



A White Paper...

THE
NIGERIA
SYMPOSIUM
FOR

**YOUNG &
EMERGING
LEADERS**

THEME: SHAPING NEW NARRATIVES

MAY 31, 2018

presented by:



www.monitor.ynaija.com

ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

The annual Nigeria Symposium for Young and Emerging Leaders is an exchange of ideas and knowledge which is driven by a leadership question of youth participation and proactive governance.

There is no better time to begin to consider active youth involvement in governance than 2019, given the fact that it is an election year. This thus explains The Future Project annual one-day symposium organized to further complement the media advocacy on **www.YMonitor.org** which is directed at active citizenship and responsible government.

Young people need to begin the process of vying for elective to positions - to do this, they must understand what it takes to contest and win elections. There is an urgent need for a generational shift – a phenomenon that is gradually taking over the world. Kenya recently produced a member of the legislature who is in his early twenties, France is another example.

It is however important that the concept of youth involvement is lucidly explained, it connotes that the older generation make room for the younger ones in the political space. In other words, encouraging a gradual generational leap. But beyond this is a vibrant activism which is essential for a deliberate youth involvement. It means that young people take the bull by the horn by getting involved even if the government is not inclusive, and this only comes through the ballot paper.

Hence youth involvement is in two ways, first, government includes young people in the political process, while the second involves youth taking initiative, by contesting for election and participating in politics.



Guest panelist at the symposium
L-R Hamzat Lawal, Mmanti Umoh, Ife Adebayo



Student leader asking question at the symposium



Participants at the Symposium



Aisha Yesufu,
Guest Speaker at the Symposium



Guest panelists at the symposium
L-R Asuquo Ekpenyong, 'Gbenga Sesan & Muhanmad Sanni

2018 THEME:

Shaping New Narratives

SINGLE OBJECTIVES

Facilitating intergenerational dialogue to equip young emerging leaders for an anticipated generational leap. This will be achieved by championing the development of a new generation of leaders who are skilled, competent, and morally upright. A new age of leaders who are engaging with government policies and policy makers across all levels.

The Symposium which was streamed live via ymonitor.org/live also featured

1. Exchange of ideas and knowledge in a TED-Talk format focused on leadership and governance and the challenge of involvement and influence.
2. Panel sessions and discussions
This Symposium brought together leaders in politics, business, advocacy, social-prenuers and many more to engage and discuss the theme 'Shaping New Narratives'. Speakers at the Symposium include:
 - **Muhammad Sanni Dattijo**, Commissioner for Budget and Planning Kaduna state
 - **Asuquo Ekpenyong**, Commissioner for Finance, Cross River state.
 - **Ife Adebayo**, Special Assistant to the Vice President on Innovation & Entrepreneurship
 - Mmanti Umoh, President, Professional & Entrepreneurial Women Network of Nigeria
 - Hamzat Lawal, Co-founder & Chief Executive Officer of Conected Development (CODE)

- Yemi Adamolekun, Executive Director, EIE Nigeria
- Ayisha Osori, Lawyer, Consultant and author of the book 'Love Does Not Win Elections'
- Aisha Yesufu, Co-convener of #BringBackOurGirls
- Linus Okorie, Governorship Aspirant for the 2019 elections
- Oyeleke Ajiboye, Real estate mogul and Entrepreneur
- Leonard Ebute, Social Analyst and Agropreneur
- Chidi Okereke, Social Commentator and Communication Strategist
- 'Gbenga Sesan, Digital Security Expert, Founder Paradigm Initiative

¹ <http://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Conference-Paper-by-Sakah-Saidu-Mahmud.pdf>

² <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/270538-breaking-buhari-signs-not-too-young-to-run-bill.html>

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Only 42.65 per cent of registered voters turned out in the 2015 elections , hence justifying the fact that in spite of the success recorded in the 2015 election, the problem of citizens' participation in politics in the voting process is still a major challenge. Also there is the problem of apathy and disinterest in politics by young people, so that we can comfortably say that there is a change in the democratic process, but there is no change in the quality of representation, leadership and the age grade of those who are involved in governance. The questions we need to ask are: How do we get more people involved in politics? How do we increase the number of voters' turnout in elections? How do we get young people involved in politics?

