

# Youth Party

**A MANIFESTO  
FOR SERVICE**

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## ECONOMY

It is widely accepted that over 80% of Nigerians are currently living below the poverty line and need support to acquire skills and essentials services. The idea that the benefits of a thriving economy will trickle down through an invisible hand to the poor through jobs is moot, considering the large number of poor people in Nigeria.

Whilst, we do not subscribe to a welfare state, wherein laziness is encouraged. The alarming wide gap between the rich and the poor needs to be addressed. The provision of an efficient universal healthcare system, a decent universal basic education system and a social housing system are pragmatic in the current circumstance.

This is also an indirect way of tackling insecurity and militancy. Redistribution of wealth may be appropriate to fund the aforesaid social amenities. This may be carried out through the increase of consumption tax particularly VAT from 5% to 15% for luxury goods and services.

Additional funding may be sourced from running a lean government and cutting the current high cost of governance/recurrent expenditure. Note: Ideally, the cost and means of funding the proposed health, basic education system and social housing should be ascertained and stated clearly. For example, 100 Billion Naira can be removed from the 150 Billion Naira of the National Assembly's budget and the balance can be sourced from other unnecessary expenses in the current budget.

The private sector has proven to be a better driver of the economy than the Government. However, stronger, professional and independent regulatory bodies have to be developed to prevent excessive profit at the expense of the poor particularly by essential services providers (water, electricity power and public transport). The regulatory agencies are important to ensure competition, safety, and quality of services. Competition will prevent monopolistic tendencies and push down the prices of goods and services. Industries would be forced to compete on prices and quality of goods and services, which is impossible under a monopoly where consumers are captives. The bodies requiring immediate consideration are the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, Securities and Exchange Commission, Nigerian Communication Commission, Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission, Nigerian Maritime Authority, Central Bank of Nigeria, National Universities Commission, and the Department of Petroleum Resources. Independence from political interference and funding will drive professionalism, which enable them perform their statutory duties.

The current tax regime does not engender economic growth. Company income taxes are currently between 32 - 35%. This cripples small businesses, stifles economic growth, and promotes tax evasion. These taxes should be reduced to about 20%, particularly when most organization incurs huge cost in providing services that the government should provide. This includes security, steady power supply and others.

Furthermore, we will prioritize the reformation of the subsidy regime fuel from consumption to production. The rich benefit the most from fuel subsidy and other current forms of subsidy than the poor that it was designed to assist. Thus, subsidies on fuel consumption will be stopped. Subsidies will be provided for the development and managing of refineries by the private sector. This will provide jobs, reduce the pressure on the Naira due to importation of petroleum products and generate foreign exchange from the exportation of petroleum products.

It is of utmost importance that our economic produce be diversified. We must wean our economy of its sole dependence of oil, and develop other areas of potential revenue, such as the agricultural, mineral, and textiles industries, so as to maximize their output, and therefore the welfare of the population.

The Youth Party shall take the following steps on the economy:

- Reduce recurrent expenditure by drastically reducing the cost of governance.
- Amendment of the tax regime by reducing Companies Income Tax from 32-35% to 20% to encourage businesses, create employment opportunities and increase revenue generation through improved tax compliance.
- Redistribute wealth through an increase in consumption tax (VAT) from 5% to 20% for luxury goods and services.
- Diversify the economy from the petroleum sector by prioritizing agriculture, textiles, mining and manufacturing.
- Institutionalize the independence of regulatory bodies of the various sectors of the economy (NCAA, NCC, NERC, NMA, CBN, SEC, NUC, and the DPR) to protect them from political interference and boost competition, which would reduce prices of goods and services and also improve their quality.
- 5-year tax break for investors in refineries, mining, agriculture, agro-allied, textiles and manufacturing.
- Exemption from custom duties for equipment required to develop and manage refineries, mining, agriculture, agro-allied, textiles and manufacturing.
- Preferential interest rates for investors in the downstream sector (refineries), mining, agriculture, agro-allied, textiles and manufacturing.

## EDUCATION

In order to maximize and sustain economic growth, it is necessary to have a sound educational structure. Currently, the Nigerian system is inefficient with poor primary and secondary school systems. Also, the education system is less a ladder of opportunity than a structure to transmit inequity from one generation to the next. Furthermore, a considerable portion of the available funding, particularly funds generated from education tax, are being funneled to the university level, which in itself is insufficient.

