

Phases of Nigeria's Foreign Policy III

Shehu Shagari (1979-1983); Ernest Shonekan (1998); Oluesgun Obasanjo (1999-2007); Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007-2010); and Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015)

- **Alhaji Shehu Shagari (1979-1983)**
- President Shehu Shagari, the first executive president of Nigeria, led the country from October 1, 1979 to December 31, 1983, when he was ousted by the military.
- When Alhaji Shehu Shagari was sworn in as the first executive president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, he inherited a dynamic afrocentric foreign policy which was heavily backed up by sound economy.
- Shagari in his first foreign policy speech to the joint session of Nigeria's National Assembly in March 1980, declared:
- "Africa remains the cornerstone of Nigeria's foreign policy. My administration is committed to the cause of the total liberation of Africa and the abolition of racism in all its manifestations. We shall neither relax nor relent until all Africans and all black men are free".

- There were contradictions in the Afrocentric policy of the Shagari administration.
- As part of Nigeria's commitment to the decolonization process in Africa, it took an active part in the Lancaster House Proceedings that led to the independence of Zimbabwe.
- The government equally gave large financial grant to the new Robert Mugabe led government, to assist it in taking off.
- To Shagari's credit, he spearheaded Africa's commitment to peaceful settlement of inter-state disputes like the Somalia/Ethiopia; Morocco/Polisario Movement over Western Sahara; and the Hissene Habre/Guokonni Weddeye crises in Chad.
- The Nigeria-Cameroon border crisis was an event which put Nigeria's love for its neighbours to test.

- The immediate cause of the border crisis in May 1981 was the deliberate killing of five Nigerian soldiers by Cameroonian gendarmes on May 16, 1981.
- After the incident, the then Nigerian external Affairs Minister, Professor Ishaya Audu in a press statement described the incident as a cold-blooded murder and threatened that Nigeria would not take the issue lying low.
- However, despite the fact that the dominant mood in the country then was that Nigeria should employ a military option against Cameroon, the Federal Government still adopted a diplomatic option leading to the peaceful resolution of the conflict by the end of 1981 with the payment of reparation to the families of the bereaved.

- The contradiction in Shagari's Afrocentric foreign policy was the expulsion of three million illegal alien largely Africans from Nigeria.
- Under Shagari, oil revenue peaked, then dramatically declined.
- Like Gowon, Shagari pursued a modest foreign policy.
- In January 1983, the Nigerian government responded to the economic downturn by expelling illegal immigrants.
- This was the state's "worst international crisis since the civil war" (Abegunrin, 2003).
- It antagonized Nigeria's neighbours and further undermined sub-regional integration (Gambari, 1989).

- **Ernest Shonekan (1993)**
- Chief Ernest Shonekan, who headed an Interim National Government (ING) set up by Babangida when he stepped aside, ruled for three months, August 26, 1993 – November 17, 1993, before General Sani Abacha seized power from him.
- Shonekan's major steps at the wheel of power were the release of political detainees and setting a timetable for troop withdrawal from ECOMOG's peacekeeping mission in Liberia.
- The government also initiated an audit of the accounts of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and presented a bill for banning three major draconian decrees.
- Shonekan was too enmeshed in resolving the fallout from the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election to focus on foreign policy.

- **Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007)**
- Obasanjo, was among those accused by Abacha for plotting to overthrow his government.
- He was among those tried and sentenced by the Military tribunal.
- When Abubakar became the Head of State, he introduced a short transition programme.
- Apart from being a beneficiary of political pardon initiated by the Abdulsami Abubakar, Obasanjo was released from prison, anointed and crowned PDP's Presidential flag-bearer.
- He subsequently won the presidential election of 1999. As president-elect, Obasanjo embarked on extensive overseas travels.
- This was understandable as the events of the previous six years, starting from 1993 led to the country being ostracized.

