



The Nigeria Diaspora Roles in Shaping Nigeria's Foreign Policy

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Abstract

The paper evaluates the Nigeria Diaspora in shaping Nigeria's foreign policy, with an estimated population of over 17 million spread across the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa, and beyond, the Nigerian diaspora constitutes one of the largest African diasporic communities globally. Their influence is reflected not only in economic contributions through remittances, which constantly rank among the highest Sub-Saharan Africa, but also in political lobbying, advocacy and cultural diplomacy. Guided by Transnationalism Theory, the study adopts a descriptive qualitative research design, relying on primary data from structured interviews and policy documents, alongside secondary sources including books, journals, and international reports. The study reveals that the Nigerian diaspora plays a pivotal role in advancing economic diplomacy by attracting foreign direct investment, fostering business partnerships, and promoting Nigerian products and services abroad. However, challenges such as weak institutional frameworks, political fragmentation among diaspora groups and lack of voting right hinders cohesive engagement. The study concludes that the diaspora represents a critical but underutilized resource of Nigerian's foreign policy. The study recommends that the Nigerian government should formulate and implement a holistic diaspora policy that provides a clear legal and institutional framework for engaging with diaspora communities. NIDCOM should be empowered with adequate funding, professional staffing, and diplomatic support to coordinate diaspora engagement effectively, also, the government and Diaspora organizations should capitalized on digital technologies to sustain dialogue and collaboration by using virtual investment forums, diaspora knowledge-sharing platform, e-governance tools to foster long-term interaction and policy input from abroad.

Keywords: Diaspora, Foreign Policy, Immigrant/Migrant, Public Diplomacy, Public affairs Committee.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, with a population of over 200 million people, has one of the largest diaspora communities in the world. The Nigerian diaspora, a vast and dynamic network of individuals residing outside Nigeria, has increasingly become a critical factor in shaping the nation's socio-economic and political landscape. This dispersion, driven by a confluence of factors including economic hardship, political instability, and the pursuit of educational and professional opportunities, has resulted in a global presence that extends across continents.

The Nigerian diaspora, which is one of the largest African Diasporas, plays a crucial role in Nigeria's socio-economic and political landscape. With an estimated population of over 17 million Nigerians residing abroad, particularly in North America, Europe, and the Middle East, their contributions in areas such as remittances, political advocacy, and diplomatic lobbying have positioned them as a significant force in shaping Nigeria's foreign policy (Akinrinade & Ogen, 2011).

The Nigerian diaspora has evolved through various historical phases, shaped by colonialism, economic factors, and globalization. The forced migration of Nigerians during the transatlantic slave trade marked the earliest phase of dispersion, followed by voluntary migration during the colonial and post-independence periods. The Scramble for Africa, which began in the late 19th century, saw European powers, including Britain, France, and Germany; compete for colonies and resources on

the African continent. Nigeria became a British colony in 1914, and the colonial experience had a profound impact on the country's economy, politics, and culture (Afigbo, 1987). Many Nigerians were forced to migrate to other parts of the colony or to other European colonies in search of work or to escape colonial oppression.

After Nigeria gained independence in 1960, many Nigerians migrated to other countries in search of better economic opportunities, education, and healthcare. This migration was driven by a combination of push factors, such as poverty, unemployment, and political instability, and pull factors, such as the demand for skilled labor in Western countries (Adepoju, 2003). In recent decades, migration from Nigeria has continued to grow, driven by a combination of economic, social, and political factors. Many Nigerians have migrated to countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and South Africa in search of better economic opportunities, education, and healthcare.

This diaspora community has been recognized as a critical component of Nigeria's foreign policy, with the potential to contribute significantly to the country's economic development and international relations. Historically, the Nigerian diaspora's engagement with the homeland was largely characterized by remittances, which have become a significant source of foreign exchange. The concept of diaspora engagement has gained prominence in international relations, particularly in the context of development studies. Scholars have highlighted the potential of Diasporas to act as "transnational actors" who bridge the gap between their host countries and their countries of origin (Vertovec, 2009). The Nigerian diaspora's influence on foreign policy is observed in areas such as economic diplomacy. The Nigerian government has acknowledged the importance of the diaspora community, with the establishment of the Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO) in 2001. NIDO aims to promote the interests of Nigerians living abroad and to facilitate their contributions to the country's development. However, despite these efforts, the Nigerian diaspora remains a relatively underutilized resource in the country's foreign policy.