It is thus necessary to redirect principal funding to the primary and secondary school levels, in order to cultivate the intelligence, know-how and life skills necessary for the youth to become active members of society. By doing so, it is essential that funding be increased in Colleges of Education in order to cultivate capable and competent teachers, and restore the dignity and prestige that comes with the teaching profession, as opposed to the current status quo of it being a stepping-stone.

It is also important to create a relationship between the private sector and the higher post-secondary education system; in order to produce and train individuals with the necessary skills required to enter the work force. Currently, there is a large need for mid-level workers, whereas enrolment in universities exceed the combine total of polytechnics and vocational school. In essence, the supply of highly skilled workers exceeds the demand. We must therefore shift the focus of our higher institution to meet the needs of our economy.

The Youth Party shall carry out the following steps in the Education Sector:

- Redirect funding for sound primary and secondary education funding, and therefore Colleges of Education.
- Ensure strict implementation of the provisions of the Universal Basic Education Act, 2004, which stipulates compulsory free basic education for all citizens.
- Ensure that each state access its own share of the Universal Basic Education funds and sanction states that fail to account for the funds allocated to them.
- Ensure institutionalization of the independence from political interference and diversion of funds of States' Universal Education Board (SUBEB).
- Re-direct funds from the Educational Tax from Higher Institutions to primary and secondary schools
- Include training modules in business and entrepreneurship in School Curriculums.
- Bolster support for vocational institutions, such as colleges of agriculture, technical colleges, to meet the midlevel demands of the economy.
- Provide a bridge for mid-level employees, or students to cross into high-level employment. But not as the primary focus.
- Provide support for research departments of universities, and use said research to support government policies.
- Build relationship between private sector and institutions of higher education, in order to facilitate necessary skill building, and employment.
- Interdependence of educational sector and private sector.
- Commercialization of public universities, with grant provisions to students from indigent backgrounds, and scholarship for exceptional students.

## **WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EMPOWERMENT**

Women are an important group of Nigerians whose participation in all spheres of the society has been limited largely due to inhibition and barriers, via institutional biases, or societal and cultural notions.

It is important to promote gender equality at all levels of society, and to encourage women to actively participate in the economy, and to support this measure by providing procedures and policies to investigate and penalize organizations with gender biases and limitations. It is equally important to enforce equal pay.

To not harness the full potential of women in the economy, is to marginalize half the Nation, and pre-emptively curb our socio-economic advancements.

- Ensure gender equality in employment and socio-economic development, and promote greater women involvement and effective participation in politics and all sectors of the economy.
- Embark on an aggressive crusade of greater political awareness and mass mobilization of Nigerian women for participation in a sustainable national development.
- Create and enforce policies regarding gender discrimination
- Promote gender equality throughout the education sector, particularly via the school curriculum, in order to deconstruct the societal constructs, the societal constructs on the limitations and abilities of women, and expectations of men.
- Ensure adequate women representation in all the organs and institutions of society through encouraged participation of women in electoral contests and political appointments.

## WELFARE AND HEALTH

Good quality public services, freely available to all, are key to the development of a more equitable and secure society. However, the health sector is frail, ineffective, concentrated in urban areas, and largely affected by the 'brain drain'. This is due to meager pay, and out of date technology.

We must restore functionality to our health care services, re-emphasize the service ethos, and increase their resources. Such a commitment will require substantial investment, both monetary and intellectual value. Thus, we must rejuvenate our colleges of medicine, and provide the effective and efficient tools, and the appropriate training in the colleges and hospitals. It is important to provide incentives for our trained personnel to remain, and return to the country, by increasing pay, providing job security, and eliminating bureaucratic hurdles.

Physical and Mental disabilities must be approached with utmost importance in terms of institutional care, infrastructure, and social awareness.

The inability to prioritize the health of the populace, and improve the quality of life will ultimately subvert social and economic advancements.

