



# **State, Governance And Regional Integration In Africa**

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## Economic Adversity and Nigeria's Collapsing "Empire" in Africa

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### Abstract

*Based on major indicators both from national and external sources, it is evidently clear that the level of economic performance in Nigeria is less than satisfactory though the potential for it to do better after some efforts has not been doubted. The current less-than-satisfactory performance of the economy has many implications for the Nigerian state and the citizens. One area that is often ignored in analyzing the consequences of the downturn in the economy is external relations. Despite the honest and repeated submissions of President Buhari on the stress that the country's foreign policy is passing through on account of the economic hard times in the country, only a few have taken note of it as more external responsibilities are being anticipated for the nation to discharge, including being a father Christmas to ECOWAS, not minding the little returns that the nation is recording from participating in its activities. This paper sets out to examine how the poor state of the national economy has negatively affected the realization of the objectives of the country's external relations especially with respect to Nigeria's policy towards Africa. The objective of the effort is to raise the consciousness in Nigeria's foreign policy making environment about the dangers that Nigeria will face if she continues to withdraw or relegate African affairs in her list of priorities based on the bad signals coming from her economy. Meanwhile, the paper tentatively concludes that a lot of strategic/security cum economic consequences await Nigeria should she continue to relegate continent in her external pursuits taking a bearing from the economy. It thus recommends that the country's political leadership should get more serious with the task of revamping the nation's economy to make it a strong propeller of a vibrant and robust foreign policy agenda in Africa. Both primary and secondary sources of data guided the effort.*

### Introduction

The regime of reluctance in Nigeria foreign policy witnessed under the Balewa government as regards African affairs was wiped away with the naira rain that fell on Nigeria courtesy of the huge petro-dollars that visited the country under the military. From being a shy participant in the internal system, Nigeria came powerfully into the global scene especially in the decade of 1970s as an assertive African country that the world could no longer ignore. Many diplomatic missions were opened majorly on account of more foreign exchange she made from the sales of oil to the international market. So awash was the nation that many popular causes were declared on behalf of the African continent with her new buoyant economy backing it up. At a point, the nation was donating money to the Commonwealth

organization and her face was quite popular in many countries with black populations as she saw herself as the leader of the black world (Otubanjo, 2016).

To some extent, Nigeria could face the western nations on some issues of importance to Africa. This was in the direction of being the champion of African liberation and the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa (Akinboye, 2013). Borne out of the relatively strong economy at home, she took a decision to sell her oil, the mainstay of her economy at reduced prices to some African countries that had approached her instead of allowing them to be at the mercy of extra African countries that wanted to grant them such a concession to cushion in the effect of the Arab-Israel war that had shot up the prices of petroleum products (Aluko, 1981).

Instantly, Nigeria became the beacon of hope not to only African countries but indeed, the entire black world which she hosted in 1977 through the instrumentality of the second Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) that took place in Lagos (Babawale, 2013). Then, there was pride in being appointed as Nigerian ambassadors to other parts of the world as the new buoyancy of the nation was taken proper notice of as Nigerians generally were given a red carpet treatment across the world. The understanding was that anywhere Nigerians visited would experience a boom, as they were big spenders. African leaders were always in and out of the country to seek one favour or the other (Obasanjo, 21990). Both the defunct organization of African unity midwife by the country and the ECOWAS counted so much on Nigerian resources to stay afloat.

Many economic assistance in outright cash donations and joint ventures were established with African countries without the country in the mood of claiming what rightly belonged to her from them until the 1980s when she began to ask some lazy questions to the consternation of countries harboring such investments (Saliu, 2004). The era of being indebted to many international organizations that she belongs never surfaced as such organizations served as an expression of Nigeria's power level in the world.

The point being made is that there was a time that the country was not driven back from pursuing a global agenda as her state of economy was quite handy to carry the weight of more global visibility for the country. Anywhere Nigeria went, she and her citizens were welcomed. That favourable external image gave some measure of confidence to the nation buoyed by their strong state of the national economy.

Indeed, scholars and keen observers took so many things for granted in the formulation and implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy especially in Africa as the concept of being Africa's big brother espoused by the Balewa government was given full expression to when the country without planning for it came across immense wealth. Until latter years when stress began to show in the implementation of the Third Development Plan (1975-1980), the country did not anticipate any borrowing or financial support coming from any other countries, as the massive oil receipts were capable of funding the plan.

