness:** Good leadership should accommodate religious and ethnic differences, promoting freedom of religion and ethnic harmony. Leaders should encourage interfaith and interethnic dialogue, unity, and discourage divisive rhetoric, fostering cultural exchange and understanding.

**Judicial Independence:** Strengthening the judiciary's independence ensures fair and impartial justice. Investing in training for judges and legal professionals enhances civil service efficiency, reduces

bureaucracy, and improves professionalism.

**Electoral Reforms and Constitutional Stability:** Strengthening electoral processes to ensure free and fair elections is crucial. Addressing voter suppression, electoral violence, and irregularities will provide a stable environment for development.

**Investment in Infrastructure:** Promoting public-private partnerships to improve infrastructure is vital. Prioritizing electricity, healthcare, roads, and education, along with developing long-term infrastructure plans aligned with national goals, will spur development.

**Youth Empowerment and Job Creation:** Investing in vocational training and education to equip the youth with relevant skills is essential. Creating job opportunities and empowering the youth are critical for national development.

In conclusion, Mrs. Olubamise emphasized that leadership and good governance are indispensable for Nigeria's development. By addressing foundational leadership issues, promoting nationalism, and implementing robust governance strategies, Nigeria can overcome its current challenges and achieve sustainable development. She called for transformational leadership that is accountable, inclusive, and visionary, setting the tone for a thriving nation.



## Social Development: Panel Session

# NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT: NAVIGATING THE WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS AND INSECURITY



**Objective:** The Panel Session tackled the root causes hindering Nigeria's social progress. By identifying key issues like weak leadership, inadequate social services, and an outdated education system, the panel sought solutions to foster national unity, cultivate competent leaders, and empower all citizens

**Moderator:** Mrs Nancy Nnaji

**Panellists:** Mrs Ibironke Olubamise (Presenter), Mr Jake Eplle (Founder TAF Africa); Akinropo Omoware, Esq. (GIZ)

### Key Issues

**Lack of Effective Leadership:** The panel identified a critical deficit in effective leadership across various levels of governance in Nigeria. This deficiency has led to poor decision-making, lack of vision, and ineffective implementation of policies, all of which hinder social and economic development. Leaders often prioritize personal or group interests over national goals, exacerbating issues such as corruption and inefficiency.

**Lack of Strategic Soft Infrastructure:** The absence of strategic soft infrastructure, including adequate healthcare, education, and social services, is a significant barrier to inclusive social development. Without these foundational elements, it is challenging to build a resilient and productive society. The lack of such infrastructure impedes access to essential services, stifles economic opportunities, and perpetuates inequality.

**Non-Adaptive Curriculum in the Education System:** Nigeria's education system is plagued by outdated and non-adaptive curricula that do not align with

current job market demands or technological advancements. This disconnect results in graduates who are ill-prepared for modern workforce challenges, leading to high unemployment rates and a lack of innovation and entrepreneurship.

**Insecurity:** Persistent insecurity, including terrorism, banditry, and communal clashes, severely disrupts social development. It affects every aspect of life, from the economy to education and healthcare. Insecurity deters investment, displaces communities, and creates an environment of fear and instability, which hampers growth and development.

### Key Recommendations

**Promote a Sense of Nationalism:** Promoting nationalism is essential to foster unity and collective effort towards national development. By encouraging citizens to set aside personal, ethnic, and religious differences, a sense of nationalism can help galvanize efforts towards common goals, enhancing social cohesion and collective progress.



**Leadership Development:** Investing in leadership development programs is crucial for cultivating visionary, ethical, and competent leaders. Such programs should focus on instilling values of integrity, accountability, and strategic thinking in both current and emerging leaders to ensure effective governance and sustainable development.

**Anti-Corruption Measures:** Transparency and Accountability: Implementing robust mechanisms to track public funds and ensure transparency is vital. Strengthening anti-corruption agencies, enforcing existing laws, and ensuring justice for corrupt practices will build public trust and enhance the efficient use of resources for social development.

**Strategic Role of Women in Social Development:** Emphasizing the role of women in social development is critical. Women should be empowered through education, economic opportunities, and participation in decision-making

processes. This approach not only promotes gender equality but also harnesses the full potential of the population for comprehensive development.

**Inclusive Media on Relevant Economic Issues:** Deploying an inclusive media strategy to highlight and address pertinent economic issues is essential. Media can play a pivotal role in educating the public, fostering dialogue, and holding leaders accountable. Inclusive media coverage ensures that diverse perspectives are represented, promoting informed and participatory development.

