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## **Diasporas and the Efficacies of Sustainable National Development in Africa: The Case of Nigeria**

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One of the most critical elements of contemporary globalization is the astronomical increase in migration across the globe. This exodus of people is, indeed, the cardinal global forces driving the world in the 21st century and one resultant effect of this phenomenon which is essentially evidenced is the emergence of a large Diaspora from the South in the affluent countries of the West. Consequent upon the huge number of the African Diaspora in Western host countries, much empirical study has not been carried out to determine the activities of the African Diaspora in their respective homelands in terms of remittances and overall contribution to National development. This paper aims at studying the engagements of the African Diaspora in National Development of the continent with particular attention to Nigeria. The paper took a panoramic view of the activities of Diaspora Nigerians in order to achieve its primary objectives. A critical examination of the forms, dimensions and types of Diaspora funded projects becomes imperative. This session is therefore devoted to the discussion of Diasporas and the Efficacies of National Development with a focus on Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Diaspora, Africa, Nigeria, Remittance, Sustainable development.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of Diaspora has become a serious cause for concern not only to the international scholars, but also policy makers across the globe. This stems from the fact that Diaspora phenomenon which had hitherto been exclusively used to describe the Jewish dispersal outside modern Israel from 587-86 B.C to the present, has been given a new interpretation (Mohamoud, 2003).

Today, the word "Diaspora" refers to migrants who settle in distant lands and produce new generations, simultaneously maintain ties of affection with and making occasional visits to each other and their homeland (Hagher, 2009). The African continent, the cradle of humanity, could be said to be the first place to record diasporization as human beings dispersed from Africa to the people of the rest of the world from millennia.

With increased advancement in science and technology, communication and transportation, the people of the world are being dispersed as never before and the migration of Africans to other countries of the world has astronomically and gradually increased since the late 1950s (van kessel and Tellegen, 2000, Akinrinada and Ajibewa 2003).

In recent times, many governments of migrant – sending countries have recognized the potential of their citizens abroad and international development agencies are beginning to do likewise. Diaspora incentives to participate in home country development or reconstruction depend on the extent to which they feel they have a stake in their home nation-states as well as in the counties that host them. Apparently, with such factors in mind, and in partnership with developing countries and

Diaspora, it is unarguably reasonable to venture into the approach to the linkages – potential and actual between Diaspora and development. Mohan (2002) considered the role of Diasporas in home country development in three phases; Firstly, development in the Diaspora, which deals with how diasporic communities utilize their localized diasporic connections to secure economic and social well-being and, as a by-product, contribute to the development of their locality.

Secondly, development through the Diaspora, which focuses on how diasporic communities utilize their diffuse global connections beyond the locality to facilitate economic and social well-being. Thirdly, Development by the Diaspora, which stipulates how diasporic flows and continued connections back home facilitate the development and sometimes the creation of these homelands. The salient point raised by Mohan is that the role of Diaspora in development can be in the form of ethnic businesses in countries hosting migrant communities, the trade Diasporas that span countries, regions and continents, and flows of ideas, money and political support to the migrant's home country, be it an existing home or one which nationalists would like to see come into being.

Essentially, the link between African Diasporas and development in Africa is a critical issue that requires attention. This is because there is now more than ever, an urgent need to gain a clearer understanding of this Diaspora development initiative in their homeland, aware of the fact that African Diasporas have left Africa physically but not emotionally. This emotional attachment is the general characteristic shared by all Diaspora that prompt the African Diaspora to maintain links with their countries of origin. Consequently, these emotional ties are translated into obligations and thus into concrete commitments, actions and activities. Implicitly, it means transferring money (remittances), ideas, information, knowledge, skills and know-how back home. It again means helping to set up local businesses as well as private or voluntary development projects.

Today, African countries are faced with the challenges of building a strong economy, an enduring democracy, stable institutions and sustainable infrastructure, the role of Africans in the Diaspora becomes even more crucial.