Nigeria in the latter part of the 1970s and the succeeding years began to come face to face with the danger of her heavy reliance on oil revenue to fund her foreign policy. The fall in international oil prices, no doubt, affected the confidence level of

the country in external relations with a notable consequence on her African policy. The Shagari's Second Republic government gave the initial indications as major strands of Nigerian African policy began to fall apart, as the nation could not meet up with its financial obligations to the OAU and even failed to continue with Nigeria's tradition of being a major backer of the liberation movements with the closing down of their offices in Lagos and withdrawal of scholarships hitherto granted to the youths from Southern Africa that had escaped from their colonial oppressors and the apartheid regime in South Africa (Ajala, 1986).

The western influence that the military especially Murtala and Obasanjo regimes had resisted began to be active again through the Shagari government dictating policy directions for the nation. This, coupled with the expulsion of illegal aliens who were Africans from Nigeria brought to the bold relief the impact of bad economy at home on Nigerian foreign policy posture in Africa (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986).

Ever since the collapse of the Shagari government, the factor of the economy has been a major constraint in the pursuit of Nigerian foreign policy especially in Africa (Bello, Dutse and Othman, 2017). The first Muhammadu Buhari government continued with the expulsion of what it called illegal aliens from Nigeria citing the poor state of the economy as a major reason. Although, the Babangida regime stopped the policy on expulsion of illegal aliens from Nigeria and embarked a flurry of activities that suggested it was more concerned about Africa, its adoption of the IMF and World Bank's inspired Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) with economic diplomacy serving as its external face, the dictates of the western inspired economic recovery programmes impacted on the country's African policy as it was not combatable with the requirements of neo-liberal economic policy of the government (Ogwu and Olukoshi, 1991; Saliu, 2006).

More Nigerians were excluded from the government economic policies and thus the back support that was necessary for African policy was lost as many more Nigerians due to the widespread disempowerment engendered by SAP, began to hold the African policy of the state responsible for their material deprivation. From that period inward, the national consensus necessary for the pursuit of Nigeria's African policy was lost. Each time a donation was made by Nigerian government, there is always a complaint or resentment (Abubakar, 2018).

Evidences abound that the Jonathan government did not properly tender the economy. There were too many cases of mismanagement recorded under his government (Iweala, 2018; Obasanjo, 2013). The lack of good economy at home led to the desperation to seek more foreign economic assistance which did not allow for a good performance on the African policy (Ashiru, 2013). It was therefore, the lot of Buhari government that came to power in May, 2015 to change the tide of things for the better.

A number of measures were initially taken but suddenly the country rolled into recession in 2016 and that further worsened the state of the economy in Nigeria and its impact on Nigerian foreign policy towards Africa was great to the extent that the country has withdrawn from so many organizations that she was indebted to and

even reduced the number of Nigeria's diplomatic missions all blamed on the state of the national economy (Adeosun, 2017).

In this paper, therefore, an effort will be made to examine some aspects of the economy such as the poverty level, indebtedness and unemployment to see how their worsening conditions have arm-strung Nigeria's foreign policy in Africa. The paper is divided into sections to enable it answer the basic research question which is: how the state of the economy in Nigeria has negatively affected the economy in Nigeria? Its objective is to find out how the reputation that the country has built for herself over the years as a leading nation in Africa is being threatened by the new turn in her economy. Our assumption is that with the downturn in her national economy, Nigeria's influence level on the African continent must have suffered some damages.

### **National Economy and Foreign Policy**

There is a basic understanding that the strength of a national economy is a major determinant of the foreign policy agenda of the nation. If it is healthy, it will show in the gaze of the foreign policy and if otherwise, it will equally show. A foreign policy that is being propelled by a strong economy will show in its activities and the kind of goals being sought in the international system. This is because ultimately money is required to give effect to the foreign policy. A lot of travelling is involved and virtually everything about a foreign policy will require foreign exchange that is in short supply every.

It therefore, becomes necessary for a nation to have some relative economic buoyancy to be able to do well in external relations. The idea of some countries relying on other countries to conduct their diplomatic functions for them cannot be divorced from the poor state of their economies. Also, the penchant of some countries to depend on other countries to pay their assessed contributions to international organizations or to fly their heads of governments to international meetings is an indication of financial insufficiency and such countries they often depend on may want to exercise some influence over them one way or the other especially the imperialist states that are always eager to render such assistance.