**Strategic Advocacy in Addressing Critical Issues:** Strategic advocacy is necessary to address critical issues effectively. This involves mobilizing stakeholders, raising awareness, and influencing policy changes. Advocacy should focus on pressing social and economic challenges, leveraging data and research to drive evidence-based policies and interventions.





# NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT: NAVIGATING THE WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS AND INSECURITY

## GOVERNANCE



Chief Segun Showumi  
(PDP Chefftain)



Yabagi Yusuf Sani  
(IPAC Chairman)



Barr. Kenneth Okonkwo  
L.P. Spokes-person



Mr. Dayo Israel  
National Youth Leader APC



Mrs. Hadiza Bala Usman  
Special Adviser to the President  
on Policy Coordination

PRESENTER



Mr. Seun Okinbaloye  
Channels (TV)

MODERATOR

## PANELLISTS



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## KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Sat. 25th May 2024



9:30am to 4:30pm



Ladi Kwali Hall,  
Old Sheraton,  
Abuja Continental Hotel.



## Governance: Paper Presentation

The inaugural Paul Alaje Colloquium, held today, featured a compelling presentation by Hadiza Bala Usman, Special Adviser to the President on Policy and Coordination, represented by Dr. Sanusi Ohiare. The presentation highlighted the critical role of leadership and good governance in addressing Nigeria's current economic and security challenges.

*"For many years post-independence, Nigeria has suffered from visionless leadership. We must make a shift away from tribalism, nepotism, and religious bigotry towards a collective focus on national development."*  
- Mrs Bala Usman



In her address, Usman praised Dr. Paul Alaje for organizing the colloquium, describing it as a model of proactive citizenship essential for Nigeria's development. "Active citizen participation is a cornerstone of democratic growth," she asserted, emphasizing the importance of citizens vigilantly monitoring their elected officials.

Usman expressed her anticipation for meaningful discussions with compatriots in a non-partisan environment, underscoring the significance of leadership and good governance for national development. Reflecting on her frequent musings about Nigeria's future, she compared the nation's potential to the success stories of leading countries like Switzerland.

"Switzerland, with its population of nearly nine million, is ranked as the most developed country in the world," Usman noted, highlighting Switzerland's consistent top ranking in the UNDP's Human Development Index and the Global Innovation Index. She attributed Switzerland's success to deliberate planning, emphasis on innovation and technology, a robust education sector, political stability, and security—factors she collectively described as effective leadership and good governance.

Usman posed the question of whether Nigeria can achieve such exemplary status or if it remains a mere fantasy. She argued that the key lies in visionary leadership and good governance. "For many years post-independence, Nigeria has suffered from visionless leadership," she lamented, calling for a shift away from tribalism, nepotism, and religious



bigotry towards a collective focus on national development.

### The Way Forward

Addressing the way forward, Usman stressed the need for patriotism and a collective commitment to the nation's progress. "True patriotism drives leaders to prioritize the public good over personal interests," she said, emphasizing the necessity of citizens making sacrifices for lasting change. She cited American columnist Bill Vaughan, stating, "A real patriot is the fellow who gets a parking ticket and rejoices that the system works."

Usman acknowledged the importance of leadership that inspires confidence and prioritizes national interests. She highlighted President Bola Tinubu's decisive move to remove the petroleum subsidy as an example of addressing tough issues head-on. Despite initial opposition, she noted that this decision is gradually proving necessary and is building confidence among the populace.

The Special Adviser outlined President Tinubu's efforts to address Nigeria's multifaceted problems through eight priority areas aimed at reforming governance, education, health, agriculture, social welfare, and other key sectors. She emphasized the importance of clear priorities, deliverables, and performance indicators, with regular reviews to ensure effective delivery.

Mrs Usman also highlighted the launch of the Citizen's Delivery Tracker by the Central Delivery Coordination Unit (CDCU), which allows citizens to

monitor government projects in real-time and hold officials accountable. She praised this initiative for fostering transparency and civic engagement.

Addressing the issues of insurgency and insecurity, Usman outlined a two-pronged approach: direct confrontation with insurgents and the education of children and young adults in affected regions. She argued that quality education would counter the manipulative narratives of insurgents and promote a more informed and resilient populace.

In conclusion, Usman acknowledged the challenges of leadership but expressed confidence in President Tinubu's administration. She called for all Nigerians, including those in opposition, to support the administration's efforts for national progress. Quoting Mark Twain, she urged citizens to join the patriotic effort to make Nigeria great.

"My charge this morning is that we should all join the patriotic train and contribute our quota to making Nigeria great," Usman stated, concluding her address with optimism for Nigeria's future under capable leadership and responsible citizenship.

