



PATHWAY *to* A NEW NIGERIA

Mallam Nuhu Ribadu's Plan to Make Nigeria Better for All



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Executive Summary

50 years ago, the founding fathers of our great nation secured independence for us and laid the foundations for a united Nigeria. They had faith in the people of this country; that when the fetters of colonization were removed they would be able to transform their lives for the better. They firmly believed that Nigerians will create the systems and enduring processes that will deliver economic growth and stability, egalitarian development, improved living conditions and quality of life for the people. They built schools and universities; they established banks and other financial institutions, farm settlements, and various industries as precursors of a vibrant economy with a small, but enterprising, private sector.

And they tried to nurture a fledgling democracy. Their aspirations were abruptly terminated in January 1966. After the long years of military rule and several half-hearted attempts to return the country to democratic governance, the people's right to freely elect their leaders and representatives was restored in May 1999. The restoration brought high expectations, the hopes and promises encapsulated in freedom. Those expectations have not been met; the promises remain unfulfilled.

Our nation's recent golden jubilee celebrations, although marred by unfortunate loss of lives, provided the backdrop for a sober reflection on our journey these past fifty years, and also an examination of the policies of the ruling party since 1999. The overwhelming consensus is that we have underperformed given the country's enormous endowment in both human and material resources. The nation's social and economic indicators are startlingly weak. Regional and civic conflicts are on the rise, threatening social cohesion and national security. Ordinary Nigerians are beginning to question the value of democracy and even the necessity of staying together as one people in a country where things no longer seem to work.

Today we are on the threshold of another general election, the fourth since the restoration of democracy. I believe this is an opportunity for change, to orientate our shared values into restoring the foundations of our nation. I believe it is possible to build a united Nigeria devoid of ethnic or religious conflicts; a Nigeria where the well-being of the people is of paramount importance; a Nigeria that inspires the highest level of patriotism in her citizens. I believe that it is possible to ensure justice for the people, the security of lives and property, and the peace and stability which would engender growth and development.

The policies I am proposing here will enable us manage the difficulties that our citizens are presently grappling with. Being mindful of the fact that problems which took several decades to seed, take root and consolidate will not be amenable to quick fixes, these are not quick fixes. They are structured to tackle immediate problems in the short term even as medium and long-term challenges are kept in focus and solutions to them carefully worked out.

I will focus on nine policy themes and briefly highlight some of the critical issues that can be addressed to improve the well being of our own people. The policy themes are Human Capital Development, the Economy, Infrastructure, Governance, Youth Employment, Agriculture and Food Security, Defence and National Security, Niger Delta, and Foreign Policy.

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

A healthy, well-educated and content citizenry is at the heart of national development. Consequently, the various segments of human capital development which include health, education, women and gender issues, the youth, the physically-challenged, and social security should receive appropriate attention.

Health

One of the key issues in the health sector is the dearth of human resource -- medical personnel, health workers, etc -- which is really serious in the rural areas and we must work towards addressing this gap by training more people. Innovative incentive regimes should help to attract some of the best and brightest to the rural and semi-urban areas, and motivate them to remain and provide service to such communities.

Since the majority of our people live in the rural areas, we need to revitalize the primary health care system to deliver basic health care, including routine immunization, to all the nooks and crannies of our country. Primary health care must be at the heart of our health policy because this is the level nearest to the populace and addressing needs at the primary level will drastically reduce the burden on the secondary and tertiary levels. A people, process and equipment model will be adopted to reintroduce efficiency to primary health care and ensure that it fully fulfils its role as first point of call. We will have to develop robust strategies to reduce maternal and infant mortality as well as the burden of malaria, tuberculosis (TB) and other infectious diseases in line with the Millennium Development Goals using primary health care as a key strategy.

Infrastructural development and assets maintenance in all our secondary and tertiary health institutions will be vigorously pursued; this will include developing facilities that will ensure that the whole gamut of advanced medical care is available to all our people locally. To this end, we will build six new super specialist hospitals namely, National Heart Hospital, National Kidney Hospital, National Cancer Hospital, National Children Hospital, National Women Hospital and National Neurosurgical Hospital across the six geopolitical zones of the country. This will be done without prejudice to efforts to rejuvenate the country's university teaching hospitals and transform them into world-class institutions of cutting edge research and training.

