

## ***Developmental Imperative and Nigeria's Quest for Security Council Permanent Seat: A Case for Security Council Reform***

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### **Abstract**

*This work is centered on the Security Council reform and Nigeria's quest for permanent seat. We evaluated the necessity for the reform and the circumstances that prompted Nigeria's quest for the permanent seat. The imperative of the work is rooted on the agitation and clamour by majority of the under-represented countries for seats in the Council and the developmental crises facing them, Nigeria in particular. We adopted political economy as enunciated by Karl Marx as our theoretical perspective, given the fact that it explains the interplay between politics and economy in social existence both in domestic and at the global level. We relied essentially on secondary data while observation was our method of data generation. Given the nature of our work, we applied in the analysis of data generated qualitative descriptive method. In all, the paper argues that Nigeria developmental imperative informed her bid for Security Council reform and permanent seat ambition. At the end of our investigation, we discovered that the developmental crises facing Nigeria is partially attributed to her non-permanent status in the Council, unlike, the permanent five and their allies who have advanced their economics through their positions in United Nations affairs. We recommended that the Council be restructured to accommodate new entrants, Nigeria included. And that such opportunity if given should be effectively maximized by recipient countries.*

### **Introduction**

The need for harmonization and conciliation of interests and conflicts arising from social relation of production and reproduction at the global level informed the establishment of supranational institutions. Concert of Europe or Concert system (1815), Hague system (1899 - 1907) League of Nations (1919 - 1945), were the previous mechanisms put in place for the attainment of the above goals.

However, given inordinate ambition of the former major powers - Italy, Germany, USSR etc towards accumulation of global resources and the inherent structural and administrative weaknesses of those institutions to avert Second World War, the formation of United Nations became inevitable in the search for enduring peace and security.

Again, given the changes in the global system that existed when UN was formed,

calls for UN reform, particularly the Security Council became very imperative and irresistible. Rourke (2003:11) noted that the Security Council as the most strategic organ of the union committed to the maintenance of global peace and security became pronounced in the call for the union's reform, following gross under representation of majority of the countries. In 1965, the council was expanded from eleven (11) to fifteen (15) members, since then challenges in global socio-economic and political composition have not only made reformation of the council imperative but a desired step towards the stability of the global community.

Nigeria joined the organization in 1960 following her attainment of independence with the expectation of meeting her developmental aspirations. Unfortunately, despite her enormous contributions to UN and other regional and sub-regional organizations, especially in peace keeping and other humanitarian engagements, the developmental challenges facing Nigeria remain enormous. Thus excruciating poverty, suffocating local and foreign debts, inadequate and decaying infrastructural facilities, corruption, unmediated ethno-religions crises, crimes, unfruitful diplomatic engagements, deteriorating gross domestic product and per capital income, flawed elections etc remain prevalent. They tend to be logical fallouts of Nigeria's absence in Security Council, which constitute the hub of global politics. This becomes more disturbing as the gap between domestic and global economics in one hand and between politics and economics in the other hand is fast disappearing. This makes countries socio-economic and political formations to depend largely on the dictates of global socio-economic and political dynamics. Thus the absence of Nigeria in the mainstream of global politics (Security Council) and her inability to make inputs even from behind the scene tend to make solutions to her problems very remote whereas the flow and direction of global wealth and resources are decided by the permanent five.

For Nigeria to overcome her developmental challenges, reform and admission of Nigeria into Security Council on permanent status tend to be the logical panacea. This work is just a part of the existing literature on the imperative of Security Council reform vis-à-vis Nigeria's quest for permanent seat. Scholars like Eke (2008), Okolie (2005), Onuoha (2008), Claude (1964), Paul and Nahony (2005), Gambari (1994), Obiozor (1998) etc have treated the subject matter. However the linkage between Nigeria developmental imperative and her quest for Security Council reform and permanent seat ambition has not been adequately addressed. Consequently this paper interrogates whether Nigeria's quest for Security Council reform and permanent seat and it also evaluates the ambition predicated on her developmental needs.