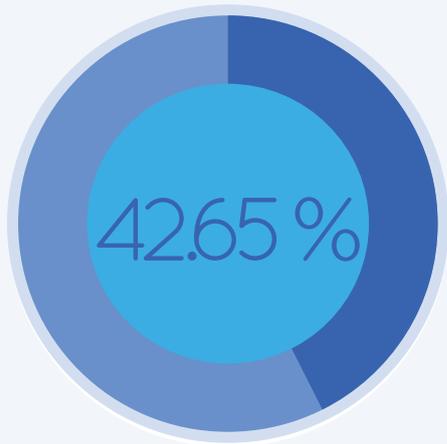
All these became important especially against the backdrop of the signing of the 'Not Too Young To Run' bill by President Muhammadu Buhari which then gives young people the opportunity to contest for elective positions.

These issues have not been critically addressed and most times there is always a shift in focus. Beyond this, there is also a critical need for proper engagement with government policies as it affects citizens.

The current 2018 budget is the highest federal budget so far. The budget is N9.1 trillion, and the capital expenditure component - which directly impacts the citizens - is N2.8 trillion . We can however say that this has had less impact on the citizens considering that Nigeria recently overtook India as the country with the largest number of extreme poor in 2018, with about 87 million people in extreme poverty .

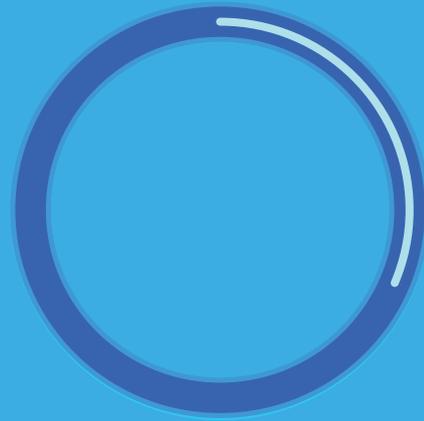
The Symposium provides a platform with a rainbow coalition of young leaders with one single purpose at this time - Shaping New Narratives.

2015 Election



■ REGISTERED VOTERS TURNED OUT

2018 Budget



■ N9.1 TRILLION
■ N2.8 TRILLION (capital expenditure)

ISSUES

ADDRESSED AND RESPONSES

The Symposium started with an opening from the Chief Operating Officer of The Future Project, Bukonla Adebakin, below are excerpts from the short speech.

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I am delighted to welcome you to another edition of the Nigeria Symposium for Young and Emerging Leaders - a platform designed for everyone with more than a passing interest in the political and leadership dynamics of Nigeria with a view to Contributing to its future.

For 4 years, this Symposium has brought together young people of diverse backgrounds, leaders of thought, and political office holders from across the country to deliberate on the inner workings of government and examine the imperatives of active citizenship.

Young people will engage public office holders on thematic leadership issues, while conversations will centre on political institutions, structures, systems and the nature of our present democratic dispensation.

Themed 'Shaping New Narratives', this edition couldn't have come at a better time - it is coming a couple of months to the 2019 general elections and at a time when we anticipate the passing of the 'Not Too Young To Run' bill by President Muhammadu Buhari. This bill, when passed, will ensure greater participation for young people in politics and promote deeper involvement in the way governance is delivered at all levels.

From the robust engagement expected from our distinguished set of panelists and the audience, we hope to leave this Symposium today with a new sense of direction and renewed commitment to transparency and accountability in the way our polity is being run.

³ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/268674-breaking-senate-passes-2018-budget-raises-spending-to-n9-1-trillion.html>

⁴ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2018/06/19/the-start-of-a-new-poverty-narrative/>

Ladies and gentlemen, I urge you to see this platform as an opportunity for inter-generational dialogue and an opportunity for the people who hold the levers of power to proactively seek feedback on the quality of their service and the value of their stewardship.

Once again, I welcome you to the 4th edition of the Nigeria Symposium for Young and Emerging Leaders.

2019 Election: Are Nigeria's Youth Prepared

This is a critical question that calls for constant re-examination. Too often have different groups and individuals talked about youth being leaders of tomorrow. So many questions like, 'Can we count on the present generation to lead our country?' and 'Are the youth really ready?' beg for answers.

How prepared are young people? What are the challenges militating against active participation of young leaders in government? How do we ensure that young people take the opportunity of the 'Not Too Young To Run' bill to start contesting for public offices? It is one thing to remove the constitutional impediment to young people's participation in governance, but how do we measure their preparedness to take on the political space? How will they deal with the issue of social capital, name recall, and even finance?

Panelists

- **Samson Itodo** - Executive Director of Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth & Advancement (YIAGA)
- **Mmanti Umoh** - Social Entrepreneur & Management Consultant, Akwa-Ibom
- **Ife Adebayo** - Special Assistant to the Vice President on Innovation & Entrepreneurship
- **Hamzat Lawal** - CEO CODE, Follow the Money

Response:

Moderated by Chioma Chuka, a seasoned communication expert, the discourse focused on the extent of preparedness of Nigeria's Youth for the 2019 election.