Efforts at providing quality health care will come to naught without essential drugs. We will partner with pharmaceutical companies in the production of essential drugs that will be used in our hospitals. Furthermore, we will boost research and development of local drugs as well as strengthen NAFDAC to fight the manufacture and importation of fake and sub-standard drugs which endanger the lives of our citizens.

Education

Functional and qualitative education should be a tool for positive social transformation, personal empowerment and national development. Our education sector faces huge challenges in terms of funding, access, quality assurance and infrastructural development and maintenance among others. Adequate funding is critical to qualitative education because it helps to revitalize personnel and maintain physical infrastructure on a sustained basis, thus enabling high academic standards. The mean unit cost of undergraduate education ranges from N190,000 for the Arts, Law, Education, and the Social Sciences to N480,000 for Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. Education will be given a high priority in terms of budgetary allocation. We shall significantly increase funding as a step towards attaining the UNESCO recommendation of 26% budgetary allocation to the education sector.

Access to education by eligible Nigerians is a very serious challenge. About half of the pupils of primary school age are not in school. 'Boy child' and 'girl child' education in different parts of the country are also faced with challenges. Total enrolment for the 2008/2009 academic year in the Nigerian tertiary system was 940,736. About 2,000,000 candidates took the 2010 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations (UTME). The total carrying capacity of Nigerian universities for the 2009/2010 session is 219,403. Out of the estimated 2,000,000 candidates, not more than 350,000 may be placed in the tertiary institutions.

All three tiers of government will have to collaborate to expand facilities across board from the primary to tertiary level and also invest in the training and re-training of teachers and other relevant personnel. In order to address the problem of *almajiri*, the *Sangaya* system of education will be incorporated with western education and improved upon. The nomadic education programme for nomadic cattle herdsman and fishermen will also be supported in order to realize the objectives for which it was established.

Quality assurance is fundamental to any functional education system. Inspection and monitoring especially at the basic and secondary schools level will be reinforced. A manifestation of the poor quality and falling standards of our educational system is the high failure rate in the 2010 SSCE/NECO examinations; less than 25% of the candidates that sat for the examinations passed. Sound primary and secondary education are pivotal because they influence performance in the tertiary level. We will establish a joint primary/secondary school commission to regulate these two levels and improve the performance of pupils and students. The regulatory agencies at the tertiary level will be strengthened and sustained to perform their functions.

Women

It is beyond dispute that women constitute the bedrock of any society, and indeed are critical to all efforts to achieve stability and prosperity in our country. The July 2010 session of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on 'Implementing the Internationally-Agreed Goals and Commitments in Regard to Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women' affirmed this fact. These Internationally-Agreed Development Goals (IADGs), particularly those that focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women and efforts to achieve them in Nigeria form the cornerstone of our policy on women. We are committed to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration, the World Summit, the Ouagadougou Plan of Action and Millennium Declaration Goals in respect of women, even as the global financial crisis and the pervading impact of climate change force governments all over the world to slash budgets and concentrate on so-called priority matters. We believe that the welfare of the Nigerian woman is a priority, and time, effort and resources will be committed to achieve the desired objectives which include to improve the participation of women in politics and decision-making; to invest in the economic empowerment of women; to value and invest in women's health, security and safety; and demonstrate principled transformational leadership with the Nigerian woman playing her due role in this regard.

Social Security

The departure point of the Social Security policy is the obvious fact that the various provisions in this regard in both the public and private sectors are grossly inadequate. It is important that both government and the private sector collaborate to find the resources to create a caring and inclusive society where all Nigerian citizens, regardless of age or gender, will be covered by a social security programme. We will work with the National Assembly to put in place an enabling law for a comprehensive National Social Security Scheme. As a first step, we will give priority to the development of a secure and efficient identity management system working with a reinvigorated National Identity Management Commission.

