

# NAIJA JUNCTION

NIGERIA IN 2025



Four Possible Futures for Nigeria

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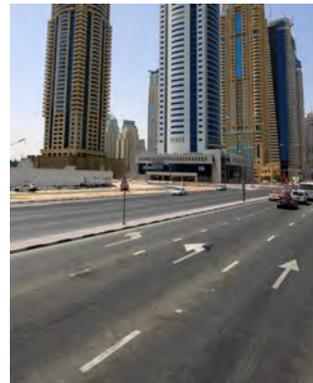
# Which Way Nigeria?

**This publication, and the enclosed VCD present four scenarios on the future of Nigeria. The scenarios are outputs of an exercise launched to explore and outline alternative possibilities for the future of Nigeria.**

This publication and the enclosed VCD present four scenarios on the future of Nigeria. The scenarios are outputs of an exercise launched to explore and outline alternative possibilities for the future of the nation. By constructing different scenarios, the aim is to inform and engage the public and opinion leaders on the main issues that will drive the nation to one type of future or the other.

Nigeria is, as at other times in its tumultuous history, really at a crossroads. These 4 scenarios highlight the various options we have as a people and how our choices could take us in one direction or another as a nation. The scenarios present detailed analyses of the options, including the critical changes that have to take place for each to play out.

The circumstances surrounding the transition following the contentious April 2007 elections make this an opportune time for us to make a fresh start. We the people and our leaders must collectively decide to make the fundamental and necessary changes to take the high road or continue along the same old path. Our actions or inactions will have dire or beneficial consequences on our collective future.



How can our collective actions and omissions, in the face of external forces lead to different futures for our country? In what possible ways can our nation evolve over the next 18 years? The scenarios team foresaw four possibilities: "Parambulator", Shine Your Eye, Jaga Jaga

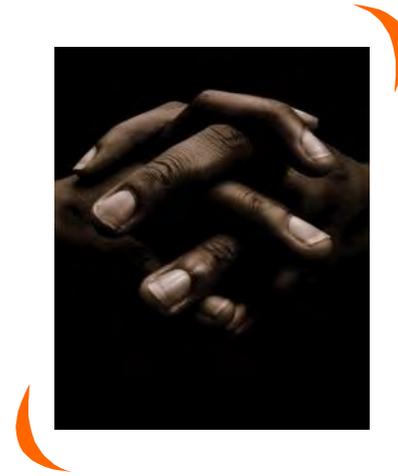
Republic and We Don Win. Each of these scenarios represents an alternative future which is logically plausible. Within the stories there are identifiable critical uncertainties, driving forces, key issues, main actors and decision points.

The scenarios are stories. They are not meant to predict the future, but to facilitate a national dialogue, allowing both decision makers and ordinary people make better quality decisions today that will affect the future. The stories taken together highlight important lessons and messages which provide interesting insight into how Nigerians can bring about change. Importantly, the scenarios should empower us as a people to make well informed choices about our future.

Nigeria cannot afford to have any more missed opportunities. The crises of values and leadership must end. We cannot continue to take one step forward and two steps backward. It is hoped that this exercise stimulates a change process set off by a national dialogue which examines where we have been and where we are now, with a view to determining what we must do individually and collectively to take us to a desired future.

This dialogue must take place at the national and state levels, within organisations, and among individuals. Each Nigerian has an important role to play and as such must lead responsibly wherever he or she may be.

In this exercise, the future is presented to us as a choice among four locked doors. We must collectively decide which door to unlock or road to take. Our choice determines what kind of future we open to ourselves and our children.



**Each of these scenarios represents an alternative future which is logically plausible. Within the stories there are key uncertainties, the driving forces, the key issues, main actors and decision points.**

# Nigeria: Trends, Tensions and Contradictions

Ours is a nation at a crossroads, a nation of paradoxes, and contradictions; We have huge potential yet very little to show for it.

While there may be disagreements on the factors that came together to create Nigeria as we know it, there is a consensus that the present condition is far below potential.

Nigeria is a nation of contradictions, a giant with a barely noticeable footprint. We make many claims, but reality often fails to substantiate them. While we continue to squander our opportunities we continue to be hopeful that someday, somehow the future will be better.

## Politics and Internal Conflict

Nigeria's political history from 1960-2007 highlights the lack of a true Nigerian identity, a discredited political system based on patronage, weak institutions, poor policy formulation and implementation, an inability to properly tackle corruption, a stronghold on power by a small clique of ruling elites, religious and ethnic intolerance and a preference of the citizenry to be represented, rather than to participate in the tasks of nation building.

It is easy to argue that the colonialists carved up Africa the wrong way, but the entity that is Nigeria has existed for almost 100 years and has been independent for almost 50. Why have we not been able to evolve a cohesive Nigerian identity? Why are we still a composition of ethnic nations to whom the Nigerian identity is expendable?



The question now is whether we can create strong institutions of governance, capable of producing a cadre of leaders with the right qualities to serve our country or instead continue to recycle self-serving leaders who have had little to show for their time in power.

Tensions in the Niger Delta have reached unacceptable levels and have started to have serious negative effects on the country as a whole. Religious and resource control conflicts are becoming a part of our daily lives throughout the federation. Nationalist associations have become veritable power-brokers in their respective sections of the country. Do we fully appreciate the implications and possible consequences of these developments? Are we ready to decisively

handle these crises or are we on the brink of another civil war?

Endemic corruption has been a large contributor to the failure of the political system in the country. Are we ready to truly tackle it or will we continue to pay lip service to it as we have done in the past? Will political godfathers continue to "anoint" successors without any regard for the wishes of the people or will we decide as citizens to become a part of the political process and start to decide for ourselves who our leaders should be?

### **The Nigerian Economy**

The viability of any society depends on the strength, size, structure and direction of its economy. The mismanagement of our economy has had a strong influence on shaping life as we know it in Nigeria today, and will play a key role in shaping the future of Nigeria.

In the years following independence, the Nigerian economy was dominated by agriculture, which contributed about 65% of GDP, representing almost 70% of total exports. Agriculture provided the foreign exchange that was utilized in importing raw materials and capital goods.

