




PRESS STATEMENT

**Title: Nigeria's Emancipation through Cultural, Civil,
and Peaceful Revolution.
1st September 2010**

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Title: Nigeria's Emancipation through Cultural, Civil and Peaceful Revolution (CCPR)

1. After the first generation of patriotic Nigerians who brought about the independence, (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe; Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sarduana of Sokoto; Sir Tafawa Balewa; and Chief Obafemi Awolowo [SAN]), Nigeria's search for emancipation in all areas of civil society i.e. governance, democracy, economic development, security, law and order, scientific development, and leadership has eluded the country.
2. Despite their failings, it's worth acknowledging that the past military and civilian administrations had good intentions for Nigeria while in office. They gave their best, and there are indeed some landmark contributions for which this country should be grateful.
3. It's worth highlighting too that although the search to advance Nigeria has gone through the military and civilians alike, exemplary leadership qualities have yet to be displayed in either category to date ([Sanusi Lamido, Governor of Nigerian Central Bank](#)). Nigeria needs a divinely guided charismatic leadership to guide and steer her to the leading democratic and economic super-power in the African League of Nations.
4. Studies show, the leaders that have emerged from the two search categories (military and civilians) have mainly sought to occupy positions for the mere sake of regional supremacy ([Nugent Paul – Africa since independence: a comparative history](#)). Thus far, we have not found the levels of patriotism, dazzling charisma, devotion, sacrifice, vision, outstanding organisational and analytical skills, superb emotional intelligence and spiritually guided leadership that embodied the first generation of leaders who guided Nigeria through gaining independence in 1960. As one of the most revered leaders of our time, a role model to presidents and the darling of the common man, there is much to learn today about the leadership from President Mandela, a living legend. The origin of his influence and success is accredited to: (a) the power of his personality, (b) the elegance of his humanity, (c) the loftiness of his ideals, (d) the wisdom of his judgment, (e) the calmness of his temperament and (f) the power of his commitment to the wellbeing of others ([US Ambassador Joseph](#)). Therefore President Mandela, a world citizen with unadulterated African genes, has demonstrated that Africa is endowed with

African born leaders. What is lacking is the mechanism to identify, encourage and empower such talents to take their rightful place democratically and lead African nations to greatness.

5. And so after years of military rulers and civilian administrations, the nation seems to be sliding backward rather than forward. The country's history has been marked by economic stagnation, declining welfare, and social instability. Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam and Brazil, among others, with which Nigeria was at par in developmental terms a few decades ago, have either attained the status of developed nations or have long been recognised as truly emerging economies of the world. In contrast, Nigeria (the largest black nation on earth), remains a typical Third World nation: buffeted by mass hunger, poverty, crime, corruption, environmental degradation, massive unemployment, disease, primitive state of basic infrastructure etc. Nigeria, a country with vast amount of arable land is regrettably unable to feed itself and has been importing food for the past 40 years ([Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture, Gbenga Makanjuola](#)).
6. Corruption "has penetrated and eroded hitherto sacred aspects of Nigerian society, such as the judiciary, universities and faith-based organisations. This has contributed substantially to the present situation in the country of under-development and poverty; the gross violation of rights; the dearth of human dignity; the absence of the full realisation of national and individual potential; and the negation of social justice" ([Transparency International, 2004](#)). The impact can be felt in terms of the poor international image of Nigeria, resulting in humiliating entry visa requirements at foreign embassies, distrust of every Nigerian no matter the status professionally or in society, downgrading of Nigerian qualifications and, mistrust of official documents issued by Nigerian authorities etc.
7. Nigeria looked upon itself beyond 50 and could not see light at the end of the tunnel. Children in primary schools wonder at the inability of their fathers to build structures they can call home in their villages. The simple reason is the salaries of their fathers, despite amount in figures, have lost purchasing power due to inflation and other economic circumstances. The cost of food has risen. Nigeria has become a nation where a child no longer aspires to be like the father. THIS IS BECAUSE IN THE EYES OF MANY NIGERIAN CHILDREN, MOST FATHERS HAVE FAILED. Why? – because the father, the head and bread winner of the family, struggles to make even two square meals a regular and

guaranteed right of the child; house rents that keep a roof over the family are late due to the insufficiency of and delay in wage payments; children's school fees remain unpaid and children often go hungry to school. The infrastructure of Nigerian schools tells the same story the attending children tell.

