

Event Report

**LAUNCH OF THE NGF PEACE AND INCLUSIVE SECURITY INITIATIVE (PISI)**

**THURSDAY 8TH JULY 2021**

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# **1.0 Executive Summary**

The Nigeria Governors’ Forum (NGF) is a non-partisan association of all 36 State Governors.

The Forum was established to among others foster cooperation and collaboration among the Governors. It is the technical and administrative arm of the Forum which serves as policy hub and one-stop resource center for the 36 States. The Secretariat oversees the operations of the NGF, it provides guidance and engages on a continuous basis with stakeholders and partners to achieve the core objectives of the Forum. Security and sustainable peace have been identified by the Forum as a key pillar to achieving National Unity and Prosperity.

It is in this regard that the Nigeria Governors Forum Secretariat organised the launch of the NGF Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative (PISI). The Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) Initiative for Peace and Inclusive Security is aimed at addressing the issues of insecurity and violence in the country. The initiative conceives several responses to the rising conflicts and insecurity across the country. They in include, to identify the drivers of insecurity and stimulate collaboration across all levels of government, agenda setting on peace and stability, especially at the subnational, and ensuring the uptake of actionable policy recommendations.

The governance structure in top to bottom hierarchical order consists of a panel of Governors’ and eminent persons who can influence policy at the highest level, followed by the Technical Steering Committee, responsible for implementing the decisions of the panel and, lastly the sub-secretariat that liaise with the Technical Committee to provide the day-to-day management of the PISI.

The collaborative peace keeping initiative will help in creating a platform that will provide a forum for sharing experiences on Government-civil society initiatives, testing practicable ideas, and pushing for implementation of innovative solutions to conflict and insecurity.

# **2.0 Summary of Welcome Address, Opening Remarks & Keynote Address**

## **2.1 Asishana B. Okauru, Director-General NGF**

Mr. Asishana began by expressing his delight at the commencement of the Nigeria Governors’ Forum (NGF) Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative (PISI). Adding that the launch of PISI is a significant step towards a nation where safety of lives and property is assured.

He noted that the Peace and Security Initiative is the outcome of the determination of the NGF to contribute to inclusive security and leverage on the collective effort of the sub-nationals to ensure safety of the citizenry. Stating that with the support of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Peace and Security Desk has been set up at the NGF to help drive the discourse around keeping the country safe and bringing all State and non-State actors together to proffer a sustainable resolution to the series of security challenges currently confronting the nation.

In his final remarks he thanked participants for attending and reiterated the commitment of the State Governments to improving security and promoting sustainable peace in the country.

## **2.2 H.E. Kayode J. Fayemi, Governor Ekiti State & Chairman NGF**

H.E. Governor Fayemi began by stating that the event heralds an important milestone for the Forum as it marks the launch of the Nigeria Governors’ Forum (NGF) Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative (PISI).

Given the recent escalation in the spate of violence and coordinated criminal activities that have undermined government authority and waned public trust, he explained that Nigeria is still at a crossroads, and that one of the key areas where consensual action is urgently needed is security governance.

Attributing the security crisis to several factors – including an oversized population that the government is unable to cope with, a large number of poor people estimated at over 40% of the population who are living below $1 per day, and indeed, desertification which has affected over 60% of Nigeria's land, as drought and climate change has continued to aggravate land deterioration in the country.

He added that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the country has also made the situation worse and exacerbated the level of violence and fatalities from crime. Between May 2011 and February 2021, over 76,000 deaths were reported by the press and tracked by the Nigeria Security Tracker (NST) – a project of the Council on Foreign Relations' Africa program which documents and maps violence in Nigeria that are motivated by political, economic, or social grievances. This number also includes persons who have been killed by a state actor.

He stressed the need for regional and continental peace and stability, noting that the challenge is not limited to internal security challenges, citing the mass displacement of persons from their areas of residence as a major challenge, b the end of 2019, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reported a total number of 2,583,000 internally displaced persons who have been affected by conflict and violence in the country.

The NGF Chairman highlighted the importance of collaboration between state and non-state actors to consolidate on the measures taken by individual state governments and regional bodies of State governors, stating that this dialogue will create a robust mechanism to stimulate collaborative responses. Concluding by expressing State governments commitment to the ideals of this initiative.