As the country sank into civil war in 1967, the economy became characterized by the predominance of subsistence and commercial activities, a narrow disarticulated production base, a neglected informal sector, uneven development due in some part to the bias of public policies, excessive dependence on external factor inputs,



continuous siphoning of surpluses from the economy, and weak institutional capacity.

In 1973, the Arab oil embargo on Western countries created a boom in the global energy market which brought in unprecedented amounts of revenue. This had an adverse effect on the agricultural sector and subsequently created serious structural problems for the economy. Nigeria became heavily dependent on oil while rent-seeking activities mushroomed.

The next two and a half decades saw a potpourri of economic programs and policies that failed to bring about any sustainable transformation. In 1999, another oil boom and the reform initiatives of the Obasanjo-led government presented the Nigerian economy with another chance to move in a positive direction. The program was based on the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and focused on four main areas: improving the macroeconomic environment, pursuing structural reforms, strengthening public expenditure management, and implementing institutional and governance reforms.

Far reaching though the reforms have been, there are still important challenges that need to be addressed for the economy to become more vibrant and buoyant. Some of these challenges include: extending reforms to the sub-national levels, focusing on non-oil growth, employment generation, improving the domestic business climate, increasing investment in infrastructure, strengthening domestic institutions, facilitating technological development, transforming and

integrating a very large informal sector into the formal economy, tackling unrest in the Niger Delta as well as other parts of the country, and increasing the quality of social sector spending.

The last eight years have seen some positive growth in the economy but numerous challenges lie ahead. At the current levels of economic growth, the country will still not achieve its millennium development goal of halving poverty by 2015. On the positive side, according to a Goldman Sachs report on newly emerging economies, Nigeria could become the world's 20<sup>th</sup> largest economy in 2020 and the 12<sup>th</sup> largest by 2050, if we can "get our act together".

### **Quality of Life**

Our quality of life indicators read like the report card of a failed state. According to the UN Human Development Report in 2006, Nigeria falls in the low human development group, ranking 159<sup>th</sup> out of the 177 countries surveyed, one place below Rwanda and one above Guinea. Togo is 10 places above us in 149<sup>th</sup> place while Ghana is ranked in the medium development group in 136<sup>th</sup> place.

Nigeria has an estimated population growth rate of 2.8% which the economy cannot sustain, a large and growing income inequality gap, rapid urbanization with very poor urban infrastructure, unaffordable housing, and a health service system that is at best inadequate. The word inadequate overstates the quality of our public education system. Safety and security in our communities have continued to decline ever since the civil war.



These statistics bring with them numerous challenges; it is estimated that 70% of the population is poor, over 60% are under the age of 15 and 75% of all Nigerians are literate, although the quality of our literacy is vigorously debated.

The basic objective of development is to create an enabling environment in which people can enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. Just how long, healthy and creative will the life of the average Nigerian be over the next 20 years?

### **Our Values**

In 2004, a survey on religiosity was carried out on 65 countries across the globe; Nigeria came in first. According to the BBC report on the survey, 91% of

Nigerians said they prayed regularly, believed in God and were willing to die for their belief.

How do we reconcile this survey's result with life as most know it in Nigeria? Values have all but disappeared, many have very little respect for the rule of law, people feel they are not part of the problem and others are, there is a culture of impunity, and the most commonly used phrase whenever there is a problem is "we want government to..." Religious leaders preach (directly and indirectly) intolerance of other faiths, openly corrupt leaders are widely celebrated, bribery on the roads is as common as potholes and simple courtesy like allowing a fellow road user to change lanes in traffic is a Herculean task. Are all these the values of the religions that we so strongly follow?

In a strange way we seem to have created a hybrid of values that are neither European nor African and the challenge will be how to comprehensively reorient our shared values.

### **Our Natural Environment**

The importance of our natural environment cannot be downplayed. For a largely resource-based country, our environment is the main source of food as well as where some of the country's key battles for economic growth and diversification will be played out.

Nigeria is richly blessed with an abundance of natural resources, but the passage of time and the inability to properly conserve and manage these resources has led to serious environmental degradation. There is deforestation in the South, erosion in the East and desertification in the North. There is air, water and soil pollution all over the country.

Like many developing countries, the environmental trends in Nigeria suggest a lack of a well thought out environmental policy. A case in point is the Niger Delta where conflict has been fueled by destruction of a once rich and fertile land. There has been an ongoing failure by the authorities to harness these resources into blessings for the people on whose land they are found.

The agricultural sector still employs the majority of Nigerians but the lack of consistent enforced policies has meant that although the area of farmed land has increased, we are getting diminished crop yield. For the majority of farmers, farming methods have not changed for

generations.

What will happen in 20 years if the environmental degradation taking place from the Niger Delta to the North is not brought under control?

What if desertification continues unchecked? Our natural resources will not last forever and at the moment sustainable resource management policies are either nonexistent or poorly implemented. The time has come to implement such policies to conserve and more efficiently use these ever diminishing resources.

### **The World Around Us**

The rate at which the world around us is changing and the far reaching effects of those changes pose new challenges. Perhaps the ultimate test for Nigeria as a nation will be its ability to thrive on the global stage despite the daunting nature of the challenges.

Economic issues such as how to respond to the challenges that arise as power shifts to the Global East may challenge our very existence as a viable corporate entity. China and India are slowly becoming global players and their demands for African resources are at unprecedented levels. How do we ensure that they do not have a "hollowing out effect" on the resources in Nigeria?

We continue to be heavily dependent on oil and gas for revenue while the global market for these commodities remains highly volatile. War in the Middle East, an increasing demand for a shift to renewable energy sources, terrorism and the growing call, especially in the US, to



end dependency on oil, are all fueling investment in research and development of alternative forms of energy. Additionally, new producers of oil are emerging. How ready are we to cope with the economic consequences of an alternative competitive source of energy becoming available in the near future?

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is continuously pushing for free trade. How ready are Nigerian firms to negotiate in a market that is completely open to goods and services from more competitive and developed countries? Will our firms be able to innovate and compete in the global marketplace?

Political and religious tensions continue to be felt on the global stage and spillover effects of these tensions have been known to affect us in Nigeria. What preparations do we have in place to contain these tensions should they boil over again?