The discussion proper began with the moderator, Chioma Chuka asking if young people are ready or not? Mmanti Umoh responded by saying that Young people are ready but how many people who are ready are known?

The few that are ready, do they have capabilities and perception to move things.

In counter response, Hamzat Lawal of CODE said: “Young people are not ready, and they also lack the capacity, this is due to their associations. Fantastic people are also not in government which is one of the factors that affects youth readiness.”

Ife Adebayo, the SA to the Vice President asked rhetorically what it means to be ready, he continued that it is key to grow from a lower level to a higher one. What are those things that makes youth ready? Capacity and engagements are very key. Most youths are not even involved in grassroots activities, so what then are we saying about youth readiness?

The moderator brought in the issue of the ‘Not Too Young To Run’ bill which was just signed by the president.

Hamzat Lawal thus explained that “it is key to know that my generation can now aspire to run because the constitution says one has to be thirty (30) before one can run for any political office. Your PVC and numbers can determine who the next president is, provided the election is free and fair; a united group is very key. It is the electorates, i.e. you and I that will determine the fate of the office holders.”

Mmanti Umoh said that while she was working with the Commonwealth, they organized and sensitized teens on citizenship and good governance through constitutional reorientations, teaching them how to communicate as well as demand for their rights.

She continued that through her organization, teenagers are now responsible for their community, she said that they have over 2.3 million teens on their database who have obtained their PVCs and are ready to review policies, stand and ask leaders how accountable they have been. Teens have the zeal, energy and social media, all of which empower them to ask the right questions.

Ife Adebayo spoke on the mindset of young people advising that the youth should shift from demoralizing politics. It is key for everyone to be involved in the elections and voting processes. Advocacy ought to be engaging not sidelined. It is also pertinent for citizens especially youth to attend ward meetings every Saturday.

In concluding the first panel discussion, Ife Adebayo said that educated elites like Professor Wole Soyinka, Pat Utomi and others left politics for rogues when everyone ought to be involved. Age is not a determinant for participating in politics, but a factor that harbours the question of capacity and mental readiness.

Ife, while answering a question on the readiness of INEC for the 2019 election, responded that INEC ought to partner with postal services and CSOs to make their work seamless. He promised to further examine steps that can be taken by his office. Umoh asked if citizens are ready to take a post, she said it is time people stop sitting on the sideline and take critical decisions. Are we ready as a people too?

Hamzat said the first person who asked a question was right in saying that we never had leaders but rulers - older people who have become political liabilities. "They keep amassing wealth so as to perpetuate themselves in politics. Youth are professionals, which is what we need and want. He spoke on the need for youth to disrupt the system and not expect to get what they want easily - power is not given, it is taken. The truth of the matter is that most youth don't understand the true principle of democracy which is equal opportunities for all. Let's demand what we want with one voice."



Guest panelists; L-R Hamzat Lawal, Mmanti Umoh, Ife Adebayo

Redressing Voters Discourse: **My Vote Or My Life**

In a democracy, the citizens are the popular sovereign and one of the ways they engage the system is by participating in the selection of political leaders through voting. 2019 election is near, there is need for active and deliberate and conscious participation of citizen now. Citizens must understand that they have a direct influence and the electioneering period also confirms the fact that the office of the citizen is the highest office in the land. That is why it is important to get more eligible voters who are yet to get their Permanent Voters Card (PVC) to do so. This is the only way to challenge the notion that votes don't count. The question is; how do we get these critical numbers?

Panelists

- **Dr. Joe Odumakin** - President Women Arise for Change Initiative and the Campaign for Democracy
- **Ayisha Osori** – Chair, OSIWA/Politician
- **Aisha Yesufu** - Co-convener of the Bring Back Our Girls, (BBOG) Group
- **Ali Baba** – Media Entrepreneur

Response

Yemisi Adegoke, the moderator for the panel threw the first question to Aisha Yesufu. She responded saying there is this assumption shared by many people that their votes do not count, hence there is no need to get their PVCs. She said if your vote don't count, why do politicians spend money to buy that vote? "Your vote does count!" she said. She went further to ask if indeed we are truly living in Nigeria or just surviving?

Aisha Osori spoke on the institutional challenges that discourages people from getting their PVC. She explained that INEC's service is bad because they can get away with this. And because we have an extractive govern-

ment, it is designed to extract - to take something from you. She further explained that our numbers ought to pull in the right candidates through voting.