The establishment of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) in 2017 further underscores the government's commitment to engaging with its citizens abroad in a structured manner (Adebayo, 2020). NIDCOM's mandate includes coordinating and organizing Nigerians in the diaspora to participate in the development of Nigeria.

PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

While countries such as India, Israel, and China have successfully integrated their Diasporas into their foreign policy strategies, Nigeria continues to face challenges in maximizing the potential of its diaspora. The Nigerian diaspora, a sprawling network of individuals scattered across the globe, represents a largely untapped reservoir of potential for shaping the nation's foreign policy. While their significant economic contributions, primarily through remittances, are readily acknowledged, the extent to which their expertise, networks, and cultural understanding can be harnessed to influence Nigeria's diplomatic strategies remains a critical gap in our understanding. The primary aim of this study is to examine the role of the Nigerian diaspora in shaping Nigeria's foreign policy; the objectives of the study seek to: Analyze the historical development of the Nigerian diaspora, its composition and contributions.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected are analyzed using descriptive analysis and qualitative analysis. Descriptive analysis was employed to summarize and present the data in a simple and meaningful form, thereby providing a clear picture of the responses obtained from participants. Qualitative analysis, on the other hand, was applied to interpret data. This approach enabled the researcher to identify themes, patterns, and insights that reflect the perceptions, experiences, and opinions of respondents in relation to the research objectives.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Nigeria Diaspora

According to Biney (2011), Diasporas are best understood through the lens of transnationalism, which focuses on the fluid and simultaneous attachments to both host and home countries. This framework helps capture the unique position of Nigerians in the diaspora who, while integrating into their countries of residence, remain actively involved in Nigerian affairs through remittances, political lobbying, cultural diplomacy, and return migration.

Foreign Policy

Scholars have offered a range of definitions that reflect the complexity and multifaceted nature of foreign policy. According to Hill (2016), foreign policy is "the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations." This definition underscores the formal and purposive nature of foreign policy, distinguishing it from informal or non-governmental international interactions.

Role of the Nigerian Diaspora in shaping Foreign Policy

The Nigerian diaspora community has played a significant role in shaping Nigeria's foreign policy, particularly in areas such as economic development and international relations (Ezeanya, 2020). The diaspora community has contributed significantly to Nigeria's economic development through remittances, investments, and trade (Nwosu, 2019). In 2019, remittances from the Nigerian diaspora community totaled over \$25 billion, making Nigeria one of the largest recipients of remittances in Africa (World Bank, 2020).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is hinged on the Transnationalism Theory by Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanton Blanc. Transnationalism Theory emerged as a robust conceptual framework in the early 1990s, primarily through the influential works of scholars such as Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanton Blanc. These anthropologists are widely credited with formally introducing and popularizing the concept of "transnationalism" through their groundbreaking publication "Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity and Nationalism Reconsidered" in 1992. Their work was pivotal in shifting the academic lens from viewing migration as a linear, one-way process of assimilation to a more dynamic phenomenon in which migrants maintain sustained, multiple ties across borders engaging simultaneously in more than one nation-state.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Adeola, and Fayomi, (2012) investigated the Political and Economic Roles of the Nigerian Diaspora in the Development of Nigeria. The study employed a qualitative research design using secondary data from international migration reports, policy documents, and journal articles. The authors critically examined the influence of Nigerian emigrants, particularly in the United States and the United Kingdom, on Nigeria's political economy. Akinrinade and Ogen (2011) conducted a study on historicizing the Nigerian Diaspora: Nigerian migrants and homeland relations. Using a historical-analytical approach, the authors reviewed patterns of Nigerian migration and their impact on homeland affairs.

