

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF A 2-DAY MAIDEN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA-NIGERIA, HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY AUDITORIUM AND UNIZIK BUSINESS SCHOOL ON THE 24TH AND 25TH JULY 2025 UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF JUSTICE PROFESSOR PETER UMEADI WITH THE THEME: “AFRICA AT CROSSROADS: CONFRONTING GOVERNANCE, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY”

Preamble

Worried by the perennial challenges retarding the advancement of various African States, and the resultant questions whether Africa is at crossroads, the causes, earlier situation, point of change, and what viable strategic options can secure redress, the Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, organized her maiden international conference to interrogate governance failure, security instability and development backwardness. The conference aimed to critically examine the complex interplay of governance, security, and development challenges facing Africa. It provided a platform for scholarly dialogue and policy reflections on best practices and home-grown solutions, and explored frameworks for cooperation, good governance and inclusive development.

Notable Guests

The Maiden International conference attracted the presence of erudite scholars of politics, policymakers, politicians, institution representatives, students and other lovers of politics from within and outside the country. In no special order, notable among them include: Prof. Carol Chinyelugo Arinze-Umeobi, Acting Vice Chancellor; Prof. Joseph Ifeanyi Ikechebelu, Immediate past Acting Vice Chancellor; Fr. Dr. Maurice Izunwa, SAVC Legal Matters; Engr. Iyk Onwuemene, Member, Unizik Governing Council; Mrs. Elizabeth Patrick Yakowa, Member, Unizik Governing Council; Hon. Charles Oforke, Member, Unizik Governing Council; Dr. Ndubuisi Nwobu, Member, Unizik Governing Council/ADC Deputy Governorship Candidate; Mr. John Nwosu, ADC Governorship Candidate; Chief George Muoghalu, LP Governorship Candidate; Chief Uzu Okagbue, YPP Deputy Governorship Candidate; Justice Prof. Peter Umeadi, Chairman of the Occasion/Former CJ Anambra State; Chief Oseloka Obaze, Former SSG, Anambra State; Hon. C.C.Onuora Representative of the Deputy Speaker ANSHA; Mr. Ken Chukwura, Unizik CSO; HRH Igwe Johnson Mbanefo, Prof. Michael Ezenwa, Dean, FSS Unizik; Barr. Olisa Metuh, Keynote Speaker; Dr. Ogban Ogban-Iyam, Lead Paper Presenter.

Chairman’s Opening Remarks

The chairman of the occasion, Justice Prof. Peter Umeadi, described as beautiful the fact that Africans are beginning to discuss how to make progress and get more directly involved in how the continent is run and translate it to Nigerian politics. Commending the Department of Political Science of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, for leading the way

on this, he highlighted the need for sustenance of the engagement and requested that the outcome of the conference be given the widest publicity.

Address by the Acting Vice Chancellor

Speaking before declaring the conference open, the acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. Carol Arinze-Umeobi, commended the Head of the Department of Political Science and his team for breaking the jinx and organising the department's first-ever international conference. She described the theme of the conference as quite germane to the development challenges of African countries, noting that it is utterly disappointing that decades after independence, most African countries are mired in underdevelopment, bogged down by a miasma of security challenges of armed conflicts within and between countries, resurgent Jihadist movements, secessionist movements and electoral fraud, leading to bad government and bad governance; the political class exploiting the great divides of religious and ethnic identities in their political contestations to remain in power; a re-emergence of coup d'états and military governments; non-challant on the part of the governed and a host of other hitches and wondered if the colonial masters can still be justifiably held responsible for this sad state of affairs. The Acting VC noted that the big challenge is how citizens who bear the ponderous yoke of underdevelopment can be conscientized to take their destinies in their own hands, to hold governments responsive and accountable, as only then lies the prospect for the development of the continent.

Keynote Address

In his keynote address, Chief Barr. Olisa Metuh emphasised that the attainment of good governance, security, and sustainable development in Nigeria requires urgent reforms in the political party system. He expressed concern over the incessant defections, cross-carpeting, and self-serving abandonments of political parties by Nigerian politicians, describing these practices as symptomatic of weak institutions. He therefore called for the institutionalisation of political parties and constitutional reforms that would provide a firm legal foundation for ideological and programmatic politics.

