

NATIONAL ORIENTATION AGENCY

in collaboration with

KONRAD-ADENAUER-STIFTUNG

PRESENTS

A ONE DAY CITIZENS CONVERSATION WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS



Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung

Lecture:

**CONSTITUENTS FINANCIAL NEEDS ARE NOT PART OF
LEGISLATORS' FUNCTIONS**

**Sub theme :Then Who is responsible for the constituents financial
needs in a volatile economy not of the constituents making?**

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❧ BIOGRAPHY

❧ Dr. Tony Marinho is a practicing obstetrician and gynaecologist in Ibadan, Nigeria. He went to St Gregory's College Ikoyi Lagos where he became Head Boy in 1967.

❧ He is a medal winning medical graduate of the University of Ibadan where he was regularly on stage at the Arts Theatre. He served Youth Corps in Plateau State where he wrote his first book - The Victim.

Dr. Tony Marinho ,Educare Trust Foundation

- ❧ He did post graduate training at the University College Hospital, Ibadan. From there he spent all his working life in and around Ibadan, as Associate lecturer and Consultant gynaecologist. He has played an active role in the Association of Nigerian Authors and is the author of several books for children, novels and two collections of poetry. He is also responsible for writing a play, Why UI? which was successfully performed at the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan in 1999. He is a social critic, writing regularly in the press on issues and addressing public fora around the country and abroad.
- ❧ He founded and runs with other like minds an education and health youth based NGO called Educare Trust.

In conclusion

1. We require **Attitudinal And Moral Compass Change** strategies for both political and citizen classes.
2. Citizens must be appealed to by a media outreach and fora like this to reduce the need to accost the politicians for funds to substitute for the failures of politics- unemployment, ill-health, no scholarships, high interest rates, and meet the challenges of an '*I de manage*' mentality. 'NOBODY WANTS TO BEG'.
3. We must fight corruption to a standstill especially instigated and perpetrated by political leverage
4. Politicians require to pass and 'oversight' the implementation of 'Social Contract Laws' that will provide the constituents the finances or adequate substitute services.

In conclusion- contd



5. Each politician/legislator must lower his or her own 'Financial Expectations Of The Office' and profile to become 'People's politician/legislator'.
6. We must fight for legislation to give politicians only the SAP, Salaries Allowance, Perks, they need and not to justify or satisfy the greed of some among them. This is best done by publishing every kobo they earn.
7. We must ensure the politician and the party have no legislative access to manipulate the budget for personal benefits at all levels of government and in MDAs
8. Budget/contract padding by political parties, politicians, civil servants and contractors must be curtailed as the method is used for corrupt enrichment

We assume that 'NOBODY WANTS TO BEG' but are we making a mistake?

Why do some Nigerians prefer to EXTORT through begging and harassment?

Why does LAZINESS make them want to transfer their personal family burdens onto the legislators?

Why do some Nigerians CREATE JOBS FOR THEMSELVES AS MIDDLEMEN and women and as IDLE MEN and women expecting a handout just because a person takes up a legislative political office?

How do we encourage an ATTITUDINAL CHANGE resulting in a REDUCTION in FINANCIAL DEMANDS in the minds of area boys and girls, street urchins AND EVEN ADULTS USED TO SUCKING POLITICIANS DRY IN THE NAME OF blackmail or sob-stories or to seek productive avenues to develop and employ themselves? Our motor-parks are awash with good examples of bad practices.

We must redefine the word 'youth' in this country where youth is almost synonymous with irresponsible behaviour, unreliability, undependability and immaturity in thought, action and deed. Can we safely say that anyone who can join the armed forces, bear arms and die for Nigeria, is to be considered and treated as a youth? In developing countries 18 year olds and above are called and held accountable as 'adults' when arrested for crimes and when being rewarded for services. They would take you to task if you called them a youth.

The other Nigerian definition is anyone between 15-30 or even 40 years old. This wide age range is a mischievous political definition to cripple the ambition of the 15-40 year olds to seek high political leadership positions so that the old guard will not leave.

