

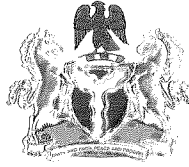


## **Submission No 18**

### **Review of Australia's Relationship with the Countries of Africa**

**Name:** His Excellency Professor S.Olu Agbi

**Organisation:** High Commission for Nigeria



HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR NIGERIA

**The Secretary**

Joint Standing Committee on  
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

11th Dec. 2009.

**SUBMISSION ON**

**Australia's Relationship with Nigeria**

I have the honour to forward, this Mission's submission on Australia's Relationship with Nigeria for the kind consideration of the Joint Standing Committee, please.

Yours Sincerely,

**Professor S. Olu Agbi**  
High Commissioner

Submission No:.....18.....

Date Received:.....11/12/09.....

Secretary:.....

**NIGERIA HIGH COMMISSION, CANBERRA**

**Paper on Nigeria – Australia Relations**

**Submitted to**

**Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade**

**AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL PARLIAMENT, CANBERRA**

Nigeria and Australia have very cordial relationship which should be further strengthened to our mutual benefit, especially with special reference to the underlisted areas:

**BILATERAL RELATIONS AT THE PARLIAMENTARY AND  
GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS**

Bilateral relations at these levels are cordial and should be sustained. We note with delight the official visit to Australia in 2008, of a 20-man Parliamentary delegation from Rivers State of Nigeria who had interacted positively with their Australian Counterparts both at the Federal and State levels. Similarly, in September, 2009, a 6-man Federal Parliamentary delegation from Nigeria led by the Deputy Senate President visited the Federal parliament in Canberra, during which they held scheduled meetings with select parliamentary Committees. Such visits and interactions should also be maintained as they afford Nigeria's Parliamentarians and top government policy makers the opportunity to learn or draw from Australia's best Parliamentary and law-making processes and practices with a view to improving and enriching Nigeria's democratic processes, governance, transparency and public accountability.

## **ECONOMIC ISSUES; TRADE AND INVESTMENT**

II) Trade relations between Nigeria and Australia have been very low and need to be strengthened. Nigeria is Africa's most populous country, with a population of over 140 million. It is the largest market in Africa.

It will be recalled that in 2002, Nigeria's former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo undertook a State visit to Australia, where he called on the Australian government to reach out more to Africa through trade and economic exchanges, and promoting greater bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Africa. It will therefore be mutually beneficial for Australia and Nigeria to strengthen economic ties in the following areas:

### **MINING**

Like Australia, Nigeria has proven reserves of substantial quantities of various solid minerals which are available for extraction and exploitation, such as aluminium, gold, black coal, silver, iron ore, copper, tin, lead, limestone, zinc, tantalite and bitumen. Thus Australia, with its vast technical expertise can assist Nigeria towards the full development of its solid minerals sector.

### **AGRICULTURE**

Australia's expertise and capabilities would be invaluable to Nigeria in the vast areas of Agriculture, forestry and fishing because Nigeria is also heavily dependent on agriculture in terms of both subsistence and export oriented farming. Australia's competitive edge and specialization in areas of soil fertility, animal husbandry, cropping systems in arid and semi-arid zones will be beneficial to Nigeria in the provision of adequate food security for its large population.

## **TRADE AND INVESTMENT**

Australia is potentially a large market for Nigeria's non-oil export of processed cocoa, processed hardwood, furniture and textiles. There is need therefore to explore trade opportunities for the export of Nigerian commodities to the Australian market. Such concessions and other opportunities could be similar to those granted by EU Countries under the Lome convention, and by the US to African Countries under the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA). Australian Companies could also take advantage of the opportunities that exist under AGOA, for their manufactures in Nigeria's Export Promotion Zones (free trade zones).

Economic cooperation between Nigeria and Australia should be strengthened and underpinned by appropriate Memoranda of Understanding (MOU'S) in the various areas of interest.

## **ELECTRIC POWER PRODUCTION**

Bilateral cooperation between Australia and Nigeria is also needed in the very vital sector of electric power production as most of Nigeria's power production facilities are grossly inadequate. Australia's technical expertise, assistance and investment in Nigeria's power sector, especially in power generation, solar energy development, transformers, electrical meters, and electrical constructions as well as telecommunications would be very beneficial in our mutual relations.

**DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COOPERATION AND CAPACITY  
BUILDING**

The Federal Government of Nigeria including the 36 States Governments that constitute the Federal Republic of Nigeria would greatly welcome more mutually beneficial relations with the Commonwealth of Australia in specific areas of development assistance cooperation and capacity building, which would ensure value addition in the country's various manufacturing and service provision industries among others, with a view to making them more productive and ensuring full capacity utilization.

The cooperation of Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) would be needed in our fields of medical and scientific research, mining and mineral processing, petroleum technology, agro-business, human resource development, water management as well as training in research and development techniques.

**PROPOSED AREAS OF CONSULAR RELATIONS**

**Australian visa regime** – the need to relocate the visa issuing centre back to Nigeria from South Africa. Except West Africa, almost all the sub-regions of Africa each has one visa issuing centre – Pretoria for Southern Africa; Nairobi for East Africa; and Cairo for North Africa. West Africa has the largest population of about 500 million in Africa and also has a lot of economic resources that could be exploited for the mutual benefits of the countries concerned. It is our view that the current move by DIAC to establish new Service Delivery Partner (SDP) arrangements which will offer services on behalf of the Department at five service centres in Nigeria including Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt, would

create more bureaucratic bottleneck rather than solve the problem of visa issuance duration.

**Nigerian detainees in Australia** – this issue borders on the following needs based on Vienna Convention on Consular relations which hitherto was almost nonexistent:

The High Commission's officials should be allowed free access to visit Nigerians in prison;

The Mission should be informed of the arrest and deportation of Nigerian nationals in Australia as well as provide information on the names, and nature of offence. The information required will be of great interest to the Government and for planning purposes. It will also assist to ascertain whether or not those arrested or the detainees are Nigerians as recent trends indicate that some African nationals are masquerading as Nigerians and perpetrating crimes.

Need for a treaty or MOU between the two countries which could facilitate prisoner transfers/exchanges.

**On the issue of overseas student programme assessment**

level in which Nigeria is currently placed on levels 3 and 4 being the last category with stringent conditions for approving visa applications for Nigerians students be revised as this would encourage more engagements and relationships between the two countries. The behaviours of few individuals should not becloud larger national interest in terms of assessment of visa requests by others.

**Restoration of Commonwealth scholarship for Nigerian students**

trying to study in Australia, and **university fellowship exchanges and research** between the two countries to be encouraged.

## **SOCIAL/CULTURAL COOPERATION**

Nigeria seeks to enhance its relations with Australia through cultural exchanges which Nigeria is well endowed with. Other areas include sporting activities as Nigeria is one of the world's soccer loving and playing nations. We would like to see Nigerian athletes trained by Australia in the areas of swimming and hockey which Australia is renowned for.

## **DEFENCE**

The Nigerian Armed Forces and security will appreciate the cooperation and assistance of Australia in capacity building in the following areas, amongst others:

- a) Training slots in Australia's Peace Support Operations Institutions;
- b) Support for capacity building for Nigeria's Peacekeeping and peace- building operations; and,
- c) Training of Nigeria's security agencies in the areas of counter terrorism and maritime security and terrorism;
- d) Training in major fire fighting techniques and emergency relief operations like flood and other natural disaster operations.

Nigeria High Commission  
Canberra  
10<sup>th</sup> December, 2009