Nigeria:
the Economics of Failure

Oby Ezekwesili Canvasses for Economic Ideas Revolution

AfriHeritage Tasks CSOs and NGOs On Synergy for Effective Impact
OBY EZEKWEZILI CANVERSES FOR ECONOMIC IDEAS REVOLUTION AT THE BIG IDEAS PODIUM

Former Minister of Education and Solid Minerals, Dr Oby Ezekwesili has made a strong case for an urgent economic ideas revolution in the country in order to prevent an impending total collapse of the country’s socio-economic life. Oby said this on Tuesday at the Big Ideas Podium, an intermittent public policy debate and analysis programme of the African Heritage Institution (AfriHeritage), Enugu.

In her lecture titled, “Nigeria: the Economics of Failure”, the former “madam due process” asserted that the citizens must wage an ideas war that will upset the status-quo and disrupt the existing socio-economic class. According to her, it is only when this is done that a new Nigeria that will ensure the well-being of her citizens will emerge. “Nigeria needs an Ideas and Mindset war that will topple the prevalent predatory elites and their obsession for rapidly thinning natural resources rents as their economic anchor and safe zone. Nigeria must stage an Economy, Economic Structure and Economic Class War that is intellectually revolutionary enough to birth an entirely new country and people”, she declared.

Dr Ezekwesili who was the guest speaker at the event berated the ruling class for their insincerity, lack of vision and diversionary tactics in their over fifty six years leadership of the country. She accused the politicians and those in leadership of replacing the economics of the people with politics; she believes politics, though important, is only a means to the economics, this is because economics is about the welfare of the people. In her proposition for a better, prosperous and egalitarian Nigeria, the former minister called for a total disruption of the exiting socio-economic class structure. However, she was clear in her message: “The specific nature of the disruption one wishes to canvass is one which is triggered by a new awakening by citizens to demand a re-balance of the weight of power between those that "rule" and the ones they rule. How does this happen? It can happen by the agency of informed, active and engaged citizens who are cohesive and collective enough to launch a “buy out option” and enforce the retirement of the existing political class and changing the structure and substance of the ongoing conversation”
She warned that while her wake-up call has nothing to do with tribal, religious or ethnic inclination, that it is an ideas and mindset war that will topple the prevalent predatory elites and their obsession for rapidly thinning natural resources rents as their economic anchor and safe zone.

Oby who made allusions and inferences richly from the Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore’s experience, however warned that any assumption that the rising trend of citizens’ restiveness and complaints, particularly that of the youths are mere version of the old social theatrics that will soon fizzle away, may well be a joke. “To Nigerians who are above fifty, like me, the rising trend of political drama could be regarded as same-old-nothing-new theatrics because we have seen various versions of it in the past; does anyone really think that there is nothing to worry about because the dust will settle as it always did previously? Anyone in my generation who answers yes to these questions falls into the grips of the fallacy of misdiagnosis”, she averred.

elites and ruling class have failed in their leadership and provision of development and good governance.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors of African Heritage Institution and former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Professor Chukwuma Soludo in his contribution upheld the call by Dr Ezekwesili that the citizenry has a responsibility to take a decisive action in taking control of the economy through ideas revolution and intellectual paradigm shift. Some dignitaries present at the occasion include former minister of Information, Chief Frank Nweke jnr; eminent scholar, Professor Okwudiba Nnoli, who was one of the paper discussants; the moderator, Professor Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, (Dean of the Faculty of Law, UNN) and a host of others.

**Communiqué of the August 15th Edition.**

The Big Ideas Podium (BIP) is a public policy debate forum where well-informed and involved Nigerian citizens with big ideas boldly discuss topical and burning issues of national and international significance. The main objective is to discuss extensively national issues that can provoke high impact policy making.