It is against this backdrop that it became imperatively necessary to study the development activities sponsored and promoted by African Diaspora that spur development in their respective countries of origin. The research objective of this study is to examine the efficacies of the African Diaspora and national development with particular attention to Nigeria. Since, it has been established that national development is dependent on both internal and external assistance and couple with the facts that governments cannot initiate development activities all alone. In doing this, the paper is divided into sections, *vis-à-vis* introduction, delineation of concepts, Diasporas and remittance flows in Nigeria, Diaspora engagement in national development and finally, conclusion and recommendations.

## DELINEATION OF CONCEPTS

### Diaspora

Scholars have offered various definitions of Diaspora depending on their perceptions and orientations. This is because the concept "Diaspora" to a large extent provokes a response of interest at mention. Hear, Pieke and vertovex (2004) defined Diaspora as populations of migrant origin who are scattered among two or more destinations, between which there develop multifarious links involving flows and exchanges of people and resources; between the homeland and

destination countries, and among destination countries. For them, Diasporas include complex mixes of people who have arrived at different times, through different channels, through different means, and with very different legal statuses. Mohamoud (2003:9) conceptualized Diaspora as a community of people living outside their country of origin. In this regard, Diaspora is seen as a group of people who live outside the area in which they had lived for a long time or in which their ancestors lived.

Weinar (2010) set out six rules to distinguish Diasporas from migrant communities. These included criteria that the group maintains a myth or collective memory of their homeland; they regard their ancestral homeland as their true home, to which they will eventually return; being committed to the restoration or maintenance of that homeland; and they relate "personally or vicariously" to the homeland to a point where it shapes their identity. While Weinar's definition was influenced by the idea of the Jewish Diaspora, he indeed, recognized the expanding use of the concept. Brubaker (2005), Cohen (2008) noting the widening use of the phenomenon suggests that one element of this expansion in use involves the application of the concept Diaspora to an ever-broadening set of cases; essentially to any and every nameable population category that is to some extent dispersed in space.

Recently, scholars have continued to make a distinction between kinds of Diaspora, based on its causes such as imperialism, trade or labour migrations, or by the kind of social coherence within the Diaspora community and its ties to the ancestral lands. Some Diaspora communities maintain strong political ties with homeland. Other qualities that may be typical of many Diaspora are thoughts of return, relationships with other communities in the Diaspora, and lack of full assimilation into the host country (Yossi, 2007, Oonk, 2007, Kelvin, 2013).

Essentially, in the context of this discuss, Diaspora can safely be defined as a scattered population with a common origin in a smaller geographical area. In this wise, it is the movement of the population from its original homeland. From this definitional clarification, it can be seen that Diaspora carries a sense of relocating the population so described finds itself for whatever reason separated from its national territory, and usually its people have a hope, or at least a desire, to return to their homeland at some point.

### African Diaspora

The problem of defining the term "African Diaspora" in very precise terms arises from the fact that different scholars have taken different views with the result that its real meaning seems to hover from the perception of the scholar. The source of this difficulty lies in the fact that the concept is used in different senses in view of the fact that African Diaspora is ascribed to different things on different grounds.

Similarly, the African Diaspora has been defined through different epochs underlining varying standpoints. Indeed, the notion that the African Diaspora is homogeneous is both simplistic and unrealistic given both temporal and spatial dimensions of African emigration to the rest of the world (Oucho, 2008). In the face of all these definitional difficulties, an attempt would be made to pin down the etymological meaning of African Diaspora.

African Diaspora refers to the communities throughout the world that are descended from the historic movement of the people from Africa, predominantly to the Americas, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, among other areas around the globe. The term has been historically applied in particular to the descendants of the West and Central Africans who were

enslaved and shipped to the Americas by way of the Atlantic slave trade (Ade, 1998).

Some scholars have argued that African Diaspora discourse is changing in recent times to include various other populations of African descent who have been displaced and dispersed due to enslavement, genocide, that theories about mythical homelands, collective memory, the experience of racism, and the emergence of Pan-African sentiment are common among notions about the African Diaspora (Akyeampong, 2000, Larson. 1999). Of course, the ever increasing demand for labour accounts for the ongoing displacement of Africans (Harris, 1993, Olson 2003). The African Union conceptualized African Diaspora as consisting of people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union. From this standpoint, it can be seen that African Diaspora has recently moved in the direction of understanding its role in the formation of modern times. This trend is in reaction to the traditional way in which Africans and its Diasporans have been placed in history books, notably, as victims or people without historical agency. Essentially, Africans and their descendants are portrayed as representatives of primitive culture and slavery, but the current consensus is that viewing the contributions of the African Diaspora to the history of modern times gives us a more complete appreciation of global history. The effect of the African Diaspora on modernity can be viewed by the history and culture of the people of the African Diaspora. It could be this that made (manning, 2009) to argue that African descendants around have kept their ties to the African continent, creating a global community carried with them their culture, family values, views on government, and their spiritual beliefs.