### **Theoretical Perspective:**

The dynamic and vast area of interactions among sovereign states is such that may attract numerous approaches in analysis. However, the focus and direction of research work usually pave way for the choice of analytical framework to be adopted in the study. In exploring the developmental imperative and Nigeria's quest for Security Council reform and permanent seat ambition, we adopted the political economy as our analytical

sovereign state in a bid to solve her developmental problems has initiated various developmental plans, reforms and engaged other sovereign states in economic, political and social interactions. Regrettably, not much has been achieved in terms of concrete development when compared with the European and North American countries; which dominate global politics. Based on the above premise, it is assumed that admission of Nigeria into Security Council league, which constitute the hub of global politics may afford her the opportunity of attracting global wealth, resources and attention, needed in revamping her economy and by extension other aspects of her national life. This is predicated on the fact that a sound economy is the basis for the development of other sectors in a polity. Thus efforts made in revamping Nigeria's economy will equally produce spiral effect in the polity. To illustrate further, inclusion of Nigeria in Security Council will afford her the opportunity of mastering the mystery and secrets behind the working of major global financial institutions currently controlled and dominated by US and Europe. Given the fact that globalization and global economic integration have closed the gap between domestic and global economies, the impact of international financial institutions on both domestic and global economics becomes enormous, hence the imperative for Nigeria to have a strong voice in the operations of such specialized agencies and organs. The relevance of political economy so far is underscored by the fact that capturing that global position and power will eventually turn around Nigeria development problems, especially her economy. Besides with working economy, other aspect of her national life will equally benefit, including reinforced and assertive diplomatic engagements and outings.

### **The Imperative of Security Council Reform**

The Security Council is without doubt the most powerful organ of the UN. The charter has given it primary responsibility for the maintenance of global peace and security and its decision is binding for all member states. Its limited geographical balance combined with five exclusive permanent seats that have veto powers however, makes the Security Council less representative than desired by many member states. Besides in spite of the UNSC enlargement in 1965, its permanent members still represent the global world structure that existed after World War 11 when the institution was created.

The number of UN member states has increased significantly since the UN's creation in 1945, from 51 to 118 in 1965 before 1965, UNSC consisted of five permanent seats with veto power and 6 non permanent seats, and this was enlarged to 10. Today the total UN members are 193, much higher than when the enlargement took place and this is considered to be the main reason UNSC should be enlarged once again. The distribution of the 10 non permanent seats in the UNSC is based on geographical representation as well as on contributions made to maintaining peace and security. Regional group make recommendations for non permanent seats and the general assembly elects them. There are five non permanent seats allocated to Africa and Asia, and two each for the Latin America and the Caribbean group as well as for the Western European and other groups.

The appreciation and recognition of these noble roles played by UN agencies and affiliated institutions must not be unconnected with the upsurge in the organization's membership in 1960s, following decolonization (Wali 2005). The astronomic growth in the membership of UN, from 51 states in 1945, when the association was formed to present 193 members clearly demonstrate that development and survivability rather than national prestige and pride are the rationale for states identification with the organization. Nigeria enthusiastically on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1960, barely six days she wrestled independence from imperial Britain ratified her membership of UN. She joined UN amidst lofty hopes and expectations given her development imperatives. As an emerging state with fledging democratic leadership, which has just gained freedom from ambitious, domineering and exploitative Britain, she desired as a matter of necessity, support, patronage, and assistance from older states and international organizations. This assistance was crucial given that the dethroned imperial government milked dry and distorted development in Nigeria, (Ake 1980). The few infrastructural facilities put in place by Britain were basically to facilitate and create conducive environment for capital accumulation and shipment of our resources to their home land.

At independence Nigerian leadership was saddled with enormous challenges of how to steer the nation to the path of development amidst heated political rivalry and fractionalization engendered by colonialism. To Ake (1986) post independence state was engulfed in tense politics that the leaders never gave thought to development. Notwithstanding, they initiated various development plans and stressed on agricultural productivity. They equally expanded the infrastructural base and assisted our sister countries secure independence from their colonizers. Regrettably, Nigeria's 50 years romance with other sovereign states under the auspices of United Nations, despite her contributions left the country worst than when she joined the organization. The country has wallowed from one developmental initiative to another. From post Independent Green Revolution, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Guided Deregulation Programme (Vision 2000), to Commercialization and Privatization Programme, (vision 2010) and the current vision 20-20-20 all to no avail. Today, the state's debt profile is steadily on the increase. Barely five years she extricated herself from excruciating foreign debt through the help of her daughter – Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, Nigeria's local debt profile has reached a crisis point (Iwella, 2011). This has opened a new vesta of worry and anxiety for patriotic Nigerians. To be candid, virtually all sectors are crying for saviour, despite our abundant human and material resources. The economy was comparatively better at post independent era when agriculture was the main income earner for the country. But with the discovery of oil in commercial quantity in 1970s and the attendant rise in consumption pattern, attention shifted from agriculture and allied services to rents from oil and distributive industry. The infrastructural facilities that received a boost through oil wind fall have deteriorated owing to old age, over-use and gross neglect. A roll call of the existing amenities in Nigeria: Nigeria Railways Corporation, Nigeria Air ports, NEPA/PHCN, NIPOST, Kano Textile Mills, Nigercem, Nigeria Refineries, etc will definitely induce tears from even an unpatriotic Nigerians.