The August 15th, 2017 edition of the program featured Dr. Oby Ezekwesili whose presentation was on “Nigeria: The Economics of Failure”. The discussants were two professors of Political Science, Okwudiba Nnoli and Okey Ibeanu, while a distinguished professor of law, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, anchored the event. The timely topic was presented at a period when several indicators like the global happiness index; fragile state index; inequality index; etc all ranked Nigeria very low. The topic attracted participants from the government, civil society organizations (CSOs), media, business and industry, academia and local communities. Much of the discussions focused on:

1. the statistical evidences that portray the nation as a fragile state,
2. inept and irresponsible political leadership in Nigeria;
3. addressing the present economy, economic structures and economic inequalities;
4. using positive disruptions to fix the nation’s problem; and
5. the need for the citizens to take positive actions towards reclaiming Nigeria from the political class. These issues were anchored on how best to deal effectively with the chal-
Observations/Remarks

• Many statistical evidences on human capital development, poverty reduction and quality standard of living revealed negative and abysmal rankings of the country on these indicators. Other evidences include weak central government, lack of adequate public services, widespread corruption and criminality, sharp economic decline, etc.

• The existing political leadership/class for the past 57 years needs to be uprooted. Past leaderships have only delivered poor governance, decadent and spent status quo. Therefore, the political structure that has been existing since independence is not compliant with the 21st century rule of ideas.

• The failure of Nigeria has become normalized and internalized as her citizens have adopted diverse coping strategies. Many Nigerians have become resilient with economic hardships and poverty.

• There is a sound of war again. The polity is heated up in another cycle of political disenchantments, ethnic restiveness and multiple dimensions of insecurity. Unfortunately, the political class is neglecting this introspective understanding of today’s Nigeria and the changing times and season. They remain stuck in their pursuit, or quest to capture, recapture and retain power for purely primitive accumulation.

• The Nigerian political elite class has reduced governance to a Russian roulette. The widened gap of inequality and high poverty rate showed that the quality of citizenship is quite poor.

• The existing disconnects between the ruling class and the rest of the citizens is a consequence of economics of failure in Nigeria. The only time the ruling class interacts with the citizens is during election campaigns which come after every four years.

• It is only positive disruptions that can fix the Nigerian problem. Intellectual revolutionary war or war of ideas is what is needed to topple the predatory political elites, who see the commonwealth or national resources as their economic anchor and safe zone.

Recommendations

• That there is an urgent need to reverse the current economics of failure in Nigeria

• That the citizens are the major catalysts for creating a new Nigeria based on ideas revolution

• The country should play less politics and invest more in the economy. The national resources that are invested in politics should be redirected to addressing the economic challenges facing the country.

• A constructive citizens’ united action is imperative. The ‘Citizens’ Era’ shall see ordinary people empowered enough with economic ideas which will reverse and end Nigeria’s economics of failure. Thus, the market of governance will witness a structural shift from the supply side to the demand side.

• There should be a structural shift in governance from the supply side to the demand side. This could be achieved with organized citizens with economic ideas who can anchor the debate and legitimize the new economic order.

• There is an urgent need for the members of the academia/the intelligentsia to lead an intellectual war of ideas or debate among our leaders in order to ascertain who is best suited to deliver the kind of dividends that citizens of countries like South Korea and Singapore have taken for granted.

• Nigeria’s priority should be to create the greatest happiness for the greatest number. For this to be achieved, strong institutions should be created and sustained not just for making laws/rules, but also for enforcing and implementing such rules so as to generate the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

• The government should initiate a new kind of education for innovation and liberation of the poor masses.

• The citizens of Nigeria should get more involved in the process of governance by holding the political class accountable at all levels.
The Executive Director of the African Heritage Institution (AfriHeritage), Enugu, Prof Ufo Okeke-Uzodike, has called for a more collaborative effort between and among civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the country, in order to achieve greater organizational goals and make more impacts on the society.

Speaking during a meeting of a group of CSOs and NGOs at the AfriHeritage office in Enugu, South-east Nigeria, the director whose institution (AfriHeritage), is reputed to be a world-class socio-economic cum political think-tank enjoined members of the civil society group to synergize so as to optimize their capacity and make more progress in their various services to their communities and to the greater society.