Climate change is becoming a major factor the world over; according to experts, Sub Saharan Africa would be the most adversely affected of all the regions of the world. What would happen if the inhabitants of the coastal cities of Lagos, Port Harcourt or Calabar were given a 48 hour tsunami or hurricane warning to evacuate the cities? What if the sea levels rise dangerously in these areas? Are we prepared to deal with the potential impact on our communities?

Regional issues such as instability in the ECOWAS, recent wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire could also affect us. The ongoing dislocations in the sub-region have created a generation of

men & women with intimate knowledge of war and a ready reserve army for hire.

There is also a need and desire for the region and the rest of Africa to become a trading bloc in order to be able to better compete against other regions. However, trade continues to be mostly with the West rather than neighboring countries. Nigeria, given its size, is expected to play a leadership role. Are we able or ready to lead if we are unable to manage our internal affairs?



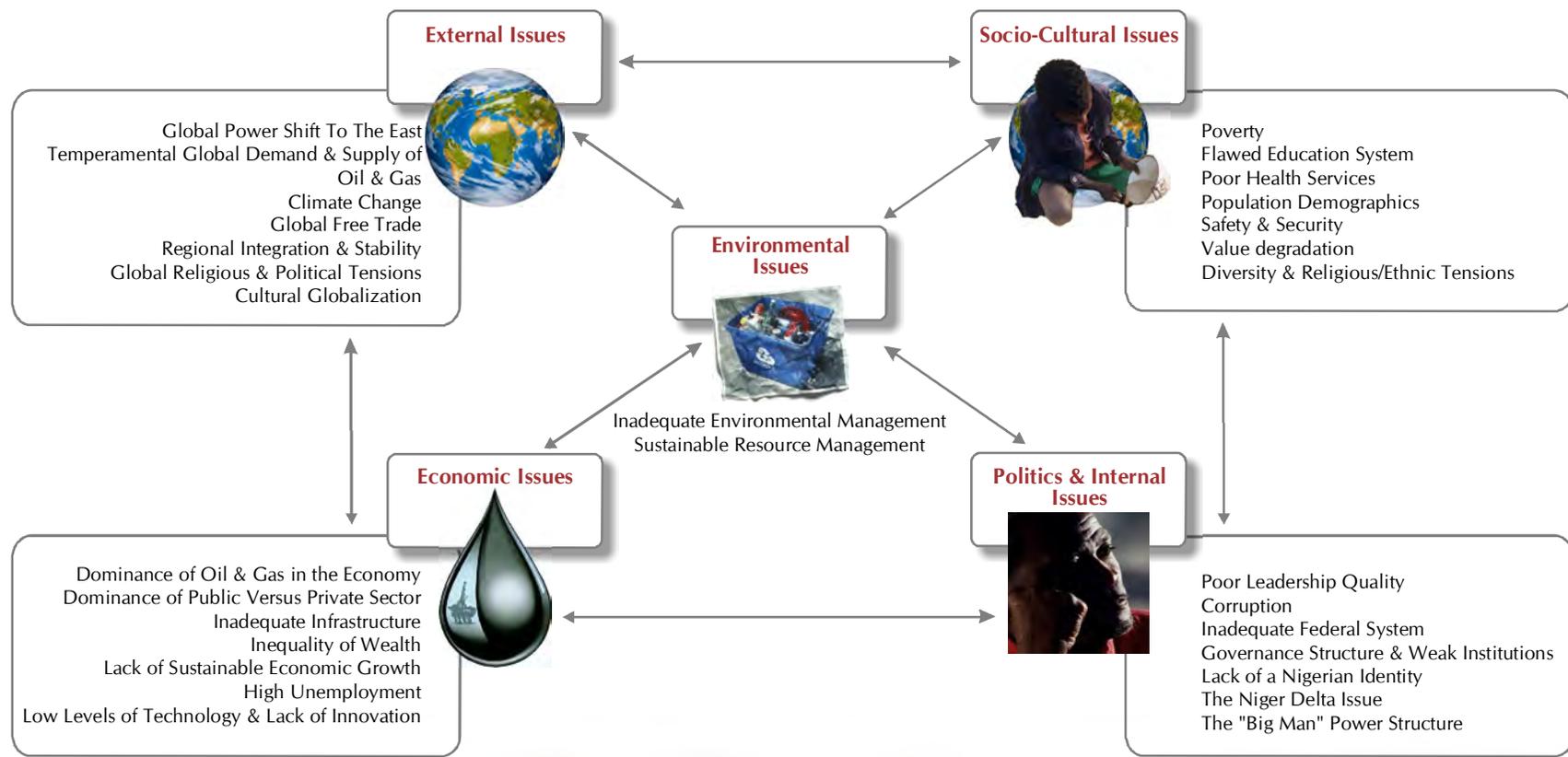
### **The Hope for a Better Future**

The hope for a brighter future for Nigeria hinges on how we decide to live as a people, how we manage strife, divisions and internal conflicts, what kind of leaders we choose, what we do to tackle corruption as well as how we diversify an economy overly dependent on oil and gas. How do we hold our own and compete in the global marketplace?

Will there be a Nigerian socio-cultural renaissance so that our religiosity and values transform our social landscape? How do we improve the lot of the average Nigerian so that poverty is reduced to a minimum? What can we do to ensure that the wealth of our nation is used for the greatest good of the greatest number? How do we ensure that our natural resources are properly conserved and managed? The world around us is in a state of flux. Are we ready for the challenges it will throw at us?

All these are major uncertainties and issues that we must confront as a country (Figure 1). Every Nigerian has an important role to play. What choices will we make with our actions and inactions? What will be the outcomes of these choices? How could they affect our future?

**Figure 1** Key Issues and Critical Uncertainties



# The Scenarios

The following are four stories of how the future could unfold in Nigeria. The stories are not predictions as no one can predict the future. As the Arab saying goes, "He who foretells the future lies, even if he turns out to be right!"

The following are four stories of how the future could unfold in Nigeria. The stories are not predictions as no one can predict the future. As the Arab saying goes, "He who foretells the future lies, even if he turns out to be right". Each scenario is equally plausible. However, the future is unlikely to unfold exactly as outlined in any one particular story. The aim is to allow us as a people make better decisions in order to build our desired future. The scenarios present four distinct possibilities:

- **"Parambulator"** is a story of how to get from where you are to where you are in about 18 years.
- **Shine Your Eye** is a story of salvation from a small clique of leaders who are able to deliver some economic gains at the high price of brutal repression of individual freedoms and self actualization.



