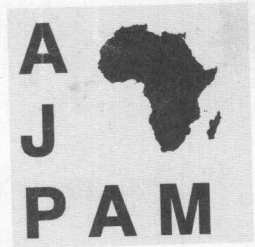


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CONTENT

The Glass Ceiling Effect on Women's Leadership in the Kenyan Public Sector <i>Obuya Bagaka and Muthoni Gachire¹</i>	1
Are the Youth Corrupt? A Study of Ghanaian University Students <i>Justice Nyigmah Bawole¹</i>	20
Adapting to Global Imperatives: Africa's Public Sector in Changing Times <i>'Tunji Olaopa¹</i>	37
Reforming Public Service Delivery in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: Issues, Challenges and Future Prospects <i>Bezabih Bekele Tolla¹</i>	51
Governance and International Image: The Case of Nigeria <i>Abdulrasheed A. Muhammad¹</i>	69
Application of E-Governance in Enhancing Civil Service Management: Lessons from Bangladesh <i>Mohammad Hamiduzzaman¹</i>	82
The Ombudsman, Political Authority and Corruption: An International Survey of Recent Developments <i>Najmul Abedin¹</i>	100
Book Reviews	115

Nigeria emerged at independence in 1960 as a potentially great nation. This is by virtue of its vast population and mineral endowment. This potential greatness has however, remained a mirage as the country continues to suffer significant setbacks in its developmental efforts. Much of the goodwill which the country initially enjoyed at independence has declined drastically. A major fallout of this is the recurrent image and credibility crisis which the country has continued to face. Worst still, this problem has failed to subside in spite of successive governments' efforts at managing it. This paper argues that most of this is a result of the limited effort being made to sell Nigeria creditably to her own population at home and abroad. At the same time, most of the governance crises that underpin or precipitated the image remain and need to be tackled decisively. In addition there is the continuing failure of the Nigerian state to develop capacity to manage new challenges. So, for the country to come out of its current international image problem, it is imperative that the government addresses the fundamental issues and endeavour to re-focus attention on the re-branding efforts.

INTRODUCTION

That Nigeria is 'a giant of Africa' is a common phrase across the continent and even beyond. But the substance of this supposed greatness has remained more of utopian than reality. As Osaghae (1998) aptly captured it, Nigeria since independence has remained at best 'a crippled giant'. This assertion cannot be divorced from the problems that have marred governance process in the country since independence. A staggering reality that the country is currently faces serious image and credibility crises abroad. Indeed, juxtaposing the country's position at independence with contemporary circumstances reveal a situation of high expectations but dashed hopes.

To be sure, the country emerged at independence under a Westminster parliamentary democracy. Aside the prospects offered by independence and the known ideals and prospects that accompany a

democratic society (see, Hadenius, 1997; Muhammad, 2006; Bratton and De Wall, 1997; Omafume, 1997), Nigeria's credentials at independence which set the tone and optimism for its future greatness include a relatively stable political entity, a robust economic base especially with the discovery and exploitation of oil resources, a disciplined and professional military base and a massive population figure which currently stands at about 140 million from the initial 53 million at independence. All these no doubt, accorded the country profound respect both at the domestic realm and internationally.

Nigeria's strong economic base, among other factors, has been observed to inform the dynamism that characterised the country's foreign policy shortly after independence (Osaghae, 1998; Aluko, 1981). In addition, Nigeria parades a rich cultural heritage which in spite of inherent diversities marks it

¹Department of Political Science, University of Ilorin, PMB 1515, Ilorin.

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out among other countries in the continent. For instance, the country is composed of multiplicity of ethnic, religious and linguistic groups adjudged by sociologists and anthropologists to be no less than 250 groups (Otite, 1990, Barbour, Nnoli, 1978). It is commonly asserted that Nigeria is the 10th most populous country in the world while in every four black Africans, one is a Nigerian (Gulrez, 2002). Little surprise therefore that the country played host to the Festival of African Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in 1977.