Prof Okeke-Uzodike, decried the present system whereby many organizations of similar focus go about their assignments individually and end up achieving little or nothing whereas such organizations could pool resources together, and synergize for a greater impact.

“As such, we need to ask a fundamental question: “is anyone in government (that matters) actually listening to much of what we have to say as CSOs? If so, where exactly can we find the evidence? I do not think so; otherwise Nigeria would look far more different and our people would be much better off than we are right now. The statistical evidence is damming.”

It is for this reason than we thought that we should call this meeting of CSOs. Our goal is to see whether it is feasible to develop an alliance of CSOs with a view to see how best to combine interests and develop partnerships towards more effective engagement for effective change in Nigeria” he said.

Earlier in his welcome remarks, Prof Okeke-Uzodike reminded the participants the core objectives and responsibilities CSOs and NGOs owe the society. According to him: “NGOs and CSOs generally are the most active institutions within civil society: Because of the weaknesses and tendencies of governments and business interests, Civil Society Organizations are indispensable institutions in every modern society regardless of its location and its level of development.

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“Everywhere, because CSOs (usually) have their ears closer to the ground than government, one of their most important roles is to serve as bellwethers for identifying problems long before governments understand that the problems exist or begin to appreciate the enormity of the issues involved”.

According to Mr Chibundu Ucheagbu of Better Community Life Initiative, Enugu, the NGOs have not performed as expected due to a myriad of challenges particularly funding as well as lack of cooperation from government officials who stifle the free-flow of information which NGOs need to do their work.

At the end, the NGOs and CSOs resolved among other things to ensure fiscal discipline and budget transparency in their various operations; engage in and sustain a more effective advocacy, and work towards adequate capacity building for staff of CSOs. They also emphasized the need for CSOs to identify their thematic areas and synergize with each other for greater impact.

SCHOLARS GIVE RECIPE FOR PEACE AND INTEGRATION AT AFRIHERITAGE 2017 CONFERENCE

Academics and other scholars who graced the 2017 conference of the African Heritage Institution, Enugu, have agreed that the attainment of peace and national integration in Nigeria is possible and can be achieved within the shortest possible time if the government can ensure that the federation is rebalanced along regional or geo-political zones; entrench good governance and ensure accountability to the people in public service.

They observed that the present discordant tunes and orchestration of separatist agitations by some ethnic nationalities are primarily fuelled by two main reasons: pre-war and post-war. On pre-war, the colonial policy of divide and rule; forceful incorporation of different nationalities into the big state and manipulation of ethnic and cultural differences of members of the state have all combined to propel and heat up separatist agi-
Post war causes of tension and hostilities in the county include marginalization/relative deprivation; manipulation of ethnic and cultural differences; structural imbalance as well as governance failure.

According to one of the key note speakers, Professor Elochukwu Amucheazi, he highlighted the need for evaluation and re-evaluation of “settled ideas to ascertain its impeccability, according to him, no idea is so sacrosanct to be above questioning. Therefore, the idea of Nigeria’s unity can be examined and re-examined to arrive at the best option. “Nigeria must settle for a truly balanced federation, in all ramifications of that concept”, he asserts.

In his contribution, Professor Okwudiba Nnoli (Professor Emeritus), spoke very passionately about the need for proper restructuring and change and to entrench peace and national integration.

Earlier in his welcome remarks, the Executive Director of the African Heritage Institution (AfriHeritage), Professor Ufo Okeke-Uzodike, posited that the problems facing Nigeria are too important to be left to our politicians. According to him, Scholars have a vital role to play in ensuring that the lines and details of debates and policy are focused appropriately, hence the need for the conference.

He revealed that the idea of the conference is in pursuit of long lasting and workable peace in the country. “We wanted to make it a gathering of those truly interested in engaging in the issues of peacebuilding and national integration in an environment where the nation is not integrated and where many of its parts are pushing for separation”.