creation enterprises. Saliu (2006: 193-195), collaborated the above view when he averred that the struggle for membership of the proposed enlarged Security Council, if it is successful has the potential to assist Nigeria internally and externally. He contended that Nigeria's problem with the foremost financial institutions in the world is traceable to the diminished status of the country. Their attitude is more likely to change when she becomes a member of the enlarged Security Council. The discriminatory debt relief measures which the nation is made to see but not benefit from will be at her disposal. Bilaterally she can use her position to discuss with the dominant powers on how she can be rescued from her unwarranted economic crisis. All her efforts toward attracting foreign investors which have miserably failed so far due to the reluctance of investors to genuinely invest in Nigeria and the foul investment climate of the state, will definitely bring more returns as soon as the country adjust her attitude and become a member of the Security Council.

Saliu (2006), added that the regime of sanctions, a reality brought about by the state's pre 1999 queer ways of handling domestic and international affairs will be removed once the latter takes steps that are acceptable to the Security Council. What this translates to in concrete terms, is that a favourable economic and financial climate will be created once more in the country. Thus, no doubt will assist the government to achieve its objectives which revolve around re-inventing the Nigeria in its entirety. The attraction of foreign direct investment and technology transfer especially in the areas of oil, gas, agriculture, transportation, power/energy etc will not only revive our economy but facilitate the realization of vision 20-20-20 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Besides, it will enable the state exploit to the fullest the abundant mineral resources, especially gas exploration and usage.

On the political realm, permanent Security Council seat promises tremendous political transformation in the country. The ongoing democratization process especially on electoral reforms, rule of law, constitutionalism will receive a boost as Nigeria will strive to meet international best practices as a member of a club of best democracies in the world. Prestige and inclusion of Nigeria in the main stream of other strategic political positions within the organs and specialized agencies of UN will be feasible. The presence of Nigeria in International Court of Justices, Human Right council, will facilitate our diplomatic engagements. Moreover, as a sovereign state with abundant human and material resources, occupying permanent seat in the community of Nations will capacitate her to pursue aggressive and expansionist foreign policies that will rebound the attainment of core national interest and that of Africa. Besides, the realization of her transformation agenda including citizen's diplomacy as a foreign policy thrust of the present administration is equally tied to the seat. Her position in Africa will equally be consolidated, strengthened and respected, because, she will automatically assume in reality leadership position and consequently project beyond mere rhetoric, the collective interest and wellbeing of Africa. Saliu (2006) remarked that the defense of African interests, which has been a long standing objective of the country's foreign policy, stands a better chance of being pursued more assiduously when the nation

undoubtedly will go along way revamping our health, education and related sectors. Besides, given the fact that she has assumed leadership position in the committee of nations, she must strive to meet global best practices on health, education and cultural issues.

### **Conclusion**

The present structure of the United Nations Security Council is favourably disposed to the industrialized countries of the West, particularly the permanent members of the Council with China as a non Western State. Their domination of the less developed countries which are the majority in the UN General Assembly is compounded by the possession of veto power by the permanent members of the UNSC. In fact, the UN as it is today, is very far from being democratic even though it claims to be symbol of democracy, and also claim to propagate the gospel of democracy to all countries of the world. Nigeria, as a member of UN, can only benefit proportionately given her contributions to UN, especially in the areas of peace keeping and security if she is admitted into the main stream of UN most strategic organ – Security Council. This will enable her address developmental challenges facing her and equally assist sister African countries. Consequently the council should be restructured to accommodate new entrants, Nigeria included. Such opportunity if given should be effectively maximized by recipient countries.