

Press Coverage of CGD's event with Nigeria's Acting President Goodluck Jonathan

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[Nigeria To Strengthen Watchdog To Step Up Anti-Corruption Fight](#)

This article also appeared on [NASDAQ](#), [Easy Bourse](#), and [Morning Star](#).

Obafemi Oredein, 4/15/2010

IBADAN, Nigeria--Nigeria is to review the structure of its anti-graft agency to strengthen its performance, acting President Goodluck Jonathan said.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, or EFCC, the anti-graft watchdog, is under scrutiny in the country for allegedly slowing down the war on corruption in the last three years of President Umaru Yar'Adua's administration.

A government statement quoted Jonathan as saying Wednesday at a meeting in Washington that the focus of his administration is "to build strong institutions that will last beyond the leadership and operators of such institutions."

Answering questions from U.S. diplomats and businessmen, Jonathan said the issue of corruption in African countries is a worrisome trend, adding that Nigeria will take urgent measures to step up the anti-graft war.

"I can assure you that we are going to review the EFCC to strengthen the body to make it to perform," he said, adding this is go a long way to deter fraud and protect investments in the country.

Jonathan was in Washington for a four-day visit and was speaking at the meeting organized by the Center for Global Development, an independent research center championing global poverty reduction and equal rights.

On Nigeria's trade relations with China and the U.S., Jonathan assured that though there are more Chinese investors in the country, Nigeria has not abandoned its traditional allies which include the U.S.

Jonathan also said that Nigeria was committed to the rule of law and the protection of the rights and privileges of local and foreign investors.

While in the U.S., Jonathan participated in the international Nuclear Security Summit, and met with senior U.S. government officials and World Bank President Robert Zoellick.

It was Jonathan's first trip abroad since being named acting president in February, replacing Yar'Adua, who fell ill in November and hasn't been able to return to work.



[Nigeria: Jonathan Hails Ribadu](#)

Daniel Idonor, 4/15/ 2010

Abuja — Acting President Goodluck Jonathan, yesterday, rounded-off his five-day working visit to the United States of America, USA, with an appearance as a guest at the Centre for Global Development, CGD, in Washington DC, where he acknowledged the sterling contributions of Malam Nuhu Ribadu, the founding Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC.

He also raised an alarm that Africa is fast becoming a dumping ground for arms and ammunition for the rest of the world.

Hails Ribadu's Contributions

While acknowledging the contributions of Ribadu, the ex-boss of the anti-graft agency, (which drew applause from the audience), Jonathan promised the international community that the government would further strengthen EFCC to be able to effectively carry out its anti-corruption campaign.

He agreed with the audience that the commission has not been as vibrant as it used to be in the days of Ribadu but reassured that the government would not relent in fighting corruption at all levels of government.

Present at the breakfast dialogue included Mr. Adams Oshiomhole, Governor of Edo State; Hon. Rotimi Ameachi, Governor of Rivers State; Chief Godswill Akpabio, Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Alhaji Mahmud Shinkafi, Governor of Zamfara State and Chief Ikedi Ohakim, Governor of Imo State.

Others in the Acting President's entourage were Mr. Odein Ajumogobia, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Olusegun Aganga, Minister of Finance; Mrs. Dieziani Allison-Madueke, Minister of Petroleum Resources; Dr. Emmanuel Egbogah, Special Adviser on Petroleum Matters; Mr. Martins Uhomoebhi, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Professor Ade Adefuye, Nigerian Ambassador to US; Mr. Ima Nibor, Jonathan's Senior Special Assistant on Media and a host of top government functionaries.

Condemns arms dumping in Africa

The Acting President questioned manufacturers of these arms why the continent of Africa has helplessly become the victim of arms proliferation, asking that "why must Africa be the dumping ground for small arms and light weapons? We must impress on the UN to move against the free flow of these arms. This must stop;" stressing further that "these is why things go the way they go in Africa".

Jonathan blamed the free flow of small arms and light weapons as been responsible for the social political crisis in the African continent saying it that has been responsible for the underdevelopment of Africa.

According to Jonathan, the violence as well as the political disorder witnessed across Africa can be directly linked to the free flow of small and light weapons, lamented that the international community, especially manufacturers of these arms see Africa as a dumping ground for these weapons.

He maintained that the time has come for the international community to put hands together to legislate on these issues so that the African continent can have peace and democratic stability.