## **2.3 Prof. Abiodun Alao Professor of African Studies, King’s College London & Director, African Security Leadership Centre**

Prof. Alao applauded the achievements of his fellow King’s College Alumni, Dr Kayode Fayemi in public service. He spoke succinctly on the role of leadership in managing diversity, highlighting the various pockets of insecurity in Nigeria.

He argued that our strength is in our diversity as academics or as practitioners, adding that to better understand Nigeria we must immediately confess to a measure of difference. According to him the security challenges in the country fall under several headings like organized crime which has manifested as kidnappings, religious radicalization exemplified in the activities of Boko Haram, trance-human as herdsmen controversy, land conflicts, cultism, sensationist agitations across the country and the unrest linked to ownership, management and control of natural resources.

He explained that the entrenched flaws facing Nigeria lies in our faulty understanding of what a “nation” should mean, the nature of our foundation is such that it can no longer bear the burden of the accumulated contradictions, typically when structures cannot withstand the contradictions they fail. The speaker explained that rather than question why the security challenges are rampant and frequent, we should seek to understand why the disenchantments took as long as it did to manifest in our body politic.

On leadership in the context of security he advised that leaders adapt best practices to our use, set all security challenges against their research backgrounds, appreciate the complexities of our structure and its changing nature, address grievances, promote inclusive-enough governance, balancing the instruments in security challenges, effective two-way communication, and investment in peace. Juxtaposing his recommendation against the backdrop of the spike in kidnapping for ransom which he argued are linked to the collapse in value system and the weakness of policing and intelligence services.

Kidnapping has replaced armed robbery as a more profitable avenue because the Nigeria society is more “cashless”, hitherto criminals could not be assured of adequate returns for their effort. Secondly, our bushes and farmlands have now become “ungoverned” spaces, especially in the South-West, making this a safe haven for criminals, corroborated by the rising rate of urbanization in Nigeria and across Africa. Adding that the risk relative to the crime of kidnapping which exploits the emotional vulnerabilities to blackmail family and friends for ransom money, and the weak policing and judicial system that has prevented potential and actual cases of kidnapping from being prevented or tracked, or speedy trials and issuing appropriate sanctions in a timely manner. The speaker advocated for the use of technology in the fight against kidnapping, it can help significantly in addressing the kidnap saga.

He offered some further thoughts on the contradictions that have characterized our existence as a nation. Noting that development figures show that Nigeria spends more on defense that it does on education and health put together, the disproportionate spending is a base for insecurity and crime to thrive amongst the youths, this describes the situation we are in today. He called them the “left behind” people. Adding that the class divide, and inequalities are more pronounced than they have ever been. Institutions have not escaped the menace of corruption that has managed to sweep through society, to the extent that the social modality of “success” and who is “successful” has been redefined negatively.

Prof. Alao advocated for a number of practical next steps be taken including the increase spending on social infrastructure, hinging government policies on national core values, rejig of our formal and informal education structures. He concluded by congratulating the governors for the huge work they have ahead.

# **3.0 Summary of Goodwill Messages**

## **3.1 Hon. Sadiya Umar Farouq, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHADMSD) Represented by Dr. Umar Bindir, the SSA National Coordinator National Social Investment Programme (NSIP)**

Dr. Umar began by stating that peace and stability are the foundations required for social development and as such the NGF Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative (PISI) is critical to nation building.

He explained that FMHADMSD was created in August 2019 to develop humanitarian policies and provide effective coordination of national and international Humanitarian intervention. Other key functions include to ensure strategic disaster mitigation, preparedness, and response, and to manage the formulation and implementation of fair focused social inclusion and protection programmes in Nigeria.

Dr. Umar noted that PISI’s objective is central to the work of the ministry as it seeks to address the root causes of conflict and vulnerabilities through early warning, early action and early prevention. He added that their intervention is based on the methodology proposed in the National Humanitarian Development Peace Framework created by the National Humanitarian Coordination Committee. Highlighting 8 pillars of the framework he noted that the pillars range from improving the quality of living standards, securing, stabilising and recovering communities that might have been impacted by natural or man-made disasters.

Concluding his remarks, Dr. Umar commended the NGF for the PISI initiative and the Forum’s commitment towards entrenching peace and security at all levels in the country. He urged the Forum to key into and co-opt existing strategies that promote a coordinated, cohesive and national approach.

