



Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA)
&
United Nations Information Centre (UNIC)
Roundtable Celebrating UN @ 79
Victoria Island,
Lagos, Nigeria.

Theme: UN PACT FOR THE FUTURE: IMPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIA AND AFRICA



On Thursday 31st of October 2024, the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) in partnership with United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) held a Roundtable Discussion to commemorate the United Nations at 79 years with the theme “UN Pact for the Future: Implications for Nigeria and Africa”. The Roundtable took place at the NIIA ultra-modern Conference Chamber and featured participation from distinguished guests from all walks of life, including the academia, think tanks, diplomatic bodies, Civil

Society Organisations, private sector, and the media.

The Director-General of NIIA, Prof. Eghosa Osaghae in his opening remarks, noted that the historical significance of the United Nations and the important role it plays in the world, is the closest to global governance. Prof. Osaghae also observed that the UN is concerned about issues that have attracted global interests such as peace and security, climate change, disarmament, etc. He raised questions about uncertainties on if the UN has outlived its relevance and the need to reform the organization, especially the Permanent Seats of the Security Council where Africa has no representation. He recalled Nigeria’s quest for permanent membership of the UN Security Council

and the recent call for Africa to have at least two permanent seats on the Security Council with full veto powers. Prof. Osaghae correspondingly thanked the UN for their confidence in NIIA to host the Roundtable.



(Director-General Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Prof. Eghosa Osaghae)

In his keynote speech, the Chairman of the Roundtable, Prof. Olufemi Otubanjo, an expert in International Relations at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) provided historical evolution of the UN, beginning from its emergence as the aftermath of the Second World War and failure of the League of Nations. Prof. Otubanjo acknowledged the multi-purpose role of the UN through its Organs and Agencies such as the Security Council which is made up of 5 permanent members – US, UK, France, Russia and China who have the responsibility to maintain global peace and security. While acknowledging governance of world affairs as the most important role of the UN, Prof. Otubanjo lamented that the veto power of the Security Council has held the UN hostage, leading to the emergence of power bloc and global hegemony by the 5 permanent members. He recommended that the Security Council and the 5 Permanent Members should remain but not with a veto power, and that the Security Council should be expanded, taking into consideration the G4 proposal by Brazil and other proposals aimed at making the UN more inclusive by accommodating developing countries.



(Assoc. Prof. Joshua Bolarinwa and Prof. Femi Otunbajo)

A video message by the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on what the UN is currently doing to ensure global peace and security was played for the participants of the roundtable. This was followed by a Panel Session which featured robust and engaging research paper presentations and discussions. Five (5) papers were presented at the Roundtable as follows:

1. International Peace and Security - Prof. Babafemi Badejo
2. Digital Technology - Mr. Adetunji Aderinto
3. Financing for Sustainable Development Goals - Ms Opeyemi Ogunkoya
4. Global Governance - Dr. Kester Onor
5. Youth and Future Generations - Mr. Chimezie Udechukwu



(Ms Opeyemi Ogunkoya, Team Head, Sustainability at Stanbic IBTC)

During the Question and Answer (Q&A) session, participants at the Roundtable made some input and asked salient questions which were addressed by the Panelists.

At the end, the Roundtable made several observations and recommendations.

Observations

- i. That the United Nations plays an essential and multi-purpose role in the areas of global peace and security, climate change, disarmament and other global challenges.
- ii. That the United Nations has not outlived its relevance but the organisation, especially its Security Council needs to be reformed to ensure more inclusiveness, broader representation and greater multilateralism in the governance of global affairs and in pursuit of the Pact for the Future agenda.
- iii. That the idea of UN Pact for the Future revolves around 4 key important agendas - peace and security, sustainable development, respect for human rights and humanitarian resilience.
- iv. That digital technology can play an essential role in driving the UN Pact for the Future agenda by enhancing inclusiveness.
- v. That SDGs are a crucial part of the UN Pact for the Future agenda, and the private sector, particularly financial institutions, plays critical role in bridging the SDGs financing gap.
- vi. That global governance plays significant role in addressing global challenges such as conflict, and in ensuring collective security, and that Nigeria through participation in peace keeping missions in Africa and beyond, has been making great contribution in this regard.
- vii. That erosion of the societal values as well as the dearth of inter-generational mentorship and partnership that can harness the wisdom of the old and energy of the young is the greatest bane of Nigeria and Africa's development and security.



Recommendations

- i. UN needs to be strengthened by member states so for instance to ensure it continues to perform its crucial role in ensuring global peace and security and addressing global challenges, especially those captured in the Pact for the Future.
- ii. The UN Security Council should be reformed, and the permanent seats should be extended to Africa.
- iii. For Nigeria to be able to play crucial role in international peace and security, the country must address its internal problems, especially corruption and governance/leadership challenges.
- iv. Nigeria and other African countries should leverage on the Pact for the Future initiative to tap into global financing to fund its sustainable development initiatives and tackle security challenges.
- v. There is the need to increase digital literacy, skills, capacity as well as provide digital public goods and create future-fit-institutions that can drive the Pact for the Future Plan in Nigeria and by extension, Africa.
- vi. UN and other important stakeholders should prioritize SDGs financing by bringing in the private sector/financial institutions to partner with government and relevant international organisations in funding SDGs and other global challenges, especially in renewable energy and circular economy.
- vii. Nigeria should leverage on global governance framework to enhance security and deepen its collective security.
- viii. There is an urgent need for value re-orientation and the building of inter-generational mentorship to harness the wisdom of the old and energy of the young in solving the complex national and global challenges.
- ix. There is need for the development and deployment of technology tools and the deepening cultural

exchange programmes to promote youth engagement in governance, development and in the pursuit of the UN Pact for the Future agenda.