"The free movement of small arms and light weapons is the bane of underdevelopment of Africa. It is the major challenge and the major cause of violence and retrogression in Africa," the acting president emphasized.

Jonathan challenged the United Nations (UN) and the United States (US) to particularly raise their voices in moving for the prohibition of these weapons noting that if the western world is allowed to continue to flood the continent with such weapons, the social political crisis bedeviling the continent will continue unabated.

FG Resolution on Power Sector

Speaking on the determination of the government in tackling the problem of power, Jonathan told the audience that the Nigerian government was resolved this time around to tackle head-on the problem of epileptic power supply so that the country can attract quality direct foreign investment.

He noted that Nigeria since independence has not invested much in power but said that quality investment began to flow into the sector after the coming of former President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999.

"There is no reason why we must not have light considering the volume of gas we flare everyday because if we have to convert that gas to power we would not have problem" he said lamenting however that the International Oil Companies (IOC) in Nigeria kept changing the "goal post" on the deadline for the flaring of gas in the country.

Asked why there is little improvement in the sector despite the huge amount of money spent so far on power by the government since 1999, Jonathan said because of the critical situation at the time, the government embarked upon too many projects in the sector that it could cope with

financially and noted however that unlike roads construction and other sectors, power generation and distribution was a complex process that if one component is missing the circle cannot be complete.

He pleaded with Nigerians both home and in the Diaspora to bear with the government promising however that the government was going to operate a committee with him as the chairman for three months to test if there would significant progress in the sector.

The acting president said thereafter he would appoint a competent hand who be the minister to continue to oversee the affairs of the minister for effective coordination assuring that in no distant time the problem of light will be a thing of the past.

He could however not give a timeline when Nigerians would enjoy steady power supply.

On the forthcoming election in 2011, Jonathan told the audience that he has no fear that the 2011 elections will be credible. "I have no fear of conducting a clean election in 2011" he said.



[Electoral Reform, Energy Are Top Priorities for Acting President](#)

Saratu Abiola, 4/15/2010

Washington, DC — Acting President Goodluck Jonathan on Wednesday called for a curb on the sale of small arms around the world and for the international community to support Nigeria's efforts to ensure free and fair elections.

Jonathan spoke at the Center for Global Development (CGD) in Washington, DC. He met earlier in the week with U.S. President Barack Obama and joined 47 other world leaders at the two-day Nuclear Security Summit, a U.S.-led effort to secure all loose nuclear materials around the world in the next four years.

Addressing a full audience at the CGD, Jonathan spoke approvingly of his meeting with Obama and expressed hopes of unfettered access to U.S. technologies in using nuclear energy for peaceful means. Talk of nuclear weapons segued into discussion of small arms, which Jonathan called "the real weapons of mass destruction" for developing countries.

"Why must Africa be the dumping ground for small arms and light weapons from developed countries?" he said. "It is a major setback for the continent of Africa."

Jonathan called for a United Nations agreement to discourage the sale of small arms, citing their use in arming militias in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger delta region and upending governance efforts and electoral transparency.

But he hailed the progress that his administration has made on securing weapons in the delta through amnesty, rehabilitating young militia members and empowering the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

Infrastructure development in the Niger delta is still a challenge, Jonathan said, citing its unique swampy geography, and promised to hold contractors accountable when working there. In addition, he promised to expand Niger delta youth programs to all young people, not just to the more than 20,000 that joined militias.

To further Nigeria's progress, Jonathan stressed the need for strong support to ensure that elections are free and fair. "If the elections are not credible they will not produce credible leaders," he said. "If we don't produce good leaders, the issues of good governance, the issues of corruption will be discouraged."

Jonathan disagreed with a commenter who said that corruption was what undermined the credibility of Nigeria's elections.

"Even when there was military rule, where there are no elections, there was still corruption," he said. "[Nigerians] can conduct elections that can be credible, even with the current [election] laws."

On the economy, Jonathan applauded U.S.-Nigeria private sector investment in the petroleum industry but stressed the need for foreigners to diversify their interests toward other sectors, such as investment in what he called "green gold" or agriculture.

He agreed with audience members who decried the "shifting of goalposts" on gas flaring by petroleum companies and noted the importance of consistent electricity, saying that without fixing electric power there would be no growth.