8. If a child comes to school with empty stomach, concentration becomes an issue. Where teachers have not been paid for months, the dedication that is expected of them is called into question. In offices up and down the country the story is the same. The menace of corruption is all too obvious: slow movement of files in offices, police extortion at tollgates and slow traffics on the highways, port congestions, queues at passport offices and gas stations, ghost workers syndrome, election irregularities etc.
9. The state of Nigerian roads defies comprehension and constitutes not only an inconvenience to commuters, but a death trap for lives. The African Development Bank (ADB) estimates the vehicle operating and road accidents costs of the deplorable level of Nigerian highways to be in the range of N80 billion (\$570 million) per annum (allAfrica.com). This picture can be seen in the Nigerian civil aviation industry where the dangerous potential for foreign control of the Nigerian airspace increases with lessening government efforts to producing Nigerian civil pilots. The same can be projected to other civil aspects of the Nigerian society.
10. These prevailing conditions in Nigeria have led to mass migration into voluntary economic slavery in Europe, USA and Asia of a new generation of Nigerian citizens and professionals. At best, some may describe themselves as economic and intellectual refugees. History is repeating itself before our very eyes. Much the same way as the experiences of this generation, the slave trading of our ancestors in the 1400s and beyond was driven largely by African rulers, traders and a military aristocracy who all grew wealthy from the sufferings and humiliation of their fellow citizens. "European slave traders saw the advantages of helping African kings and chiefs realise their desire to acquire western culture, if not for themselves then for their children.... They were obsessed with the variety of goods available through the trade. Locally produced equivalents of some merchandise like cloth and jewellery existed, but greater satisfaction and prestige was gotten from having imported varieties. The man with a warehouse filled with goods from abroad was a powerful figure in the community, able to buy favours and influence with his ill-gotten wealth" (Tunde Obadina). "While Europe invested profits from the trade in laying the foundation of a powerful economic empire,

African kings and traders were content with wearing used caps and admiring themselves in worthless mirrors while swigging adulterated brandy bought with the freedom of their kinsmen”. That a citizen could subject his/her own kind and people into abject poverty by looting and exporting their wealth to prop up the economies of other nations, has made us vulnerable to theories of Black inferiority.

11. Immediately after independence, Nigerians were burning with passion and patriotism for the country. Students who read abroad never stayed a day longer once their studies were over. They returned to serve the nation with hope, dignity and pride. Today the reverse is the case. The country is choking with incompetence in every sector of the economy, coupled with half-baked, home grown graduates - a product of an out-dated, malnourished and run-down education system. The country’s development continues to be hampered by the relentless rate of brain drain - a product of economic depression, unchecked political corruption, insecurity of life and assets, primitive infrastructure, the sacrifice of meritocracy on the altar of mediocrity etc. Today, there are many world class Nigerian bankers, business managers, computer scientists, pharmacists, engineers, journalists, lawyers, medical doctors, nurses, professors, and scientists powering the economies of Europe, America and the rest of the world. Time is running out for Nigeria. The Nigerian professionals in diaspora are ageing up in foreign lands and populating those lands with highly intelligent children - an emerging capable and resourceful working class with little reason or motivation to consider returning to Nigeria.
12. The reason Openmind Foundation is calling for an all-Nigerian Cultural, Civil, and Peaceful Revolution is that this is the only and last time that Nigeria has got to repair and reinvent itself.
13. THE DOORS OF EUROPE AND THE REST OF THE PROGRESSIVE WORLD ARE CLOSING FAST ON ECONOMIC MIGRATION, REFUGEES AND FOREIGN AID. The citizens and governments of these countries are getting tired and fed-up with endless and fruitless donations and aids to African countries. Protectionism is rearing its ugly head in disguise in the form of continent-sized countries.
14. Until recently, never has the entire earth experienced the current level of growth in the formation of continent-sized countries. The existing and emerging