Implicitly, African Diaspora can safely be defined as the dispersal of Africans outside of the African continent. Dispersal here suggests the actual process of dispersal and can also mean individuals residing in countries outside of Africa who have been dispersed, either through choice or through force. Today, the African Diaspora has been formed by the movements of Africans and their descendants to regions throughout Europe, the Caribbean, North America, South America, and Central Africa. Historically, some of the African Diaspora descends from individuals who were taken into slavery; however, we are witnessing an increase of voluntary immigrants and asylum-seekers.

Below is a table illustrating the world's top twelve countries hosting members of the African Diaspora. Table 1 below explains the spread of the African Diaspora and their population in twelve host countries.

### **Nigerian Diaspora: Towards Explanation**

According to wikipedia, the Greek word Diaspora (scattering, dispersion) originally referred to the "movement, migration, or scattering of people away from an established or ancestral homeland" or people dispersed by whatever cause to more than one location" or "people settled far from their ancestral homelands".

In this context, Nigerian Diaspora is restricted to mean Nigerians who have settled or live abroad (outside of Nigeria) for reasons which are not limited to active conflict, poor government, pursuit of advanced degrees, Economic inequality and quest for better opportunities (Akinrinde and Ogen 2011). Nigerian Diaspora is two folds. The involuntary Diasporas who left Nigeria as a corollary of the Atlantic slave trade before

Nigerian Independence in 1960, and the voluntary Diasporas who left after independence (Soludo, 2014). Our focus here is solely on the post-colonial Diaspora who voluntarily left Nigeria because of all kinds of hardships or search of better opportunities.

Statistics on Nigerians living outside Nigeria is highly difficult to know because of the changing nature of the population. For instance, millions of Nigerians have emigrated from Nigeria to other parts of the world are still arriving in different countries. These migrants and their descendants constitute the Nigerian Diaspora. The Nigerian Diaspora covers practically every part of the world, but the largest populations of Nigerians can be found in UK, USA and South Africa. Below is a table illustrating the world's top ten countries hosting members of the Nigerian Diaspora.

### **Development**

Whichever way we conceive the term "Development" one pertinent point to note is that it is used to describe the process of economic and social transformation within countries. This process often follows a well-ordered sequence and exhibits common characteristics across countries (Attamah, 1999, Mabogunje, 1980, Aboyade 1976, Todaro 1992). Supporting the above reasoning, Nholi (1981), Ake (1990) and Rodney (1976) noted that development is multi-faceted and man-centered. Ake (1990), observed that: development that commits us to a wholesale imitation of others leads to a wholesale repudiation of our state of being.

Development as a societal phenomenon is all encompassing and demands the involvement and participation of all sections of the society simultaneously. In this context, development is conceptualized as man-directed and propelled socio-economic and political transformations of self and the entire structure of a given political system from a comparatively low and/or present level to a more qualitative and/or remarkably improved form. These transformations have as its primary objective improvements of the living conditions and material standings of the citizenry (Nkwede 2011, Ogbuagu 2012). Odoziobodo (2013) linked development to transformation and equated transformation to improvements of the materials and non material conditions of the citizenry.

In effect, it subsequently improves man's potentials and capabilities and eliminates and/or reduces poverty, penury, inequality, unemployment and generally enhances the conditions of human's existence.