The Youth Party will carry out the following steps in the health sector:

- Remedy mis-distribution of healthcare professionals.
- Provide budgetary allocations for capacity building at all levels of healthcare.
- Support for lifelong skill enrichment for medical and paramedical personnel.
- Funding training and re-training of personnel with regards to modern technologies to healthcare.
- Establishment of national medical commission to regulate and monitor the quality of core and special medical services.
- Priority for pregnant women and children, with particular focus on reduction of maternal mortality rate.
- Promote public-private partnerships within the healthcare sector in order to bolster the budget, and availability of qualified personnel.
- Provide infrastructure on community buildings and utilities to facilitate mobility of physically challenged people.
- Appropriate infrastructure, personnel and awareness for the physically and mentally challenged.
- More primary healthcare centers.
- Strengthening of the Education Sector. Bring public schools up to international standards in order to desegregate society based on wealth and reduce inequality.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Population growth, and rapid urbanization, leads to various issues such as land pressure, and higher crime rates. Because the number of youth flocking to urban areas, on incomplete or false information outweighs the number of available jobs, this will lead to an increase in unemployment in the area, higher crime rates, and pressure on provision of housing, and living necessities.

Whereas, the pressure to feed the growing population of the country rests on the shoulders of rural areas that are facing out-migration, this in turn leads to change in agricultural practice. The out-migration of indigenes leads to a less capable work force, and thus inefficient use of resources.

Improving the transportation network will facilitate an easier commute to business hubs from surrounding areas, and allow individuals to minimize their cost of living.

Also, a steady electric power supply can have an exponential multiplier effect on the economy, create jobs and increase the quality of life of the citizenry. The privatization of the power sector, whilst commendable, is fraught with a lot of gaps and in need of urgent reform.

Whilst gas infrastructure and supply needed to generate power are grossly inadequate, the regulation of the pricing is counter-productive. The regulated pricing regime of gas makes investment in gas infrastructure unattractive to investors.

Similarly, the regulation has to be amended to encourage off-grid power generation to accelerate the reduction of the gap in the generation and transmission, and distribution of power.

Furthermore, affordable housing is increasingly becoming difficult for low income earners. House rent are paid yearly, which is difficult for low income earners to afford. This is also a driver of corrupt tendencies amongst low income earners. Social housing scheme, where tenants are allowed to pay their rents monthly will be initiated.

- Efficient transportation between rural and urban areas to reduce costs, and pressure on land and housing; Through a proposed High-speed rail system 150km/hr. (Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Warri, Bauchi, Abuja and Port Harcourt), connecting major cities, revitalizing and creating new hubs of business.
- Development of national seaports, and local waterways.
- Renovation of local airports to meet international standards.
- Development of sustainable roadways locally and nationally.
- Develop public-private partnerships and concessioning to facilitate above-mentioned networks.
- Develop the Lagos airport, to serve as the hub for West Africa. Aviation support services will also feed in on the business inflow.
- Institutionalize the independence of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority in terms of funding and insulation from political interference, so it can effectively carry out its primary objective of ensuring safety in the aviation sector.
- Devolve the exclusive powers of the Federal Government to build railways to the states, so they can develop their respective railways at their own pace. The Federal Government can retain its regulatory powers to ensure safety and satisfactory standard.
- Social Housing: Develop a framework for the design, finance and construction of a minimum of 50,000 housing units in each State of the Federation for rent to low income earners. The rent shall be affordable and payable monthly.
- Promote social mobility via effective town planning in order to encourage social integration.



- Power: Amend the Electric Power Sector Regulatory Act to encourage off-grid generation, transmission and distribution of electric power for captive areas.
- Deregulate the pricing of gas to attract investment for gas infrastructures needed to generate electricity.

## ENVIRONMENT/POLLUTION

Environmental degradation and pollution facilitate ill health among the population, and must be attended to, in order to support sustainable health and welfare reforms.

Climate change in the Sahel region is causing the destruction of large areas of land by desertification. Energy insecurity causes the urban and rural poor to decimate forests in search of firewood, so also facilitating deforestation.

Desertification coupled with waste and industrial pollution lead to rapid depletion of natural resources such as soil fertility, and plants that provide natural rejuvenation for the environment.

- Provide support for a clean environment that goes beyond nominal attention to solid waste and that includes the control of environmental pollution created by emissions from automobiles and generators, as well as control noise pollution.
- Provide infrastructure for proper emission control in all states.
- Provide infrastructure to facilitate composting, to be utilized in other sectors.
- Ensure that natural water supplies are protected from pollution, and industrial waste.
- Enforcing regulations regarding sewage treatment, incinerations, and chemical dumping.
- Enforcing appropriate sanctions and punishments for violation of established rules, and public endangerment.