“Your PVC is your voice, it’s your face, it’s your name, it is not enough to just have your PVC, you have to use it,” she stated.

Osori continued that INEC ought to have been digitized to make their work seamless. She said citizens should stop agonizing, they should rather organize themselves to demand that things work.

Aisha Yesufu said enough is enough, citizens need to stand up and start making demands. “Nobody will give you anything on a platter of gold, if one million Nigerians march on the street of Abuja, do you think the government would not do anything,” said Yesufu.

She further stated that citizens need to have a positive mindset: “It is now time to have the right expectations, especially given the fact that life is not a pizza man who delivers to your doorstep. Sacrifices is also key for elected officials in order to be accountable. Education ought to be free as the older generation got this same free education. If one is poor, that person is nameless, faceless and voiceless, he or she does not have a role in any election process or governance.”

Attendees at the event asked pertinent questions which the panelists responded to.

Aisha Osori replied to the question on the challenges that surround PVC collection saying, “PVC is your ticket to address social injustice. Let’s end social injustice by ourselves, speak up and stand up and let’s cut our coat according to the size that fits us. There are more than 66 parties that we can choose candidates from, let us stop being slaves to two parties. Choose elsewhere! Choose wisely! Choose dispassionately!”

Aisha Yesufu replied that “it is a choice to be financially independent, let us

all come together and make demands using social media. Don't allow anyone's opinion to be your own reality. Let's take it back, we need to understand our political power, capacity, character and ethics, enough is enough. Stand up and make demands. We were told in 2015 that we cannot change a sitting government and we did it. In 2019, they are saying that we cannot change a sitting government and we would do it! This is the time for us to shape the narratives," she said.



Guest panelists; L-R Aisha Yesufu, Yemisi Adegoke, Ayisha Osori

Governance and Transparency, An Evaluation of the Current Administration.

Improved governance requires an integrated, long-term strategy built upon cooperation between government and citizens - it involves both participation and institutions. Issues of transparency remain on the front burner. Even with the Freedom of Information bill (FOI), there are questions regarding the level of transparency in government both at the state and the federal level. It could be argued that transparency in governance has not found a foothold in Nigeria, many states do not see the need to make known the details of their spending, with others claiming they are yet to “domesticate the Freedom of Information bill”. The questions are; How do we address these issues? How do we ensure that transparency becomes entrenched in our system, especially giving the call for young people involvement in politics? How do we reconcile good governance and transparency in Nigeria?

Panelist

- Muhammad Sani Dattijo - Commissioner of Budget and Planning. Member, State Executive Council, Kaduna State
- ‘Gbenga Sesan – CEO Paradigm Initiative
- Asuquo Ekpenyong – Commissioner for Finance, Cross-River state

Response:

The session was moderated by Yemi Adamolekun, a prominent social advocate and Executive Director of Enough is Enough (EiE) Nigeria. She started by saying that transparency in government is hard work. She then asked Muhammad Sani Dattijo about the budget performance in Kaduna state and Muhammad responded by saying that, globally, there is high distrust between citizens and government. It is key for his Kaduna people to have a

budget that is transparent. Government is used to promising and which makes accountability very critical especially for taxation. He went further to say that citizens are not interested in sitting down but want to participate in the infrastructural process. “Constant engagement is very key”, “support is key on the path of citizens which is really difficult”.

‘Gbenga Sesan spoke on the security of the digital and new media space. According to him, there’s a decline in the usage of digital security and illegal usage of monitoring which some few states have been involved in. Surveillance in Pres. Buhari’s administration is worse than Goodluck Jonathan’s administration.

“Nigeria is on a serious decline as a result of annoying policies, laws, and citizens showing apathy,” Gbenga said.

The moderator questioned Asuquo on the availability of Cross River state budget, project and finances to citizens. Asuquo, the Commissioner for Finance for the state said the state budget has been published online – he reiterated that the government of Cross River state puts a premium on accountability and transparency.

He spoke on the freedom of information, and elaborated on the fact that it is not been enforced. He also addressed the super highway and deep sea port projects under construction by the state government claiming that the projects are strategic and will increase commerce and trade in the state. “State resources are not directly being deployed to the construction of the super highway, we are leveraging on the PPP model, build the road and earn your income,” Asuquo explained.

‘Gbenga Sesan responded to an audience question saying: “What exactly government is doing? Are they working, stealing or building a legacy? Citizens aren’t meant to be laid back or clap but they ought to ask the right questions, light a candle, do big or go home, spark a darkness. There is a need to distinguish between works that need to be done and work that is not necessary

“Why do you want to outsource advocacy to influencers when you can do it yourself or even take action,” ‘Gbenga asked rhetorically? “The cost of governance is the aspiration to be a political office holder - as if it’s a CEO of a Fortune 500 company - governance should be sacrificial!”