Historical Overview of Nigerian Migration Patterns

The migration patterns of Nigerians can be broadly categorized into four overlapping historical phases: the pre-colonial era, the colonial era, the post-independence period, and the contemporary globalization phase.

The pre-colonial migration patterns among the various ethnic groups in the geographical space now known as Nigeria were not only common but formed the backbone of socio-economic, political, and cultural dynamics long before the arrival of European colonial powers. These movements were largely driven by indigenous factors such as trade, pastoralism, kinship obligations,

religious pursuits, and the quest for security and political alliances. As noted by Falola and Heaton (2010), the Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, and numerous other ethnic groups actively participated in expansive regional and trans-regional trading networks that connected West Africa to the wider trans-Saharan trade systems, fostering enduring patterns of mobility.

The post-independence era in Nigeria, spanning from the 1960s through the 1980s, marked a significant turning point in the country's migration landscape. While pre-independence mobility was largely intra-African and motivated by trade, pastoralism, and kinship, the post-independence period introduced new drivers of migration including political instability, economic transformations, and educational aspirations which diversified both the motives and destinations of migrants.

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, one of the most pronounced patterns of migration was educational. With the country striving to build a competent civil service and professional class to replace departing British colonial administrators, a substantial number of Nigerians, particularly from the urban middle class, sought higher education abroad, primarily in the United Kingdom and the United States.

The 1966 military coups, followed by the Biafran Civil War (1967–1970), created widespread insecurity, particularly in the southeastern region. Okome (2014) explains that the war not only displaced millions of Nigerians internally but also led to a notable increase in outward migration. Political refugees and war-affected civilians, especially from the Igbo ethnic group, sought asylum or resettlement opportunities in nearby African countries and in Europe. This period highlighted the increasing role of forced migration and asylum-seeking in Nigeria's migration dynamics.

The 1970s, however, presented a different scenario. The oil boom that followed the 1973 global oil crisis transformed Nigeria's economy almost overnight. According to Zeleza (2002), thousands of West African migrants, including Ghanaians, Nigerians, and Togolese, moved to Nigeria in search of better economic opportunities.

Yet, this phase of economic prosperity proved unsustainable. By the early 1980s, a confluence of external and internal shocks reversed Nigeria's fortunes. The global oil glut precipitated a steep decline in government revenues, leading to economic contraction, rising inflation, and high levels of unemployment. To address the deepening economic crisis, the Nigerian government adopted the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986, under the guidance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

The post-independence migration patterns were also influenced by Nigeria's foreign policy posture and global geopolitical trends. Nigeria's active role in anti-apartheid diplomacy, its support for liberation movements across Africa, and its leadership in the Non-Aligned Movement enhanced its international visibility, creating diplomatic and cultural linkages that often facilitated migration. In parallel, changes in immigration policies in Western countries, such as the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and the introduction of point-based immigration systems in Canada made it easier for highly educated Nigerians to migrate and settle abroad. Additionally, regional events such as the political and economic crises in Ghana and Liberia during the 1980s contributed to two-way migration dynamics.

Socio-Economic and Political Characteristics of the Nigerian Diaspora

Many Nigerians excel in sectors such as medicine, engineering, academia, information technology, and entrepreneurship. In the United States, for example, Nigerian immigrants rank among the most educated groups, with high levels of university degrees. Economically, the diaspora contributes significantly through remittances, which amount to billions of dollars annually and form one of Nigeria's largest sources of foreign exchange". Remittances remain one of the most tangible and widely studied economic contributions of the Nigerian Diaspora.

Socio-Cultural Influence of the Nigerian Diaspora

One of the most vibrant domains of Nigerian diasporic cultural influence is the global entertainment industry. The Nigerian music scene particularly Afrobeats has witnessed exponential

growth in popularity across continents, spearheaded by globally recognized diaspora and home-based artists such as Burna Boy, Wizkid, Davido, and Tems. Burna Boy, who won a Grammy Award for his album *Twice as Tall*, has often spoken of his diasporic influences, blending his Nigerian heritage with Western musical styles to appeal to a global audience. According to Ogbar (2017), the international success of Nigerian music not only reflects the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of Nigerian artists but also challenges dominant cultural narratives that often marginalize African voices. Diasporic Nigerian writers such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Teju Cole, Chika Unigwe, and Helon Habila have significantly shaped global discourses on race, migration, identity, and post-colonialism. Nollywood.