- **Jaga Jaga Republic** is a story of how self-seeking leadership, endemic corruption, a populace rendered supine by apathy and superstition, ethnic distrust, religious strife, and an elitist power struggle all contribute to destroying the Nigerian nation.
- **We Don Win** is a story of how with remarkable foresight and fortitude, Nigerians are able to raise their nation from its slumber to become Africa's largest economy and a leading member of the G20.

# 1. "PARAMBULATOR"



In 2025, it is as if nothing has changed in Nigeria. As a nation, we have had a lot of motion and activity, but in reality, we have not moved very far and nothing much has changed. Poverty continues to deepen, conflicts continue to arise, the political processes and the economy are unable to cater for the needs of the average Nigerian. It is as if we as a nation are determined to continue the slow slide into oblivion.

### **A Promising Start**

The story begins in 2007, with contentious elections followed by mass complaints and a civil strike. Faced with a crisis of credibility, the government quickly moves to legitimize its tenure by focusing on 3 key priorities: The Niger Delta issue, Electoral and Judicial Reforms and a social program; HEEPS (Health, Education, Electricity, Potable water and Security).

The resulting infrastructural upgrades and improvement in government accountability begin to charm Nigerians. A new song is heard across the land: 'Nigeria Na We Own O! We Go Make Am Beta!'

### **But Bad Habits Remain Unchanged**

A dark specter looms; insidious forces of entrenched vested interests lurk menacingly. Unhappy with the growing popularity of a President who has tried to shake himself free from their shackles, the political godfathers split the ruling party before the 2011 elections. The President and his faction align themselves with pro-business interests. With significant financial support from the private sector, he wins the 2011 election by a narrow margin.



Renewing his efforts, the President implements some infrastructural improvements. Major cities begin to enjoy stable electricity for the first time, but broader institutional, economic and social reforms are deadlocked in the National Assembly.

In 2014, Nigerians receive a rude wake-up call! Tax payments become compulsory and are now closely monitored. Evaders are being jailed! In line with the liberalization of the economy and private sector's heavy involvement in the polity, subsidies on education and petroleum products are removed. As a result, although most public utilities function and commodities are readily available, they are unaffordable. Angry union workers and civil servants who have lost their jobs in the reforms turn against the government.

### **Cheap Populism and Binge Spending**

Seizing the opportunity, the opposition fields a flamboyant businessman as a presidential candidate for the 2015 elections who promises to bring back "enjoyment" to all Nigerians. He wins the polls and declares a week-long national jamboree to celebrate his inauguration. Millions of bags of rice and cans of cooking oil are distributed in every local government area.

The new government spends heavily, promising *heaven, earth and 'chicken in every pot'*. Fuel subsidies are restored, the quota system is reinstated and widespread tax evasion returns unchecked. Asian economic dominance is completely ignored, cheap goods flood the

Nigerian market and local manufacturers die. Heavy spending and corruption empties the treasury, economic growth slows sharply, unemployment soars and many skilled workers leave.

### **Bankruptcy**

In 2020, Nigeria is hit by an outbreak of drug-resistant TB and polio. 700,000 children and 400,000 adults die within a year as a heavily indebted and inept government looks on, while Western and Asian aid workers make frantic efforts to bring succor to dying Nigerians.

As the 2023 elections approach, government agencies are forced to divert donor funds to finance the elections. Nigerians see no point in voting. Those who can, sell their voter cards. The ruling party

candidate wins. More talk and less action continues.

Government borrowing accelerates. Previous reforms and their benefits vanish, investor confidence evaporates and inflation soars. Jobs disappear and 60% of Nigerians do not have access to good drinking water. In 2025, Nigeria is the 8th most populous country in the world. Three-quarters are poor, living on less than \$1 a day, while 90% of the nation's wealth is held by less than 2% of the population.

For 18 years, Nigeria has gone round in circles, doing the same things and expecting different results. Nigeria progressed, regressed, re-progressed and re-regressed. This is how we get from where we are to where we are.



## 2. SHINE YOUR EYE

In 2025, Nigeria is a troubled nation with many contradictions. The economy is doing reasonably well but the people feel unfulfilled. What was achieved in the form of economic growth was due to repressive measures and consolidation of power by a ruling clique of autocrats. The battle for freedom has taken on a new meaning with people battling to regain their identity.

### **The Situation in 2007: Nigeria is stuck, shattered and searching**

Over 70 million of us are living in misery under the poverty line. Women face a 1-in-10 chance of dying in childbirth, and our infants have an even slimmer chance of making it past the first twelve months of life. Those of us who live beyond infancy are looking forward to a life expectancy of a mere 44 years.

During that short life, we face decaying roads, scarce water and no electricity services due to years of neglect. We are further assaulted by worsening ignorance and malnutrition and the violent brutality that has become part of our daily existence as crime is used by some to merely survive and by a few to stay well ahead of everyone else.

Decades of a 'jollof' of official schemes, plans and initiatives have not improved life for the majority. We succumb to the temptation to exchange personal responsibility and freedom for the promise of some relief to our daily suffering. We are desperate, vulnerable and gullible. We are ready for a saviour.



### **The World Around Us**

We look around the world and see the growing power and influence of a dynamic East Asia. We had started at roughly the same place in 1960 but during the subsequent half-century they have improved their living standards 34 times faster than we have! Does their success legitimize authoritarian rule? Did they make a better decision by trading democracy for prosperity? Our experience with similar approaches had produced very different results - repression, corruption and mass misery.

East Asia's success has opened up a window of opportunity for us. Their booming economies are hungry for the oil and minerals that we have. They also want the huge market that our people represent for their factories and traders. We are a crucial part of their bold ambition to lift hundreds of millions more of their people out of poverty. Could their rising tide of prosperity lift our boat too?

We also remain strategically crucial to the West. As they recognize the competition for our attention and affection from the East, they reconfigure their stance towards us by adopting a pragmatic posture to our shortcomings particularly in the areas of governance.