Although there are intangibles that are involved in foreign relations that may not show the angle of money, yet no foreign policy can ever have the opportunity to derive them without some economic power either latent or manifest before it can birth with the intangibles (Saliu, 2016). With the disturbing bent of ultra-nationalism being experienced in foreign relations, it would be difficult for economic considerations not to have played a role.

Throughout the period of campaign in the USA between 2015 and 2016, the air was thick on the mantra of *America First* that Donald Trump adopted as his campaign message. The understanding was that the American economy was contracting due to loss of jobs and the Chinese invasion of American market. His thrust of revamping the economy was to protect American economy by insisting that the Chinese and others should come to America to invest so as to generate more wealth for hard working Americans (Trump, 2017) .

Also, one noticed that the Buhari's campaign for a second term in office in 2019 focused on the issue of fighting corruption and revamping the economy. The view is that with a reduction in the level of corruption and a revamped economy, more money will be made available to the Buhari government with which to adequately fund the country's foreign policy. This underscores the place of a strong economy in foreign policy. A bad economy in any country will encourage external borrowing which will in turn reduce the amount of freedom that a nation can enjoy in the international system in choosing its external options as indebtedness has become a major instrument for exploitation and domination.

Any externally-dependent nation can hardly pursue any nationalistic policy within and outside its borders. A less buoyant economy can bring about ridicule as basic needs of the nation's diplomatic outfits may not be met and that will lead to lowering of morale among its Foreign Service officers among other negative consequences that such a nation may face (Saliu, 2013).

Once the national economy of a country is experiencing some stress, her foreign policy pursuits would show signs of stress as a forward-looking approach may not be seen. In the same way, a nation that is lucky to have a strong economy backing its foreign pursuits will show more confidence and record more achievements in its external engagements. Aware of the fact that the state of the economy needs not to be absolute yet, a relative buoyancy is necessary for a worthwhile external visibility and accomplishments.

### **An Analysis of Some Aspects of Nigeria's National Economy**

In this section of the paper, our emphasis will be on poverty, unemployment and debt portfolio. We are strongly convinced that the three major issues will enable us to peep through the Nigerian economy upon which an informed analysis can be carried out on why Nigeria's African policy is no longer generating national consensus for its pursuit and why the external gains of the country on that strand of the country's foreign policy are so few and not as enduring as they used to be in the past?

*Poverty* is a global phenomenon. Little surprise the world is confronting it through many programmes and initiatives. Until now, the era of millennium goals was heralded with the ambition of reducing global poverty by half by the year 2020. Failure of many countries to inch towards achieving the target led to the adoption of a new initiative in the direction of sustainable goals with many penetrating approaches at reducing global poverty (Saliu, Raheem,.....).

Quite surprising, the poverty situation in Nigeria has not shown any impact being made by the global efforts at reducing it. For now, about 86 million Nigerians have been arrested by poverty out of about 180 million population and that is encouraging the conclusion that in a few years time, Nigeria will be the world capital for poor people. India, with her over one billion population and that used to be the home for more poor people in the world, now has about 70 million poor people and thus displaced by Nigeria (World Bank, 2018).

With about half of Nigerians in the poor bracket, little is available to pursue any global agenda for power and influence (World Bank, 2018). Already, because of the poverty bug, Nigeria is a leading nation in terms of illegal migration to Europe as well as being a top country on the list of asylum seekers in other parts of the world (Adesina, 2019). This is quite surprising with many poverty reduction strategies adopted in the country.

The reality is that as the country grows more in the number of years spent under democracy, the more the number of people that have been pushed into poverty and squalor. The reason why this is so is not far-fetched. The politics in Nigeria and other African countries is such that grows the tummy of the active politicians with obscene salaries and allowances being paid to elective and appointed officials of the state (Sani, 2018). While members of the National Assembly collect hefty amounts every month, the minimum wage in the country, until recently, was N18,000 in the midst of spiral inflation. Yet, a good number of states have not been paying the minimum wage and they are in arrears of whatever amount they are paying (Adeyeye, 2019). Also to be captured is the high unemployment, under-employment that is being seen in the country. It is not possible to reduce poverty when year-in, year-out, graduates are leaving schools without the prospect of getting employed (NBS, 2018).