continent-sized countries are: the “European Union”, currently made up of 27 states and potentially expanding; “The United States of America” with 50 states including Alaska; “ASEANIC” block with 10 Southeast Asian country members; “SAARC” with 8 South Asian member countries; “UNASUR” comprising 12 South American countries including Brazil; “GCC” made up of six Arab states of the Persian Gulf; and the proposed South Asian Union - comprising 44 countries including China, India, Japan, Singapore and South Korea.

15. If Nigeria continues operating without a clear sense of direction, CAN IT COMPARE OR COMPETE IN TOMORROW’S WORLD WITH THESE CONTINENT-SIZED EMERGING ECONOMIES?
16. In Europe new technologies for the 22nd century are being contemplated and designed. As you read this press statement, European, Asian and American scientists are testing hybrid energy and green technology automobiles. In a layman’s language, cars are being developed in Europe, America and Asia to run on electricity, gas and recycled waste. There are even pilot-designed solar energy powered aircrafts that have undergone successful maiden flights. If Nigeria remains visionless and dependent on its mainstay oil economy, what hope do we have of the future as these modifications commercialise?
17. Nigeria tends to make myopic assumptions of its oil production wealth and capacity. It’s worth noting that Brazil has launched a ten year programme to become one of the major world oil producers. Angola is rivaling Nigeria in oil production. The United States of America has discovered huge gas reserves that are to replace dependence on imported energy and is investing massively in green technology under President Obama’s administration. “So if you look ten years ahead, is Nigeria going to be that relevant as a major oil producer.....while the world moves on to alternative sources of energy and other sources of supply?” ([US Ambassador P. Lyman](#)).
18. Global warming and its ramifications for the world are no longer academic. They are manifesting in earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, encroaching deserts, scorching earth, drought, failing harvests, tsunamis, bushfires, floods, changing weather patterns, and rising sea levels. From India through Pakistan, China, Russia, Australia, Antarctica and USA the carbon footprints of global warming are evident. There is limited UN disaster and emergency response aid to go round. Donor nations’ ability to contribute to disaster relief funds is now constrained by

the fact that they are equally vulnerable to the effects of global warming. Governments are making contingency plans and developing disaster prevention and management strategies in the interest of their countries and people. Nigerians and Africans in general need to be well informed and prepared against our share of the global warming impact; else we become extinct like dinosaurs.

19. Finally, the level of inequality, injustice, unchecked political corruption, open display of unmerited wealth, unemployment and human sufferings in Nigerian society is no longer sustainably free of unintended consequences. “Somalia is mono-religious, mono-ethnic; they only have clans (but) they have one tribe. What has happened there? It’s a failed state because the elite in Somalia were so disconnected from the people that once they had some money, they bought houses in England, Washington and all those places... There was such a disconnect that even till today, they cannot bridge it. Let me tell you, the last recognised President of Somalia is buried in Lagos-Siad Barre. We are multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-problematic” and over 150 million people. If we fail to take the necessary actions now to build a better future, “we will fail like Somalia; in Somalia, half of them are in Kenya, Ethiopia, and a few are in Europe here and there; ..The reason why most people worry about us is if we explode, who will contain us in all of West Africa and Central Africa?” (Donald Duke, *ex-governor of Cross River State*). The Mo Ibrahim Foundation jointly compiles an index of governance in Africa with the prestigious Kennedy School at Harvard University. In the 2008 report, Nigeria was ranked 39th out of the 48 countries measured. “The index measures the so-called essential goods, which remain very scarce in Africa: safety and security; rule of law; transparency and corruption; participation and human rights; sustainable economic opportunity and human development... As one of the bottom ten countries, Nigeria was positioned alongside countries like Guinea, Eritrea, Cote de Ivoire, Central Africa Republic, Angola, Sudan, Chad, DRC and Somalia. All of these are outright failed states or countries at war or emerging from war” (Igwe - a *Woodrow Wilson Policy Scholar*).
20. This is why all Nigerians of all regional, religious, professional, and tribal persuasions should embrace this first and last cultural, civil, and peaceful revolution being proposed by Openmind Foundation.
21. Openmind Foundation is a voluntary and non-governmental organisation set up and registered under the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to assist the Nigerian nation to enjoy the products of democracy: free and vibrant press, free