THE ECONOMY

Key Thrust: Employment And Job Creation Especially For The Youth

The Nigerian economy is performing below potential and is not creating enough jobs for our burgeoning youth. Though the economy is growing at around 6% per annum, it could grow at a much faster pace and more importantly it could create more jobs if the right policies are pursued. Young people 30 years old and below make up 70% of Nigeria's population yet youth unemployment is rampant. Up to 50-60% of our graduates are unemployed to the point where parents and children now question the value of education.

The economy has to be managed with fiscal prudence so that we are not spending much more than we take in as revenues. The fiscal deficit was kept at 3% of GDP from 2003-2007; now it has doubled to 6%, implying a great deal of spending without much impact or results on the ground. At the end of 2008, the Excess Crude Account (ECA) had the equivalent of US\$20 billion in savings to cushion the country against a "rainy day". Most of that money has now been shared between federal, state and local governments. Less than US\$ 500 million is left.

Our foreign exchange reserves have come down from a peak of more than US\$50 billion a couple of years ago to US\$38 billion now. Our domestic debt has climbed to the level of Naira 3.76 trillion or the equivalent of US\$25 billion (From DMO website as of June 30 2010). This is something we have to be cautious about so as not to harm the domestic economy. Some of the states borrowing may not be in a position to fully service their debt. All the borrowing and use of our domestic revenues is not leading to better services on the ground.

We shall budget within our means and keep overspending to a minimum. This means bringing the fiscal deficit back to 3% of GDP. We shall rebuild our foreign exchange reserves back to a robust level of US\$50 billion or more; and plan for a steady and attainable economic growth rate of 7-8% per year for the next five years and 8-10% per year for the years following that. This growth must be job-creating growth focused on both the oil and non-oil sectors of the economy. We will invest in infrastructure, in health and education, and in creating the enabling environment for investment all key sources of growth in the economy to thrive particularly agriculture, the extractive industry, manufacturing, housing and construction, financial services, information and communication technology (ICT), as well as arts and culture-the entertainment industry.

GOVERNANCE

I believe in the humanity and equality of all citizens regardless of ethnicity, religion, and social class. Our own vision of governance is rooted in this fundamental stance, and in the primary goal of restoring the dignity of Nigerian citizens. I believe in Nigeria; that it is a country with potential for greatness; that it is a country where things can work if the leaders demonstrate the required discipline, focus and dedication. And we can all contribute in our own little ways at this critical time to make her take her proper place in Africa and the world.

Corruption and Governance

Corruption has made it difficult for the country to invest in strategic areas of national life and also give adequate protection to the citizens. Nigeria, in spite of the enormous oil revenue it generated over the past five decades, still has one of the lowest per capita incomes in the world.

Our vision is not only a bold new system that punishes corruption but one that also taps into the energies and innovation of our people to generate shared prosperity driven by honest labour, an abiding sense of commitment, and a desire to fix our broken society and restore our shared national values of honesty, integrity, discipline, hard work, and respect. The link between transparency and democratic governance is not often recognized. Corruption only thrives when a government and its key functionaries are not accountable to the voting public. We will restore transparency and accountability in the conduct of government business by insisting that all those who seek public office must do so using democratic means, relying on free, fair and credible elections.

It is not enough to bring the light to bear on people and processes in the public sector. Recent incidents in the banking sector, the Nigerian Stock Exchange and the Securities and Exchange Commission are clear indications that corporate governance is also crucial in the private sector. Regulatory frameworks under girding this vital sector will be strengthened and enforced.

We will work with the legislature and the judiciary to improve governance at all levels. We will provide judicial officials with adequate security and other resources, including the regular training they require to operate effectively.

We will empower our citizens to enable them fully participate in governance and also serve as a countervailing power able to check the excesses of the government. We will assure ordinary Nigerians through programmes designed to strengthen the rather fragile institutions of our still evolving system of representative rule that democracy is an open system that gives each citizen and each federating unit enough power to contribute to the important project of making Nigeria a prosperous, stable and caring nation.