### **The Deep Drivers**

A number of inescapable pressures have emerged, but two seem fundamental. The first is our large, fast-growing, young, urbanizing

and aspirational population which places massive and unmet demands on our physical infrastructure and social services. After doubling during the preceding 25 years, our population is expected to further increase by at least 60 million more people over the next 25 years, and reach over 200 million by 2030. Almost half of us are younger than 15 years. And out of the two-fifths of Nigerians who live in cities and towns, 80% live in slums. Secondly, we appear to be going through a spiritual awakening. The air is alive with rising religiosity and a 'merchandising of the anointing,' but this spiritual awakening seems to have no effect on our values. Crime and corruption are rife. We seem to be a God-conscious but not a God-fearing society.

This is a story of 'salvation' delivered. But at a high price!

### **To the Brink and Back (2008)**

In early 2008, the Niger Delta crisis escalates to an all-out conflict. The security forces decide on a show of overwhelming force to root out the militants and insurgents. The result is an unmitigated disaster. Within a month, over 3,000 bodies litter the streets, creeks and waterways including 120 soldiers and policemen. A very high-level but shadowy Internal Security Estimate Committee (ISEC), determined to stop the chaos in the Niger Delta and maintain the integrity of the country, acts decisively and persuades the President to proclaim a State of Emergency.



There follows a ruthless military campaign which results in a brutal and complete crushing of insurgents. Crucial search-and-destroy technology was supplied by Western countries keen on maintaining regime stability in the region. As part of the operations, several prominent government critics and human rights activists are arrested and 'disappear' across Nigeria. All Niger Delta governors are 'invited' to Abuja for their own 'protection'. Despite international criticism for its heavy-handedness, the Niger Delta is secured within weeks, but a strong military and police-state posture is maintained. Emboldened by its success, ISEC consolidates its influence over a grateful administration.

### **Early Action, Early Results, Freedom Suffers (2009 - 2011)**

Bold action quickly follows at the very heart of government. Radical changes to the Federal Executive Council are announced. The cabinet is reduced from 19 to 7 ministries, with four Mega-Ministries created to deal with core challenges (Domestic Production, Infrastructure Development, Citizens' Welfare and National Security). For the first time in Africa, Ministers and Directors-General are hired through an internationally competitive process, producing an energetic, competent and committed senior executive team.

An international tender to implement a comprehensive digital national ID system is implemented rapidly. The new ID card is compulsory for

every Nigerian adult as it is the only way to access government services. The administration advises religious and ethnic leaders to support Citizen Welfare initiatives by mobilizing their constituents behind government action. Labour union leaders are also required to support government plans by ensuring a disciplined workforce, and are warned that strike action would be considered unpatriotic and dealt with accordingly. A mobile-phone based Citizen Reporting System is established to allow ordinary citizens to report corruption. Early arrests, convictions and severe punishment (including that of a senior Director-General) at the War Against Ignorance and Indiscipline (WAI) Tribunals boost public confidence and act as effective deterrents.



The 2009 "Promise to the Nigerian Child Program" which includes free access to health services for all under-five children yields quick results in reduced infant and maternal mortality by 2011. The Lagos-Benin Expressway rehabilitation is completed in record time using a labour-intensive approach which is replicated across the country. The second of seven 2,000 MW power plants is linked to the grid vastly improving the power situation without increasing tariffs.

Due to these early achievements, the incumbent leadership is returned with a huge majority in the 2011 elections, which are, nevertheless still carefully managed by ISEC.

### **Consolidating Political Repression and Economic Growth (2011-2019)**

It is evident that consolidating, entrenching and building upon the success needs continuity and time. Major constitutional amendments are therefore proposed to first, increase Federal control over State and LGA finances and second, to remove presidential term limits. A massive countrywide public 'awareness' campaign - '**Naija don beta!**' - is executed to secure public support for the constitutional changes. Opponents to the amendments are intimidated through frequent catch-and-release arrests and appearances at the now-feared WAI tribunals. Political opposition and civil society are neutralized by the propaganda and intimidation. The amendments pass although foreign human rights organizations protest the deep erosion of personal freedoms in Nigeria. The incumbent leadership strengthens its hold on power, and deepens its focus on economic and social transformation.

A decade (2009-2019) of rehabilitation, re-tooling and re-skilling makes the manufacturing sector competitive. Years of large, stable oil and gas revenues are used to finance infrastructure upgrading and social spending. The economic growth rate is maintained at a minimum of 10% for over eight consecutive years. Nigeria's sovereign credit-rating is significantly enhanced which attracts increased portfolio and foreign direct investment flows. The annual income of the average Nigerian rises to US\$1,700 by 2019.

### **A Skilled Population Challenges Extreme Secularism (2020-2025)**

The country is teeming with Niners - skilled young Nigerians who, after a minimum of nine years of relevant, ICT-enabled training in ExperiCentres (formerly known as 'schools'), are employable and entrepreneurial. Distance Third Level Training (formerly known as 'university') is accessible from anywhere and on any device through a Federal-funded national fiber-optic and wireless internet network.

But the combination of the population pressure (there are almost 200 million Nigerians now!), the rising cost of maintaining and guaranteeing minimum standards in social services in the face of relentlessly rising popular expectations exposes the limits of the leadership's ability to continue delivering.

The Family Size Limitation Act (FSLA) is passed to limit population growth. It limits the number of children per family to two: the birth of a third child or more results in the withdrawal of all state support for the offending family. The popular reaction against this intrusion by the State into the bedroom is organized and spearheaded by religious and ethnic leaders. The FSLA is branded as un-Nigerian, un-African and ungodly. Cyber-sabotage is increasingly and effectively used against



the Citizen Reporting System, frequently 'blinding' the technology-dependent leadership to the activities of its opponents. The leadership responds to the growing power of the opposition with an extreme secularist decree. Faith is decreed to be a 'private matter' and all

unlicensed public expressions of organized worship are outlawed.

'A Free Life is a Better Life' slogan rallies Nigerians - who are better off now, but weary of the increasingly harsh police state - around a new political movement: Cross and Crescent Alliance for Real Democracy (CCARD). Nigeria's cyberspace is overloaded with demands for the opening up of the political space and for greater freedoms.