These grown people mis-called 'youth' therefore still think less of themselves and go around seeking 'pocket money', handouts and other perks etcetera instead of empowering themselves financially with self-employment and also knowledge to question and make development demands from their legislators.

We require ATTITUDINAL CHANGE in this group of citizens, indeed in all citizens. The slogan should be 'FROM 18, AM A RESPONSIBLE ADULT, NOT A BEGGER, THUG OR HANGER-ON' CAMPAIGN using media TV, radio, social message programmes. This will be aimed at encouraging people to change with short 10-60 second motivational adverts, short documentaries on the problem, and longer stories in Nollywood films, ATTITUDINAL CHANGE ADVERT inserts during high view programmes like sports especially football matches, popular soap operas.

Story lines in Nija-music, **Attitudinal Change Ambassadors** just like NOA, WAI brigade can help and they can be identified Male and female from peer group achievers. Young graduates, Young workers doing any job or with gainful employment. Respected Stars of film, stage and music, Lagbaja springs to mind for Oyo State.

I beg, I beg, I nobe area boy. I am an area man and I help people when I can. I no de harass, I n de disgrace, I no de beg. I am young but I work. Make no mistake I n de take. I earn my way. I take my pay. I am 18 going places, give me a job, not your petty cash.

The media should include the idea that *'by begging from politicians and legislators you are encouraging them to seek/steal funds to fulfil your needs'*.

The background is as follows....

The perception of the politician by the constituent is dependent on the historical persona and presentation of the politician, not the misinterpretation of the constituent. Where is the poor politician?

The tsunami of multi billion naira and even dollar corruption budget, contract, pension scams, scandals and allegations, our empty treasury, our lack of saving culture characterised by a paltry \$1b when Saudi Arabia is planning \$1trillion and a Saudi-Egypt Bridge, our lack of the Second Niger Bridge, our 4,000Mw of power when South Africa has 45,000Mw for 45m post-apartheid citizens, our 14-17m housing deficit for 130m+, our children streaming abroad for basic not top-notch education, our expensive political class so difficult to maintain in the style to which they quickly became re-accustomed after repeated military incursion into administration, our MDAs steeped in inefficiency, poor delivery and civil service corruption.

We must add the huge calamity of corruption and political court adjourned, lack of jurisdiction and judge-bias causing delayed and denied legal cases estimated by some to cost 10-25% of most looted funds a figure routinely factored into theft.

Let us recall how many times politicians have scuttled good projects for vindictive, corrupt or other perhaps cogent or noble reasons. President Buhari is trying to execute the Lagos Calabar Railway. Politicians are accused of removed it from the budget without consultation. Budget padding did not start in 2016 but back in the 1960s and is not the preserve of civil servants.

Politicians and political parties are equally expert in coercive padding of budgets and strippers of budgets once passed.

And finally our citizens are brought out every four years for foreign media deception to endorse the old or bring in a new set of hands to run the country down to ground zero while charged with lifting it up to developed nation status.

All these have drained the country dry and rendered the citizens with lower and lower expectations from governance and democracy- now taken with apathy. But whichever party wins, seizes or steals and sits in the democracy driving seat, the citizens face squarely still the burden of their family, business and social responsibilities remains.

This burden grows by the day in the face of a falling volume of naira and the falling naira value due to falling oil prices and failure to save for a tsunami day, rising joblessness and poor returns on honest business ventures, multiple taxation, draconian democracy delivery and an almost absence of adequate services and social amenities.

~~Generator power, water tanker water, okada motorcycle mono-transport~~ are all far more expensive than the grid, pipe-borne water and bus mass transport coupled with an epidemic of potholes, bad roads and gridlocked traffic.

A good summary would be Powerlessness, Petrolessness, Pensionlessness, Salarylessness, nairalessness, Joblessness and Min of Workslessness@2016?? All of which were inherited by the present administration and is adversely affecting the smooth take off of the current regime.