### **THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

The paper employed political economy approach as the theoretical framework. Apparently, political economy has its root from the classical works of Marx and Engel (1962) who derived his intellectual stands from the works of great economists such as Smith (1937); Pye (1966); and Mill (1970). Political economy theory is concerned with the distribution of social wealth, class relations and conflicts as well as their impacts on the development of the society from one stage to another. Political economy approach tries to explain the social relations existing among people in the society in all the processes of production, exchange and consumption of goods and services. Political economy approach need not be mutually exclusive. The process as complex as African Diaspora, is obviously the result of equally complex forces, operating at various levels in space and time, diaspora remittance flows are determined by conditions in both the sending and receiving countries, including the state of the economy, political stability

**Table 1:** Twelve Countries hosting members of the African Diaspora

Country	Diaspora population	Rank
Brazil	85,783,143	01
United States	38,499,304	02
Colombia	9,452,872	03
Haiti	8,701,439	04
Dominican	7,985,991	05
France	5,000,000	06
Jamaica	2,73,419	07
Venezuela	6,999,926	08
United Kingdom	2,015,400	09
Cuba	1,126,894	10
Trinidad and Tobago	1,047,366	11
Canada	783,795	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>167,669,549</b>	

**Source:** Institute for cultural Diplomacy, 2013

**Table 2:** Nigerian Diaspora Statistics

Country	Population
India	9,500
Ireland	16,300
Japan	5,018
Netherlands	9,453
Australia	4,519
Canada	19,520
Britain	174,000
America	227,631
Brazil	5,000
Greece	6,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>52, 6941</b>

**Sources:** white 2009, Cybriwsky 2011, CBS 2009, Odafe 2011, and office for National Statistics, Sept 2011, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigeria 2009, Greek ministry of Foreign affairs 2009.

and freedom, and diaspora laws, all of these are affected by broader forces in the global political economy.

Every society has a peculiar system of economic system anchored on property relations. Political economy approach gives credence to material conditions, particularly economic factors in all social lives. Undoubtedly, economic needs are the most fundamental needs of man, because he must eat before pursuing other things such as worship, culture, tourism, and other social things. This approach gives primacy to material conditions, particularly economic factors in the explanation of social life (Ake, 1976). Ake (2005: 1-2) further maintained that:

*Once we understand what the material assets and constraints of a society are, how the society produces goods to meet its material needs, how the goods are distributed and what type of social relations arise from the organization of production, we have come a long way to understanding the culture of that society; its laws, its religious system, its political system and even its modes of thought.*

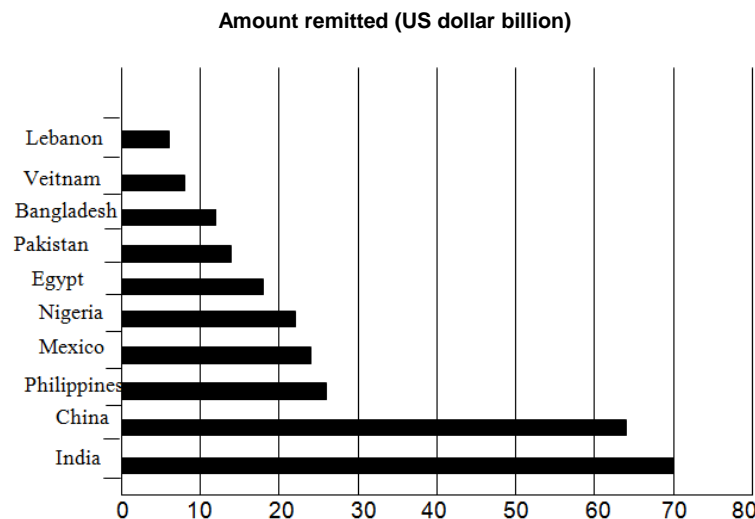
The political economy theory looks into the interconnection of phenomenon, programmes and policies, with the sole intention of discovering the class origin, character, composition and the logic of their existence and future. The methodological implication of this approach is that special attention must be

paid to the economic structure of society and indeed, it must be used as the point of reference for studying other aspects of the society, be it the legal, political, religious, etc (Odoziobodo, 2013). Contemporary diasporization is a search for improved material conditions which should propel homeland and host land development.

#### **DIASPORAS AND REMITTANCE FLOWS IN NIGERIA**

Though Nigeria is bedeviled with severe financing gaps, remittances by Nigerians in Diaspora have become a veritable source of revenue to Nigeria and contribute significantly to the Nigerian economy.