In most of the states, graduates and artisans have been pushed into *okada*-riding in the face of unemployment. Unfortunately, the policy-makers at all levels have abandoned the culture of planning. They are administering their various levels without any planning. Loan facilities are announced from time to time but only those with contacts in corridors of power usually have access to them, while many others desirous of the loan window are usually driven back because of the harsh conditionalities attached to them.

Looting of the treasury by the country's leaders and the heavy reliance on oil money that fluctuates over time cannot be excused on why poverty is endemic in Nigeria. Diversification of the economy is a catch-phrase of successive governments in the country, yet oil revenue continues to be relied upon to fuel government at all levels. As the economy is contracting leading to job losses, more Nigerians have been pushed into poverty without any clear hope of how to escape from it (Soludo, 2017, Balarabe, 2019).

**Unemployment** is the byproduct of poor planning and non-diversification of the national economy. On account of the reliance on oil revenue, many white collar jobs were created during the period of oil boom without any thought spared on the period of oil burst, as oil is a finite resource. Instead of planning for rainy days, the country's leaders thus become poor thinkers, as oil revenue is being seen as free money that must come into the kitty whether they plan or not. High consumption was created on the basis of the oil money, school curricular have not been re-directed as free money is always there to sustain the high import culture (Ogbe, 2019). Pencils, pizza, lipsticks and other frivolous items are being imported and gradually local industries that should have absorbed Nigerians closed down or re-located to other countries. Infrastructures such as water, power and roads are not being efficiently

provided. For those companies that rely on them, closing shop and re-location recommends themselves.

Today, there is a high level of unemployment especially youth unemployment in the country. The statistics show that about 23.1 per cent of Nigerians are without jobs and there seems to be any hope for about half of the people securing jobs in foreseeable future. The Buhari government claimed to have generated about 8 million jobs in the agricultural sector but reality is that many are still doubting the figure given the statistics being given by some source (NBS, 2018; Ngige, 2019).

Resulting from the high unemployment figure, Nigerians are everywhere in the world including professionals in search of greener pastures. Some of them have died in the course of migrating to other parts of the world; some others have been arrested while some others have been serving jail terms or deported back to the country without any adequate protests identified with the Nigerian state on behalf of the affected citizens. The situation is so bad that President Buhari had to warn the world that not the blacks that have caught on illegal migration to Europe are Nigerians (Buhari, 2018).

As many more Nigerian youths leave their schools without jobs, the problem of unemployment is being compounded in the country. At a point, the Nigerian state blamed the high unemployment on lazy youths who are only interested in quick money not what they can do in a sustainable manner to earn a living (Buhari, 2016; Saraki, 2018). The Nigerian state has also pushed the responsibility to the private sector assuming they exist in Nigeria. With the new drive for taxes, the members of the private sector have been groaning under the regime of multiple taxations, serving as disincentive to businesses. In some of the states, there is a strong belief that the government should have no business in business. It is scarcely necessary to remark that this mindset is the grower of joblessness in the nation as the pivotal role of the public sector in directing the economy that includes promoting employment is being sacrificed in the poor consumption of the neo-liberal economic principles and their unsuitability for African situations that shows a heavy dependence on the public sector (Saliu, 2013b).

**Debt portfolio** in Nigeria is again becoming an issue of concern after the debt relief secured in 2006 under Obasanjo government. Currently, the country is owing about 23.49 trillion naira as debt to both internal and external sources upon which the country is spending about 63 per cent of her annual budget to service annually (Dipo, 2019). This figure is even a conservative one if one notes the 69 per cent that IMF has come out, leading to its advise that the debt servicing obligations are too high for the country (IMF, 2019).

Although, the government shares the view that its borrowing which is at the ratio of about 19 per cent of the country's GDP is still below the limit of about 25 percent, informed analysts and observers believe it is still high, a great chunk of which is being owed to China (Abubakar, 2019). So many factors are responsible for the high level of the current indebtedness in the country (Nigerian Tribune, 2018). The heavy reliance on the oil sector as the major revenue earner has been



experiencing fluctuation in its earnings as it is dependent on variables that are outside the control of the nation.