## **3.2 Mr. Chris Pycroft, Development Director, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).**

Mr. Chris thanked the NGF for the opportunity to extend the FCDO’s goodwill. He congratulated the Forum on behalf of the British High Commission Abuja for their commitment and dedication to building sustainable peace and security for all Nigeria – which was signalled by the launch of the PISI initiative.

He added that Nigeria faces a significant peace and security challenge across the country, and this destroys lives, livelihoods, hope and ambition for the future. Stating that the police and army are in urgent need of reform – but the solution transcends the police and the army it requires building an effective social contract, improving the infrastructure to manage conflict at all levels and creating jobs and opportunities for the young people to have a stake in a prosperous and peaceful Nigeria.

He noted that injustice, impunity, weak justice institutions, the proliferation of small arms and weapons, the weaponization of social media are all drivers of unrest and insecurity and requires urgent commitment, dedication and support to eradicate. Adding FCDO recognises the important role the NGF plays in setting the peace and security agenda and are keen to continue to collaborate with and support the Government of Nigeria in its effort to deal with mounting insecurity and the NGF in advancing peace and security agenda.

He highlighted the promotion of regional response in the North-East and Lake Chad Basin through FCDO’s engagements in Nigeria to reduce violent conflict, they also contribute to the Regional Stabilization Facility (RSF) and the delivery of programme on peace building, humanitarian assistance, protection of civilians, human development, good governance and accountability.

In conclusion he noted that peace and stability can be achieved when the cause of conflict in societies are managed through strong, fair, and responsive governance mechanisms at all levels of government. He urged participants to be active and contribute to the ongoing efforts to promote peace, stability and inclusive security at the sub-national level and across Nigeria.

# **4.0 Overview of the Peace & Inclusive Security Initiative (PISI) – Programme Design & Governance Structure by Bar. Chijioke Chuku – Head Legal NGF Secretariat.**

Bar. Chuku presented an overview of the NGF, which is a non-partisan association of Nigeria’s 36 states Governors, established to among others foster cooperation and collaboration among the Governors, it is the technical and administrative arm of the Forum which serves as policy hub and one-stop resource center for the 36 States. The Secretariat oversees the operations of the NGF, provides guidance and engages on a continuous basis with stakeholders and partners to achieve the core objectives of the Forum.

Providing context, he explained that the security situation in Nigeria is as dire as it is diverse and at the core of our existence as a country. He posited that ensuring is security at the sub-national level would translate to peace in Nigeria as a whole. Adding that the leadership of the Forum has given prime consideration to security and sustainable peace, resulting in the establishment of the Peace and Inclusive Security initiative (PISI) to address security challenges in our States and country.

PISI is an Initiative designed to address issues of insecurity and violence in the country, it is the NGF’s response to the need to have a one-stop desk on security matters. It is a collective approach by the 36 State Governors’ towards tackling security challenges by ensuring that empirically sound expert policy option/direction are available for the Governors in the fight against insecurity. It will serve as the early warning platform – Informing the Governors of festering security challenges at the sub-national.

Furthermore, the initiative aims to provide a platform for State and non-State actors to proffer solutions to the security challenges in the country. Other objectives of PISI include, agenda setting on peace and stability at the sub-national level, to identify the drivers of insecurity at all levels and stimulate collaborative response and ensuring uptake of actionable policy recommendations including designing and operationalizing State Action Plans (SAPs).

At the top of the governance structure is the Panel of Governors and Eminent Persons (PGEP) made up of persons who can influence policy at the highest level, followed by the Technical Steering Committee (TSG) the technical arm of the initiative, and lastly the Sub-Secretariat (SS) providing the day-to-day management of the initiative.

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**PISI Governance Structure**

The Stakeholders include, State Governors, Security and Peace related MDAs at all Levels of Government, Security Agencies (Including representatives of military operations deployed in the States, and International Organizations, Donor Agencies, Organized Private Sector and Civil Societies.

Bar. Chuku concluded by thanking participants for honoring the invitation to attend and participate actively in the discourse, he also applauded the support of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) for sponsoring the Technical Assistance component of this initiative.

# **5.0 Summary of Remarks by Former Head of State Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, Chairman, National Peace Committee represented by Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah, Catholic Bishop.**

Bishop Kukah explained that the current spate of insecurity is characterised by the Instrumentalization of insecurity, adding that a military approach to tackle insecurity is futile, governments should adopt bread and not bullet approach to tackling insecurity. He applauded the NGF’s approach to diagnose the security challenges and address them wholistically.