- Obasanjo's top foreign policy priority was to restore Nigeria's international reputation.
- In his inaugural speech during the hand-over ceremony, Obasanjo asserted:
 - "We shall pursue a dynamic foreign policy to promote friendly relations with all nations and will continue to play a constructive role in the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity and other international bodies. We shall continue to honour existing agreements between Nigeria and other countries. It is our resolve to restore Nigeria fully to her previous prestigious position in the community of nations."
- What followed was extensive tour by the president and his foreign affairs minister to Africa, Europe, Asia and the Americas to promote Nigeria's image.
- According to some sources, as at mid August 2002, Obasanjo had made one hundred and thirteen trips and was out of the country for a total period of 340 days.
- In other words, in a period of three years, the President has been out of the country for a period of a year less two weeks.

- Obasanjo's tours paid off. Soon after his inauguration, Nigeria was readmitted to the Commonwealth of Nations.
- Sanctions were lifted.
- In addition to restoring Nigeria's international reputation, its foreign policy clearly focused on economic diplomacy which was defined in terms of attracting foreign direct investments/ partnerships from the West in order to engender economic development.
- Thus, Nigeria created structures that would help in further bringing the country into greater reckoning in Africa, thereby making for peace and development in the continent.
- This was done through:
 - i) the creation of important offices for the promotion of African integration and support for African unity – shown through the Ministry of Cooperation and Integration in Africa; and,

- ii) maintenance of peace and security in the West African sub-region
 - Demonstrated by Nigeria's leadership role in the formation and funding of ECOMOG,
 - Membership of the Gulf of Guinea Commission.
- At the African level, Nigeria did not move away from its traditional Afrocentric stance. According to Obasanjo (2005:16);
 - "I believe that Africa should remain the centerpiece of our foreign policy. The renewed determination of African leaders, our strengthening of regional economic communities, the restructuring of the OAU into the AU, and a better global disposition towards Africa, the AU and the AU's programme, NEPAD, are indicators that we are indeed in a new Africa. The Africa that should be united, integrated, devoid of conflicts and violence, especially in the contemporary global system where there is no chronic conflicting ideological divide".

- With regard to Africa, in 1999, Nigeria began pulling out of Sierra Leone, to cut costs and redirect resources to the Niger Delta, where the local security situation had deteriorated.
- In the West African subregion, Obasanjo presented himself as a peacekeeper.
- When the International Court of Justice ruled in 2002 that the contested Bakassi Peninsula belonged to Cameroon, Obasanjo contained intense Nigerian opposition to the verdict and initiated implementation efforts.
- Obasanjo also reiterated Nigeria's support for ECOWAS and his desire to pursue more extensive regional integration.

- **The Highpoints of Obasanjo's Foreign Policy.**
- i) Nigeria played a key role in the conceptualization of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and shifted its focus from conflicts to economic development.
- ii) Obasanjo's overseas trips provided a platform that secured the commitment of such countries as Switzerland, Britain, America, Belgium and Germany, among others to repatriate Nigeria's stolen fund.
- iii) Diaspora engagement.
- President Obasanjo routinely interacted and dialogued with Nigerian communities in the countries he visited to discuss issues of common national interests and update Nigerian Diaspora on government policies, as well as solicit their contributions on possible ways of moving the country forward

- iv) Through an Open Skies Agreement with the US Airspace Agency in 1999, the Obasanjo government also secured the lifting of ban on direct flight between Nigeria and the US which had been in place since the time of Gen. Abacha.
- The country, to an appreciable degree, regained its lost status as the hub of air and sea transportation in Africa. More international and domestic airlines came on board through private initiatives.
- v) Nigeria assumed the leadership of several international organisations such as: ECOWAS, AU, and G-77.
- It also hosted very important international summits thereby attracting foreign players to Nigeria. All these imply that the international system has restored its confidence in Nigeria.