Historical Evolution of Nigeria's Foreign Policy

At independence in 1960, the policy was anchored on Afrocentrism, emphasizing Africa as the centerpiece. In the 1970s, Nigeria adopted a more assertive role, leveraging oil wealth to influence continental affairs. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a decline in credibility due to internal political instability and military rule. The return to democracy in 1999 reinvigorated Nigeria's foreign relations, with renewed emphasis on regional leadership, peacekeeping, and economic diplomacy. Today, Nigeria's foreign policy reflects a hybrid of traditional Afrocentrism and pragmatic engagement with global actors in pursuit of security, trade, and development interest.

In the immediate post-independence period, Nigeria's foreign policy was largely conservative and non-aligned. The country sought to maintain neutrality in the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union while engaging diplomatically within the Commonwealth and the United Nations. Balewa's administration maintained cordial relations with former colonial powers, particularly Britain, while remaining cautious in extending diplomatic relations with socialist bloc countries. This cautious but Afrocentric approach was foundational to Nigeria's early foreign engagements (Ogunsanwo, 2014).

The Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) marked a turning point in the country's diplomatic behavior. The war revealed the vulnerabilities of domestic instability on international diplomacy, compelling Nigeria to strengthen its regional influence. Following the war, General Yakubu Gowon's administration intensified Nigeria's involvement in African affairs. Nigeria was instrumental in the formation and sustenance of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975, aimed at fostering economic integration and political cooperation in the sub-region (Adebajo & Landsberg, 2012).

Under General Murtala Mohammed and his successor Olusegun Obasanjo (1975–1979), Nigeria adopted a more assertive and radical foreign policy. Murtala's famous declaration that "Africa has come of age" symbolized a shift from passive diplomacy to proactive engagement, including support for anti-colonial struggles in Southern Africa. Nigeria played a key role in the decolonization of Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, earning international acclaim and continental leadership status (Akindele & Ate, 2013).

During the civilian administration of President Shehu Shagari (1979–1983), the country pursued a more moderate approach, emphasizing economic diplomacy and multilateral cooperation. However, the subsequent military regimes of Generals Muhammadu Buhari (1983–1985) and Ibrahim Babangida (1985–1993) introduced significant shifts. Buhari's administration was marked by a nationalist tone and retaliatory foreign policy, such as the expulsion of foreign nationals under the ECOWAS protocol. Babangida's tenure, by contrast, saw Nigeria returning to multilateral diplomacy and a stronger ECOWAS role, particularly in conflict resolution, evidenced by the creation of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which intervened in Liberia in the early 1990s (Eze, 2014).

The return to democratic governance in 1999 with the election of President Olusegun Obasanjo marked a significant turning point in Nigeria's foreign policy trajectory. After decades of military dictatorship and international isolation, Obasanjo's administration embarked on a deliberate process of reintegration into the global community. Central to this renewed engagement was the pursuit of economic liberalization, regional cooperation, and the rehabilitation of Nigeria's

international image. Obasanjo positioned Nigeria as a responsible and proactive actor in global and continental affairs. His administration championed initiatives within the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and other multilateral bodies. Nigeria took leading roles in peacekeeping missions across West Africa, including in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire, reinforcing its status as a regional power and peacemaker. Obasanjo also spearheaded negotiations that led to significant debt relief under the Paris Club, which helped stabilize the Nigerian economy (Gberekpie, 2013). While his successors President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and President Goodluck Jonathan largely continued these diplomatic efforts, they were often more cautious and reactive in their foreign policy posture. Nonetheless, both administrations upheld Nigeria's commitment to multilateralism, regional security, and economic diplomacy, ensuring continuity in foreign policy direction, though with reduced visibility and global assertiveness.