“Nigeria is a seriously divided country. Regrettably, there are tremendous divisive pressures everywhere. It seems that Nigerians are often so focused on the things that divide them that they are unable to identify and appreciate the things that bind them”, he averred.

The conference which held at the institution’s conference hall in Enugu on Friday September, 22nd, 2017 with the theme: “Peace Building and national Integration: The Political Economy of Separatism” was well attended by eminent scholars.
Communiqué of the 2017 Annual Conference on Peace Building.

Background:
Nigeria is a seriously divided country. Regrettably, there are tremendous divisive pressures everywhere. It seems that Nigerians are often so focused on the things that divide them that they are unable to identify and appreciate the things that bind them.

The costs in terms of bad human relations, stunted development, lost opportunities, embedded poverty, and the associated consequences are too immense to tabulate. The problems facing Nigeria are too important to be left to our fumbling politicians. Scholars have a vital role to play in ensuring that the lines and details of debates and policy are focused appropriately. These and more informed the need for the conference.

PARTICIPATION:
The conference was well attended by eminent scholars, from across the federation and beyond. Papers were presented by experts in different fields i.e. law history, political science, humanities, etc.

Observation/Remarks:
In its critical evaluation of the various peace building and national integration efforts made by various Nigerian governments at different times and why they have not yielded the desired results, the conference therefore made the following observations:
⇒ The Nigerian government has in the past taken some steps towards peace building and national integration, like the NYSC, unity schools. Unfortunately, these laudable steps have lost their main focus due not only to lack of adequate planning and funding, but also to deviation from set policy.
⇒ Electoral processes have often been manipulated based on “godfatherism”; and unpopular/unworthy candidates are often elected as leaders. These have created tensions and hostilities in the nation, thereby disintegrating rather than integrating the country.
⇒ The colonial policy of divide and rule as well as the forceful incorporation of different ethnic nationalities into one big nation without dialogue on the terms of unity have largely contributed to the absence of peace in the nation.
⇒ Marginalization/relative deprivation, structural imbalance, and governance failure are some of the major contributors to socio-political rivalries in the country.
⇒ Manipulations of ethnic and cultural differences by the ruling class are also contributing factors to social and political conflict.
⇒ That the character of Nigerian democracy which engenders a disconnect between the leaders and the led contributed to the rise and escalation of insurgency and separatist agitations in Nigeria.

Recommendations:
The conference, having observed the above issues and noted the importance of peace in the socio-economic and political development of the country -- especially with respect to nation building and integration -- made the following recommendations:
• The Federal government should ensure that the federation is restructured meaningfully;
• The rule of law, good governance, public transparency and accountability, and fair, efficient and effective public service systems should be entrenched;
• There should be a renegotiation of Nigeria’s unity based on agreed upon principles and norms;
• Religion and religious affairs should be a residual matter; and government should play minimal roles except on matters of international relations;
• The Federal government policy on land ownership should be revisited through the amendment of Land Use Act to give individuals rights over their ancestral land.
• Citizenship should be based on Residency Bill and not on state of origin. A maximum number of years of residence not totaling more than six years may be set for individuals before they can become citizens of other states);
• Justice (real and perceived) must precede peace and unity;
• Government agencies and institutions should return to their original philosophies and
functions, and must ensure justice and fairness and merit in matters such as appointment, promotion, etc;

- Inter-group/inter-ethnic cultural exchanges and relations should be cultivated and encouraged;

- Nation building and peace building in Nigeria should be a collaborative engagement involving both the citizens and the state;

- The Intelligentsias and academia should effectively use their platforms to enlighten and equip the populace with narratives on nation building; and

- The political conferences organized by ex-presidents Olusegun Obasanjo in 2005, and Goodluck Jonathan in 2014, should be revisited with a view to harmonizing the recommendations and implementations of key aspects dealing with peace building and national integration. The outcome of those efforts should be vetted further within states and views collated for the assessment of the review committee on the national constitution.