In spite of disruptive events such as the military coups of 1966, the 13-month civil war and crops of political upheavals especially in the western region among several other internal crises (Akinwunmi, 2004; Gofwen, 2004; Osaghae, 1998; Falola, 1998; Albert, 1998, Akinola, 1981; Ojiako, 1981), Nigeria for several years after independence, enjoyed considerable goodwill and followership from several of African countries and some others beyond the continent. Indeed, Nigeria's leadership role in the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now African Union (AU), and the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) attests to this feat.

Given this favourable context, it was only a matter of time before Nigeria would become an inevitable force to reckon with within and outside the continent. However, this was never to be, following the emergence of series of crises bordering on absence good governance and effective leadership in the country.

It must be emphasised that Nigeria's descent from grace to grass took a gradual process that was characterised by several contradictions in

governance under successive governments. Also, while governance crises in Nigeria was majorly concerned with rescuing the downturn economy in the first two and a half decade after independence, it assumed a more complex dimension in the mid-1990s and ever since seems to have continued with intensity. For instance, it is axiomatic to note that the democratic transition without end (Diamond, Kirk-Greene, Oyediran, eds., 1997) that characterised the Babangida military regime (1985-1993) was a major dent on the country's image among the community of nations.

Unfortunately, the situation became worse under the General Sanni Abacha regime that succeeded the Babangida administration. In fact, opinion seems to crystallise that the Abacha era, with all its maneuverings and manipulation of existing cleavages, was the darkest part of Nigeria's socio, political and economic history since independence (Abegunrin, 1999; Ibeanu, 1994). The apparent brutality of the regime, flagrant violation and abuse of fundamental human rights, disregard for democratic norms, a host of international sanctions led to the emergence of Nigeria as a pariah state within the international community. The sudden death of General Sanni Abacha in June 1998 and the consequent ascension to power of General Abdulsalami Abubakar seemed to place Nigeria on hold among the community of nations. This was because the regime was caught between continuing the path of regression and that of attempting to salvage the already battered image. But wisdom prevailed, perhaps due to untiring domestic and international pressures for democratisation and/or self-conviction of the military ruler, as the regime quickly began a transition process that eventually saw the restoration of

democratic rule in May 1999 under President Olusegun Obasanjo.

Democracy came with its hopes and prospects. However, contrary to the high expectation on restoration of democracy as capable of serving as springboard to mend and re-launch Nigeria's already battered image, the problem took a new dimension with the emergence of new threats that compounded existing problems. Like in the preceding administrations, these issues such as perennial ethno-religious conflicts, intra- and inter-party disputes, executive-legislature wrangling, corruption and other economic crimes, insecurity and hostage-taking in some parts of the country among others were largely a fallout of governance crises in the country.

But while the existence of some crop of crises cannot be completely ruled out in the governance process, the current situation in Nigeria which gave rise to and sustained the image problem cannot be completely divorced from inability of the state to develop capacity that would enable it respond adequately to new and existing challenges.

Thus, how have crises at the realm of governance affected or is affecting Nigeria's external image? What have been the trends and dimensions of the image crises in Nigeria and what options exists for their effective management?

Investigating these issues forms the crux of this paper.

Understanding Governance

Governance as a concept is as old as human civilisation but not until the latter part of 1980s did the concept become so popular in

development literature (Alcantara, 1998; Johnson, 1997). In recent times, however, it is difficult to find a publication on development issues that does not rely on its use. Johnson (1997) even notes that the first classic political science essays on the subject talked about the concept of "governability", which made the rule of law the core of development.

However, with the end of the Cold War, "governability" gave way to the concept of governance which simply put implies the process of decision-making and implementation.