- ❧ This is the current reality in the Nigeria where politicians and constituents struggle with each other for 'Selfish Vs Survival' acquisition of a slice or a crumb of the national, state or LGA cake. To date the constituents have always been the losers. This unfortunate trend need to be corrected and unarguably the process of amelioration is in progress it may only take a little time to manifest
- ❧ Though well mouthed as 'for the common good' most policies and projects 'bite the dust' or 'bite the people' and end up in the dustbin of mystery and history. Good projects are starved of funds and bad projects thrive in the quagmire of corruption and extortion. There is a suggestion that presented bills have a 'running' cost and 'presentation fee'. Is that true?
- ❧ The citizen is resident in Nigeria which has a **Transparency International Index position of 136** and a high **Resident In-Country Corruption** of an estimated 10-70 or even 100% in some projects killing the country. The citizen is more than averagely poor while his political counterpart is far more than averagely rich, greedy beyond the needy with the citizen's money.

The citizen requiring a healing and helping hand looks to anyone better than him or her to lend that hand.

But the traditional helping hand institution – **The Extended Family – the biggest traditional and cultural zero, interest blood relationship is only security, NGO/bank in Africa and** Nigeria has been assaulted by the Western trained tax man who, in a very un-African way, recognises only the Western 'nuclear family of parents +4 children' and ignores the 'need to feed' unemployed adult youth till 30 or more, grandparents, siblings and the genuine extended family and the 'family hangers on' for every working adult in Nigeria. In addition 'communal collections' and friends-at-work '*esusu*' and '*ajo*' monthly collections with one predetermined 'recipient' every month have been destroyed by the adverse employment conditions –no salary, no pension, no job - and the general economic turn down. Brother and sister in a very un-Africa way now closes door on sister and brother and nephew and niece in need.

- ❧ We must admit that the '**politician as moneybags**' is largely a creation of some politicians themselves, not the citizenry who quickly buy into the idea with 'praise and worship' led by area-boys and thugs in orchestra of upliftingly deceptive choruses of '*for the Baba-Ke*' and '*Chairman*'!
- ❧ Politicians are often accompanied by a needless human retinue of expectant hangers on, all costing the citizens maintenance money. Politicians wear expensive clothes and jewellery costing the citizens' money and are driven in costly cars costing citizens' money and even throw citizens' money at passers-by be they thugs threatening them or adoring fans or innocent onlookers -all costing citizens' money. Travel is another matter where politicians use the citizens' money to arrogate to themselves entire charter flights or the first class '*I never travel less than first class mentality*' cabin to junket to political BBBB Business, Birthdays, Betrothals, Burials and Book-launches -a major 'first line charge' and preoccupation of the political class. In hotels they arrogate to themselves suites '*suitable to their self-adjudged status*' in the Sheratons and NICON NUGAs of Nigeria as of right.

✎ Every politician has at least one car and [probably several] but the first order of business in the life of every assembly is to give them a *citizen-paid-for* new car to be cancelled against a travel allowance over four years. This amounts to a free car every four years. But who pays for these excesses while their counterparts in the UK use personal cars and even bicycles or public transport, economy tickets and tiny rooms in tiny flats in first class London to give one example? The answer is public funds directly or indirectly through corruption and corrupt manipulation of laws. But the constituents do not have such an option and must pay for any loans at 25% if available at all. Beyond their political life in actual office, they demand from a dying economy certain secret services like life salaries, pensions, severance pay, soft landing allowances.

Must developed states are developed because there is 'SEPARATION OF PARTY FUNDING AND GOVERNMENT BUDGETS'. In Nigeria it is clearly established that eventually all 'POLITICAL MONEY COMES FROM THE GOVERNMENT BUDGET OR EVEN IF DONATED IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT JUICY APPOINTMENTS, PADDED BUDGETS AND INFLATED CONTRACTS OR OTHER MEANS LIKE EASY ACCESS TO CBN OR STATE BUDGETS AND EASY DIVERSION OF FUNDS FROM ONE BUDGET LINE AND HEADING TO ANOTEHR WILL BE USED FOR THE POLITICAL MONEYBAG DONORS TO 'RECOVER' THEIR 'DONATION' WITH 1000% INTEREST. All MONEY COMES FROM THE CITIZEN AND DEPRIVES THE CITIZEN OF RIGHTS TO SERVICES UNDER A DEMOCRACY- NOT 'DIVIDENDS OF DEMOCRACY' WHICH ARE REALLY EXTRAORDINARY BENEFITS OF DEMOCRACY.

