



## **INTERNATIONAL PEACE DIALOGUE FOR NIGERIA IN THE REBUILD NIGERIA INITIATIVE**

### **Concept Note for Antwerp Dialogue of 13 December 2022**

Following its formal global launch in Abuja, Nigeria on 13 May 2022, **Rebuild Nigeria Initiative** decided to embark on 4 National Consultative Sessions and 2 International Peace Dialogues on Nigeria between the second half of 2022 and first half of 2023. The first of such consultations was a most successful consultative session with corporate Nigeria in Lagos on 17 November 2022. Next in line is the **International Peace Dialogue for Nigeria** which will hold on Tuesday 13 December 2022 at the Venerable Chapel of The Cathedral of Antwerp, Belgium.

This planning note outlines the various elements of the planned dialogue. It also attempts an outlay of the strategy to be deployed in organising the meeting to be hosted by Catholic Bishop of Antwerp, Monsignor Johan Bonny in collaboration with a host of community and civil society organisations in Belgium.

#### **1. Pertinence: why consult?**

In the initial consultations leading up to the establishment of **Rebuild Nigeria Initiative**, it emerged that there is a plethora of organisations and individuals working nationally and internationally under the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) space, yet the spate of disintegration discourse keeps heightening. Where some of these entities are not working at cross purposes, they are competing when they ought to be collaborating. A different model is a necessity if Nigeria is to derive value from its rich human capital base in civil society organising and value extracted from the efforts of its international friends.

#### **2. Why hold an international peace dialogue for Nigeria?**

We believe that facilitating peace dialogues at sub-national, national and international levels reinforces the importance of peace as a cornerstone of civil wellbeing, security, politics and socioeconomic prosperity. Peace is the panacea to the Nigeria of our dreams, just as justice and equity are the bedrocks of nationhood. With the mistrust, mutual suspicion and division caused by Nigeria's fault lines, it is difficult for growth and development to thrive. In fact, if unchecked as quickly as possible, retaining the current status quo practices can contribute to the escalation of internal disagreements which, in turn, could contribute to Nigeria completely breaking apart. The long-held notion that Nigeria is "too big to fail" has become an illusion, judging by how deep the nation has sunk.

It must be said that Nigeria is not experiencing peace crises never before seen in other parts of the world. How have countries that were in the place where Nigeria currently is, resolve their conflicts, secured and retained their peace? What role did their friends in the comité of nations play? What are current thoughts and strategies in winning the peace that have eluded nations for a protracted period of time? What role can global friends of Nigeria play in deterring direct and indirect enablers of conflicts in Nigeria? These and more interrogative questions are at the heart of calling a couple of international dialogue for peace in Nigeria.

*\*A comprehensive Speaker Profile will be available as separate document*

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If we consider the cardinal place of Nigeria in the broader African context, then it becomes clear to the world at large that further escalation in the disintegration discourse in Nigeria is not a problem far from the beds of the international community.

### **3. What we seek to accomplish with this dialogue**

As a group of concerned Nigerians, supported by our friends in the international community, the intention is to assemble all willing players, build a coalition of Non-State Actors to interrogate different aspects of securing and sustaining lasting peace from a global perspective. It is our ambition to reach a possible consensus on a common collaborative approach based on international best practice in conflict resolution adapted to the Nigerian realities.

### **4. Topics of Coverage, Speakers & Other Resource Persons**

A combination of the speakers\*, key figures, other resource persons and participants is the means through which Rebuild Nigeria Initiative, RNI will accomplish the goal of the International Peace Dialogue for Nigeria. Below are the confirmed speakers and what they will be speaking about:

- ✓ ***The State of Peace in Nigeria:*** under this topic, **Dr Fatima Akilu**, Executive Secretary RNI & expert in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) will take the audience through the policy landscape of Nigeria as it relates to securing and sustaining peace. She will seek to enlighten the audience of policy initiatives or lack of it and on hindsight, what could have been done better.
- ✓ ***The Fault Lines of Peace in Nigeria:*** in our search to understand where Nigeria started getting it wrong in peaceful co-existence of many people groups, **Pastor Ituah Ighodalo**, President RNI will attempt to recreate the picture of Nigeria as one big indivisible nation, if it ever existed. He will be establishing when, where and why the conflict fault lines developed. In his many interactions through the lengths and breadth of the nation, what are aggrieved groups telling them about what aches them? What, if anything, will reconcile them with those that caused them aches?
- ✓ ***International Perspectives on Conflict Resolution:*** knowing about countries or regions of the world where conflicts have existed, be it religious, ethnic, political or otherwise but have been contained or even resolved, will help agitators for peace in Nigeria to fashion a way out for the country. **Meyrem Almaci**, foremost Belgian Politician and expert Comparative Cultures will provide a paintbrush of what protracted absence of peace has done to nations of the world. She will let us in on what conflict does to vulnerable groups to enable deeper understanding of the urgency for peace in troubled lands and regions. Drawn from what worked elsewhere, Meyrem will equally drop a few recommendations not only on what Nigeria could do to secure lasting peace but also what could reasonably be expected from international friends of Nigeria. What could be expected for instance on the legislative front in the West around passing legislations that seeks to deter direct and indirect conflict enablers in Nigeria?
- ✓ ***Faith as Enabler of Conflict and Peace:*** There are several examples of how religion has been deployed to enable peace in some regions of the world just as same religion has equally been the source of and anchor for the worse conflicts the world has known. Drawing from his broad and

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**Rebuild Nigeria Initiative**  
a better Nigeria for all

international interactions, **Monsignor Johan Bonny**, Catholic Bishop of Antwerp, Belgium will let the audience in his **Keynote Speech** into new thoughts and strategies in the use of faith, particularly inter-religious management, as avenue for winning and keeping the peace.

- ✓ ***Interacting for Peace in Nigeria:*** in this moderated interactive session, speakers will be constituted into a panel and the audience will have opportunity to make brief comments on the topic of peace for Nigeria or pose questions to the speakers. The moderator, **Collins Nweke**, Vice President RNI, will identify beforehand, some 5 key figures within the audience representing different domains of peace, community organising, conflict resolution, religious conflict, counterterrorism, et cetera to make some five-minute remarks. These will be taken on board in the panel discussion.

***More info?***

**Jumoke Akin-Taylor** | Executive Director RNI

[info@rebuildnigeriainitiative.org](mailto:info@rebuildnigeriainitiative.org)

Tel. +1 510 284 7119 | +234 703 187 1514

**Collins Nweke**

Convener | Vice President RNI

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