## FOOD AND FARMING

Our current approach to food supply is unsustainable and fosters economic insecurity. For the consumer, food quality and safety continue to be compromised by inefficient methods of cultivation and handling.

Those involved in farming and fishing have to cope with intense price pressures, due to the presence of several middlemen, as well as imports and falling incomes. This has had a crippling effect resulting in further decline to rural economies. This, in turn, increases our food and economic insecurity: we become more dependent on food supplies from overseas, with ever-longer supply chains controlled by transnational corporations. This reduces the revenue circulating in local economies and contributes to a vicious cycle that has to be broken.

It is imperative that we wean our economy of its crippling dependency on oil. In order to do this, we must first return to our very potent, yet under-utilized agricultural sector. The estimate population of Nigeria by 2050 is 300million people, while the estimated world population is 9billion people. Food is an irrefutable necessity; we must reposition our agricultural sector, for national sufficiency, and international exportation. The necessary natural resources are available, we must support them with the best agricultural, and economic practices.

- Farmer unions and organization, to facilitate economies of scale.
- Provide a microcredit and a line of credit for farmers.
- Facilitate direct access to food processors, manufacturers and business hubs, edging out the middleman.
- Construction of Feeder Roads: Pursue integration of rural and urban centers by providing special support for states and local governments to link the farming communities with centers of consumption of farm produce in towns and cities.
- Research and development, including biotechnology.
- Application of modern and indigenous technologies: One way to reduce agricultural losses is to apply modern and indigenous technologies to food storage through research on the special needs of local food items and to provide support to research institutions on the use of biotechnology and indigenous techniques to increase and improve food storage.
- Price Assurance for Farm Produce: The issue of price assurance must be addressed so farmers can increase production to levels that will ensure stability of supplies to meet both normal and emergency requirements.
- Support the development of private sector driven-marketing organizations.
- Special Incentives for Private Sector Involvement: Provide incentives to compensate for the opportunity cost of capital tied down to agricultural production by the private sector.
- Local Government Involvement: The local government is the closest tier of government to the farmer and should therefore be in the forefront of ensuring food security by participating in the processes of food storage and preservation. Federal and state governments shall strengthen local governments to perform their role in providing food security by supporting farm settlements for planting and storage of local food items at the community level.

## CRIME AND JUSTICE

Nigeria is plagued with insecurity and social instability at all levels of society. Due to government's inability to administer resources, the Nigerian Police and other security agencies are ill equipped and mismanaged, and therefore do not have the capacity to manage the menace of lack of security for persons and property across the country.

The society is getting increasingly unsecured and citizens are increasingly under siege at the hands of criminals who are never tired of exploiting the culture of impunity foisted on the nation by corrupt and irresponsible political managers. More people are going into crime and they are getting cruel, desperate and more sophisticated. Criminals no longer wait for the cover of the night to operate and nor do they bother to conceal their physical identity.

Fraud, assassinations, drugs, ritual killings, cult activities, kidnapping, embezzling, prostitution, impersonation and other vices are on the increase daily with renewed energy, and the real fear is that the rise in criminality and the apparent helplessness of security agencies foreshadow the descent of the country into anarchy or a complete breakdown of law and order.

There must be a commitment to responding creatively to the failure of security in the land. The Youth Party Government shall support the strengthening of the states and local governments to provide community policing for their jurisdictions, while also strengthening the country's federal investigation system.

