



NIGERIA: A CLOSER LOOK

The People of Nigeria

Nigeria is a massive country about 115 million people comprising 300 ethnic groups speaking 400 distinct languages. In size, it is two and a half times the size of California. The diversity of Nigeria is reflected in its rainbow of ethnic groups and complexions, views and counter-views, stretching from the fringes of the Sahara Desert in the North to the Atlantic waters in the South.

With one of the highest literacy rates in Africa, Nigeria has the largest and most vocal press in Africa, publishing views and opinions freely expressed. However, while debates are impassioned and views varied, Nigerians largely remain united in a single, unswerving threat: ONE NIGERIA. It is this oneness that has been the guiding posts of Nigeria since its independence even as it embarked upon state creation exercises in a bid to perfect its federal structure.

Since joining the United Nations in 1960, Nigeria has consistently committed itself to the cause of peace keeping and peace making, Nigeria sent its first troops to participate in the UN peace mission in the Congo, only days after its independence. In *World Citizen*, a former advisor to Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Carter, Prof. Ruth Morgenthau says Nigeria, "is among the most committed countries to maintaining the degree of international order that the present UN decision making process permits."

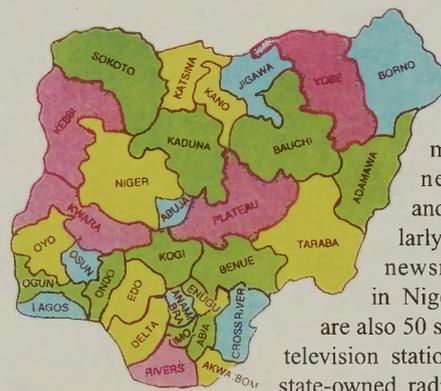
Today, Nigeria is the leading contributor in international peace keeping from Africa. Of the 80 countries contributing troops to over 20 global peace keeping operations, Nigeria has more than 7,000 men keeping the peace outside its borders in places such as Bosnia Herzegovina, Iraq, Kuwait, Western Sahara, Liberia, Angola, Rwanda. Nigerian troops have also served in Somalia, Mozambique and Cambodia, The Congo, Chad, Lebanon, India, Pakistan (Kashmir). The core elements in global peace keeping are the men and women risking their lives in the interest of peace. Nigeria has deployed over 100,000 men and women of its Armed Forces to peace keeping in its 35 years of independence.

NIGERIA: The Media Giant in Africa

In the whole of Africa, the undisputable leader in media has always been Nigeria. Nigeria is one of only five countries which had more than ten newspapers in 1990, according to UNESCO. Of those five, Nigeria maintained a clear lead - 31 daily newspapers, compared to

South Africa with 22, Egypt with 14, Morocco with 13, and Algeria with 10.

By 1993, while the number of newspapers in most African countries were declining, news publications actually ballooned in Nigeria, a trend that represented the highest growth rate in Africa.



Today, there are more than 66 major newspapers and 60 regularly published newsmagazines in Nigeria. There are also 50 state-owned television stations and 40 state-owned radio stations.

Some of the 14 licensed private television stations have already commenced operation.

NIGERIA: Leadership in Education

There are more than 18 million students in Nigerian schools at all levels. That is more than the school population of South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Egypt, Morocco, Tanzania, France, Britain, and Spain.

The country adopted a 6-3-3-4 educational policy in 1982. The policy requires six years primary education, a two-tier (3-year junior, 3-year senior) secondary education and four years of University education. There are 31 universities in Nigeria today.

Apart from fully funding primary education all around the country, the government also runs secondary schools, and funds technical colleges, polytechnics and universities in all 30 states of Nigeria. In addition, there are hundreds of privately-owned schools duly approved by government for the benefit of those who prefer to send their children to private schools.

While literacy rate stands at about 51%, one of the highest in Africa, Nigeria's goal is to eradicate illiteracy in the shortest time possible.

NIGERIA: Leadership in Sports

Nigeria has made its mark in global sports competition. Its national soccer team, the Super Eagles, is adjudged

the best in Africa and one of the best ten in the world. Nigeria won the World Cup in the Under-16 category in China in 1985 and 1993 in Japan.

Nigeria's Under-20 soccer team won the bronze medal in the Junior World Cup competition in the Soviet Union in 1985 and the silver medal in Saudi Arabia in 1989. In 1994 World Cup competition, Nigeria led its group to qualify for the second round.

Dozens of Nigerians are today professional athletes in Europe and America. A Nigerian based in the U.S., Hakeem Olajuwon, is today considered the best basketball player in the world.

PETROLEUM: Nigeria's Economic Bedrock

Nigeria's oil well was discovered in 1908. Today, oil is the bedrock of Nigeria's economic development, accounting for more than 80% of its foreign exchange earnings.

Nigeria's oil reserves are the ninth largest in the world. In 1987, crude oil reserves totalled 16 billion barrels. It is projected that by 1997, the reserves could rise to 20 billion barrels. Nigeria is a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Indeed, the Secretary General of OPEC, Alhaji Rilwanu Lukman, is Nigerian.

Nigeria also has vast, largely unexplored, natural gas reserves, the world's fifth largest. Dozens of European and American businesses are currently exploring joint venture businesses in gas production. But Nigerians themselves now realize the danger of over-dependence on the oil sector. In the past few years, deliberate attempts have been made to concentrate on agriculture and encourage manufacturing. Various strategies have been established to assist farmers at every level, resulting in impressive cutbacks in Nigeria's food import bills while changes in Nigeria's industrial policy are encouraging foreign participation in manufacturing.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Nigeria is the largest and most heterogenous nation in Africa. Apart from this large market and abundant and skilled labor force, Nigeria has a greater variety of mineral resources than any African country. The minerals include iron, columbite, coal, lead, zinc, zircon, uranium, manganese, phosphate, and petroleum.

It is the largest U.S. sub-Saharan African trading partner. Over 19% of U.S. exports to the region goes to Nigeria which also accounts for 10% of the U.S oil