For almost two decades, Nigerians had traded their personal freedom for a strong and stable economy, a halving of poverty levels and greatly improved social services. By 2025, 'salvation' appeared to have come to Nigeria.

But was it worth the price?



# 3. JAGA JAGA REPUBLIC

In 2025, Nigeria, the Heart of Africa, lies battered, bleeding and shattered. Vultures feed upon it and on-lookers mock it. Once full of promise, Nigeria is now a wasteland of destruction and sorrow. Nigerians scatter as refugees and strangers in foreign lands, beholden even to people they once fed and protected.

How did this happen?

### **Promises Unkept**

Following the contentious elections in 2007, the administration takes a number of steps to shore up its credibility. Nigerians adopt a 'siddon look' attitude.

The engagement with the Niger Delta which had started with some hope, quickly turns into a never-ending round of consultations with no concrete resolutions reached. The promised improvements in utilities supply also appear too far fetched to materialize.

It becomes apparent that there is no clear strategy to deal with the fundamental issues. The administration appears to have been captured by special interests and paying lip service only to change. Yet another litany of broken promises! Nigerians are disappointed and resign themselves to the familiar "god-dey" posture. Mediocrity, apathy, helplessness and disillusionment thrive.

### **Vultures and Hyenas Step into the Vacuum**

Into the vacuum created by an ineffective government and apathetic Nigerians, the godfathers, financiers and influence-peddlers step in to



consolidate their stranglehold on the country. Nigeria's riches - forests, solid minerals, energy and vast tracts of fertile land are up for grabs. The vultures and hyenas jostle for the juicy portions. Behind closed doors they are privatized and concessioned to a powerful cabal of

Nigerians and their foreign collaborators. Nigeria's economy is firmly confined to pure resource-extraction. With high global commodity prices, the elite who monopolize the oilfields, mineral concessions and plantations become obscenely rich. They see no need for local value-addition. The idea of economic diversification dies.

Captured by the powerful business cartel, the government pays no attention to schools, hospitals, housing or sanitation. Malaria continues to be Nigeria's deadliest child killer and HIV proliferates unchecked. Few jobs are created and unemployment worsens. The miserable quality of life worsens. The gap between the rich and the poor becomes an unbridgeable chasm.

Meanwhile conflict in the neglected Niger Delta region escalates as attempts at resolving the crisis are abandoned. A special privately-financed 'delta' force is created to protect oil installations and rich families.

The 2011 elections return the ruling party to power, but with a much diminished turnout. Voters have lost interest in the process as cross-carpeting decimates the opposition. Cronyism and corruption continue unchecked.

### **The Coming Darkness**

As they suffocate under the weight of horrible social conditions, Nigerians turn to their religious and ethnic leaders. Under the prevailing conditions of impunity, strong factional and sectarian sentiment is inflamed and communities begin killing each other in a bitter struggle for land and other sources of livelihood. Even children are not spared.

The 2015 elections witness a heavy military presence to crush any protest. In the atmosphere of violence and intimidation, voter turnout is the lowest ever.

The Niger Delta explodes and top politicians in power are targeted by the militia. Militants attack foreign oil installations, kidnapping and killing their workers. Oil companies are forced to pull out of Nigeria. Foreign commandos invade the Niger Delta to secure the release of the hostages. Resistance is fierce and there are many casualties.

### **'Things Fall Apart...'**

Anarchy spreads across the Federation. Some groups support the "Nigerian project", while others fight for self-determination. The

center is weakened as Nigeria becomes ungovernable. The bloody military coup of 2019, led by a cadre of opportunistic officers, does little to maintain a unified Nigeria. They only succeed in controlling a small section called the MGN - Military Government of Nigeria. The Federal Republic collapses as warlords rename their settlements: Republic of Arewa, Biafra, Oduduwa, Niger Delta...

Nigeria's neighbours shut their borders to keep away the millions of fleeing Nigerian refugees. Aid organizations are overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the humanitarian disaster. For those left behind, daily life is a nightmare, as warlords, soldiers and bandits kidnap, mutilate, rape and kill at will.

By 2025, Nigeria is Jaga Jaga: a country only in name, shattered and broken!

# 4. WE DON WIN!



The year is 2025 and the Giant of Africa has roused from its slumber. Nigeria is Africa's largest economy and a leading member of the G20. Although problems remain, Nigeria is admired globally for the remarkable progress it has made in just two decades. Nigeria can now credibly lead an international effort on the challenges for social and economic development in the developing world. Achieving this was not easy. But the engagement of the people and the investment in institutional reforms, education and economic diversification as well as a credible process for political transition makes Nigeria well positioned to handle the obstacles ahead. But how did we get here?

### **Nigerians Defend their Democracy**

It began during the President's first months in office. Although the election was contentious, the President's early actions posed a serious threat to the "big men" who had expected 'business as usual'. They attempted to remove him from office. The public responds fervently with a "Never Again!" Agenda. For the first time in Nigeria's history, men, women, boys and girls came out in droves to demonstrate against an attempt to remove a government which is perceived to be delivering. Shocked and frightened by the huge outpouring of popular support for the administration, the 'big men' retreat. Nigerians celebrate the success of their 'people power.' Is it possible to shape the future of the country? The possibilities are endless and exciting! It is the dawn of a new era.

Emboldened by the massive show of popular support, the government shifts into higher gear with a series of Quick Strike Actions that



demonstrate courage and vision. The first is the swift investigation and prosecution of political and financial crimes. By 2008, several "sacred cows", including former governors, senior officials and collaborators are tried, convicted and imprisoned. The second promise is for a

corruption-free police force by 2010. Better conditions of service are agreed. Community trust in the police begins to grow. The third pledge is a "Feed and Read" Program for primary children by 2010. School attendance figures show a dramatic improvement, especially for girls. Importantly, a new mindset begins to emerge as moral and value orientation takes center stage. Government in collaboration with religious leaders kick off a re-orientation program process in churches and mosques across the country. Building on these efforts, the Government embarks on concerted

agenda to educate the public on the costs of corruption and to engage the civil society in an all out effort to build a grand coalition to end the "culture of corruption" and build a consensus around core values.