Remittances are largely personal transactions from immigrants to their friends and families. The World Bank reported that Nigerians in Diaspora officially remitted over 21 billion US dollars to Nigerian in 2012. In real concrete terms, this 21 billion US dollar is equivalent to about 9% of Nigeria's GDP in the year 2012 (World Bank). The World Bank numbers also showed that remittances were the second largest forex inflow in after crude petroleum (Thisday newspaper 2013). It should be noted that migrants use various methods to remit their money and many transfers are informal and unrecorded. The current statistics from CBN shows Diaspora have been remitting over 10 billion US dollars yearly into the country. The Nigerians living abroad, ranked fifth among the top recipients of Diaspora transfer of funds (World Bank). In the latest ranking, India led the pack, followed by China, Philippines,

**CHART ONE.** Remittances By Nigerians In Diaspora

**SOURCE:** World Bank, 2013.

Mexico and Nigeria in the fifth position. Other countries that equally joined the top 10 include Egypt, the sixth largest, with about 18 billion remittance, suggesting that there has been an astronomical surge from 9 billion in 2008. Perhaps, the surge is driven by increased support by migrants to their families in the face of political uncertainty.

Essentially the remittances of 530 billion in 2012 by the migrants outstripped the World Bank's projection for the period, which were expected to reach 406 billion in 2012, a growth of 6.5% over the previous years. These flows are expected to rise to 8% in 2013 and 10% in 2014 and to reach 534 billion US dollars in 2015 (Obi, 2013).

Analytically, the rise in remittances from Nigerians in the Diaspora is not unconnected with their interest to subscribe to a Diaspora bond planned by the federal government of Nigeria with a view to securing alternative means of funding critical infrastructural projects in Nigeria. These remittances can be diagrammatically represented in chart one.

Apart from the information in chart one above, Diaspora remittances have constituted a major revenue sources in Nigeria. The World Bank also indicated that remittances were the second largest forex in low after crude petroleum in chart two below.

Imperatively, these remittances have drawn attention of Nigerian governments to the Diaspora as potential development actors. Although the current global financial crisis may have reduced the volume of remittances for the moment, but generally, the opportunities for securitizing these flows and using the funds raised to finance developmental activities remain sacrosanct.

This is largely so because the role of the Diaspora is easily noticeable at macro and micro levels of society, that of remittances cuts across the whole spectrum of societal development. Apparently, all African countries, including Nigeria with large Diaspora, perceive their contributions and their remittances as crucial for homeland development, (Neil 2003, Orozco and Fedewa 2006).

More so, the general conclusion from previous studies posits that the Diaspora use their wealth wisely, with remittances more than counterbalancing cost (Gunatilleke 1986, cited in Skeldon 2002). Relatedly, in sub-Saharan Africa

where investment opportunities hardly exist, remittances has boosted the poverty gap to the extent that the majority of households are entrapped. This stems from the fact that in Nigeria, remittances has reduced poverty by providing families left at home with additional income, surpluses of which end in consumption as well as investments in education and health (IOM, 2006).

Ipsa facto, two notable features of remittances need mentioning via;

- (i) they are largely unaffected by political or financial crisis, tending to increase in times of difficulties and
- (ii) they are equally spread among developing countries than are other financial flows (Ratha, 2003, in IOM, 2006)

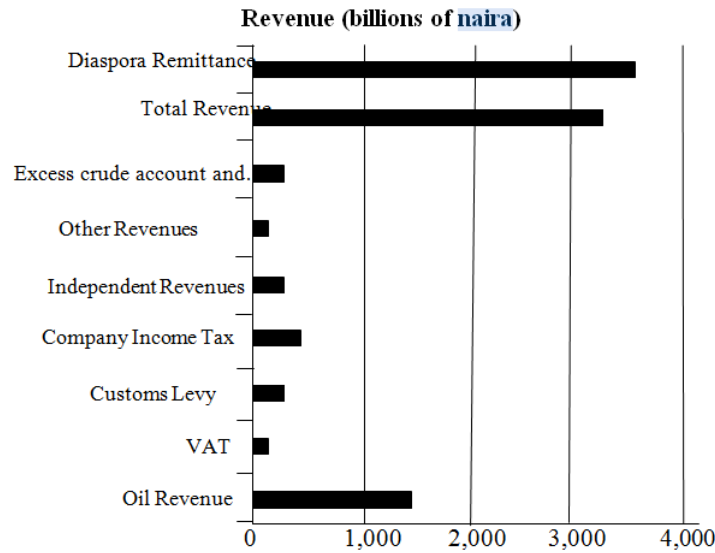
Skeldon (2002:119) made a clear distinction between migration and poverty when he stated thus;