According to Opaku (1995), it is the fundamental process by which the lives and dreams of a people are jointly pursued through deliberate and systematic strategies that helps maximum realisation of their potentials. For Alcantara (1998), it suggests the exercise of authority within a given sphere. What this definition suggests is that it is a concept that is applicable to any level of organisation be it a state entity or otherwise. In other words, while one can hardly talk about governance without talking about the state, governance goes beyond the state to encompass other stakeholders that may be corporate or individuals (Saliu, 2010). This view was also shared by Bello-Imam (1997) that it is the mechanism whereby an institution or organisation incorporates "the participation of relevant interest groups in defining the scope and content of its work including capacity to mediate among these interests when they enter into conflict and the means whereby it demonstrates accountability to those who support it".

It must be noted that governance from the definitions above also involves development,

by the state, of a strong capacity to reconcile opposing interests that gives rise to conflict, effectiveness and efficiency in the management of resources as well as responsiveness on the part of the state. Generally speaking, the idea of governance involves threading a worthy pattern of good while at the same time, avoiding an undesirable pattern of bad. It is in this context that scholars tend to distinguish between good governance and bad governance. While the former represents a positive action taken by the government or an organisation to achieve a goal and its outcome, the latter represents dereliction in upholding the former. Placing it in political context, governance thus is a political process whereby constituted political authorities make decisions for the benefit of the citizens. This is in accord with the position of the World Bank (1991), that governance implies the exercise of political authority and the use of institutional resources to manage society's problems and affairs. This definition implies increased capacity of the state to respond adequately to whatever challenges that may arise from time to time in the process of administering the political entity.

This perspective, shared by this paper, also reflects the general tendency among authors in conceptualising the notion of governance as it relates to the political entity (see, Stephen, 2002; Johnson, 1997). Following from the above therefore, governance can be described as a deliberate and strategic effort by the political authority in a state to galvanise its human and material resources for the purpose of attaining the objectives of statehood. This includes capacity to mediate conflicts, provide for the welfare of its citizens, minimise stress and strain on the system as well as guarantee physical and symbolic

presence of the entity through policies and actions that promote its image and credibility within the community of nations.

Conversely, therefore, governance crises imply the inability of the state to fully mobilise, in an effective manner, its human and material capital for the benefit of the state and its citizens. Symptoms of such crises include persistent conflicts, dwindling economic base, persistent economic crimes, declining confidence of citizens in the ability of the state to cater for their needs, leading to the search for alternative means to survive the harsh terrain and, in response, inconsistent and incoherent moves on the part of government which are suggestive of a panic situation among other domestic challenges.

Given the fact that there is profound linkage between the domestic and external environments of a country, it is little surprise therefore that such domestic challenges are usually potent enough to cause unfavourable backlash for the country within the international system.

Nigeria's Image Problem in Perspective

There is no doubt that contemporary international relations is characterised by attempts by states to build their image and credibility in the international arena. This becomes necessary given the challenges posed by rapid globalisation and increasing interdependence.

Xiufang and Chitty (2009) have rightly observed that current pre-occupation with image building by countries serves a dual function. First, it creates domestic political support, and second, it enlarges a country's international influence.

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As earlier noted, a staggering reality for Nigeria is the image and credibility problem that have persisted for quite some time. While it may not be readily possible to explain, in quantitative terms, the effect which this situation has on the country, the impact which this has on how the country is perceived within the international arena is nonetheless cause for concern. Moreover, in politics, perception is often more important than reality since it determines the extent of support and patronage available to the state within and outside its territorial area.

For instance, one may want to query why in spite of the country's commitment to multilateralism and African Centre Piece Policy (Big Brother Africa Policy), there were oppositions to its candidature for a permanent seat in the United Nation's Security Council. For sure, the principles of multilateralism and African Centre Piece, which Nigeria adopted since independence as a cornerstone of her foreign policy, have only made the best out of her as a universal donor. The country has participated and is still participating in several peace keeping and conflict mediation efforts in Africa and other parts of the globe (Bukarambe, 2010; Sani, 2010; Saliu, 2009). This has also come with commitment of human and material resources to such efforts.