As its prices fell in the international market in the period, between 2015 and 2016 and even now, the hope of implementing Nigeria's annual budget was not realized and that encourage more borrowing to cover up the consistent deficits in the budget until the new era of indebtedness returned to the country. As it has been argued repeatedly by the Buhari government, the failure of the PDP's government it succeeded to save for the raining days prepared the ground for the recession it experienced in 2016 (Tinubu, 2017).

Although, the country is now out of recession but in the view of observers only marginally (Taiwo, 2017). Another important issue is the failure of the Nigerian state to seriously pursue the policy of diversification of the economy. Each time the oil prices fall in the international market, the non-sector has not been seen rising to the occasion as ten per cent of the foreign receipts of the country.

As remarked elsewhere, the basis of the current debt overhang of the country cannot be divorced from the manner of securing debt relief in 2006 (Sheu, 2016). While the relief was celebrated by the Obasanjo government, it failed to address adequately the basis for debt accumulation in the first instance (Saliu, 2008; Iweala, 2012).

With about 63 per cent of Nigeria's national budget goes into debt servicing, there is really little left for the economy to cater for the critical needs of the nation. With respect to internal debt, money has been withdrawn from the economy with laying off of staff by local industries remaining the outstanding consequence. There is, indeed, a noticeable stress in the economy that has prompted President Buhari to warn the governors who are major contributors to the huge debt that the nation is owing to both internally and externally that the future will really be tough for Nigeria (Buhari, 2019). This, definitely, will extend to the external sector where the nation is known for its crave for global visibility.

### ***Implications of Economic Crisis for Nigeria's African Policy***

As the national economy despite being the largest economy in Africa is fumbling, there is no way the foreign sector of the country will not feel its pangs. Its impact is varied and they show in many forms. A few of the impacts of the economy on the African policy will be sketched out in this paper.

The first to be noted is that the last word on the appropriate number for Nigeria's diplomatic missions has not been heard. More discussions are likely to take place on the high number of missions which stands at over one hundred; about 105 to be precise. It is not possible for the African continent not to be affected by the cost saving measures of the Nigerian state. If the country goes the whole hog as being speculated, some missions in Africa are likely to be affected as questions are being asked on the rationale for many of the diplomatic missions in Africa on account of them not having any visible significance to Nigeria. Some other missions created by the African leadership syndrome in other parts of the world may have to be closed down to reflect the economic realities of the country (Buhari, 2015).

While nothing concrete is yet on the table on the matter beyond the nine missions that Buhari's government has closed down, one would want to advise the Nigerian nation that caution is necessary in pruning down their number for obvious reasons. One of these is the likely impact of the decision on Nigeria's past investments in and on behalf of the African continent. Already, there is a noticeable decline in the level of the country's influence in Africa and one is afraid, it might be worsened with a decision to close down more missions on the ground of the poor state of the economy in Nigeria. The trophy of being the defender of African interests may be lost with repercussion on the leadership role being fancied by her in Africa.

If that happens all the past investments of the country in that regard may go down the drain with a consequence of stripping Nigerian foreign policy naked of its historical linchpin. If more reverses are seeing with the country's African policy, the sustaining of people in the country's foreign policy will be gone and that will be terrible for the nation (Saliu, 2014; Tyoden, 2012; Bukarambe, 2010).

The angle of the economy has also shown in the level of security functions being performed in Africa that has raised Nigeria's profile in the world. In 2013, president Jonathan shocked world when he announced that the country would not be on duty in Central African Republic, CAR, to restore normalcy to the country because of the poor state of the economy. Consequently, Nigeria has lost her pride of place in the United Nation's ranking of countries on peacekeeping operations (UN, 2018). This strand like the African centre-piece, until recently, had generated warmth for the country in the committee of nations. Poor economy was equally partly responsible for the withdrawal of about 1,100 of Nigerian troops who were on duty in Mali in one fell swoop. Thus, the initial positive rating of the country plummeted as other nations such as France, Rwanda and others have outshined the country's participation in Malian operation (Akinterinwa, 2014)

A once liberator or peacekeeper in Africa has loss its prime position traceable to signs coming from the economy. One is afraid that the drop in the ranking of the nation that was seen under Yar'Adua leading to the nation being excluded with the meeting convened by ex-President of America, Barack Obama with notable troop-contributing nations has further gone down (Saliu, 2013c).