He commended the Nigeria Governors' Forum for the Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative (PISI), stressing the importance of inter-agency collaboration, adding that in the past, security operatives preferred to form silos and become territorial rather than cooperate. Noting that spiritualism in politics and democracy have impeded speedy transition to a more peaceful and secured Nigeria.

In his final remarks, he reaffirmed the peace committee's commitment to work with state officials, emphasizing the importance of broadening the scope of the conversation beyond religious boundaries, as it is critical to a secure and peaceful Nigeria.

# 6.0 Inauguration of the Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative (PISI) Technical Steering Committee

The members of the PISI steering committee were formally inaugurated by H.E Kayode J. Fayemi. They include representatives of:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **S/no** | **Organization** |
| 1 | Office of the National Security Agency |
| 2 | National Defence College |
| 3 | National Orientation Agency |
| 4 | Office of the SGF |
| 5 | Ministry of Interior |
| 6 | Office of the Vice President |
| 7 | PDP Governors Forum |
| 8 | Progressive Governors Association |
| 9 | Plateau and Kaduna Peace Building Agencies |
| 10 | National Peace Committee |
| 11 | Obasanjo Foundation |
| 12 | Dangote Foundation |
| 13 | Ministry of Niger Delta |
| 14 | Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs |

# **7.0 Panel Discussions**

**7.1 Opening Remarks –the Moderator Prof. Charles Ukeje, Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Osun State.**

He welcomed participants and elaborated on the theme of panel discussions “Conflict Trends and Efficacy of Current Responses to Conflict and Insecurity in Nigeria”. Noting that the dire security situation in the country could no longer be left solely in the hands of government; arguing that there is need for collaboration amongst stakeholders in order to develop a solution to some of the problems of insecurity in Nigeria.

Several speakers alluded to the adverse effect insecurity in the country, specifically on the economy, including increased defense spending at the expense of other economic sectors, decimation of consumer confidence which has a negative impact on FDI inflows.

**7.2 How did we get to this point? – Isaac Mbachu, Professor of Political Science and Defence Studies, Nigeria Defence Academy.**

Prof. Isaac began by drawing on examples from China, explaining that although the wall of china was built to protect the Chinese from invaders, overtime it became evident that they had not handled the most critical aspect, which is the mindset of the citizens.

He added that justice was critical to security and the continued rise in poverty levels has exacerbated the security challenges in the country. Adding that corruption is at the heart of the issues currently besieging the country, adding that this has led to the underfunding of critical security agencies leading to ungoverned vacuums that are now governed by non-State actors.

Arguing that corruption is at the heart of the continued rise in inequality and marginalization coupled with the vast span of ungoverned spaces. All of which have eroded the confidence in government and exacerbated the failing social contract. He noted the need for efforts to intensify efforts to ameliorate the poverty situation in the country.

**7.3 Elaborate on the timelines of the various security challenges and the impact on society – Dr. Nnamdi Obasi Senior Adviser, Nigeria International Crisis Group (ICG)**

Dr. Nnamdi thanked the organizers for putting the event together, stating that the geography of the crisis has changed overtime; at the time he joined the ICG, the burning topic was the Niger-Delta crisis, and now the security challenges have metamorphosed across the country.

Noting that the nature of the insecurity has evolved to be more generalized across various demographics and aspects, the number of actors has increased, as have the frequency of insecurity and violence. The fatality has continued to rise; in 2019, the total fatalities recorded was about 2300, in the first quarter of 2020, it was 2400; extrapolating the figures, we can expect 6400 fatalities in 2021, more than double the 2019 figures.

The rise in IDP camps reflects the situation in the country and gives a clear insight of the rise of internally displaced people, families have been impoverished by ransom fees and have experienced heightened trauma as a result of their experiences. The continued diminishing capacity of the State to address the challenges has further widening the gap of inequality. The increase in impunity is a reflection of the justice system, explaining that impunity leads to self-help, including individual, regional and state outfits. Which could become a double-edged sword as these vigilantes are formed along ethnic lines. The inability of states to provides security has led to the polarization of her citizens.

**7.4 What is the capacity of the State to address issues of security? –H.E. Simon Lalong Governor, Plateau State**

Gov. Lalong reflected on his time as speaker of the State House of Assembly, saying that there was little he could do because his powers were limited, and that the issues have evolved now that he is governor. He emphasized the importance of a defined method to addressing insecurity, noting that in his experience, many Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are willing to help but aren't given the opportunity.