Drawing insights from global trends, African political realities, and political theory, he advanced a compelling case for ideological, structural, and constitutional reforms as the bedrock of democratic progress in Nigeria. He noted that since the 1980s, development theory has shifted focus from "big government" to "good governance," defined by political democracy, rule of law, transparency, and economic efficiency. The emphasis has equally moved from mere GDP growth to the broader values of democracy and human development.

Despite Africa's embrace of multi-party democracy, he observed, the continent has failed to translate this into meaningful development, thereby raising questions about the viability of Western democracy in the African context. In Nigeria, political parties remain plagued by the absence of internal discipline, resulting in instability, public distrust, youth

discontent, and poor governance. Such factors have, at times, paved the way for military intervention in politics.

As a way forward, Chief Metuh proposed what he termed the “**Metuh Doctrine for Party Institutionalisation**”, which entails: the restoration of party ideology; strict adherence to manifestos; prohibition of arbitrary defections; institutionalisation of zoning and power rotation; establishment of legal and transparent mechanisms for party funding; and comprehensive political education to deepen civic consciousness. These, he argued, constitute workable pathways for consolidating democracy and fostering genuine development in Nigeria.

a. Restore Ideology: Parties must be rooted in clear ideological frameworks to guide their actions and earn voter trust. **b.** Enforce Manifestos: Parties should be held accountable for their campaign promises. Manifestos must be binding and publicly tracked. **c.** Ban Political Defections: Amend the Constitution to prohibit party-switching during a term, except in rare cases (e.g., mergers). **d.** Institutionalise Zoning: Enshrine power rotation into the constitution to reduce ethnic tension and ensure inclusion. **e.** Reform Party Funding: Legalise and regulate transparent internal fundraising. Introduce performance-based public funding. Cap campaign spending and enforce disclosures. Establish an Independent Party Finance Commission to audit and sanction. **f.** Political Education: Educate the public on ideology, manifestos, and political accountability to deepen civic engagement.

His key points:

a. From Government to Governance: Since the 1980s, development theory shifted focus from big government to good governance, defined both politically (democracy, rule of law) and economically (efficiency, transparency). Development was no longer just GDP growth but included democratic values.

b. Importance of Institutions:

Strong institutions, especially political parties, are vital for sustainable development. Weak institutions allow corruption, instability, and elite domination. Nigeria’s parties lack the depth and maturity to stabilise governance.

c. Democracy in Africa:

Despite adopting multi-party systems, many African countries—including Nigeria—have failed to achieve the development gains expected. Even elder statesmen like Obasanjo and Mbeki question whether Western democracy models can truly work for Africa without internal reforms.

d. Cracks in the System:

Discontent is growing—especially among youth—fuelling nostalgia for military regimes and admiration for authoritarian models like China. But history warns that military rule breeds more harm than good. The challenge, then, is fixing—not abandoning—multi-party democracy.

d. The Real Problem, Weak Parties:

Nigeria's political parties suffer from ideological emptiness, constant defections, poor funding structures, and a lack of programmatic discipline. These weaknesses breed instability, distrust, and poor governance.

Lead Paper Presentation

The conference reaped extensively from the intellectual database of Dr. Ogban Ogbanyi. He presented a paper titled "Politics of Social Productions and the Implications for Governance and Security in Africa." High points of his submissions include:

- a. Governance and general security failures in Africa created mass poverty, insecurity of life and property, unemployment and trade deficit. These have reduced Nigeria to a low-level player in global politics and have manifested in the dominant politics of her social production, reproduction, consumption, distribution, sharing and exchange, which have many phases and faces.
- b. Africa practises adversarial political party rule, while credible attempts to establish a firm basis for capitalism have been and are still subverted.
- c. The African Union is infected with the various countries' weaknesses, yet it is expected to help mobilise and have a common front that should be stronger than that of each country acting alone.
- d. Due to external influences, African countries remain unable to establish adversarial party rule and capitalist social production based on science, technology, and industrial manufacturing.
- e. The former colonial Masters exploit their former colonies through adversarial party politics that keep their leaders divided, corrupted and distracted from engaging in rapid scientific, technological and industrial manufacturing to meet the expectations of independence from colonial rule
- f. Due to the absence of committed, sustained and united leadership and modern scientific, technological and industrial manufacturing in most countries of Africa, the continent is unable to meet the challenges of modern life and become producers and major players in global politics.