The Youth Party shall take the following steps:

- 'Restructure the Nigerian Police Force, strengthen the local police force. Induce constitutional amendments to allow state governments to establish community police for the purpose of crime prevention, detection, and prosecution within their jurisdictions.
- Welfare of the Nigerian Police shall be addressed by ensuring better condition of service: better remuneration, housing and other benefits.
- Develop an anti-corruption enforcement framework for the Nigerian Police to tackle issues of commercialization of bail process, nuisance of road blocks and others.
- Establishment and equipment of intelligence/crime analysis laboratory in all State Police Commands.
- Discourage custodial approach to investigation, where people are arrested before investigations are carried out. Investigation should be conducted, where possible, before a suspect should be considered for arrest. This will shorten the time between and commencement of prosecution and decongest police detention facilities.
- Introduce technology-driven policing particularly crime scene management, state of the art National Forensic support Centre, establishment of National Crime Database, patrol vehicle camera and data base access, access to existing national databases (National Identification Card, Driver's License, Voters register).
- Human Capacity Development for the Nigerian Police by seeking the support of development partners particularly the UN, US, UK and others to close skill gaps amongst the personnel.
- Establish a National Security Commission with members drawn from all states to coordinate the nation's security.
- Promote a clear distinction between executive power and police administration at the federal and community levels by decentralizing the powers of law enforcement agencies.

- Pursue judicial reforms to cut delays in courts and ensure timely completion of the hearing and adjudication of cases.
- Separate the office of Attorney General from that of Minister of Justice.
- Appointment of competent officials, professionals with the appropriate ethical disposition.
- Implement the UN recommendation of 1 police officer to 400 citizens.
- Ensure that police training meets international standard.
- Increase salary and improve welfare benefits and conditions of service for police personnel.
- Refurbishment of the prison system into rehabilitation facilities for skill acquisition and education, in order to make prison correctional, and not a venue for further degradation.
- The same rigorous process for appointing Senior Advocates of Nigeria should be applied to the appointment of Judges.
- Criminalize hate speech particularly ethnic incitement.

## POLITICAL REFORM

The Economic and Political spheres of our economy cannot be mutually exclusive in their policies or functions. That is, governmental policies must be supportive and enable a durable economic environment. If this is not the case, businesses will not thrive, and government will be plunged deeper into a state of disarray.

There should be an obligation to reforming governmental structure at all levels, and to involve the youth in the political process. We must guarantee and commit to functional federalism; where in there is a strong center, and equally strong states and local governments. To ensure this, the government must introduce constitutional amendments to empower all levels of government, and devolve power from the center, thus removing unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, and allowing states to independently harness their full potential.

Although, often overlooked, it is important to foster a healthy spirit of competition, in the political sector, and in all other aspects of the economy. This is to ensure that companies are performing effectively and efficiently, not simply maximizing profits at the expense of consumers. In the political sector, it will ensure that officials perform and provide for the populace, at the risk of their reputation, and be ousted. Overall, it will provide checks and balances.

The Youth Party shall take the following steps:

- Increase responsibility of the state and local governments, by decentralizing the federal governmental structure.
- Stop the diversion of funds (federal allocation) meant for local government areas by State governments to enable a quicker development of rural areas.
- Develop and enforce a broad policy of service delivery to prevent desperate politicians from exploiting the prospects of these services to intimidate and blackmail the populace into submission.
- Promote Civic Education for the populace, particularly geared towards the youth.
- As a long-term measure, there is the need for political socialization of the youth in school and the political education of adults to understand the negative consequences of electoral fraud and violence.
- Reducing the age requirements to 25, and 30 for participation in the House of Representatives, and Senate respectively.
- Implement the recommendations of the Uwais Report on political reform.

## **PEACE, SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY**

The world is becoming ever smaller, and communication across nations has never been easier. The Youth Party Government will facilitate cooperation between Nigeria and other nations, in order to maximize the potential of our economy through trade, and peaceful foreign relations. This will reposition the country for progress, and ensure it becomes a major world player.

The Youth Party Government shall take the following steps:

- Promote Nigerian businesses through diplomacy particularly in any country where Nigeria has strategic interests.
- Promoting soft power through diplomatic missions, and cultural exchanges in sports, music, and education.
- Curbing the importation of illegal arms.
- The protection of the sovereign and territorial integrity of Nigeria.
- Promotion of the economic and social well-being of Nigeria.
- Develop and promote measures and policies to ease restrictions on free trade and mobility of persons between African nations, and beyond.
- The promotion of unity as well as the political, economic and social well-being of Nigeria.
- Redressing the imbalance in the international power structures which tends to frustrate the legitimate aspirations of developing countries.
- Promotion of world peace based on the principles of freedom, mutual respect and equality of the world.
- Respecting and enforcing Human Rights Laws as defined by the United Nations and the International Criminal Court.