Nigerians who were always welcomed across Africa have now become endangered species received with scorn and contempt. Almost everywhere in Africa, Nigerians are not welcome. Xenophobic attacks against Nigerian interests in South Africa, Zimbabwe and other countries have been frequent with no one paying attention to feeble protests by the Nigerian state. Liberia, Angola, Ghana, Congo and others have followed suit in resenting Nigerians who live in their countries. What is really happening to the good reputation that the country had built over the years? One would want to ask. The answer lies in the many citizens who are being driven out of the country to eke out a living outside the country. As was experienced under the Abacha government, anywhere a crime is committed in the world, the likelihood of other African countries believing that the criminals before investigation is that Nigerians must be involved (Buhari, 2018). This is a reflection of the slide of the country in African affairs (Kolawole, 2018; Mark, 2013).

The case of Ghana in her display of hostility towards Nigeria is regrettable. As a neighbor to Nigeria, one did not expect the numerous anti-Nigeria acts she has taken against the country. Deportation of Nigerians is a constant reality and policy restrictions placed on Nigerian businessmen and women are common these days (Lakemfa, 2018).

Libya is a favoured connecting country for Nigerian youths who are migrating to Europe has been hostile towards the country's citizens. Returnee Nigerians from the country have been telling tales of hardship they have passed through as they are stateless people. The usual Nigeria's influence is not being seen in interceding on behalf of the trapped Nigerians in Tripoli and other cities in Africa. It seems not many African countries have no re-collection of the efforts of the country in solving their problems in the past. This is no doubt a reality as Nigeria is much soaked ad-hoc approach to international issues.

As the citizens have no proper records of their country's investments in Africa, the citizens of other countries too especially their young leaders have no traces of file on the support that Nigeria had rendered to their countries. This is the dilemma. While successive Nigerian leaders demand reciprocity, other African nations do not know how to reciprocate the assistance rendered on the spur of the moments, not derived from any well-thought-out action plan. These days when Nigeria sneezes, no one is catching cold in Africa. One recalls a situation under Obasanjo when the late President Ghadaffi for several weeks waited in vain for the Nigerian state to come and evacuate its trapped citizens from Libya without any response then decided to transport them to their early grave. Happily, the Buhari government has attempted to evacuate Nigerians from the same country.

Other realities have shown the collapse of Nigeria's empire in Africa (Aremu, 2011). The first is her ostracization from the mainstream African position, on the issue of Continental Free Trade for Africa. Unlike what was seen on the US-African project where her rejection of the command coupled with that of South Africa discouraged many African countries from agreeing to cite its headquarters in their territories, one observes the reservations expressed by Nigeria on the Continental Free Trade has made the country to be abandoned by 149 other African countries that have signed the agreement (Adetula, 2019).

The main argument advanced by the country is that doing so would further harm the national economy as the agreement has the potential of turning Nigeria into a dumping ground for imported goods. It is quite surprising that Nigeria only a few other African countries sitting with her on the fence, a situation that signifies her loss of power and influence in Africa (Adetula, 2019).

As a champion whose empire-building efforts have been tragically reduced to West Africa, the country should worry more about her position in the sub-region. This is not, however, the case as a combination of poor reading and the poor state of the economy is making her to experience a stress at that level too, leading her at point to withhold financial support to ECOWAS (Onyeama, 2016).

Nigeria has cited poor management of resources and not according proper recognition to her as a basis for her reduced interest in the sub-regional organization

(Onyeama, 2016). While one agrees that Nigeria's influence is not showing much in the activities of ECOWAs over time, the stress being witnessed in the national economy in the country has encouraged some anti-ECOWAS policies in Nigeria. Quite surprisingly, the ECOWAS Court has delivered some damaging judgements against the country, most notable was the judgement against the country on the Dasuki's case that the Nigerian state is feeling reluctant to implement (Oyebode, 2018). A peep into the staff structure in the whole organization would show that Bach (1987) was correct in assertion that Nigeria is only dominant in ECOWAS but influencer and powerful in the organization.

The second is the war against terror which ordinarily Nigeria should not be begging other nations to come to her aid to overcome the *boko haram* phenomenon. Until recently, the country had to count on Britain, France and the USA to ginger Chad and Cameroon, to ginger the two countries and others in her backyards to give up their frustrations about Nigeria's handling of the *boko haram* menace. This is quite unfortunate for the country which should, on her own, whip these countries to toe her line of thinking on the menace of *boko haram*.