Unfortunately, the image of a universal donor has not been accompanied by a 'universal recipient'. Also, Nigeria has lost several bids to host international tournaments such as the Commonwealth Games, hosting the Miss World beauty pageant etc. due to what can be described as unfavourable international public opinion. It is axiomatic to note that the unfavourable public opinion was precipitated by domestic challenges and inability of the

state to manage them.

For instance in 2007, Nigeria lost its bid to host the 2014 edition of the Commonwealth Games due to rising tension in the Niger Delta and spate of insecurity and political assassinations rampant in the country then. Earlier, in 2002, the Miss World contest was moved to London from Nigeria after riots by Muslim youths opposed to the show left several people dead in the city of Kaduna and some other parts of the North (BBC News, November 23, 2002; Thisday Newspaper, November 24, 2002).

Taking a cue down history, Nigeria's image and credibility problems came to the fore during the reign of Gen. Sanni Abacha. Although before then, there was some resentment to some state policies in the country by the international community. This ranged from the indiscriminate and draconian policies of the Buhari/Idiagbon military regime (1984–1985) to the flagrant violation of human and democratic rights of the citizens by the Babangida military regime (Ajayi, 2005; Momoh, and Adejumobi, 2002). As Ajayi (2005) notes, the nation's emerging image crises deepened greatly under Babangida because the regime "advanced corruption and bribery to a level of state policy, and thereby compounding the moral image of the nation as a very corrupt country. Prospective foreign investors increasingly found it difficult to do business in Nigeria as much was spent on fringe... kickbacks and bribes to bureaucrats" (p 54).

The image crisis, however, went awry during the Abacha regime especially with its staggering record of human rights abuse, excessive looting of public treasury, and abuse of powers. As a fall out of the economic crises

and widening poverty under the regime, there were also cases of deviation from the citizens in their desperate move to survive the harsh economic terrain. Consequently, tendencies such as drug peddling, money laundering, 419 and a host of economic crimes became rampant among Nigerians during the period.

Thus, during the period, Nigeria acquired the status of a pariah state, with hosts of economic and other sanctions from several of its allies and international organisations in addition to being at the bottom of Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, recall by countries of their diplomatic officers and suspension from the Commonwealth and other international organisations among others.

The sudden death of General Sanni Abacha in June 1998 and the consequent assumption of power by General Abdul Salami Abubakar, however, merely served as a pause on the growing negative international image of the country.

In other words, the 11-month period of Abdul Salami's rule (June 1998 to May 1999) was a period of maintaining the status quo when there was neither a decline nor any growth in how the country was perceived in the international system. It must be stated however, that the progress towards democratisation under General Abdul Salami was suggestive to many of a likely springboard for the re-launch and rehabilitation of the already dented image. Thus, at the restoration of democratic rule in 1999, there were hopes of a possible rebound by Nigeria within and outside the country.

Perhaps in recognition of the magnitude of the

problem and attendant losses to the country, the new democratic administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo began a process of reforming the entire socio-political and economic landscapes of the country. High points of the reforms include institutionalising and strengthening the fight against corruption through establishment of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), right-sizing and down-sizing in the civil service, health sector reform, education reforms and political reforms among others.

Indeed, it was the era of reforms which have come with varying degrees of successes (see, Enweremadu and Okafor, 2009; Saliu, Amali and Olawepo, eds. 2008; Alli, 2005). Also, in order to drive the point of an emerging new Nigeria to the international community, the President embarked on shuttle diplomacy with the intent to convince the international community of the commitment of his administration to the reform programmes. The effort would soon pay off with the re-admission of Nigeria to the Commonwealth of Nations from which it was suspended during the Abacha regime; lifting of embargoes on the country; favourable comments on Nigeria by the international community and improved corruption rating. However, it was only a matter of time before President Obasanjo's tactics of shuttle diplomacy earned the title of 'a flying president' among Nigerians.

