

Nigeria Governors Forum – Peace Event

Protocol:

- I would like to thank the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) for the opportunity to extend my goodwill, and to make a few remarks at this important event.

- On behalf of the British High Commission, Abuja, I would like to congratulate the NGF and Governors across the Federation for their commitment and dedication to building sustainable peace and security for all in Nigeria – which is clearly signalled by the launch of this initiative today. We are at a critical juncture in Nigeria’s journey, and now is an important moment for new thinking and action to build a more peaceful future for all Nigerians.

- The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office values our relationship with the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) and have supported the NGF through our programmes including SPARC, PERL and most recently the Technical Assistance provided in framing the Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative (PISI)

- Nigeria faces significant peace and security challenges. There is an active insurgency in the North East; farmer-herder conflicts are extending across the country; resource conflicts in the Delta; tension in the South-East; and banditry in the North West. The rise in conflict risks destabilising Nigeria’s democracy in the run-up to the 2023 elections.

- Conflict destroys lives, destroys livelihoods, destroys hope and ambition for the future. Conflict represents an existential threat to Nigeria’s unity and its development. The police and army are in urgent need of reform – but the solution to Nigeria’s instability does not lie in simply strengthening the police and army – but rather in building an effective social contract, building Federal State, Local and Community level infrastructure to manage conflict; and in giving young people jobs and opportunities so they have a stake in a prosperous and peaceful Nigeria. Injustice and impunity, weak justice institutions, the proliferation of small arms and weapons, the weaponization of social media, are all drivers

of conflict and instability. But with the right commitment, dedications and support – there are solutions.

- The UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) recognise the important role the NGF plays in setting the peace and security agenda, building state level and community level structures and institutions to reduce violence and to respond to conflict and insecurity across Nigeria.
- The FCDO is keen to continue its collaboration with and support for the Government of Nigeria in its efforts to deal with the mounting insecurity. The UK is pleased to have been able to support this initiative and is committed to continue working with the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) in advancing its Peace and Security agenda.
- The UK is engaged in supporting Nigeria to reduce violent conflict in a number of areas: we promote a regional response in the North East and Lake Chad Basin through our contribution to the Regional Stabilisation Facility (RSF) and delivery of programmes on peace building, humanitarian assistance, protection of civilians, human development, good governance and accountability. All our programming – whether focused on health, education, economic growth, or governance – works to reduce the risk of violent conflict and support peacebuilding infrastructure.
- Peace and Stability will be achieved when the causes of conflict in society are managed through strong, fair, and responsive governance mechanisms whether at community, state, or federal level. The use of the police and army will always be only part of the solution. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on reconciliation, mediation, arbitration, and access to justice – all vital components of a vibrant, resilient, and effective social contract.
- I hope today's launch event and ensuing dialogue will contribute to ongoing efforts to promote peace, stability and inclusive security at the sub-national level, and across Nigeria
- I wish you all fruitful deliberations.