Audience members brought up the question of Nigeria's international image, to which Jonathan applauded the early efforts of Nuhu Ribadu, former chief of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. He chided the Nigerian press for negative coverage of the country and failing to focus on the nation's progress.

"Even in terms of the music industry, entertainment industry," he said, "Nigeria dominates, but nobody talks about it. We over-celebrate the negative."

The acting president also thanked the CGD for its efforts on Nigerian debt buyback and electoral reform, and expressed hope to work with the organization in the future.

Jonathan has been leading Nigeria since February when he took over from the country's long-ailing president, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua.



[Jonathan's visit to US has boosted Nigeria's image- Envoy](#)

Agency reporter, 4/15/2010

Acting President Goodluck Jonathan's visit to the United States has made tremendous and positive impression about Nigeria, the US Ambassador to Nigeria, Ms Robin Sanders, has said.

Sanders made the remark while fielding questions from newsmen shortly before Jonathan left the US after completing a four-day visit.

``His participation in one of the most historic landmark events in this century, the Nuclear Security Summit that President Barack Obama hosted with so many world leaders, was an important one.

``His role here as Nigeria's acting president from the bilateral meetings and invitations with this global event on a very important issue is commendable.

``And he has made such a positive, tremendous impression for his vision for Nigeria over the next 12 months,`` News Agency of Nigeria quoted her as saying.

The US Ambassador reiterated that her country maintained a strategic relationship with Nigeria, citing the recent establishment of the US-Nigeria Bi-National Commission and other bilateral co-operations. Commenting on the success of the visit, the Ambassador of Nigeria to the US, Prof Ade Adefuye, said Jonathan's interactions with several key organisations in the US has put Nigeria on ``a high pedestal`` .

``During a meeting on Corporate Council on Africa, an American remarked that `Mr president within the last four days you have done the best to put Nigeria on a high pedestal.` It has justified that this visit is a mission accomplished,`` he said.

NAN reports that aside the Nuclear Summit, Jonathan attended series of meetings in the U.S. including a session with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.

He had a breakfast session at the Council on Foreign Relations, the Centre for Global Development and had a luncheon with Vice President Joe Biden.

Jonathan also had a meeting with the World Bank President and an interaction with members of the Black Caucus at the US Capitol, among others.



[Ribadu's Return Not Imminent](#)

Uduma Kalu, 4/16/2010

Acting President Goodluck Jonathan has explained why he wants former Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Chairman, Malam Nuhu Ribadu back to the anti-corruption war.

The Acting President, Saturday Vanguard gathered, allegedly said that since Ribadu's exit from the EFCC saddle, the anti corruption war has waned, hence his desire to have him back, though as his Special Adviser on Anti Corruption.

However, Saturday Vanguard also gathered that the former anti corruption czar may not be returning to the country immediately as he still pursuing his fellowship at the Centre for Global Development in Washington, USA.

Saturday Vanguard sources also revealed that it was Nuhu Ribadu who provided most of the contacts that the acting President required during his four-day visit to the United States and facilitated the meetings. And Jonathan reportedly also had a private audience with him during the visit.

"Ribadu is not returning immediately as he is involved in some consultancy works with the United States and United Kingdom's governments. But the overseas jobs would not affect Ribadu's advisory role to Jonathan as he is already playing the part in the government."

The source said that part of the role Ribadu played was the facilitation of most of the meetings and interviews Jonathan had in the United States during the Nuclear meeting of 47 world leaders hosted by the US President, Barack Obama.

"Jonathan also had meetings with the US Vice President, Joe Biden, World Bank President, a 15 minutes parley with Obama himself, Nigerian communities. He has also had interviews with the BBC, CNN and other major media agencies".



Gains of Jonathan's U.S. Visit

Tony Ailemen, 4/17/2010

Abuja — Acting President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, Sunday, arrived the United States of America on a four-day official working visit during which he participated in the international nuclear security summit hosted by President Barack Obama.

On his arrival at the Andrews Airforce Base, Virginia, the Acting President was received by US Ambassador to Nigeria, Robin Sanders, her Nigerian counterpart, Ade Adefuye, and other ranking Nigerian and US officials.

The Andrews Airforce Base is exclusively reserved for use by select foreign leaders and special dignitaries of the American government.

The Acting President's recent visit to the United States has been described as a major plus and a big booster for Nigeria's diplomatic image.