Efforts to de-escalate the state's security challenges have resulted in the development of a comprehensive document addressing issues of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as well as the establishment of an inter-religious council to address religious issues. The document emphasized the need for institutions that can domesticate and drive conflict prevention and peacebuilding agency, the institution was backed by law. The document outlined the framework for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in detail.

Gov. Lalong argued that development and implementation of the framework for conflict resolution and peace building is critical for all the States. He urged international partners to keep up the wonderful work they have been doing in Plateau State by developing early warning signals. He spoke on the need to adopt the National Livestock Development Plan (NLDP), adding that the document is not without its challenges as they have not been able to adequately implement the recommendations because of the inherent challenges. He added that the need for all the State to adopt a co-joined approach will dramatically reduce the insecurity within and around the State.

**7.5 What is your take on the breakdown in social contract at the State? – Dr. Emmanuel Agbadu Akabe, Deputy Governor Nassarawa State.**

Dr. Emmanuel alluded to the heightened mutual distrust and lack of transparency in government. Stating that Nassarawa State is currently confronted with the farmers herders clashes which has taken the shape of ethnic violence. The key driver for this clash is the mutual distrust, adding that there is need to ensure inclusive and participatory governance, specifically in information sharing and also inter-agency cooperation. Adding that citizens should be encouraged to share information and adequate protection should be made available to citizens noting that this will improve the social contract.

**7.6 Could you reflect on the need for Inter-agency cooperation? – Mallam Mustapha Muhammad Inuwa, SSG Katsina State**

He began by highlighting the particularities of front-line states and their unique understanding of subnational security challenges. Security risks are difficult to deal with because they are multi-headed targets that require a multi-agency strategy, he said, adding that while the federal government has primary responsibility for security, states must devise measures to mitigate insecurity threats.

Despite the state's efforts, it is rendered ineffectual as a result of neighboring states' failure to do their part. He underlined the necessity for collaboration among security services to provide a coordinated approach to addressing insecurity challenges. He urged the federal government and security agencies to collaborate with the states to address these challenges.

**7.7 What is the human cost of the insecurity and how should we respond to it? By Hon. Sadiya Umar Farouk, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development Represented by Umar Bindir SSA, National Social Investment Programme (NSIP)**

Dr. Umar began by stating that the security situation in the country is dire, and that it is not restricted to any one region. He advocated for leadership decentralization and collaboration across divides. The importance of the traditional leaders cannot be over-emphasized, adding that the entire governance structure should be harmonized to improve accountability and transparency, improve the education of youths in the country, and leverage on technology in addressing the security challenges. Concluding he noted that the economics of the state is key to the generation and re-distribution of wealth to further bridge the inequality gap.

# **8.0 Questions/Comments**

I. Representative of the National Orientation Agency (NOA) – expressed the need for precise leadership strategy in dealing with the insecurity challenges. He also urged the States to adopt the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP).

II. Khadijah Hawaja Gambo,Representative of Kaduna State Peace Commission – noted that Kaduna State is blessed with a diverse collection of ethnic groups and as such there is bound to be some sort of fracas because of misinformation that has been passed down through generations. The need for inclusive growth becomes inevitable. She urged governors to fund peace building at the subnational.

III. Representative of FCDO – urged the governors forum to consider including women in peace initiatives in the country, considering the fact women are the most affected in this crisis.

IV. Mrs. Elizabeth – highlighted the lack of trust in government because of the breakdown of the system through the manifestation of impunity. She urged for governors to as a matter of urgency drive a more inclusive and participatory structure, one that is devoid of impunity.

V. Joseph Lengmang Plateau State Peace Building Agency – he explained that the governor shifted from active response to been proactive. The design of the agency is key to their success, it emphasizes the importance of justice and community cohesiveness. Arguing that the importance of having similar institutions replicated across states aimed at building consensus around the issue of insecurity cannot be over-emphasized.

# **9.0 Vote of Thanks**

Dr. L.O.T Shittu, Executive Director, Strategy & Research, NGF – noted that the PISI is geared towards fostering learning and sharing experience on pragmatic and sustainable ideas and solutions to resolving the myriad of conflicts and insecurity that has evaded our environment and communities. He thanked all the panelist and all in attendance at the event for their time and support in advancing the cause of peace and inclusive security in the country.