- vi) Securing debt relief for Nigeria. Before Olusegun Obasanjo became president in 1999, Nigeria was highly indebted as its external debt profile was huge. Through Obasanjo's efforts, Nigeria secured debt relief of \$18 billion from the Paris and London clubs.
- vii) Preservation of democracy in Africa. Under President Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria became a principal promoter of democratic rule in Africa.
- Obasanjo's administration resisted government change through coup d'état:
 - ✓ Nigeria single-handedly reversed the coup in Sao Tome and Principe that toppled the country's president, Fredrique de Menezes who had incidentally visited Nigeria to attend the Leon Sullivan summit. The Nigerian government ensured the return of de Menezes to power.
 - ✓ Another instance was in Guinea-Bissau where the government of Kumba Yala was overthrown. Nigeria and other countries ensured immediate commencement of a transition programme to civil rule in Guinea- Bissau.

- viii) Regional Economic Integration. On the regional economic integration front, Nigeria under President Obasanjo pursued the West African Gas Pipeline Project (WAPCO) envisaged to facilitate the supply of natural gas to four countries in West Africa – i.e. Benin, Ghana, Togo, and subsequently Cote d'Ivoire.
- The country could not meet the 2006 deadline slated for the completion of the project due to unforeseen challenges, including the crisis in the Niger Delta.
- ix) Pursuit of African development. In connection with Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Bouteflika of Algeria, Obasanjo initiated the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)
- Obasanjo was instrumental in gathering African leaders to work towards establishing a code of conduct in economic and political reforms that would satisfy the conditions and expectations of Western donors.

- At the June 2001 Group of Eight summit in Genoa, Italy, Obasanjo was one of the four leading African Heads of State to unveil an African initiated plan called the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).
- NEPAD is designed to garner aid from donors in return for African commitments to good governance.
- x) Nigeria's capital territory, Abuja became a diplomatic centre for peaceful settlement of many intra and inter-state conflicts involving African countries.
- Obasanjo created an office in the presidency on conflict resolution with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and special Envoy on Conflict Resolution in Africa.

- Nigeria's enviable commitment towards solving African problems could also be seen in various peace and mediation talks it hosted, namely:
 - a) mediation talks between Sudanese government and Darfurian rebel factions.
 - b) mediated severally between various rebel factions in the Liberian crisis and eventually granted asylum to the former Liberian President Charles Taylor in order to end crisis in that country.
 - c) Before this, Somalia's Siad Barre was granted asylum here in Nigeria. Yormie Johnson of Liberia also found a home in this place.
 - d) Further to this, the restoration to power of the President of Sao Tome and Principe, Mr. Frederique Menezes, after military take-over in July 2003 was largely credited to Nigeria under the leadership of Obasanjo.

- e) In a similar vein, Nigeria succeeded in ensuring that due constitutional process was followed in installing democratically elected government in Togo, after the death of President Gnassingbe Eyadema in February, 2005.
- f) In fact, the Nigerian Army and police were massively deployed on peace keeping missions in different parts of Africa all in a bid to help bring peace and security in Africa.
- Thus, in the 2000, the sum of N1.8 billion was approved for a contract to supply equipment and facilities to the Nigerian soldiers in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo, while only the sum of N0.95 billion was proposed by the Federal Military of Finance for all the three arms of the Nigerian armed forces.

- Shortcomings of Obasanjo's foreign policy were rooted in domestic issues such as the Niger Delta crises.
- The crises discouraged the free inflow of oil foreign investors as they considered their life unsafe in the Niger Delta region. There were cases of kidnapping, hostage taking, bunkering, etc.
- Another shortcoming of Obasanjo's foreign policy was corruption.
- Nigeria consistently occupied the lowest rung in the global corruption ladder. The ambivalence of the Obasanjo administration despite being credited with establishing institutional frameworks for fighting corruption viz, ICPC and EFCC, tended to frustrate Nigeria's foreign policy under Obasanjo.
- Also, Obasanjo's domestic policies on infrastructural development yielded little which in turn negatively affected the conduct of foreign relations especially in the area of wooing investors to the country.
- Nigeria did not witness a significant improvement in infrastructure in eight years of Obasanjo's civilian administration.