Nigeria's foreign policy under President Muhammadu Buhari and his successor Bola Ahmed Tinubu has focused on economic diplomacy, security cooperation, and regional stability. There has been a renewed emphasis on combating terrorism, especially in the Lake Chad Basin region, and enhancing Nigeria's role in continental frameworks like the African Union (AU) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) (Sidi-Ali & Obaze, 2021).

Thus, the historical trajectory of Nigeria's foreign policy reveals a blend of idealism and pragmatism, with a consistent Afrocentric thrust but varying degrees of engagement depending on domestic priorities and global dynamics.

Current Foreign Policy Priorities

Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Nigeria's foreign policy priorities are shaped by pressing domestic needs and international realities. At the forefront is national security, particularly combating terrorism, piracy, and transnational crimes in the Gulf of Guinea and the Sahel. Economic diplomacy is another priority, focusing on attracting foreign investment, diversifying the economy, and expanding trade relations. The current thrust of Nigeria's foreign policy under the leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and as framed during the later years of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration, is driven by economic diplomacy, regional stability, multilateral cooperation, and diaspora engagement (Ojo, 2023; Obaze, 2021).

Instruments of Foreign Policy

Nigeria, like other sovereign states, deploys a range of instruments; diplomatic, economic, military, cultural, and legal to advance its foreign policy objectives. These instruments are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are often used in combination, depending on the nature of the international challenge or opportunity faced by the state.

Challenges to Nigeria's Foreign Policy

Nigeria's foreign policy continues to face a number of persistent and emerging challenges that stems from structural, institutional, political, and global factors that often constrain Nigeria's capacity to effectively project power and influence on the international stage. Economic dependency on oil revenues limits Nigeria's capacity to project power abroad, especially in financing peacekeeping or regional leadership roles. Corruption, weak institutions, and inconsistent policy implementation also erode credibility while insecurity, particularly terrorism, insurgency, and banditry, which not only affect the country's stability but also shape its external image.

Mechanisms of Diaspora Influence

Nigerian diaspora influences foreign policy through both formal and informal mechanisms. Formally, institutions such as the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) and embassies serve as platforms for diaspora consultations and policy input. Diaspora organizations and professional associations also lobby host governments on issues affecting Nigeria, shaping bilateral relations.

These groups often engage with policymakers, media, and civil society in host countries to shape public opinion and foreign policy decisions concerning Nigeria. Akinrinade and Ogen (2019)

highlight the role of the Nigerian-American Public Affairs Committee (NAPAC) as a prominent example. NAPAC has been instrumental in lobbying U.S. lawmakers on a variety of issues, including enhanced security cooperation between the United States and Nigeria, counterterrorism support, and visa and immigration policies that affect Nigerian nationals. These lobbying efforts have not only contributed to shaping foreign perceptions about Nigeria but have also had a direct impact on the formulation and reorientation of Nigeria's foreign policy. Many Nigerians in the diaspora occupy influential academic, diplomatic, and professional positions that allow them to serve as intermediaries between Nigeria and the international community. These professionals often offer technical expertise in strategic sectors such as education, health, governance, and finance, which Nigeria integrates into its policy formation processes. For instance, the Nigerian Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), established in 2019, institutionalized these contributions by creating formal channels for diaspora professionals to engage with homeland policy makers (Nwajiaku-Dahou & Binaisa, 2021).

Transnational networks also constitute a vital mechanism through which the Nigerian diaspora exercises influence on both Nigeria's global image and its foreign policy orientation. As noted by Okechukwu (2020), transnational networks operate as informal yet impactful channels of diplomacy and communication, shaping not only how Nigeria is perceived internationally but also influencing the policy discourse within and outside the country. Digital technologies particularly social media platforms like Twitter (now X), Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram have created unprecedented avenues for real-time communication, mobilization, and advocacy.

Diaspora Contributions to Economic Diplomacy: NiDCOM clarified that the diaspora plays a pivotal role in Nigeria's economic diplomacy. Remittances from Nigerians abroad contribute billions annually, bolstering foreign exchange reserves and supporting household consumption. Beyond remittances, diaspora professionals act as bridges for trade and investment, linking Nigerian businesses with global markets. Many diaspora entrepreneurs return to establish businesses in Nigeria, bringing capital, expertise, and international networks. Their participation in trade fairs, technology transfer, and knowledge-sharing platforms enhances Nigeria's economic competitiveness.