The event was well-attended, with participants expressing appreciation for Usman's insightful and motivational presentation. The Paul Alaje Colloquium promises to be a significant platform for discussions on Nigeria's development, fostering active citizenship and collaborative efforts towards national progress.



## Governance: Panel Session

THE PAUL ALAJE COLLOQUIUM

ECONOMY SECURITY DEVELOPMENT GOVERNANCE

THE PAUL ALAJE COLLOQUIUM

# NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT: NAVIGATING THE WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS AND INSECURITY

**Objective:** The Governance Panel Session focused on the current state of federalism in Nigeria and how it can be restructured to better reflect the principles of true federalism as outlined in the constitution.

**Moderator:** Mr Seun Okinbaloye

**Panellists:** Chief Segun Showumi (PDP Chietain); Barr. Kenneth Okonkwo (Labour Party Spokesman); and Mr Dayo Israel, Mrs Hadiza Bala Usman (Special Adviser on Policy Coordination to the President), represented by Sanusi Ohiare

### Key Issues

**Internal Democracy in Political Parties:** The absence of independent candidacy underscores the critical need for robust internal democracy within political parties. Effective internal democracy requires adherence to each party's constitution, which dictates the emergence of leaders and the functioning of democratic processes. However, corruption and incompetence significantly undermine these efforts.

**Leadership Disconnected from Public Interest:** The panel discussed the prevalent issue of leadership at various levels of government operating without a genuine commitment to the welfare of the populace. This disconnection results in policies and actions that do not reflect the needs and aspirations of the citizens. Leaders often prioritize personal or political interests over the common good, leading to a lack of trust and engagement from the public. This misalignment between leadership and the public interest manifests in poor service delivery, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient social programs, which in turn perpetuates a cycle of poverty and underdevelopment. The panel emphasized that for effective governance, leaders must be accountable to the people, transparent in their actions, and focused on fostering inclusive growth and development.

**Leadership, Tribalism, and Corruption:** The panel highlighted the intertwined issues of weak leadership, tribalism, and rampant corruption as significant barriers to progress in Nigeria. Weak leadership fails to provide a clear vision or inspire collective action towards national goals, often succumbing to short-term gains or external pressures. Tribalism exacerbates divisions within the country, as leaders and citizens alike may prioritize ethnic loyalty over national unity. This sentiment fuels nepotism and biased decision-making, undermining meritocracy and equitable resource distribution. Corruption further complicates these issues, as it erodes the foundations of trust and integrity in public institutions. The pervasive nature of corruption leads to misallocation of resources, inflated contracts, and a lack of accountability, which severely hampers development efforts.

**Rule of Law and Currency Devaluation:** A weak rule of law and a declining currency were identified as serious issues. An unstable legal environment discourages investment and hampers economic growth, while currency devaluation reduces purchasing power and drives inflation, adversely affecting citizens' livelihoods.

**Flaws in the Federal System:** The panel highlighted significant concerns regarding the structure and implementation of Nigeria's federal system. They



noted that the current framework does not effectively reflect the principles of federalism as outlined in the constitution. There is inadequate devolution of power to the state and local governments, leading to over-centralization and inefficiency. Furthermore, the three arms of government—executive, legislative, and judicial—do not operate with the intended level of independence and checks and balances. This imbalance hinders effective governance and accountability. The panel emphasized that beyond structural issues, the fundamental problem lies in the behaviour and attitudes of the people within the system. A collective effort is needed to review and restructure the federal system to ensure it functions as intended, promoting decentralization, accountability, and improved service delivery at all levels of government.

#### Transactional Nature of Nigeria's Federal Structure:

The panel highlighted that Nigeria's federal structure operates in a largely transactional manner. This means that relationships and interactions between different levels of government are often driven by exchanges and deals rather than genuine cooperation and adherence to constitutional principles. This transactional approach undermines the effectiveness of governance and hampers the proper implementation of federalism in the country.

#### Key recommendations:

**Dissolution of State INEC:** The panel recommended the abolition of State Independent Electoral Commissions (INEC) due to concerns about their effectiveness and impartiality in conducting local elections.

**Empowering Local Governments:** The panel advocated for strengthening the independence and autonomy of local governments. This includes granting them more resources and authority to effectively serve their communities, thereby enhancing grassroots development.