- Moreover, given that Obasanjo tended to overshadow his foreign affairs ministers, the progress made in foreign policy during his era was overshadowed by his attempt to stay put in office through various means which eventually did not succeed and which made him lose some of the respect the international community had for him at the inception of his administration in 1999.

- **Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007-2010)**
- President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua was in office from May 29, 2007 to May 5, 2010, when he died from a condition that was never made public.
- Yar'Adua came to power through the highly controversial 2007 presidential election.
- He publicly acknowledged the flaws in the election that brought him to power, becoming the first Nigeria leader to do so.
- He proposed a national unity government and in late June 2007, two opposition parties, All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and the Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA), agreed to join the government.
- On June 28, 2007, Yar'Adua publicised his assets declaration from May, which showed that he had N856, 452,892 (US\$5.8 million) in assets, N19 million (US\$0.1 million) of which belonged to his wife. He also had N88, 793,269.77 (US\$0.5 million) in liabilities. He was the first Nigerian leader to publicly declare his assets.

- The hallmark of the Yar'Adua government was his Seven-point Agenda for development, involving massive investment in the improvement of critical infrastructure – power, transportation, telecommunications, national gas infrastructure – Niger Delta; food security; human capital; land tenure changes and home ownership; national security and intelligence; and wealth creation.
- Yar'Adua's approach to the Niger Delta crisis was legendary.
- His amnesty programme and other peace initiatives helped to restore considerable peace and confidence in the region where successive governments – even military regimes – could not restore peace through strong-arm tactics.
- President Yar'Adua's Administration made a radical and positivist step toward something very unique and so different – citizenship diplomacy.

- Ojo Maduekwe, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, declared that the Yar'Adua administration will espouse what he called Citizens Diplomacy.
- This foreign policy thrust was directed towards the enhancement of the country's citizens world over.
- Maduekwe described the new thrust of Nigeria's foreign policy as the diplomacy of consequence, such that if you are nice to Nigeria, Nigeria would be nice to you. If you are hostile to Nigeria, Nigeria would be hostile to you.
- In essence, the era of flamboyant magnanimity and reckless foreign spending had gone. The times of banking on intangible gain or self deception, of playing the big brother role in Africa was ruefully and painfully seen as wasted years.
- Citizenship Diplomacy therefore meant - expect Nigeria to pay you back in your own coin.

- It is a sort of tit-for-tat or counter-strike diplomacy; meaning that, Nigeria must take a serious corresponding action, or its pound of flesh, should any country violate the human dignity of its citizens residing in its land.
- Here, as in physics, actions and reactions must be equal and opposite, and directly proportional and equilateral.
- Mainly, the philosophy of citizenship diplomacy became a child of necessity owing to a lifelong ill treatment meted to Nigerian citizens abroad, and in most cases, coming from countries that had been or are still beneficiaries of Nigeria's generosity.
- Thus, the emphasis on the citizen-centred foreign policy was all about the welfare of the Nigerian citizens both home and abroad.

- This idea is premised on the assumption that a happier citizenry home and abroad, would better project the country's image, prestige and glory anywhere in the world.
- This is what is referred to as "Track-Two-Diplomacy".
- Simply put, rather than relying wholly on Track I Diplomacy (i.e. work of actual diplomats at the embassies), the Yar'Adua's government engaged the strategy of scientific exchanges, cultural interrelationships, and international sporting events to complement official diplomacy.
- A step taken by the Yar'Adua Administration in this regard was the negotiation for exchange of prisoners with other countries.