Indeed, there is an existence of a multinational joint task force on *boko haram* with the African Union giving a helping hand to an essentially a Nigerian problem. How would Nigeria be taken serious in Africa when her Armed forces that had excelled in Africa and other places are incapable of subduing the insurgency in the last ten years? This is the crux of the matter. At a point, the USA was held responsible for Nigeria's failure to overrun the *boko haram* due to America's failure to sell weapons to Nigeria (Buhari, 2015b). So far, the *boko haram* terror group remains an eloquent testimony to the country's collapsing empire in Africa (Tar and Mustapha; 2017; Zenn *et al.*, 2018).

Nigeria, no doubt, has found a path of redemption for her image in Africa when, in 2017, she donated sizeable military resources to the peacekeeping mission in The Gambia. Keen observers have, however, frowned at the failure of the country to restore order in The Gambia after the electoral logjam heralded by the refusal of former President Yahyah Jameh to accept defeat after his country's presidential election held in December, 2016. It was a low turn for Nigeria that she could not on her own broker peace in Banjul, given her level of warm relations with The Gambia and her former president. The reality that Nigeria was not the leading light in the mission established for The Gambia only confirmed her reduced influence level in the smallest West African nation (Sesay and Ifedayo, 2017).

In all analyses on contemporary Nigerian foreign policy, the angle of the poor state of the national economy has not escaped the conclusion about the low turn of events for the giant nation in Africa in its external pursuits within the continent. Although, lack of vision and other considerations are important but one argues that, unlike in the past when Nigeria was a cheerful-giver, her regime of stressful economy has made public officials to be coming out more forcefully about the paucity of funds with which to pursue the nation's foreign policy and that gives the impression of the country receding from international affairs. That has found expression in Nigeria's

withdrawal from about 90 international organizations in one full swoop and thus, saving some money for the country (Adeosun, 2017).

That decision has an impact on the country's position in Africa, as the decision to belong to over 300 international organizations must have been informed by her perception of being a leader in Africa that must carry the burden of showing her face in all corners of the world. This development, among others, strongly indicate that the wall of global importance built around her is collapsing due to the pressure coming from the distressful economy at home. If the frightening scenario must be reversed, there is an urgent task of fixing the national economy to be a strong propeller of Nigerian foreign policy in the changing world. This remains an urgent task for the Nigerian nation.

Also, need to be fixed is the real objectives behind the pursuit of the country's African policy. This is a necessary step to know how to apply economic resources on foreign policy pursuits. As repeatedly argued by other African nations, they really have difficulty in fathomning the real interests of the country in the continent. Is she out to genuinely to help less-endowed African countries or to display her power towards the empty end of being a leader in the continent? These posers need to be sorted out urgently to help researchers on Nigerian foreign policy and policy makers in general to know how to appraise the policy. One therefore argues that the tree that grows lamentations on non-reciprocal relations with other African nations is the obscure foreign policy objectives that Nigeria parades and that in turn makes official frustrations with the policy to grow by the day. They are of course being sustained by the stress coming from the economy. One can therefore contend that the foundation for the mounting irritations that observers have with the policy towards Africa is the unhealthy domestic environment symbolised by less buoyant economy and the tardiness of the policy environment that propel it. It inevitable for the country to be experiencing

### **Conclusion**

This paper has contributed on the relationship that exists between the state of the national economy and Nigerian foreign policy. Its main finding is that unlike in the past when the buoyant economy had encouraged some notable and admirable exploits in the conduct of Nigerian foreign policy, the current regime of poor state of the national economy has witnessed some reverses in the global standing of Nigeria in Africa which has led to some big slashing in the level of her influence and power in the continent.

Incidences such as the influx of Nigerians to other countries sometimes under inhuman conditions and the longstanding war against terrorism are all examples of the impact of the stressful economy on contemporary Nigerian foreign policy. To reverse the dangerous trend would require proper tending of the economy in Nigeria. This paper shares the view that this should not be difficult for Nigeria to do to reposition herself in the African continent where her influence and power was once more noticeable. For the sake of her past investments in foreign relations, her

progressive descent in the continent needs to be halted so that she can bounce back into global reckoning.

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