AFRIHERITAGE COMENCES SUB-NATIONAL DOING BUSINESS SURVEY

The African Heritage Institution (AfriHeritage), Enugu, has commenced the Sub-national Doing Business in Nigeria 2018 Survey, a project of the World Bank in conjunction with the Federal Government of Nigeria. According to the Executive Director of AfriHeritage, Professor Ufo Okeke-Uzodike, the “Sub-National Doing Business survey covers exhaustively business regulations and reforms in different cities and regions within a nation and can be used to analyze specific regulations that enhance or constrain investment, productivity, and growth”.

“It will provide data on the ease of doing business, rank each location, and recommend reforms to improve performance in each of the indicator areas. Selected cities can compare their business regulations with other cities in the country or region and with about 185 other countries”, he said.

(Continued on page 10)
He also assured that AfriHeritage is adequately prepared and ready to carry-out a detailed and accurate data gathering on the sub-national doing business in Nigeria across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. He further revealed that the researchers were properly trained at a workshop that took place at the World Bank office in Abuja a fortnight ago. actual survey, the institution was in Abuja between 22nd and 23rd August, for the training of state coordinators of the World Bank Doing Business 2018 Survey.

Professor Okeke-Uzodike further revealed that the World Bank contracted the African Heritage Institution (AfriHeritage) to be the Nigerian coordinating organisation for the survey, and “we are working with the Nigerian Institute of Builders (NIOB), Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE), Nigerian Architects Association (NIA), and the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV) as institutional partners in conducting the survey. he stated.

It would be recalled that the African Heritage Institution is a non-profit and independent think-tank which thrives primarily in socio-economic and political research to promote evidence based policy making and people oriented laws for good governance. AfriHeritage does this most times through stakeholder/community engagements and interactive programs that explore and harness the views of both the government and the people. Given the quality assurance and reliability of its research findings, many international organizations and agencies in need of accurate data for social planning usually patronise it. Some of its programs include: Big Ideas Podium; BECANS; Enugu Forum; etc.

The institution was also involved in the 2014 sub-national doing business in Nigeria survey by the World Bank. For the Sub-national Doing Business in Nigeria 2018 Survey, two national coordinators have equally been appointed, they are: Dr Nathaniel Urama and Dr Uzochukwu Ama-kom. Earlier before the commencement of the actual survey, the institution was in Abuja between 22nd and 23rd August, for the training of state coordinators of the World Bank Doing Business 2018 Survey.

Perl, AfriHeritage Meet In A Strategic Partnership Build-up

The Management of African Heritage Institution (AfriHeritage) met representatives of Perl in a strategic partnership build-up to strengthen its operational capacity. In the meeting, Perl sought to have an overview of the operations and organizational effectiveness of AfriHeritage as a knowledge hub, with a view to determining where it can partner with the institution for more productivity. According to the head of Perl team, Mr Bamidele Thomas, his organization will analyse the findings and determine areas it will assist. He commended AfriHeritage for the giant strides it is recording and for being a trail blazer in social, economic and political research which has helped shape the community debates and policy engagement.

The Executive Director of AfriHeritage, Professor Ufo Okeke-Uzodike, commended and thanked Perl for its interest in AfriHeritage and promised his organization’s unrelenting effort in providing community engagement, advocacy and reliable data to both the demand and supply sides of the society in policy formulation and implementation, not minding the numerous challenges militating against the attainment of set objectives. He disclosed that AfriHeritage, as a not-for-profit, non-political and non-religious organization, would do far more than it is doing at present, but for the paucity of funds, especially in the area of capacity building.

NEW APPOINTMENTS: FINANCE, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGERS RESUME DUTY

In a move to further strengthen the internal organizational capacity of the institution; two new staff joined AfriHeritage in the months of July and August, as Finance, and Communications Managers respectively.