While, the option of shuttle diplomacy is an effective and potent strategy often adopted by states in international relations, the seeming excesses with which it was explored in the country especially in the first 180 days of the administration and the fact that the

government was slow in responding to new and emergent domestic challenges, accounted for the unfavourable domestic opinion on the President's visits abroad. This position would be appreciated when it is realised that Nigeria, right from the inception of the new democratic administration in 1999 was characterised by hosts of ethno-religious violence in parts of the country, political disputes and assassinations, executive-legislature wrangling, violence in the Niger Delta, intra-executive disputes, deepening economic crises and rising level of poverty among others.

All these are issues of governance which the state could not resolve soon enough. From this standpoint therefore, it could be reasoned that the government's attempt to redeem Nigeria's image is more of external polishing than attempts at resolving domestic challenges which gave rise to poor external perception in the first place. This was the prevailing situation under President Obasanjo, while the issues were not resolved before he handed power over to another civilian administration headed by Umar Musa Yar'adua.

It is important to note that, a cardinal policy of the Yar'adua government was the pursuit of a seven-point agenda meant to transform Nigeria from the depths of development to one of sustainable development. These included: Power and Energy, Food Security and Agriculture, Wealth Creation and Employment, Mass Transportation, Land Reform, Security and Qualitative and Functional Education. This perhaps may have been informed by the administration's believe in the resolution of domestic challenges that often gives rise to external negativities. In line with this philosophy, the administration

decided to grant amnesty to insurgents in the Niger Delta as a way of resolving the crises which have turned the region to a hotbed of violence, kidnapping and arson. Indeed, the Niger Delta crisis is one that has grossly affected Nigeria's image both locally and abroad. It portrays the country as one that is grossly insecure with some nations warning their nationals from visiting the region. But at the heart of these crises is the issue of marginalisation and prolonged neglect of the region by successive Nigerian governments even though the region harbours the bulk of the country's oil resource.

Thus, what started as a mere protest in the 1990s later degenerated into serious conflict that is now assuming different dimensions. Under the amnesty package, militants are given opportunity to voluntarily surrender their arms to the state in exchange for rehabilitation and empowerment by the government. This feat produced resounding success as thousands of erstwhile militants have been accommodated under the programme. Thus, it received encomium and admiration from most Nigerians as well as foreign bodies. In addition, the administration established the Ministry of Niger Delta as a bureaucratic response to the challenges posed by the crises.

In a way, the establishment of a ministry can be described as a panic move on the part of the government that is unwarranted and unnecessary. This is because, several programmes and policies such as the 13 per cent derivation, establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission and the Amnesty package among others, have been put in place by the government.

These are more pragmatic and pro-active in orientation than the new bureaucratic measure. Perhaps the government ought to have been more concerned with understanding why the problem persists in spite of the already existing more practical approaches and to make necessary adjustments.

Moreover, given the inherent problems of bureaucracy as slow and contrived, it is doubtful whether the bureaucratisation option can yield any meaningful result. Second, although the Niger Delta issue is very volatile, it is certainly not the only volatile issue in the country. Others include persistent ethno-religious violence in several parts of the country including indignity conflicts in the Plateau State. It is puzzling then to note why the government has not established a Ministry of Indignity or Religious Affairs to address these equally volatile issues. In another sense, where there is an outburst of equal magnitude from another part of the country, would a similar ministry be established to that effect? Yet, there is nothing to suggest that the Niger Delta crisis is dying out in spite of several resources already pumped into managing it.

Another major point of the Yar'adua administration targeted towards relaunching Nigeria in the international scene was the establishment, through the Ministry of Information, of the 'Re-Branding Nigeria' project. Before then, there was the Heart of Africa Foundation which was aimed at turning Nigeria into a tourist and business destination. However, it was only a matter of time before the initiative, which was private-public collaboration, died out naturally. The project consisted of radio and television jingles to project the image of the country as

well as promoting the image of the country through diplomacy. Indeed, it is doubtful whether this approach can produce the desired result given the fact that the country is still characterised by internal contradictions that gave rise to the problems in the first place. Why then, has the problem persisted?