#### Reforming Local Government Elections and Autonomy:

It was recommended to establish clear and democratic processes for electing local government officials. The structure should mirror the federal system, with the chairman and deputy chairman serving as the executive branch and the councillors forming the legislative branch. Financial independence from state governments is crucial to ensure true autonomy. This reform aims to entrench democracy at the local level and ensure that local governments can function effectively and independently, similar to the relationship between the federal and state governments.

#### Promoting Internal Democracy in Political Parties:

The panel stressed the importance of internal democracy within political parties, given the absence of independent candidacies. Parties must adhere to their constitutions, which detail the processes for leadership selection and internal governance. Ensuring internal democracy will help address issues of corruption and incompetence, fostering a more transparent and accountable political environment.

#### Addressing the Transactional Nature of Nigeria's Federal Structure:

To mitigate the transactional nature of Nigeria's federal structure, it is crucial to promote genuine cooperation and adherence to constitutional principles across all levels of government. This can be achieved by implementing clear, transparent guidelines that define the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments, ensuring that interactions are based on mutual respect and collaboration rather than transactional exchanges. Additionally, strengthening institutional checks and balances, promoting accountability, and fostering a culture of integrity and public service can help shift the focus from short-term transactions to long-term governance and development objectives. Establishing mechanisms for regular dialogue and cooperation among the different tiers of government will further enhance the effectiveness of Nigeria's federal system.





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## Winners of TPAC Essay Competition

This year's essay competition focused on the theme of "Nigeria's Development: Navigating the Way Out of The Current Economic Crises and Insecurities". The Paul Alaje Colloquium received over 20 entries from students across the country. A distinguished panel judged the essays based on originality, clarity, and their insightful exploration of the theme.

At the event, Dr. Paul Alaje, the Convener, presented the awards. The winner of the tertiary category Ademuyiwa Toheeb, 300 Level Medicine and Surgery student from university of Abuja received a sum of N250,000.00 for his thought-provoking essay. Likewise, the winner of the secondary category, Merit Eneotu Isaiah of Dazzle International High School Uyo received the sum of 150,000.00 for inspiring essay. The essay competition proved to be a great success, generating significant interest and stimulating discussions on the colloquium's maiden edition.



## About The Paul Alaje Colloquium



### Who We Are

We are dedicated to seeing a better Nigeria as we focus on proffering solutions to the nation's economy, social development, leadership and good governance, and sustainable security.

### Our Mission

Our mission is to foster a culture where citizens are solution-driven and engage with stakeholders and policymakers through our annual national colloquium, essay competitions and enlightenment programs.

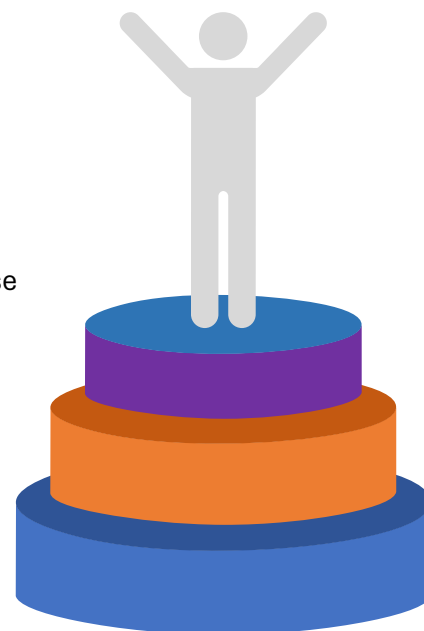
We aim to create platforms where:

- Students enhance their writing skills and critical thinking
- Stakeholders and policymakers share ideas, knowledge and expertise and engage with citizens to shape national policies
- The next generation of leaders and change-makers are empowered to participate in nation-building

Our goal is to create a community through our annual national colloquium where stakeholders' policymakers, and citizens all participate in nation-building and policymaking through their discourse in proffering solutions to national issues

### What We Do

- Pursue national development
- Organize annual national colloquium
- Campus quarterly colloquial
- Annual national school essay





## Meet Our Team



**Dr. Paul Alaje**  
Convener



**Angela Omeiza**  
Chairperson



**Eucharika Ileka**  
Vice Chairperson



**Olukare Ruth Yetunde**  
Secretary



**Erdoo Ungwa**  
Research Team Lead



**Chidimma A. Chukwu**  
Mobilisation &  
Contact Officer



**Isaac A. Ojo**  
Creative Team Lead



**Olumide Onitekun**  
Repertoire



**Dallah Nilzah Jirayi**  
Social Media Officer



**Keke Bongos-Ikwue**  
Member



**Ikeoluwa Abobarin**  
Member



**Iniobong Steven**  
Member



**Ralph**  
Adverts Team Lead



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