The entire country starts to benefit from reform of the power sector and in 2010, Nigeria celebrates one month of uninterrupted power supply, the first in two decades. Continuing on the reforms initiated in the previous administration, additional reforms in education, health and investment in science and technology skills, this administration is confident approaching the 2011 elections. In fact, a restructuring of INEC, coupled with the civil society's promotion of deepening of democracy initiatives makes the 2011 elections a vast improvement over 2007.

### **Deepening the Process of Change, the Oligarchs Retreat as Fighting Corruption Takes on a New Meaning**

The incumbent party returns to power but this time through a credible process, with Nigerians rewarding the administration for progress made between 2007 and 2011. Political integrity takes center stage. New bold initiatives characterize the first few months of the new election term, including a national ID scheme and incentives for thousands of physicians in the diaspora to return home.

The Niger Delta continues to witness improvements with a focus on reversing environmental degradation, a reduction of crime and increased youth employment. The administration decides to embark on an ambitious infrastructure programme to link the major capitals by road and rail.

But 2013 provides a painful setback as oil prices drop to \$45 a barrel. The Federal Government and the State Governments are finally forced to take economic diversification strategies seriously. Nigeria begins to see itself within the context of the African economic region. Establishment of a new Standards Agency and trade groups help spur innovation and better product quality while the push to develop the information technology, finance and pharmaceutical sectors encourage many Nigerian expatriates in the diaspora to return, injecting new skills and capital in the economy. An agro-development programme pioneered in the North helps improve food security country wide.



An important development is the retreat of the political godfathers. Finally recognizing that they can no longer control the electoral process with money, they start to realign themselves to deliver on social and economic agenda.

While Nigerians begin to challenge corruption more openly and more confidently given the improved employment in the public and private sector, a form of xenophobia takes root in response to immigrants looking for opportunities in Nigeria's growing economy. "Foreigners Must Go" begins the rallying cry leading up to the 2015 elections.

### **Regional Integration Takes Center Stage**

The opposition party wins by a slim margin in an election viewed to be both free and fair. They immediately start to make good on the promise of regional integration.

The decline of French influence in Africa gives Nigeria a chance to step in and fill the gap. By 2019, the expansion of Nigerian banks, the predominance of the information technology sector, amongst others, makes Nigeria the Big Brother of Africa. The ECO becomes the main currency in West Africa while Nigeria becomes the financial hub of Africa superseding South Africa.

This administration picks up the mantle of reform and by doing so keeps the economy on track. 70% of Nigerians have access to affordable power. The non-oil sector represents 70% of GDP.

### **Responding to Social Challenges**

On the social front, the improvements are evident. The MDGs seem within reach. But the need for further improvements in social services is brought to the fore when in 2018, a dark shadow is cast over the nation as massive flooding in coastal areas leads to diarrhea and cholera outbreaks, 200,000 people die in a matter of months.

Without the health reforms that had been put in place, the consequences would have been even more disastrous. As the nation unites in shared sorrow, the Government keenly focuses on institutional reforms in the social services sector with particular emphasis to check national emergencies and disasters. Emphasis is placed on bringing competent technical people to lead government agencies.

The moral and value reorientation started 10 years before creates a strong national identity. A zero tolerance for corruption is pervasive. A sense of justice, fairness and meritocracy permeates schools, homes, churches, mosques and the work-place.

### **Tides Shift as the Common Man Demands More Change**

With great pride, Nigeria wins the World Cup in 2022, the first nation

outside Europe and South America to do so while in 2023, Nigeria secures a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. The nation celebrates its emergence as a truly world class player. On the regional agenda, the ECO, a common currency for West Africa is launched and

Africa becomes Nigeria's biggest trading partner. Nigeria as a whole is doing well by international standards. But the opposition capitalizes on the plight of the un-captured poor to mount an aggressive campaign in the 2023 elections.

### **A New Dawn**

Nigeria enters 2025 as a member of the G20, with GDP growth consistently over 10%, a reduced population growth rate of 1.8%, high economic diversification, with reduced ethnic and religious tensions, more balanced regional income generation, having achieved the MDGs and with a strong sense of national pride. Although challenges remain, Nigeria is the undisputed Big Brother of Africa and is solidly on the road towards attaining the status of a developed nation.



## Comparing the Scenarios

The four scenarios like good stories are meant to foster strategic learning, explore our options, and examine the consequences of our actions and inactions before we act in order to make better decisions today. Each is equally viable and in this sense we must learn from each of the scenarios the lessons on what to do or what not to do. Additionally, there may be desirable and undesirable elements from each scenario just like the real world (Table 1).

**Table 1** Comparison Matrix

|                         | "Parambulator"   | Shine Your Eye  | Jaga Jaga Republic   | We Don Win  |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| State of the Federation | Fractious<br><br>The Niger Delta is a no-go zone                   | Federation in name only. Everything is decided at the Centre            | Shattered<br><br>Ungovernable  | Federal Republic of Nigeria. New federal constitution forms basis for unity between the regions<br><br>The Niger Delta issue is tackled effectively                     |
| Nature of Government    | Captured, corrupted and compliant                                  | A closed cabal of security services insiders                            | Competing warlords<br><br>Self-centered kleptocracy and rampant corruption | Smart, facilitative and adaptive with a professional civil service<br><br>Predictable legal system<br><br>Effective local government                                    |
| Nature of Politics      | Money talks  | Obedience pays  | Brute, raw and naked force   | Competitive, open, and accountable<br><br>National priorities dominate  |
| Nature of the Economy   | Dominated by rent seeking oligarchs<br><br>Massive informal sector | Diversified, modernising and dynamic<br><br>GDP growth greater than 10% | Pure extraction. Blood oil, blood trees, blood minerals, blood...          | Highly diversified, more balanced regional contributions<br><br>GDP growth greater than 10%<br><br>Strong local & foreign investment, thriving efficient private sector |