*Migration is the oldest action against poverty. It selects those who most want help.; it helps good for the country to which they go; it helps to break the equilibrium of poverty in the country from which they come. What is the perversity in the human. soul that causes people to resist so obvious a good?*

In this connection, the reciprocity between Diaspora and remittances is highly appreciated but is hardly subjected to empirical analysis hence the preponderance of anecdotal evidence. In the words of Salvadoran sociologist, "Diaspora and remittances are the true economic adjustment programmes of the poor in our country – "African countries"(Carlo Guillermo Ramos, in Portes, 2008). Similarly, (Skeldon, 2002:80) argues that the main challenge for policy makers in African countries "is to facilitate the types of movements that are most likely to lead to development while protecting Diasporas from abuse and exploitation".

It is therefore reasonable to argue that remittances augment recipient households' resources, smooth

**CHART TWO: Revenues Accrued To The Federal Government  
And Recorded Remittance From Diaspora Nigerians In 2012**



consumption, provide working capital and have multiplier effects through increased household spending. Remittances can also be integrated into a country's economy, employ the macroeconomic behaviour of remittances to influence responses to productive force (for instance, in investment and trade); and ascertain the impact of remittances on national economic growth.

Again, it has been noted by (Gupta et al, 2007, More 2005) that remittances may reduce infant mortality by improving housing conditions or access to public services such as water; that remittances boost growth in the countries with less developed financial system because they provide an alternative way to finance investment, acting as a substitute for the domestic financial system; and that households receiving remittances tend to have better nutrition and access to health and educational services compared to those not receiving remittances.

#### **DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: EVIDENCE FROM NIGERIA**

Importantly, Nigerians in Diaspora have made an impressionable impact in National Development. Indeed, without the receipt of remittances, without Diaspora-funded development projects, and without the return of people committed to peace and prosperity in their homeland, marginalized and vulnerable people of Nigeria would have been worse off. Nigerians abroad have provided funding, leadership and publicity for activities in their homeland, often returning to take part in the work on the ground. The financial and material contributions from the Diaspora have helped to sustain served as a powerful antidote to the helplessness and the disillusionment that prevailed in the wake of global economic crisis.

The National development process is based not only on financial resources, but also on social and political dialogue, advocacy and awareness to stability for development. Evidently, notable areas of Nigerians in diaspora engagement in National Development are chronicled below.

#### **1. Partnership In Democratic Governance**

Nigerians in Diaspora are becoming significant players in building democratic institutions. As they are gaining more voice and recognition they have begun demanding participation in the home country political processes. It is increasingly evident that a great number of Nigerians abroad are seeking elected office at home, including as members of national legislatures, State Governors, and many of the major national political parties rely on Diaspora financial contributions during electioneering campaigns.

#### **2. Community Projects/Development**

Diaspora Nigerians often through hometown associations, undertake philanthropic activities in their inherent social capital values to pool resources for extending basic infrastructure and services (classrooms and education facilities, health equipment and access to potable water and electricity) to communities.

#### **3. Thematic And Social Networks**

More often than not, Diaspora Nigerians establish some form of links with their home institutions such as universities and research centres, providing occasional face-to-face tutoring, collecting and distributing materials (books, computers, medical supplies etc). For instance, the vine group, a New York based Association of Nigerian Professionals has been sending on an annual basis books, computers and scholarships to higher institutions in Nigeria.

In 2013, the group sent 10 scholarship awards to the polytechnic Ibadan, 20 to the Olabisi Onabanjo University in Ogun State, and also 300, 000 books and 50 computers to the Ibadan polytechnic (office of the secretary of the government of the Federation).

