



**Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation Worldwide**  
*United "In pursuance of national development"*

## **DIASPORA DAY 2017 ABUJA**

### **NIDO Worldwide COMMUNIQUE**

#### **DIASPORA DAY EVENTS AND CONFERENCE HELD FROM Monday, 24 to Friday, 28 JULY 2017 IN ABUJA, NIGERIA**

**Theme: Promoting Diaspora Participation and Engagement for National Development.**

#### **PREAMBLE**

25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of July annually, are gazette by the Federal Government for the celebration of the Nigeria Diaspora in Nigeria. The celebrations bring together Nigeria Diaspora under the headship of Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation (NIDO).

Galvanizing Diaspora and expatriate human and economic resources towards homeland development is the goal of NIDO. The Diaspora Day celebration has become a Diaspora Week events and conference with most Nigeria Diaspora participants engaging in voluntary and charitable work during this annual homecoming.

Therefore, in achieving this goal NIDO encourages all Nigeria Diaspora to return home, invest and contribute their quota towards the development of our dear homeland.

In doing so, NIDO appreciates the assistance of:

1. The Senate President, through the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Diaspora and Civil Societies, Distinguished Senator Rose Oko;
2. The Speaker of the House of Representatives, through the Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Diaspora Affairs, Hon Barr Rita Orji;
3. The office of the President and Vice President through the Special Senior Adviser to the President on Diaspora, Hon Abike Dabiri;
4. The office of the SGF and the NNVS which are currently the executive departments responsible for coordinating Diaspora Affairs.
5. Specifically this year, NIDO appreciates and celebrates the passing into law of the Nigeria Citizens in Diaspora Commission Act. And urges the National Assembly and relevant ministries and MDAs to move faster towards the passing and implementation of the Diaspora Voting Rights Bill.

## **Diaspora DAY 1: 24 July 2017**

### **Courtesy calls on MDA's**

6. NIDO visited the Nigerian University Commission (NUC). Amongst what was discussed is the possibility of revisiting the 'Linkages with Experts and Academics in the Diaspora Scheme' (LEADS). This scheme which started in 2007 aimed at supporting the Federal Government's efforts in the education sector. NIDO encourages experts and academics of Nigerian extraction in the Diaspora to key into this scheme and contribute to the enhancement of education in our homeland. The NUC will advise NIDO on updated formalities.
7. NIDO visited the Minister of Interior Affairs. The complexities of some Nigeria Diaspora citizenships were discussed. Would special consideration be given to Nigerians who have obtained another nationality? The Minister affirmed his willingness to collaborate with NIDO on matter of interest, with emphases on emigration seminars and consideration for 10 years validity period for Nigerian passport.
8. NIDO thank Distinguished Senator Rose Oko for arranging these visits and the clerk to the Senator, Prince Yomi Omogbehin for facilitating the visits.

## **Diaspora DAY 2: 25 July 2017 - The Conference**

9. The Conference held at the National Assembly House Complex was facilitated by, Hon Barr Rita Orji, and members of the House Committee on Diaspora. NIDO Worldwide Leadership Council takes pride in organising the Conference and thanks NIDO's Local Organising Committee members.

### **Highlights**

10. Hon Rita Orji presided over the DD Event. She says, with the passage of Nigeria Diaspora Commission, the Nigeria Diaspora has arrived. She encourages Nigeria Diaspora to shun ethnicity and fraudulent acts. She concludes that, Nigeria Diaspora are first class citizens in Nigeria; unlike in their host countries. She bade warm welcome home to all the Diaspora.

### **11. The Nigerian Immigration Services**

Their representative assured Nigeria Diaspora that the problem of lack of passport is almost over. In UK for example all backlogs has been cleared. To buttress their resolved, the Nigerian Immigration Services have improved their website with timelines set for all their services and respond to complaints this is in line with the President's directive on transparency. He affirms that change of biometric data on passports while abroad is now possible and seamless. The representative promised to extend invitation to NIDO for the appraisal of the Nigerian e-passport, 10 years after.

### **12. Debt Management Office (DMO)**

Representative from the DMO was grilled as a result of DMO's shabby response to the recently issued Diaspora Bond. The representative pointed out

that the Diaspora Bond is currently trading and as such they cannot speak on trading securities. He confirmed that the Bond was oversubscribed but cannot disclose details as he has no mandate to speak on the issued bond. The House obliged the representative and mandated him to prepare to further brief the Committee in a close session.

**13. Nigerian Identity Management Commission (NIMC)**

The representative of NIMC affirmed that due to Hon Rita Orji's tenacity, great progress has been achieved. NIMC mandate is to enroll all Nigerians whether at home or in Diaspora. NIMC budgetary allocation of 2017 was enhanced in order to cover Diaspora registration. All legal frameworks have been done and awaiting for the seal of the Minister of Justice.

**14. National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP).**

A representative in attendance on behalf of NAPTIP seeks the collaboration of NIDO most especially with the establishment of the Diaspora Commission which she believes empowers NIDO to do more on the area of welfare and protection of Nigeria Diaspora.

**15. National Directorate of Employment (NDE)**

The Director General (DG) of NDE was in attendance. He affirms that the NDE now has data of all unemployed Nigerians with the collaboration of NIMC. There now exist, NDE International (NDEi). NDEi seeks to reduce emigration by providing employment. Government alone cannot provide employment. NDE seeks partnership with NIDO in providing employment. With a viable project plan, NDE is able to facilitate start up funds. It is recommended that the office of Hon Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Diaspora Affairs, Hon Barr Rita Orji acts as a go-between Nigeria Diaspora and the office of the DG of NDE.

