



## **REPORT ON THE NIGERIA CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON PEACEBUILDING AND STATE BUILDING (IDPS) AND ITS NEW DEAL FOR ENGAGEMENT IN CONFLICT AFFECTED STATES**

This conference which started at about 10:00am on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May, 2017 was organised by the Centre for Sustainable Development and Education in Africa (CSDEA) in collaboration with the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The conference was designed to launch the Focus and Programmes of the IDPS and Its New Deal for Engagement in Conflict Affected States while showcasing the nexus between peace and development.

In his opening remarks, the **Director General of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Prof. Oshita O. Oshita** pointed out that the conference is borne out of galvanised efforts by the European Union and the United Nations towards peacebuilding and statebuilding. He further said that the IPCR is a research think tank to help develop policy options for government in the area of peace and conflict resolution.

The Director General reminded the conference that Nigeria as a nation is facing multi -dimensional conflicts that are economic, political and socio-cultural in nature. This he said calls for strategic action plans to come to terms with these

conflicts. He however, acknowledged the contributions and support of the Honourable Minister of State, Hon. Khadija Bukar Ibrahim towards peacebuilding in the country. He further emphasized that despite the difficulties, peace can only thrive when there is understanding among ourselves.

He deeply and greatly appreciated Excellencies from various embassies and diplomatic corps for finding time to attend the conference. He welcomed all and wished all participants a successful and peaceful deliberation.

In his welcome address, **Mr. Theophilus Ekpon, Executive Director, CSDEA**, thanked participants for being part of the strategic meeting. He remarked that the effort to bring people together started in 2014 when the first Civil Society IDPS/New Deal conference took place.

He stated that there have been challenges to peace in the North- East, the Middle-belt, the Niger Delta and other parts of Nigeria and that the IDPS which is the first ever UN mandated forum for political dialogue is best suited for addressing the challenges to peace in Nigeria. He therefore expressed the determination of CSDEA and partners towards supporting peacebuilding in Nigeria.

He also called on the Federal Government of Nigeria to officially endorse the IDPS to ensure full implementation of its principles and the New Deal in Nigeria.

**The Chairman of the conference Professor Eddy Idjie** Started his speech with a quotation “Peace begins with me but does not end with me. Let charity reign among human being. Peace does not end with me, must be extended to other people and areas”.He acknowledged the fact that conflict generating

dynamics is in human beings, he however maintained that anyone who cannot resolve conflicts when it happens, the existence of such fellow is questionable.

While appreciating the representation of participants, he urged them to work towards galvanising peacebuilding in the country.

**Special Guest of Honour and Hon Minister of State, Foreign Affairs, Her Excellency, Hon. Khadija Bukar Abba Ibrahim** in her speech stated that conflict brings about fear in every part of the world. Conflicts according to her leads to weak governance, lack of capacity, poverty and insecurity. She equally maintained that actualising sustainable development is anchored on the nations leadership and it's peacebuilding mechanism.

She greatly commended IPCR and CSDEA for the wonderful collaboration, stressing that peace structures with new ideas should be built and encouraged. The Minister consequently urged development partners to support such initiatives and partner with relevant agencies in peacebuilding.

According to her, no part of Nigeria is free from conflict and the IDPS which has been endorsed by over 40 nations of the world is worth engaging with to holistically address peacebuilding in Nigeria and further noted that the world needs new ideas in the areas of peacebuilding.

The Guest speaker of the occasion and Chairman, Federal House of Representatives Committee on IDPs, Honorable Sani Zoro recognised all participants. His speech focused on the activities of Boko Haram and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). He commended the IPCR and CSDEA for the conference that has brought stakeholders together to brainstorm on peacebuilding.

Hon. Zoro started by saying that Nigeria did not see the conflict coming as it 6 years ago. According to him, activities of the Boko Haram have snowballed into Cameroun, Chad and Niger, describing it as one of the major crises across Lake Chad Basin. He commended the effort of the present administration in liberating most of Nigerian territory that was occupied by Boko Haram. He stated that many returnee refugees from Cameroun are back to their land in Bornu and Adamawa States.

Presently the Boko haram activities has given rise to series of challenges thereby over stretching resources of government. The lawmaker is of the view that more effort should be intensified in the areas of health, education, food and water in these conflict-affected zones. He commended the effort of Embassies and donor agencies for their assistance to the affected victims.

Hon. Zoro painted graphic pictures of the devastation occasioned by the activities of the insurgents; closure of school, destruction of masts, MTN, GLO etc, looming famine and severe social vices. He therefore called for global policy agenda and post conflict initiatives such as the IDPS and its New Deal for engagement in conflict affected states to be institutionalised.

In her speech, the **Ambassador of Finland Her Excellency Pirjo Suomela-Chowdhury** commended the organisers for the dialogue while pledging active support for the IDPS in Nigeria. She said conflict must be resolved in a sustainable way while announcing that so far 3.5 Million Euros has been committed to Nigeria by her country to support peacebuilding in the North East. She also congratulated Nigeria for the release of some of the Chibok girls.

**Norwegian Ambassador His Excellency Jens Peter** stated that preventing conflict is more important than resolving it, stressing that early warning is very

important. He warned Nigeria government not to allow herself to be dependent on foreign aid while pledging his country's support to the IDPS programme in Nigeria.

**ECOWAS representative Mrs. Onyinye** expressed gratitude to the organisers while urging that the conference should not end in rhetorics. She pointed out that the issue of violence without borders must be curtailed.

**Representative of Chief of Army Staff, General Agbuzu** commended the organisers for the conference while assuring their support to the IDPS. He also maintained that there will be stabilization operation in the North East.

**Former Kaduna State Governor His Excellency Ramalan Yero** commended the organisers for the conference. He emphasised the need for sincere dialogue and social justice. He advised that the outcome of the conference should be taken up with the Executive Arms of government for sustainable follow up and implementation otherwise nothing will come out of it at the end of the day.

**The UNESCO representative Mr. Ydo Yaw** remarked that his organisation is ready to collaborate in the areas of youth deradicalisation, interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding in general.

At this point the Hon Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, along with other dignitaries unveiled the focus and proposed programme for the IDPS/New Deal implementation in Nigeria. The Director General (IPCR) immediately promised that the National Steering Committee for the programme shall be inaugurated in immediately to develop a National Action Plan for the implementation of the programme in Nigeria.

Thereafter, Mr. Andrew Nkemmeme of the IPCR gave a historical perspective of IDPS and detailed the focus areas and their accompanying potential programmes. He however stated that these might not be the only programmes for each focus area and that the propose Steering Committee is to add or subtract based on the needs of the conflict affected zone in perspective. He consequently used the opportunity to call on agencies and partners to further have a critical look on the programmes and select the ones to fit into their overall project focus in Nigeria.

The conference came to an end by 2pm with a vote of thanks by Hon. Arziki Sawa, Senior Adviser, Centre for Sustainable development and Education in Africa.

The next steps as agreed upon included:

- i. Setting up and inauguration of the IDPS Steering Committee in Nigeria**
- ii. Advocacy to the various stakeholders on Nigeria's membership in the IDPS and g7+.**
- iii. Developing a National Action Plan on the IDPS/Its New Deal for Engagement in Conflict Affected States.**