To this end, Mr Magnus Nnanna Ezuma, comes in as Finance Manager; a holder of Masters in Business Administration (MBA) Degree and another Masters (MSc) in Development studies from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, the new finance manager, a chartered accountant.
(associate member, Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (CNA), 2009, comes with a rich professional background from both the public and private sectors. The Ebonyi State born accountant who is an ISO certified lead auditor has worked in several organizations some of which include Kumexco Ltd, Missebo Cotonou Rep. of Benin, De Piudentcom Int’l Enugu, among others. Prior to joining AfriHeritage, he was deputy manager, and head of Internal Audit, at the Enugu Office of the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).

Similarly, Mr Anthony Emeka Odom, a 1999 Theatre Arts (with media arts option) graduate of the University of Ibadan comes on board as Communications Manager. Mr Odom has over fifteen years professional experience garnered across marketing communications, radio/television production and print journalism. As a mass communicator, he has worked in several organizations including PreX Advertising, HotPot Communications Ltd. etc. A holder of Masters Degree in Theatre Arts, specializing in arts and cultural administration and management, he equally has a postgraduate diploma in hospitality and tourism studies. As a mass communicator, he has worked in several organizations including PreX Advertising, HotPot Communications Ltd. etc. A holder of Masters Degree in Theatre Arts, specializing in arts and cultural administration and management, he equally has a postgraduate diploma in hospitality and tourism studies. As a mass communicator, he has worked in several organizations including PreX Advertising, HotPot Communications Ltd. etc. A holder of Masters Degree in Theatre Arts, specializing in arts and cultural administration and management, he equally has a postgraduate diploma in hospitality and tourism studies. As a mass communicator, he has worked in several organizations including PreX Advertising, HotPot Communications Ltd. etc. A holder of Masters Degree in Theatre Arts, specializing in arts and cultural administration and management, he equally has a postgraduate diploma in hospitality and tourism studies.

Communications Manager Attends Advocacy Training Workshop in Lagos

In line with the career and professionalism enhancement policy of the institution, the new communications manager, Mr Emeka Odom, in the month of September, 2017 attended a training/workshop in Lagos. The training workshop which was on: CSO PROFESSIONALISM AND EFFECTIVENESS THERAPY (C-PET) was conducted by CSR-in-Action, professional public relations and advocacy outfit, and Access Bank, took place at the bank’s corporate headquarters in Victoria island, Lagos, on Wednesday, 13th September, 2017. The training was well attended by non-governmental organizations working on various projects where extensive community engagement and advocacy is required for successful completion.

The training was divided into two segments, the morning session was on COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT and the facilitator was Igazeuma Okoroba, a PR/community relations specialist, while the afternoon session dwelt on STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT and the topic was taken by Emete Tonoukari, another public relations/engagement specialist.

The workshop/training dwelt principally on the importance and mechanics of engaging beneficiary communities as well as other groups whose interest may, in one way or the other, be affected by policies,
decisions, etc or whose influence, approval, cooperation, etc. may be required for the success of any project, policy or law, even when such project, policy, etc is supposedly in the interest, or for the benefit of such people.

The workshop identified reasons why unnecessary tensions usually characterize relationships between organizations and their stakeholders and why hitherto cordial relationships between organizations, including the government, and their publics usually go sour, as due to lack of strategic stakeholder/community engagement master plan as we as lack of proper and adequate organizational communication plan which includes adequate budget to pursue and execute communication plans.

(Continued from page 11)

The Communications Manager at the Advocacy Training Workshop in Lagos

Press Coverage!
The institutions events were carried by different media houses within the period.
Some of them are:
The Guardian – Wednesday 16th August, 2017 pg. 4
LEADERSHIP Weekend – Saturday 23rd September, 2017 pg. 53
LEADERSHIP – Thursday 21st September, 2017 pg. 13
LEADERSHIP Sunday 13th August, 2017 pg. 21
Verbatim Magazine – September 11, 2017 pg 47
Channels TV – Nationwide news August 6th, 2017
AIT – News Hour August, 6th, 7th, 2017
Many radio stations, eg. Dreams FM, Solid FM, Urban FM, Caritas FM, etc
Many Blog sites, eg, ELANZA news.com;
Buzznews.com, etc.