**16. Federal Housing Authority (FHA)**

The DG of the (FHA) reaffirms that the FHA wants to be the architect, builder and manager of the proposed Diaspora City to be built all over Nigeria. The focus is to provide shelter to Nigeria Diaspora in any region of Nigeria they choose; provide employment to the teeming unemployed youths of Nigeria and the diversification of foreign earnings through the offer of mortgages to Nigeria Diaspora. He further opined that this will hopefully encourage technology transfer from Diaspora to homeland. Diaspora City is said to be supported by the Federal and State government, the ICPC and the Federal Mortgage Bank.

**17. Chief of Defence Staff**

The representative of the Chief of Defence Staff conveyed the felicitation of the Chief of Defence Staff. He reaffirms that democracy has come to stay in Nigeria. The military is subject to civil rule. A website is to be established for collaboration of the military and the citizenry. The military is transformed and has loads of research and developmental projects that has made it a viable partner with NIDO in the pursuit of national development and improved security of all citizens.

### **18. Controller General of Customs**

The representative of the Controller General of Customs congratulates Nigeria Diaspora for the establishment of the Nigeria Diaspora Commission. The customs will provide enabling grounds for Nigeria Diaspora where relevant and seeks NIDO cooperation.

### **19. Inspector General of Police**

The representative of the IG of Police is delighted to be invited and assures Nigeria Diaspora of the support of the Police and their protection everywhere they are. They assured NIDO of future collaborations and cooperation.

### **20. Ministry of Health the Ministry**

The representative of the Ministry of Health confirms the existence of a Diaspora Health department. A department set aside to liaise and coordinate Diaspora organisations in their voluntary and charitable work in the health sector.

### **NIDO Projects Highlight**

In furtherance to the Diaspora Week tradition, NIDO Worldwide delivered several projects.

- 21.** NIDO America projects includes: A Free 5-Day ICT workshop concluded on 28 July, 2017; and an IDP empowerment project slated for 2018.
- 22.** NIDO Europe projects include: A solar energy project and a youth empowerment & hybrid (EPHG) technology.
- 23.** NIDO Africa projects include: A Diaspora Cancer and Trauma Research Centre in Enugu which is 90% completed. All equipments are provided by NIDO Africa. NIDO Africa asks for a soft landing ground for their visiting professionals.
- 24.** NIDO Asia projects include: Malaria prevention mosquito nets and other health prevention measures; a waste energy conversion system with the University of Nigeria Nsukka and Organic Fertilizer from Waste, a 100 USD million project currently ongoing.
- 25.** Individual members of NIDO America further presents: A Mobile App for Nigerians everywhere, which are freely downloadable, and makes volunteering process seamless. A second Mobile App for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), including small roadside petty traders, providing the mobile tools that the SMEs can use to advertise and attract global customers by using their phone, telephone number, camera and GPS.
- 26.** Goodwill messages from CANUK, SAN and other Diaspora organisations and representatives were received.

### **Diaspora DAY 3: 26 July 2017 – Visit to Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)**

27. NIDO has been in the vanguard of lobbying for Nigeria Diaspora Voting right. All agencies of the Government have accepted that the right for Nigeria Diaspora to vote is sacrosanct. INEC favours Diaspora voting. NIDO and INEC concluded that Diaspora voting is inevitable but the legal frameworks must be enabled. The following laws are affected which the National Assembly must amend:

- Constitution – Section 77(2) Residence in Nigeria;
- Section 17 Equality of Rights, and other applicable sections of the Constitution.
- Electoral Act --- Section 12(1); and Section 134 (2) and other applicable sections of the Electoral Act.

### **Diaspora DAY 4: 27 July 2017 – Visit to Ministry of Science and Technology and the Federal Housing Authority**

#### **28. Ministry of Science and Technology**

Visit to the Ministry of Science and Technology exposed NIDO with loads of opportunities for Nigeria Diaspora especially in the area of domestication of foreign Technology.

#### **29. Federal Housing Authority (FHA)**

To streamline their presentation made on Conference Day NIDO Worldwide had a closed door meeting to determine the progress Diaspora City. Benin City and Abuja locations are fast becoming a reality. The next important update will be by the end of August 2017.

#### **30. Ministry of Trade and Industry**

Visit to Ministry of Trade and Industry (FMITI) was chaired by the Minister of State Hon, Aisha Abubakar. The Permanent Secretary Mr. Aminu A. Bisalla and other heads of departments were present. NIDO Delegates and FMITI agreed to focus on both Information and Computer Technology (ICT) and Industrial Development Clusters (IDC) for investments, knowledge and technology transfer.

### **Diaspora DAY 5: 28 July 2017**

31. The 5 days ICT workshop and training delivered by NIDO America ended in a resounding success July 28, 2017. The participants in Mobile Apps module won awards based on performance, and Certificates of Completion were awarded to all the participants.

32. NIDO Worldwide leadership meeting and appraisals emphasised on Diaspora's place in Nigeria and the need to in place a follow up committee to work with NASS and various agencies on NIDOWW projects and initiatives.

**33.** NIDO Worldwide leadership and delegates were hosted to Dinner on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July at Bercelona Hotel Abuja. Major General Suleiman Bara´u Said Rtd welcomed NIDO members on behalf of TLC organizer of the Event. The event was to formally ask for collaboration between NIDOWW and Nigerian Fallen Heroes Project as part of the sensitization and promotion of Armed Forces Remembrance Day Celebration which is the second statutory National event after the Independence Day. The Continental leaders assured their support for the project.

Looking forward to Diaspora Day 2018 in Abuja with promises of a great Diaspora Week packed with events. Expected highlight will be the welcoming of the board of the Nigerian Diaspora Commission. A new format is anticipated.

**Rapporteur**

**Chibuzo Ubochi KSC**

*On behalf of NIDO Worldwide Leadership Council*