Muhammad Sanni Dattijo said that the cost of government is something one needs to ponder over. There is a need for intergenerational partnership that paves way for the Nigerian system to work. There’s a need for reduction in the national budget due to the unnecessary items on it - only few states implement the budget as expected and use the funds for the exact items they were designated for.

He reiterated that advocacy should be centered on governance which is about taking the right decisions at the right time. The issue of southern Kaduna which has been on for over 21 years was resolved using the court. Asuquo added that it is important that information be checked and authenticated before it is disseminated.



Viability of States in Nigeria, Strength or Weakness

Nigeria has been described as a nation with a parlous state of workers - with many states unable to pay workers' salaries and/or other entitlements. We claim to be a Federation but in reality, the federating units are not self-sustaining. Rather than being a level of government with coordinate powers and independent revenue source(s), we have contrived a system whereby the centre has become the pre-eminent government with the powers to create smaller, dependent and economically less viable or even unviable orders of governments.

We must collectively realize that our political authorities can no longer be preoccupied mainly with matters of 'allocation' and 'distribution' of rents. They must now be concerned with how to generate wealth and ensure that the sub-national orders of government (states) are viable and fiscally independent.

This can only be done by undoing the damage done initially - creation of unviable units as states. That is why the political restructuring of the country is so essential and necessary. Our governors need to take a realistic view of the restructuring of the country.

What are they doing right to get their states running and not always waiting for federal government allocations?

Panelists

- **Dr. Oyeleke Ajiboye** – Real estate mogul, entrepreneur.
- **Chidi Okereke** – Social commentator and founder of listen.ng
- **Linus Okorie** – Governorship Aspirant for 2019 in Imo
- **Leonard Ebute** – An agropreneur and seasoned political analyst

Response

Tolu Adeleru-Balogun, a broadcast journalist and OAP with NigeriaInfo FM moderated the panel.

Okereke opened the floor by addressing the issue of leaders failing to focus on what matters to the people. According to him, states ought to be run as a social enterprise. He stated that greed is inbuilt and there's a need to choose the right people (to lead) in order to hold them accountable and create a system that is citizen oriented.

Leonard Ebute spoke on the need for partnerships among all the states. He discussed extensively on the reason why states are not viable - this he reduced to social and cultural reasons. It is key to clarify the index whether a state's resources are viable or not. It is time for these states to look inward and learn what true federalism is all about. Crop productions can make Nigeria rich again as it was before the oil boom.

"The federal government isn't meant to be giving any state money because they have natural resources which is highly valuable. There is a need for corporate governance amongst states," Ebute added.

Okereke spoke on the cost of imports been higher than exports – a situation which, according to him, is making life difficult for citizens.

"Distribution of wealth is not shared equally, federal government ought to reduce their power and give same to states to function optimally. This is what true federalism is all about," he said.

Mr. Linius who's the final speaker for this panel spoke on the need for electing the right people who are citizen-oriented and who will get the job done.



L-R Chidi Okereke, Leonard Ebute, Tolu Adeleru, Leko Ajiboye, Linus Okorie, Bukonla Adebakin

NEXT STEPS IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK

Enough is Enough Nigeria (EiE), a network of individuals and organizations committed to instituting a culture of good governance and public accountability through active citizenship, told the Cross River state commissioner for finance that the state does not have its 2018 budget published on its website. The Commissioner expressed surprise and explained that the issue must have been an oversight. He however promised that the budget will be published as soon as possible.

ABOUT YMONITOR

YMonitor is an initiative of The Future Project which highlights crucial accountability and governance issues at the State and Federal level. The online site tracks and monitors issues happening across government level and provides citizens with the information needed to take action toward demanding good governance at all level of the government.

Objectives:

1. To highlight and track policies/law/bill passed with accountability and transparency through the site.
2. To deliver information that ensures adequate coverage, exposure, and response to any matter that has real implications for public wellbeing.
3. The project will get key players in government and public stakeholders to make a commitment on major issues, narrow conversations, and debates to actionable products, and ultimately strengthen democratic ideas, accountability, and transparency.



ABOUT THE FUTURE PROJECT

The Future Project has a simple mandate - to build empowered citizens across Africa, through (inclusive) enterprise and (active) citizenship. This focus on Human Capital Development is informed by our value proposition: Africa's growth needs a generation of young people who are gainfully employed and able to demand better leadership.