#### 4. Education Through Professional Conferences

Diaspora Nigerians often hold conferences in Nigeria with a view to raising awareness about new practices, carry out vital services, or address grey areas that have not been the focus in existing domestic practice. Nigeria in Diaspora organization (NIDO), for example, as part of their 2007 Conference in Abuja held a pain and Arthritis Clinic, Training of Trainers on Emergency Medical Response and Life-saving skills, and organized a molecular science and technology show.

#### 5 Humanitarian Services

Several Nigerian groups, churches and associations have been contributing their quota in National Development in various forms to Nigerians at home including medical missions by doctors and nurses. Recently, a group of Nigerian doctors led by a well-known and hugely successful Nigerian Medical doctor in Chicago, Dr. Nurudeen Olowopopo embarked on a medical mission to Lagos state tagged "Medical mission of Mercy" where they treated several patients without charge to them. The mission was planned under the auspices of the strong and vibrant Association of Nigerian physicians in Americas, whose membership numbers in the thousands both in the US and Canada (Anyim 2013).

Another group of Nigerians abroad from the US and Britain, also contributed money up to thousands of dollars to victims of the bomb blast that occurred at the Ikeja military cantonment in 2011. The same group of Nigerians had contributed similarly to the case of Bosede, the girl with a hole in the heart under the auspices of website Nigeriaworld.com. This group was coordinated by the US based Nigerian Leadership forum, NLF (Anyim 2013).

#### 6 Award Of Scholarship

Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO), which is now embedded in the Nigerian National Volunteer Services (NNVS) has been raising substantial amount of money with which they fund projects in Nigeria or offer scholarships to needy Nigerian students. Simultaneously, some have engaged in some intellectual exercise to strategize on how to contribute to moving Nigeria forward.

#### 7. Investment And Wealth Creation

Nigerians in Diaspora have helped immensely in elevating the living standards of their families. Aside monetary remittances, they have invested profoundly in emerging industries in Nigeria thereby alleviating the unemployment problem in Nigeria.

#### 8. Private Sector Growth And Value – Chain Extensions

Nigerians in Diaspora have been active in establishing small businesses, particularly new home constructions that have impacted local real estate industry and artisanal groups regarding brick manufacturing, masonry, and carpentry; such activities have implications for youth employment and income generation (Guo, 2010).

#### 9. Establishment Of Mortgage Refine Company

Diaspora Remittances have helped in no small measure in the areas of housing project in Nigeria. Kumo (2014) maintained that 2.5 billion USD from Diaspora money is being used for

housing sector for 200,000 housing units in the next five years with the nomenclature of mortgage refine company (MRC).

#### CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATIONS

In this effort, it has been established that Diaspora are very important components of nay country's development. The government has recognized the important contributions and positive roles that Nigerian professionals in the Diaspora have play in the socio-economic development of the country and has identified health and education sectors as high priorities for national development.

The Diaspora engagement is therefore a process that requires a sustained effort, especially to support Diaspora investment entrepreneurship, social remittances and knowledge transfers which are the vibrant and integral part of African overall development agenda. It is also noted that Nigerians in the Diaspora are indispensable resources and agents of change for economic development.

In realization of the above, the paper therefore recommends that for the Nigerian government to properly harness Diasporas and remittances in her development process, Nigeria should formulate policies in which they involve the Diaspora, improve the investment environment and be constantly responsive to changes positively affecting utilization of the Diaspora resources.

Similarly, it is recommended that the Nigerian government should appoint a Diaspora liaison officer at embassies and consulates all over the world. This officer will help those Diasporas desirous of coming home and would be in constant communications with the office of the Special Adviser to the president on Diaspora affairs.

The paper also recommends that the introduction of legislation that would give the Diasporan communities voting right as a way of making them to exercise their civic responsibility in the democratic process. This is because the diaspora should not be considered just as sources of financing, but as development partners.

Finally, African countries should factor the contribution of their Diaspora and remittances in national development planning and programmes. This could be done through African countries sustained engagement with the Diaspora in multifarious development. Given the growing influence and relevance of Diaspora issues globally, Africa had no choice but to explore the opportunities available in it.

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