During the visit, Dr. Jonathan met with US President Barack Obama, who urged him to use his tenure to make historic and tangible progress in strengthening Nigeria's government's commitment to follow through on countering corruption just as he assured him that the U.S. would support him in realising his public promise for electoral reform.

He also met with the president of the World Bank at its building in Washington DC, and later that evening, joined other visiting Heads of Government and delegations for a working dinner with President Barack Obama.

The engaging visit also saw Hilary Clinton, the US Secretary of State and her energy counterpart, Steven Chu, hosting Odein Ajumogobia, Nigeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Diezani Allison-Madueke, Minister of Petroleum Resources, respectively.

On Tuesday, Dr. Jonathan joined other world leaders for the first plenary session of the Nuclear Security Summit, which was chaired by President Obama.

On Wednesday, the Acting President began his schedule with a breakfast meeting with officials of the Centre for Global Development in Washington DC, with the governors of Imo, Edo, Rivers and Zamfara along with the Foreign Affairs, Petroleum and Finance Ministers in attendance.

Another high point of the Acting President's engagement was his meeting with the Nigerian community in the US and a luncheon with coordinator, Corporate Council on Africa, after which he met with the president of Exxon Mobile Oil Company.

The visit which was at the invitation of U.S President Barack Obama is seen as recognition of Nigeria's growing international role as a major supporter of global peace and security.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Aliyu Idi Hong, in his assessment of the visit, told Saturday Champion that it was significant in several ways.

"We have used it to score a major diplomatic advantage since it is recognition of Nigeria's long standing contributions to peacekeeping efforts worldwide and Nigeria's strategic role as a regional power block in the African continent."

"This is indeed a major achievement for our Acting President and indeed Nigeria as a country. It shows that Nigeria is now taking her rightful position in the global scheme of things. It is a very important milestone for the country as well as a unique opportunity for the Acting President to interact with other world leaders. The visit will allow the Acting President to meet with and interact with 47 world leaders in one place, a situation that would have required him to travel to individual countries," he said.

The personalities that were invited to attend the meeting underscores the importance attached to the gathering considered to be the largest assembly of world leaders to be hosted by an American president since the 1945 San Francisco conference held to found the United Nations.

The attention that Nigeria is attracting is understandable given that she remains Africa's most populous black nation and West Africa's biggest economy. Nigeria is also regarded as the fifth most-important supplier of foreign oil consumed in the United States, which makes the country's stability a priority to the U.S. policy-makers.

The recognition also underscores the country's strategic importance to America's interest in a world constantly faced with increasing security threats, especially with the activities of al-Qaeda fast growing and permeating into countries hitherto considered very safe to American interests.

For instance, the world was taken aback by the Christmas Day terror attempt by Nigeria's Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab, who tried to bring down with an explosive a Detroit-bound US airplane; a situation never considered possible before then.

Nigeria was immediately placed on terror watch list by the United States, a development that expectedly led to a frosty relationship between the two nations hitherto seen to have enjoyed cordial relationship.

Nigeria, it would be recalled, was elected as one of the non-permanent members of the United Nations' Security Council, a position considered to be strategic to America's interest, especially when it requires passage of resolutions on the floor of the United Nations.

The current move by President Obama is regarded as one aimed at addressing the single biggest threat to global security by his mobilizing of global solution to ensure that nuclear materials worldwide are secured from theft or diversions or better still, preventing them from entering wrong hands and being used to pose threats to global peace.

Among the achievements recorded by the visit include giving a bit of time to nuclear security and international compliance to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as well as efforts to combat terrorism by both countries. This is because President Obama needed firm commitment of global community to secure global peace.

This, perhaps, explains why the Nigeria's Acting President was given high-level attention among the 48 foreign Heads of States and dignitaries that attended the summit.

On Sunday, Acting President Jonathan had a one-on-one meeting with President Barack Obama and on Monday morning, he was one of the dignitaries who attended a standing-room- only conference at the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations (CFR).

The Acting President, among other things, has used the visit to market his administration's policies and program to the international community, which has helped to reassure Nigerians that the government is on course in its efforts at tackling the economic and socio- cultural issues affecting the nation.

While addressing a cross section of members of the Press, Jonathan said his attention will be focused on the need to use the visit to promote Nigeria's image, amongst other things.

"For now, our domestic focus must be on electoral reform, delivering peace dividends to the Niger Delta and the rest of the country, and standing strong on our resolve against corruption."