Niger Delta Policy

The key challenges in the oil-producing Niger Delta region presently include environmental pollution, poverty, widespread unemployment and low human capital development, inadequate infrastructure, violence and insecurity. These are serious issues that must be addressed with sincerity of purpose and a long term perspective. To this end, we will ensure that the Ministry of the Niger Delta and the Niger Delta Development Commission are staffed with competent and knowledgeable officials committed to accountability. We will also encourage greater synergy in their operations.

We will review the Amnesty programme began by the late President Yar'Adua and encourage greater involvement of the private sector in order to address the fundamental needs of the demobilized militants which are jobs, a sense of self-worth, and a new social and political order in the Niger Delta in which they can participate as active citizens. We will partner with the private sector to provide these young men the skills that they need to find employment.

We will endeavour to expand the job pool in the region by working with the state governments to revive moribund industrial and agricultural projects, sourcing expertise from the private sector. The employment-generating potentials of the Petroleum local content bill and the Petroleum Industry Bill that are now under consideration will be fully tapped, to ensure that they benefit youth in the region.

We will enforce the 'no gas flaring' act when it comes on stream, and also engage the oil companies and other relevant stakeholders in dialogue to begin to reduce the pollution of farmlands and fishing streams. When land and rivers are rehabilitated economic activity will resurge, creating jobs, prosperity and peace. Our 'healthy environment' strategy will also explore ways in which the government can utilize the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) to grow green jobs in the region even as it also contributes to reversing the deleterious effects of climate change.

POWER AND ALLIED INFRASTRUCTURE

A country determined to compete in a 21st century marked by globalization, nations fiercely competing for markets and jobs, and rapid technological advances must have 21st century infrastructure to drive this project. Decades of underinvestment, policy incoherence and a failure to appreciate the crucial role of modern infrastructure in economic development and social cohesion has put Nigeria in the class of stragglers in this global race.

The proposals on power and other infrastructure are designed to reverse this state of affairs. We will resist the temptation to adopt an omnibus, catch-all strategy, promising to tackle all facets of the infrastructural decay at once. This is not a realistic approach, given the enormous capital requirements, the complexity of the challenge, and the time needed to properly plan a workable and sustainable intervention strategy.

We will focus on three main segments of the nation's infrastructure needs namely, power, railways, and road construction and maintenance. The fundamental goals of our power and infrastructure policy are job creation, economic development in general, and a properly interconnected Nigerian nation where people, goods and ideas can move freely and efficiently at minimal cost.

Power

Inadequate power supply restricts socio-economic activities, limits economic growth and adversely affects the quality of life. Electricity supply in Nigeria is grossly inadequate as total installed capacity is far less than demand.

The current supply system relies essentially on natural gas and hydro (70:30) which are both vulnerable to sabotage and adverse weather conditions respectively. The drop in water level in the hydro power plants and acute shortage of gas supply to the thermal plants contribute to the inadequate supply of electricity.

The nation currently has an installed generation capacity of about 10,000 MW, but an available generation capacity of between 2,500- 3200 MW. Transmission capacity is estimated at 5,838 MVA with a transmission backbone of 4,534km (330kv lines) and 19 major transmission sub-stations. Our distribution capacity sits at about 8,425 MVA. Technical energy loss is estimated at 14% of generation capacity (4%-transmission, 10%-distribution) Non-technical losses accounts for 32% of generation capacity. Access to electricity is estimated at 40% of the population.

We will move to diversify the energy mix by introducing coal powered plants which will employ clean coal technologies. These plants will be sited to ensure proximity to known coal reserves in Okaba, Ogboyoga (Kogi State), Owukpa (Benue State) and Ezimo (Enugu State). We will also invest

in decentralized renewable energy such as wind, solar and biomass especially in rural areas, with limited grid access.

We will provide fiscal incentives for private developers. We will implement pricing schemes to promote load management and motivate customers to minimize their energy consumption during peak periods. We will also ensure good consumer education on the most efficient use of energy.

We shall ensure capacity building within the industry and re-orientate PHCN personnel towards customer- oriented service, productivity and efficiency and sanction recurring anti-customer behaviour. We will introduce power consumer assistance funds for low-income power consumers, who consume below a certain threshold.