|  | "Parambulator"  | Shine Your Eye  | Jaga Jaga Republic  | We Don Win   |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Quality of infrastructure  | Decaying  | Excellent   | Smashed to smithereens. Heavy fighting for control of functioning ports and runways | Excellent  |
| Poverty and inequality   | Deepening poverty, widening inequality  | Reduced poverty levels, inequality gap is closing   | Overwhelming. No one is measuring it anymore  | Deep reduction in poverty levels, reduced inequality   |
| Nature of the relationship between our ethnic, racial, religious & social groups | Tensions between groups are manipulated for narrow personal gain                        | Extreme secularism. All ethnic, racial and religious expression is officially banned      | Survival of the strongest<br><br>Nation divided                                     | Competitive<br><br>Negotiated compromises<br><br>Unpredictable and vibrant relationships   |
| Who benefits? (Winners)  | Selected politicians, oligarchs, and those with access to them                          | The majority of Nigerians are noticeably better off materially                            | Warlords and their mercenaries who pillage and plunder                              | People who develop successful relationships across communities<br><br>Innovators, entrepreneurs and communities that adapt quickly to grasp the opportunities<br><br>A merit system where excellence, quality, efficiency and effectiveness is paramount |
| Who suffers? (Losers)  | The untrained and unskilled Nigerian with no oga (access to patronage or capital)       | Freedom   | Everyone else   | The Apathetic<br><br>Those who believe the road to power and wealth is through corruption, connections and forgiveness by God  |
| How is Nigeria perceived by the global community?                                | Donor dependent, exporter of unprocessed commodities. A country that failed to take off | Reliable source of commodities and manufactures. Safe investment destination. Huge market | Failed state, basket case and haven of international criminals and terrorists       | Nigeria becomes a model for the West African region and the developing world   |

# Agenda for Change

The scenarios-building exercise is about facilitating change. A full reading of the scenarios reveals two classes of messages; what we must avoid doing, and what we must do to build the 21st century Nigeria of our dreams.

Looking for easy solutions and instant gratification leads us to the "Parambulator". In desperation we could forgo freedom for 'prosperity' in **Shine Your Eye**. If we succumb to hopelessness and fatalism, **Jaga Jaga** beckons. **We Don Win** is also possible, through commitment, daring and sacrifice.

We are all ultimately responsible for our individual and collective futures, but our collective future, Nigeria's destiny will be shaped by how we choose to address the following critical issues:

- Adopting and implementing zero tolerance for corruption across all levels of our society.
- Becoming Nigerians first rather than primarily a member of a tribe, religion or State.
- Re-entrenching strong positive values in our communities, organizations and country, founded on selflessness, caring, honesty, sacrifice, excellence and merit.
- Establishing and defending strong institutions to eliminate the "big man" mentality, godfatherism, patronage and cronyism.
- Demanding bold and visionary leadership from whom we require full transparency and accountability.
- Replacing a debilitating 'God-dey' attitude with active and constructive participation in the affairs of our communities and country, with the realization that each and every one of us must lead responsibly from any place we find ourselves.
- Resolving the Niger Delta crisis quickly, equitably and permanently.
- Accelerating the diversification of our economy to take advantage of our riches, whilst sharing the fruits of our hard work with fairness.
- Investing in Nigerians through radical reforms in health, education and social safety nets so that we can learn, innovate and compete with the best in the world.
- Creating a friendly and secure environment for investment whilst always keeping our country's interests in focus.
- Rebuilding our physical infrastructure - power, roads, rail, water and communications.

# Acknowledgments

## Advisory Board

The exercise was led by a team of eminent Nigerians who served on the Advisory Board. They provided guidance for the exercise and support to the team. The members are:

**Engr. Mansur Ahmed** (Chairperson)  
**Mrs. Morin Desalu** (Deputy Chairperson)  
**Mr. Segun Adeniyi**  
**Mr. Eamon Cassidy**  
**Mallam Nasir El-Rufai**  
**Rev. Fr. Matthew Hassan Kukah**  
**Mr. Frank Nweke Jr.**  
**Dr. Adhiambo Odaga**  
**Mrs. Ifueko Omoigui-Okauru**  
**Professor Pat Utomi**

## Project Design, Facilitation and Coordination

Africa Leadership Institute (AfLI), a charity registered in the UK and South Africa, focused on building capacity for visionary and strategic leadership across Africa, designed, facilitated and coordinated the Nigerian Scenarios project. AfLI's team include:

**Peter Wilson**, Executive Director, AfLI  
**Olugbenga Adesida**, Associate Director, AfLI

## Project Management

LEAP Africa, a not-for-profit NGO, provided administrative and management support. LEAP Africa's team include:

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## Audio-Visual Producer

**Alder**, an ideas, strategy and brand consulting firm, worked with the team and facilitators to produce the audiovisual outputs.

## External Speakers

The scenarios team's perspectives were enriched by experts who gave presentations on key issues. The external speakers that addressed the group are:

**Mrs. Saudatu Shehu Mahdi**  
**Dr. Obadiah Mailafia**  
**Professor Lesley Obiora**  
**Mr. Victor Osadolor**  
**Mallam Nuhu Ribadu**  
**Mrs. Maryam Uwais**

## Scenario Team

35 people from various walks of life and professions made up the scenario team. Their main role was to meet in workshops and in subcommittee meetings to construct the scenarios. The members are made up of 33 Nigerians and 2 non-Nigerians. The members of the scenario team are:

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# NAIJA JUNCTION

NIGERIA IN 2025

## ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

In November 2006, African Leadership Institute and LEAP Africa brought 33 individuals together, representing the ethnic, religious, geographic and sectoral diversity of Nigeria. 2 other Africans enriched the group.

These individuals, selected through a transparent process and guided by a distinguished Advisory Board, embarked upon a scenario planning exercise to explore future possibilities.

For fifteen months, the team deliberated on the future of the largest black nation on earth - Nigeria; the critical uncertainties and the main drivers that will move the nation to one type of future or the other.

The results are captured in four imaginative stories - "Parambulator", Shine Your Eye, Jaga Jaga Republic and We Don Win; each a plausible future outcome for Nigeria in the year 2025.

The overarching thrust of the scenarios is that Nigeria can be transformed. The scenarios highlight the critical role of the people, lay out the choices before Nigerians and outline how our actions and inactions could shape the future. The team calls for fundamental change, stressing the need to make risky, quantum leaps in order to transform our society and economy. Small, linear steps using traditional approaches, even if the steps are in the right direction, will not be enough.

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