- In fact, the administration made serious efforts to intervene in the cases of over twenty thousand Nigerians serving merited and unmerited jail terms in prisons across Europe and Africa.
- According to some reports, Nigerians serving jail sentences across the world included 1,500 in Libya; 391 in India; 15 in Nepal; 14 in Japan; 13 in Canada; 40 in Niger Republic; 150 in Togo; 1400 in Britain, etc).
- Also, various attempts were made, howbeit in vain, to negotiate death sentences passed on some Nigerians in the Arab world and elsewhere.
- Near examples were the cases of two Nigerian citizens in Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, where the governments of these two countries went ahead to execute the victims amidst pleas from the Nigerian government to hold action.

- Again, the Yar'Adua Administration made a belated effort to hold on to the execution of Mr. Samuel Iwuchukwu Okoye and Hansen Anthony Nwaolisa by the Indonesian government in June 2008.
- Also, about a dozen and half of Nigerian citizens, over 16 illustrious Nigerians, were gruesomely murdered in Equatorial Guinea; while 128 others were languishing in prison on alleged plot to overthrow the government of Equatorial Guinea.
- In all these, no tangible retaliatory statement or action was either heard or taken by the Nigerian government.
- This has made Omenma (2009:74) to contend that citizen diplomacy was “a mere policy deception and nothing more since its actual connotation-retaliatory or reciprocal diplomacy- is not reflected in the Yar'Adua government's foreign relations.

- The truth of the matter is that a country that cannot offer its citizens basic amenities despite the enormous wealth accruing to it from diverse resources may not be serious about protecting the interests of its citizens whether in Nigeria or outside the shores of the country.
- Similarly, a country that is dependent and whose economic sectors are virtually comatose cannot impose its will on other countries to treat its citizens right.
- This is so because those other countries know that Nigeria cannot really do anything, and its leadership would not have the will, to do anything even if provoked.

- Yar'Adua also continued in the tradition of Afrocentric foreign policy.
- In a televised question-and-answer session forum tagged "Media Chat" held in Abuja on May 29, 2008 , Yar'Adua said Nigeria was working to provide leadership in efforts to bring Africa together.
- He further asserted that efforts were being made to integrate the continent economically before political integration.
- Another important trend in the foreign relations of this regime was the bilateral security agreement struck with some western countries.
- Mainly, important liberalization strategies were articulated and relevant steps taken to effectively engage the country in the regime of Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union in order to enhance the capacity of trade as an "engine of growth".

- As ECOWAS Chairman, having taken over from President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso in 2009, Yar'Adua diligently sought to securitize Nigeria and the continent in general.
- The plan was primarily to import security paraphernalia from US and other willing western nations to tackle the hydra-headed issues of Gulf of Guinea piracy and militancy.
- However, Yar'Adua, as a chairman of the ECOWAS has under a regional arrangement sanctioned and expelled Niger Republic under President Mamadu Tanjan who violated the nation's law to reinstate himself in power.

- **Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015)**
- Goodluck Jonathan was Vice President to Umaru Yar'Adua between 2007 and 2010.
- Following Yar'Adua's long absence due to ill-health, Jonathan was made the Acting President.
- Jonathan's emergence as the Acting President was not easy as many vested political interest groups worked hard to scuttle his ascension to acting capacity.
- Yar'Adua tended to administer Nigeria more personally than institutionally.
- Thus, in his absence due to ill-health, his Vice, Goodluck Jonathan, could not generally stand in for him despite constitutional provision recognizing such deputation.
- As Nwankwo (2013) observed, "the consequence was that the ship of the Nigerian State was sailing rudderless on the international waters of foreign policy".

- The effect was that Nigerian government was seemingly headless as it could not attend important international meetings, lost many positions in multilateral associations, forsook obligations, and found itself in a situation where many of its allies started wondering what had gone wrong with Nigeria.
- The long absence of Yar'Adua from governance and clueless responses of government officials led some groups to approach the court for the interpretation of the Nigerian constitution.
- On the 13th January 2010, a federal high court held that Jonathan as Vice president was empowered by the constitution to exercise the powers of the state as well as carry out State affairs while President Yar'Adua 'received medical treatment in Saudi Arabia'.
- Despite the court ruling on the matter, it took extra constitutional consultations between some Governors and the Senate to actually get Jonathan to function as Acting President on February 9th, 2010.
- However, it was on 6th May 2010 following the formal announcement of the death of Yar'Adua and swearing in of Jonathan that he began to exercise the full powers of the state.

- Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 was articulated under the administration of Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007 – 2010).
- The vision captures among other things, the road map and blueprint to achieving national economic growth and becoming one of the twenty largest economies in the world by 2020 or more specifically becoming one of the twenty most developed countries by the year 2020(NTWG, 2009).
- The blueprint which was presented to Nigerians in November of 2007, formed the basis for various technical groups including the one on foreign policy, to workout actionable objectives.
- Against this background, the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) on foreign policy component articulated in 2009 specific foreign policy objectives for the vision as follows:
 - i. Articulate a better image for Nigeria and improve its relationship with the outside world by cultivating goodwill for Nigeria;

- ii. Seek closer and better relations with the major and emerging powers;
- iii. Pursue the acquisition and transfer of technology, promotion of trade, investment and cultural relations to boost Nigeria's ailing economy;
- iv. Facilitate rapid and sustained economic growth and development;
- v. Assist Nigeria to achieve systemic equilibrium, peace, stability and good governance;
- vi. Ensure Nigeria's leadership role in Africa and the ECOWAS region is sustained and safeguarded;
- vii. Use diplomacy to persuade Nigerians in the Diaspora to be part of nation building efforts;
- viii. Assist Nigeria in securing a permanent seat in the United nation's Security Council

- ix. Ensure Nigeria's strategic role and military capability;
- x. Seek and encourage high level visits by government officials and private sector to countries abroad that have strategic relevance to Nigeria's interests and vice-versa, for achievement of our goals in vision 20:2020;
- xi. Use success stories elsewhere and domesticate these for national Interest;
- xii. Ensure Nigeria's domestication and compliance with bilateral and multilateral obligations and treaties.
- Along the lines envisioned by NTWG on foreign policy, these objectives serve as benchmarks for the evaluation of Nigeria's foreign policy. It becomes, therefore pertinent to interrogate the relative extent to which the nation's foreign policy under President Jonathan has been dynamic, proactive and resilient in the pursuit of the agenda enunciated in the vision using the above benchmarks. More specifically, to what extent has the president's actions and reactions on the global stage leveraged Nigeria's large economy and population to harness the opportunities in the global environment for sustainable socio-economic development of the country and attainment of the Vision?

- In his capacity as Acting President, Jonathan embarked on a number of diplomatic shuttles, as part of a deliberate attempt to reassure the world that Nigeria was well and secure despite the internal political challenges especially with the challenges of succession it was going through then.
- One of the shuttles took him to the USA where he met with his American counterpart. The delisting of Nigeria from the discriminatory rule of the Department of Homeland Security on special screening of passengers on international flights to the United States that specifically targeted Nigerians (consequent upon the Christmas day attempted bombing a US airline by a Nigerian) was the effect of the re-invigorated diplomatic contact.
- Earlier he recalled Nigeria's Ambassador to Libya in protest of suggestion by Muammar Gaddafi that Nigeria should separate into a Muslim North State and a Christian South.
- The action was intended to demonstrate Nigeria's objection to interference in its internal affairs by any State.

- The relationship between Nigeria and US continued to improve under Jonathan as exemplified by the signing of the first US–Nigeria Bi-national Commission in April 2010.
- The commission is intended to foster a platform for sustained, bilateral, high-level dialogue to promote and increase diplomatic, economic and security co-operation between the two countries.
- The foreign policy agenda of Yar'Adua of 'Citizen Diplomacy' was followed up by Jonathan with visible actions.
- He expanded the mobilisation of Nigerians in Diaspora for national development by encouraging the formation of the Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation (NIDO) in all countries where this platform was not in existence.
- His prompt response to the denigrating deportation of Nigerians by South Africa sent a very strong signal that Nigeria had come of age" and that any attempt to denigrate it would have consequences. His diplomacy of consequence was one with visible actions. The diplomatic way he was able to manage the said Nigeria-South Africa face-off was highly welcomed by Nigerians.