Participants' Observations/Findings

After an extensive keynote address, lead paper panel discussions and plenary sessions, participants submitted that:

- a. In Africa, particularly Nigeria, the integrity of the judiciary remains a contentious and crucial factor in the quest for democratic consolidation. Persistent conflicting court orders, political interferences, and corruption undermine judicial independence. Despite efforts, the judiciary has yet to gain a significant level of enduring institutional independence. After each election cycle, the judiciary, based on vague nuances and technicalities, decides who emerges, irrespective of the actual electoral outcome.
- b. Participants emphasised that Nigeria's persistent internal security challenges, ranging from insurgency and banditry to communal violence and kidnapping, underscore a critical need to examine the governance and structures underpinning national security. There is a

strong empirical relationship between leadership accountability deficits and internal security challenges, with the majority of the participants linking poor oversight, lack of transparency, and absence of consequence management to operational failures.

c. It was stressed that the struggle for political power and access to wealth by the African political and economic elite in Africa is the bane of democracy and development. Increasing apathy in Africa's political process will continue to constrict the political space to the detriment of democracy and development. While natural resources in Africa offer immense growth potential, they are often associated with the over-importation of manufactured goods at a higher cost.

d. The tragedy of Africa is that decades after independence, children still go to bed hungry. Nations are still undermined by governance, security and development backwardness. As Africa's digital footprint expands, much of the continent's cyber infrastructure, ranging from cloud storage to software systems, remains dominated by foreign entities.

d. A comparative assessment of Chinese, Russian, and Western infrastructure engagements in Nigeria and Burkina Faso revealed competing geopolitical motives disguised as developmental aid. Infrastructure development in Nigeria and Burkina Faso reflected more of a political contestation among global powers than a cooperative alliance for national advancement. Yes, certain projects delivered tangible benefits, but their long-term implications raised concerns about sovereignty and self-reliance. Although massive foreign investments were directed toward infrastructure, the discussion emphasised that these initiatives truly failed to advance national development or entrenched dependency and external control.

e. In the earlier periods of Nigeria's political development, the legislature was independent, offering checks and balances, unlike today, when chief executives are like kings. African states are independent, but they are not independent in the real sense of it, and African leaders are not helping matters. Africa is at a crossroads and has all manner of challenges, but we must not continue to blame developed countries. 80% - 90% blame is on Africans. Until Africans realise themselves, the situation will continue.

f. Africa is not ready for a positive change, and the global North is taking advantage of the shortcomings. Indiscriminate migration into Africa is a tragedy, yet governments don't do enough checks. They can do well but lack the political will. Our destinies are in our hands. We can do better. The problem with us is that we have the habit of being comfortable with situations despite inadequacies.

Conclusion

The maiden international conference of the Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, provided a robust platform for interrogating Africa's governance, security, and development challenges in the 21st century. After two days of rich intellectual engagement, participants unanimously agreed that Africa stands at a critical crossroads. The continent's persistent governance failures, weak institutions, security crises, and development stagnation remain largely self-inflicted, though external influences aggravate them. While Africa possesses immense resources and human potential, the lack of visionary, accountable, and inclusive leadership continues to hinder

sustainable progress. The conference reaffirmed that Africa's renaissance must be home-driven, people-centred, and anchored on credible institutions, ideological political parties, and strategic engagement with the global order.

Recommendations

In light of the findings, the conference recommends the following:

- a. **Institutional Reforms:** Strengthening political parties, the legislature, and the judiciary through constitutional and structural reforms to guarantee accountability, transparency, and independence.
- b. **Leadership and Governance:** African leaders must embrace visionary, people-oriented leadership, shun corruption, and prioritise citizen welfare above personal or elite interests.
- c. **Security Frameworks:** Governments should overhaul national security architectures, strengthen oversight, and adopt proactive measures to address insurgency, banditry, and communal conflicts.
- d. **Economic Transformation:** Africa must urgently diversify its economy, invest in science, technology, and industrial manufacturing, and reduce dependence on foreign infrastructure and imports.
- e. **Civic Reorientation:** Citizens should be conscientized through political education to hold governments accountable, demand performance, and actively participate in governance.
- f. **Regional and Global Engagements:** African states must negotiate international partnerships on the basis of sovereignty, mutual respect, and developmental relevance rather than dependency.
- g. **Youth and Inclusivity:** Governments and political actors should create enabling environments for youth engagement and inclusive participation to guarantee democratic consolidation and long-term stability.

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