We will bring credibility to the power reform process by ensuring that those we will appoint will be above board, highly qualified and driven solely by public interest. We will stabilize power generation, transmission and distribution in the shortest possible time while putting in place a sustainable energy plan for the long term.

RAIL, ROAD AND WATER TRANSPORT

A modern and economically-viable railway system is the cornerstone of our efforts to upgrade the country's transportation network. In this regard we will adopt a bold new approach, introducing the British model of government –owned track system that will service private sector-run train companies. This is to ensure that adequate and regular investments are made in tracks to ensure passenger safety, even as we ensure that the entire network remain efficient and commercially competitive by encouraging private sector participation in ferrying goods and people. We will proceed by building a modern track network in a designated part of the country to serve as a model for gradual expansion. We will utilise a Public Private Partnership funding model for this project.

This funding model will also be extended to the maintenance and construction of new roads. Only 15 percent of the country's 200,000 kilometres of road networks are paved. We will aim double this figure and ensure the regular maintenance of all federal roads.

The country's transportation network will be properly integrated as we make air safety a primary consideration and the airports economic nodes. Working cooperatively with international carriers, we will partner with the private sector to expand and equip designated Nigerian airports to serve as the African hub. We will also improve water transportation by dredging inland water ways and constructing new inland ports where they are needed.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

The nation has been grappling with the difficult task of achieving food security and agro-allied industrialization over the years with varying degrees of success. Low productivity and wastage have continued to plague the sector, especially in the vital area of post-harvest handling of perishable fresh produce that provide the essential nutrients for sustenance.

While the country is endowed with arable land, climate and human resources, sustained poor policy frameworks continue to hamper efforts to scale-up and make more efficient the food production/supply chain. Industrialization based on abundant agricultural potentials of the nation has been slow to gain traction. Scarce foreign exchange is wasted on importing dairy, fish, juices and other food items that could be easily produced in the country. The enormous employment-generating potential of this sector has hardly been tapped.

Our food security policy proposes to address these gaps and ensure that appropriate attention is paid to every element in the vital food supply chain - from the field to the table- which includes primary production, extension and education programmes, post-harvest handling and farm produce haulage, preservation, storage, processing, and marketing as well as rural development.

We are committed to evolving a system of providing an egg and a glass of fruit juice or one glass of fresh milk to each child in school by 2014, in order to increase the protein and vitamin intake of our leaders of tomorrow. This programme will have the multiplier effect of encouraging increased production of these food items with attendant manufacturing and service sector activities which, in turn, will create wealth and jobs.

Farmers in each State will be supported through a combination of federal and state grants and loans to produce food and industrial crops in which their State has comparative advantage.

FOREIGN POLICY

Our foreign policy platform proceeds from the truism that ‘charity begins at home.’ It is not a coincidence that our diminished role in global affairs presently comes at a time our country is struggling with enormous economic, social and political difficulties at home. It is now an established fact in international relations scholarship that a strong domestic economic and social base is the vital prerequisite for a successful foreign policy. Nigeria can only play a critical role in global affairs when it has emerged as a prosperous, stable and democratic country. Consequently, the primary task of our foreign policy platform is to speedily reverse Nigeria’s declining economic fortunes, provide employment for our citizens, work towards social cohesion and stability, and drive through the reforms that will strengthen the institutions of our democracy and bring ordinary citizens to the heart of governance. We will do this with the aim of building the redoubtable platform on which a new and vigorous foreign policy will stand.

The international environment is presently rooting for democratic government, zero tolerance for corruption, poverty eradication, rule of law, respect for human rights particularly the rights of women and children, and care for the environment. We will bring these concerns to the heart of our foreign policy objectives, vigorously promoting them in Nigeria and the West African sub-region first before taking the message to other parts of the world. Our goal is to make Nigeria the reference point on these matters in Africa and in all international forums where they are discussed. We will lead by example in the Gulf of Guinea by reviving the comatose Gulf of Guinea Commission and making it a platform on which to launch a crusade for democratic governance and respect for the rule of law in the sub-region and Africa.

DEFENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY

National security is the pivot on which the prosperity, governance and the general welfare of the citizens of any country turns. In other words, security considerations are paramount in any effort to transform Nigeria into the economically and politically.

Our defence and national security policy platform puts Nigerian citizens at the centre of development; the argument here is that the citizens of a country are its first line of defence and that a

contented citizenry are best placed to vigorously defend Nigeria's interests and effectively repel internal and external threats.

We also recognize that the traditional approach of securing the nation by ensuring an efficient police force, armed forces and other security agencies is valid and just as important. And we will introduce yet another conceptual innovation by putting more emphasis on crime prevention and potential security breaches instead of reacting to them fire brigade-like as is the present practice. We will pay particular attention to the Police Force with a view to reforming it to operate at optimum because it is the only federal agency accorded statutory powers to prevent crime. Besides, the Police Force is the largest employer of labour in the public sector, with over 500,000 officers and men. Its vast operations with tentacles in all parts of the country require that they be adequately funded.

We will encourage specialised training for the officers and men of the Police Force; 25 percent of their time will be committed to training and re-training, and a continuous knowledge acquisition and improvement programme will be supported. Staff welfare will be integrated into a new framework that links productivity to career advancement. We will insist on a culture of professionalism and also ensure that equipment required for effective modern crime-fighting are supplied and regularly updated. We will encourage a migration to intelligence-led policing, and facilitate the process by ensuring that the architecture and input required for effective intelligence gathering and analysis are put in place.

We will eliminate the gap between the police and citizen by encouraging regular interactive sessions between both. Community and civic leaders' forum will interface with police formations to share intelligence, operation modalities and legitimate mutual concerns.

The defence segment of our national security policy platform is designed to achieve a compact, highly mobile, well-trained, equipped, and highly motivated armed forces. There are six broad challenges that confront members of our armed forces presently and which will be vigorously addressed:

There is no synergy of action between the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Affairs Ministry in terms of input into Nigeria's defence policy. This explains why Nigeria kept the peace in Sierra Leone while Britain reaped the economic benefits of the post-war era. We will ensure that the 2006 National Defence Policy is reviewed and employed as a means of building greater synergy and cooperation between these two key Ministries.

There is no consistency in procurement policy with regards to vendors. This has led to lack of discontinuity in procurement and maintenance of equipment, leading to a waste of national resources. We will ensure consistency in procurement and maintenance of equipment.

Members of the Armed Forces lack basic uniforms and kitting. This has compelled Officers and men to purchase their own uniforms and other needs at great cost. We will provide these uniforms and other accessories on a periodic basis.

The various Services lack sufficient accommodation facilities to cater for both officers and men, and this is not good for morale. We will engage with private sector partners to provide housing for our Services at reasonable cost.

Although military hospitals exist in different parts of the country, they are mostly ill-equipped, compared to the standard of similar facilities outside the country. We will guarantee the health needs of members of the Armed Forces who are often exposed to high risk by virtue of the nature of their duties.

There are inconsistencies in the administration of retirement benefits as manifested in the change-over from the defined benefits pension scheme to the contributory pension scheme. This has had a negative impact on the welfare of officers and men; and every effort will be made to quickly ensure that retirement benefits are paid promptly to retiring officers and men.

Although salaries of public servants including the military personnel were increased across the board recently, it is still a far cry from the ideal. We will work towards meeting the required minimum standard if the total commitment of service personnel is to be secured.

Policies on posting and promotion, though available, have been observed more in the breach. Postings are sometimes done at random to the detriment of the Service and personnel. We will endeavour to restore consistency in postings and promotions to make for predictability and justice.

We recognize that the Nigerian army, the Navy and the Air Force each has challenges peculiar to it that the six outlined above do not speak to in detail. These run the gamut from deficient training facilities to inadequate equipment, lack of operational capacity and sundry logistics and maintenance problems.

We take the welfare, morale and professional pride of our officers and men seriously as they, along with the Police constitute the vital backbone of the nation's defence and national security infrastructure. We will work towards addressing needs as they come up, and also involve all arms of the armed forces and the Police in the process of reviewing the National Defence Policy to ensure that it receive the full benefit of their contributions.

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