He went on to explain that "internationally, we are determined to restore Nigeria's image and traditional role as the key member of the international community. In an increasingly uncertain world, Nigeria is a key partner in our collective efforts to maintain peace and security in Africa and beyond.

"Nigeria will reiterate its commitment to fight terrorism and rededicate our efforts to promote development, democracy and a shared value for human progress.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts and hopes with you on the present and future," he stated.

No doubt, Nigeria and the US stand to gain from the renewed interactions as rightly indicated by statements from the office of both presidents.

A statement from the White House noted that both Obama and Jonathan agreed that "Nigeria must pursue goals that respect constitutional laws and processes, achieve free and fair elections, build the capacity and commitment to fight corruption, respect human rights, promote economic development, and resolve internal conflict."

According to Dr. Hong, Nigeria, which is currently battling several security problems also used the opportunity provided by the meeting to impress it on other world leaders to check small arms proliferations, which has posed serious threats to the internal peace and security of some developing countries like Nigeria as well as other African countries.

"The Acting President used the visit to reassure the international community that the country has the ability to address its internal problems, provide leadership to smaller African countries as well as restore their confidence in our democratic process," Dr. Hong said.

These, he said, are very significant for Nigeria's current drive to attract investors as well as tourists to the country, while providing good governance.

He also listed other achievements to include improved bilateral relations between Nigeria and the United States of America, strong economic ties, as well as more windows of opportunities for citizens of both countries to do business and other social interactions amongst others.

"Let me assure Nigerians that no part of this new opportunity will be allowed to slip off our hands. We shall follow up on the current gains and ensure that Nigerians make maximum use of the opportunities, especially those that have to do with the gains of the Bi-national commission," he said.

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[Nigeria: Jonathan's US visit, toxic waste get media play in Nigeria](#)

4/17/2010

Lagos, Nigeria - Acting President Goodluck Jonathan's visit to the US, his first trip outside the country since becoming Nigeria's leader in February, and the presence of a ship fully loaded with toxic waste, made newspaper headlines this week.

Also in the news during the period was the declaration of interest for the 2011 presidency in Nigeria by former military president, Ibrahim Babangida.

"Jonathan's visit to US, beginning of new phase of Nigeria/US relations," was the front page story of the Tribune on Friday.

The paper said the South-west Osun State governor, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola, and the Consul-General of Nigeria in the US, Mr. Chudi Okafor, in Atlanta, Georgia, reviewed the visit and declared that it marked a new phase in Nigeria/US relations.

It said the duo drew the conclusion in Atlanta, on Wednesday, at a luncheon organised by the Consulate-General in honour of Governor Oyinlola who was also in the US on a working visit.

On Friday, Thisday newspaper captioned its story "Jonathan Returns, US Trip Successful, Says FG", reporting that Jonathan returned to the country Thursday after a four-day working visit to the US, where he attended the Nuclear Security Summit, met President Barack Obama and had other engagements.

The Sun newspaper, reporting Jonathan's visit, said the Acting President was a guest at the Centre for Global Development (CGD) in Washington DC and just before departure, he met with the members of the Black Caucus in the US Congress at the Capitol Hill, Washington DC, during which he urged them to take urgent steps to stem the tide of proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Africa.

The Daily Independent on Friday also headlined its story "U.S. Trip A Success - FG" while The Punch's headline Tuesday was: "Fight corruption, rigging, Obama tells Jonathan".

In its coverage of the toxic waste story, the Punch on Saturday said "Toxic ship: Customs grills Maersk Line agent, 20 crew members". It said the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) has detained 20 crew members aboard the ship that allegedly berthed in Lagos with toxic waste.

The detained crew members, including the Captain and a Maersk Line Agent in charge of the consignment, are also being grilled by Customs and other security agencies.

Thisday newspaper 'screamed' "Toxic Waste Ship Berths", alerting the reading public that a ship laden with toxic waste has berthed at the Tincan Island Port, Lagos.

As expected, all Nigerian newspapers ran stories on the declaration of interest by Babangida to run for the presidency in 2011.

The Punch, Sun and Tribune all had interesting headlines on Babangina. "2011: Group kicks off bid to stop IBB next week" and "Prove That I'm A Thief, IBB Dares Nigerians" were the headlines in the Tribune while the Punch wrote "Opposition mounts against IBB's presidential ambition".