- He was also quick to order the evacuation of Nigerians trapped in the crisis-torn countries like Libya in 2011 and Egypt in January 2012.
- In fact Nigeria was the first to airlift her citizens from Egypt. In January 2012 Nigeria hosted the fifth Nigeria/EU dialogue aimed at streamlining migration in a globalizing world and in the interest of all parties. These affirmative action's projected vividly the citizen centred focus of Nigeria's Foreign Policy.
- Shortly after his re-election as the president of Nigeria, Jonathan directed a review of Nigeria's foreign policy, "to reflect current realities".
- According to him, "after 50 years of independence, it is time to review the country's foreign policy, in line with modern realities and international developments" (<http://dailytimes.com.ng>).
- In his address to the Presidential Advisory Committee on Foreign Affairs, earlier setup by Yar'Adua, he hinted the direction of the review, namely, foreign policy with focus on Nigeria's domestic priorities.

- Thus, in a follow up seminar the President clearly noted that although the country had played a leading and facilitating role in the emancipation of the African continent from colonialism, racial discrimination and reintegration in the past, there was now need to focus on new priorities and challenges, such as job creation, economic progress, poverty eradication and security, which, he said, were topmost on the nation's national agenda.
- Jonathan's administration recorded more successes such as: the emergence of Nigeria as number one investment destination in Africa with \$8.9 billion according to UNCTAD's 2012 Investment Report.
- Nigeria's visibility on the globe outside the peacekeeping/peace enforcement operations began picking up under the regime.
- Through lobbying and campaigning, Nigerian candidates got into positions in international organizations, namely:
 - Presidency of the Executive Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) based in Montreal, Canada;
 - Membership of UN Committee on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
 - AU Commissioner for Political Affairs;

- Commissioner Political, Peace and Security at the ECOWAS Commission.
- In October 2011 Nigeria was also elected to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC);
- Vice Presidency of INTERPOL representing Africa.
- In November the same year, Nigeria was elected to the Executive Board of UNESCO for a term of four years;
- The then Nigeria's Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Hon. Mohammed Bello Adoke, was re-elected to the International Law Commission;
- The election of Dr. Chile Eboe-Osuji as one of the six judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC); and,
- The election of Nigeria as the first President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: UN Women

- There are divergent positions about how to score Jonathan's administration in the area of foreign policy.
- Some scholars contend that measured in terms of Nigeria's visibility in the global community and the amount of foreign direct investment and foreign trade inflow which are indices of effective engagement with outside world, Nigeria under Jonathan made significant progress touching all the objectives of the Vision 20:2020.
- They argue that these efforts earned the Nigerian President the international recognition of being among 100 most influential leaders of the world in 2012 by Times International magazine.
- These scholars concede that challenges, however, still abound in all the spheres including the key priorities in his transformation agenda.

- Some other scholars contend that Nigeria's foreign policy under Jonathan was dismal.
- To them, the basis for this view included:
 - Nigeria lost its teeth in the African Union (AU).
 - Jonathan was absent at the 50th anniversary of the AU and in the continental effort to find peace in the Central African Republic, Sudan and Congo.
 - Nigeria failed to take a driver's seat to help the people of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea in the height of their Ebola days.
 - Nigeria betrayed the people of Palestine by abstaining from voting for their statehood in the United Nations (UN).
 - Nigeria helplessly watched as thousands of African youths sank in the Mediterranean in attempts to cross over to Europe.
 - Nigeria attracted condemnation from other African countries for depending on France to come and fight our home-grown terrorism in the Northeast.
 - Nigeria had no official position on the chaos in Libya and the dangerous presence of ISIS in the continent.