According to data from the World Bank (2022), remittance inflows to Nigeria from its diaspora reached approximately \$19.2 billion in 2021, making Nigeria the highest recipient of diaspora remittances in sub-Saharan Africa. These remittances have become a vital component of Nigeria's balance of payments and foreign exchange earnings.

In addition to remittances, the Nigerian diaspora has increasingly engaged in foreign direct investments (FDI) in key sectors of the Nigerian economy. Diaspora entrepreneurs have invested in real estate, agriculture, fintech, healthcare, education, and logistics. Organizations like the Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation (NIDO) have created platforms to attract diaspora investments by connecting investors with viable projects in Nigeria. The Federal Government, through NiDCOM, has leveraged these investments as tools of economic diplomacy by showcasing Nigeria as a viable destination for international capital. The establishment of the Diaspora Investment Summit in 2018, for instance, institutionalized a space for dialogue between diaspora investors and Nigerian policymakers, further aligning diaspora capital with national economic priorities (Binaisa, 2022).

Diaspora actors have played an increasingly strategic role in advancing Nigeria's economic diplomacy by serving as bridges between the domestic economy and international markets. Many Nigerians abroad operate as facilitators of trade, investment, and market access, leveraging their knowledge of foreign business environments, legal frameworks, and consumer preferences to promote Nigerian products and services. Furthermore, the diaspora has contributed to economic diplomacy by facilitating the transfer of knowledge, skills, and technology. Through short-term return programs and virtual engagements, Nigerian professionals abroad contribute to capacity building in sectors such as ICT, medicine, and higher education. The "Diaspora Doctor" program, for instance, enables Nigerian physicians in North America and Europe to undertake medical missions in

underserved Nigerian communities, indirectly promoting health diplomacy and national development (Aduloju, 2020). Despite these positive contributions, there are limitations to diaspora-driven economic diplomacy. Their growing institutionalization through frameworks like NiDCOM ensures that diaspora contributions are no longer ad hoc but increasingly strategic, integrated, and aligned with national foreign policy objectives.

Diaspora Engagement in Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy to engage foreign publics to advance national interests has taken on renewed significance in Nigeria's foreign policy. Nigerian diaspora communities have emerged as informal yet potent agents of public diplomacy. Through cultural exchanges, media engagement, grassroots advocacy, and civic participation, Nigerians in the diaspora have increasingly shaped how foreign societies perceive Nigeria, its people, and its government. Ministry of Foreign Affairs revealed that the Nigerian diaspora has become a powerful force in Nigeria's public diplomacy. As Nye (2011) articulated in his theory of soft power, influence in the modern world is often achieved through attraction by promoting cultural values, political ideals, and economic opportunities rather than through coercion or hard power. In this context, the Nigerian diaspora serves as a vital conduit for projecting Nigeria's soft power across the globe.

Challenges and Opportunities for Diaspora Engagement: Bureaucratic inefficiency and poor coordination among Nigerian government agencies often frustrate diaspora initiatives. Policy inconsistency, such as delays in implementing diaspora voting rights, limits their political participation. Mistrust also exists between diaspora communities and Nigerian officials, with concerns about transparency and accountability. Financial constraints restrict the government's ability to sustain diaspora outreach programs.

CONCLUSION

The study confirms that the diaspora's influence operates through both formal and informal mechanisms. Formally, institutions such as the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) have begun to coordinate diaspora affairs, thereby integrating their contributions into national development planning. Informally, diaspora communities influence foreign perceptions, engage in transnational lobbying, and participate in civic activism that indirectly reshapes Nigeria's diplomatic posture.

RECOMMENDATION

The Nigerian government should formulate and implement a holistic diaspora policy that provides a clear legal and institutional framework for engaging with diaspora communities. NiDCOM should be empowered with adequate funding, professional staffing, and diplomatic support to coordinate diaspora engagement effectively.

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