Understanding the Basis

The central thesis of this paper is that the image problem which Nigeria is currently facing was informed by crises and contradictions in governance. Part of this understanding is that some of these crises have not been addressed while the state has not responded adequately to emerging ones. For instance, first, while the economic crunch may be a basis for deviant tendencies among citizens, there seems not to be any significant improvement in the living standard of most Nigerians for decades. Indeed, the number of people living below poverty lines despite several intervention agencies by the government seems to be on the increase.

The UNDP report (2010), indicates that between 1980 and 1996, the percentage of the core poor rose from 6.2 per cent to 29.3 per cent, although it declined to 22.0 per cent in 2004. Also, the 2010 Global Monitoring Report (GMR) of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), revealed that about 92 per cent of the Nigerian population survive on less than US\$2 daily, while about 71 per cent survive on less than US\$1 daily. In such a situation of increasing abject poverty, citizens may tend to take to sabotage activities, at home and abroad, that profits them as a form of insurance against the worst effect of economic crunch. Thus, activities such as drug peddling, international prostitution, child trafficking and

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a host of others that erodes Nigeria's credibility in the international system becomes prevalent.

Second, weak legal and enforcement mechanisms may yet be a major factor against effective governance. This is because, even where mechanisms are put in place to check some tendencies that may attract negative image for the country, enforcement frameworks are usually weak or ineffective. At times, they become politicised and as such fail to function optimally. A case in point is government's efforts at combating corruption in Nigeria.

In this context, the principal agencies so established are the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). However, the politicisation of these agencies especially under the reigns of President Obasanjo amid other problems (see, Muhammad, Forthcoming), is a major albatross on their effective performance. Consequently, there seem to be doubts about the efficacy of the anti-corruption agencies.

According to the 2010 Standards Compliance Report of the e-Standard Forum – a body whose mission is to monitor and report a country's economic, financial, and political conditions – Nigeria achieves very low overall compliance with international standards and codes, with a score of 11.67 out of 100 in our Standards Compliance Index. It also suffers from the legacy of decades of misguided policies, corruption, the poor state of basic infrastructure, and weak institutions (e-Standard, 2010). In a situation such as this, the likelihood that the country will command

greater respect within the community of nations is remote.

Only recently, the government set up a special commission to review the country's electoral processes (Uwais Commission). This was an aftermath of irregularities that characterised the 2007 presidential elections. Although the report of the commission has never been officially made public, many have wished that the report be followed up and implemented to the letter, but the government seems to have maintained a position that it is bound by the constitution not the report (Daily Trust, June 15, 2010). This has given rise to suspicion that the government has tacitly brushed the report aside, giving the image of a non-conforming authority.

Third, it is also noteworthy that poor information management strategy forms part of the reason for the lingering governance crises in the country. It has been noted that in Africa, Nigeria has the biggest and most virile media community (Ozhekome, 2009). This community, which includes both print and electronic media (including the Internet) has continued to grow since the advent of democracy and liberalisation of political space. Interestingly as well, majority shares are owned by the state. Given the advent of new technologies in broadcasting and information dissemination such as satellites and computer systems, information exchange has become more complex and faster. The implication is that in the process of information exchange, nations and countries are continuously formed or reformed in the minds of other countries (Ozekhome, 2009). Thus, what may appear to be a domestic affair of one country often generates some definite perceptions for it from the international

community.

It is ironical that in spite of the fact that in Nigeria the government seems to own a majority of the media, it is only being used for propaganda purposes rather than advancing the image of the country. Beyond this, information often spills beyond the nose of the government to the extent that it becomes difficult to track.