and fair election, transparent governance, respect for human rights, economic prosperity, accountability, an enterprising civil society, rule of law, and freedom of religion, thought and speech.

22. What form will Openmind Foundation's proposed cultural, civil and peaceful revolution take? The revolution aims to introduce new nationally accepted cultures developed along the lines of eradicating those vices that have kept the nation from emerging a leading economic super-power. It will also eradicate those cultures that have been accepted as a national norm and for which Nigerians have suffered terribly. We admit, a change in culture in any society is neither easy nor cheap and demands long-term strategy and commitment. Reprogramming the Nigerian mentality through culture modification therapy will face resistance, apprehension, and in extreme situation – sabotage. However, it will be successful, and as a matter of fact, it remains the only viable exit to peace and prosperity for Nigeria at this point in its history and one that every patriotic citizen should firmly embrace.
23. The strategy that Openmind Foundation (OMF) adopts in this cultural, civil and peaceful revolution will be implemented through its *organise-4-Nigeria* programmes. Below is a brief description of a few of the programmes:
- Introduction of a central culture across the nation, through education and reorientation, of a society where market driven economy flourishes but with conscience; every single member of the community has equal opportunity; and a country ready and willing to develop and tap into the potential of every citizen irrespective of tribe, state of origin, sex, age, or religious denomination. In other words, the central theme of OMF cultural drive is “A REVIVED NATURAL PASSION AND PATRIOTISM DRIVEN BY HUMAN ORGAN-STYLE-SOCIETY”. In a layman's language, the OMF cultural, peaceful and civil revolution mimics the importance and cooperation of every member of the human body in its drive to function.
 - Nationwide campaign aimed at facilitating hope, reconciliation and unity particularly among the three main Nigerian tribes - Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba. The campaign is to drive home to the Nigerian people and tribes that “what unites the people and tribes of Nigeria is greater than what divides them”. Agreed we are 150 million people, 37 states, 923,768 square km of area space, and tribally, geographically and religiously divided. But countries like the USA, India and China are much larger, have religious



and ethnic diversities and challenges. Yet, united behind a common flag, they are enjoying economic prosperity. Together, we can change the world view of Nigeria, the world view of Nigerians and Nigeria's view of itself.

- A massive educational and behaviour modification campaign aimed at drawing attention to the ills of the Nigerian society and geared toward a mass rejection of those vices. This will operate under the “SAY NO AND SEE” (i.e. say no to vices and see the impact on society, governance and prosperity for all) campaign slogan and through families, school clubs, televised soap-opera etc.

These outlined approaches and more have inbuilt automatic out-dated cultural rejections like corruption, tribalism, ethnocentrism, sectarianism (especially religious), prebendalism, and nepotism.

Openmind Foundation shall be holding an invited press conference of all the Nigerian media organisations including print and electronic media on the organisation's micro-detailed programmes for the nation's cultural, civil and peaceful revolution. BE ON THE LOOKOUT.

Join Openmind Foundation and make a difference in the quality of governance and standards of living of our people. It is our last chance. For further information please consult our website on www.omf.cc.

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