Often, the government is caught between giving below what is expected in terms of information dissemination or non-disclosure of necessary information to the citizens. For instance, poor information management on President Yar'adua's illness, no doubt, had negative impact on Nigeria's image among the community of nations. If anything, it portrayed the country badly as news about the President's illness was more readily obtained from foreign media than what local media provided. Another instance in the past was the inappropriate handling of the Nigerian government's position on United States stand over the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack. Shortly after the attack, the US had vowed to dislodge Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups from anywhere they may be, a position which was supported by the Nigerian government. Unfortunately, the manner and context of disclosing the information by the then Foreign Affairs Minister, Sule Lamido, prompted religious violence in some parts of the North with its attendant loss of human and material resources.

Thus, the best which poor information management can do for a country is to widen and escalate the rate of crises with all its attendant negativities on the country. At another level, the country's response to

negative reportage from other countries often ends up in complications. It is a truism that today, Nigeria is often portrayed by most foreign media as a drug-peddling society, corruption ridding, politically volatile and ethnically divisive among others yet, the best the country would do is to employ a combination of strategies that include denial, silence and admission of guilt (Okigbo, 2007). The government's response to foreign reports on the Niger Delta crisis is a case in point.

There is also the leadership and leadership style dimension to the governance and image crises. Indeed, Nigeria since independence has not been fortunate with dynamic and well-focused political leadership – be it military or civilian.

For instance, every military regime often claims to seize power in order to stamp out corruption, bad governance and rescue the ailing economy. Observable trends with all military regimes in Nigeria have shown that one is not a credible alternative to the other much as the military is no better than the civilian regimes they overthrow. Indeed, trends have shown that leadership in Nigeria is characterised by stiff competition among the elites as well as political competition is seen as warfare resulting in politically motivated killings and assassinations, all leading on the one hand, to a pathological conception of politics as means to achieving some ends and on the other hand insecurity of lives and properties. The end result of this whole process is that good governance is relegated to the background while corruption, abuse of office and arbitrary sharing of political perquisites takes centre-stage.

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Concluding Comments

It needs to be acknowledged that successive governments have made efforts to manage Nigeria's external image problem to the best advantage of the country.

Unfortunately, problems persist. As already noted in this work, this persistence can be attributed to the fact that, there are crises and contradictions in the countries governance process such that while some of the issues that gave rise to the problem subsists, other new ones have continue to emerge. Besides, the government remains weakly capacitated to manage such issues. As a possible way forward, I would like to propose the following suggestions:

- Since the issue of perennial conflict has remained a major bane of governance in the country, the government should take a holistic view of all conflicts (ethnic, religious, political, economic etc) as not mutually exclusive. Thus the amnesty granted to militants in the Niger Delta region could be extended to other individuals and groups throughout the country who may be in possession of firearms and dangerous weapons. First, this will help the government to mop up the huge array of firearms already in circulation and which often increase the propensity of violence in whatever form. Second, it would help reduce the level of security threats on the state;
- There should be more focused attempt at combating corruption and economic crimes. While current efforts are commendable, the relevant institutions should be strengthened and their operations divorced of political

manipulations in order to increase the level of confidence of the international community in the agencies;

- Information is crucial to the attainment of any organisational or individual objective. However, effective management of such information is of no less significance. Therefore, the government needs effective information management strategies in order to effectively curtail contradictions that may arise in the course of governance;
- The focus of the current rebranding campaign seems to be more of external and little on internal re-orientation in attitudes. This needs not to be so. Rebranding a country comprising divergent peoples and individuals may be an exercise in futility if attempt is not made to re-orientate the individuals that comprise it as well. This is because it is the aggregate make-up and orientation of these individuals that gives the political entity its character and not the other way round. Therefore, efforts at rebranding should be inward looking as well; not just externally oriented.

In conclusion, Nigeria is a country of immense potentials. But for this to be translated into reality, she requires deliberate efforts to resolve the series of contradictions that characterise governance in the state. While the current situation is not a hopeless one, concrete actions must be taken by the state to arrest the decline in international confidence and better enable government to address new and emergent challenges. Nigeria's image problem is a direct reflection of a wider governance crisis in the country.

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