☞ So why will the citizens not demand their own **POUND OF FLESH** from this multiple evidence of personal largess? Did I forget to mention the secret shroud around the **'Salaries and Perks'** that are **SAPing the country dry**? Or the mysterious constituency allowances, CA. The politicians deny that they have access to these funds and can only suggest for their **Constituency Projects**. Can they also impose contractors with the usual kickbacks to themselves? Irregularly, the politicians call the masses for a meal and share a tiny share in their accumulated SAPed funds on 50 lethal murderous motorcycles unleashing another round in the **'THE OKADA EPIDEMIC'** of murder, injury and hospitalisation of citizens and creation of widows, widowers, cripples and orphans to day numbering nationwide in their millions. Let us not mention the thousands of abled-bodied youth who have left the farms nationwide to ride okada and break their heads without crash helmets.

The citizens' appetite grew to accommodate the growth of the politician's advertised financial and personal ego and perceived size of his pocket –from doubtful sources. Perhaps politicians are asked pay ~~hospital bills, school bills and one year rent~~ of citizens because of the sharp reduction scholarships at all levels and quality free health services. Citizens have no access to '**monthly payment of house rent**' as there is a 14-17million housing deficit leading to demands of one or two year rent in advance. **Can citizens demand from politicians the legislative policies to counter these problems?**

It is clear that only **provision and execution of creative policies** which stimulate improvements in access to jobs, health, education and housing societal safety nets will reduce the backlog genuine demands on genuine service oriented politicians.

- ❧ Politicians are used to throwing money around to grovelling masses. Can they change or will just mean they keep even more of the money they take as of right. Be aware that a law may not be just and morally sound just because it is a law. All Nigerians are aware of the various policies initiate by **politicians to provide themselves** with gratuity, soft landing, pensions, and severance payments after only 4 years of service. Meanwhile our 30 year serving citizens are denied salaries and our pensioners remain unpaid for years.
- ❧ Politicians may be afraid of saying “I can’t” when asked for help even when they cannot so where do they get the money? Even so-called constituency project schemes have come under fire as scams.

❧ The electorate is unaware of the constitutional limit of the law makers to **responsibility for laws and project monitoring**. Note that project monitoring, also MDA monitoring and known as 'oversight function' in particular has also to a large extent been turned into a huge corruption corridor milking even government agencies through free travel, **'oversight overnight allowances'** gifting, brown envelope, perks and other irregularities. If the gifts and other gratification fail to meet the high expectations of politicians then the threat of media castigation of the organisation and public disgrace of its leadership is a very **real weapon of corruption**. Next time you see or hear a **bad 'Oversight Report'** read between the lines to see it may just be retaliation for **'poor welfare package'** for the oversight team. **Politicians are supposed not to have any party or personal access to budget and government funds or personal access to control of public resource organs under their purview as supervising legislators.**

Citizens need to be told that Legislators' duties can only legally be in accordance with the constitution. There is no moral or legal access to budgetary, extra budgetary or other slush fund votes. ~~But they have the power to change the laws to suit themselves and they sometimes do eg salaries for life!~~

There are three issues at stake.

1. The perpetual financial and social excesses of the political class –can they be curbed
2. The ignorance of the electorate about the 'normal' situation and role of 'normal politicians' -can the electorate be educated to pull back and observe
3. The lack of insulation of the public budget and MDAs from the party and the political class –can we prevent political interference in 'padding' and 'gifting' from MDAs the public understanding on the legislative duties for them to grapple with the fact that.

- ☞ Today we are trying to initiate a strategic reduction in the 'hangry' citizenry's demand for handouts from politicians. This citizens' attitudinal change will not come easy as the political landscape is littered with 'past bribery of the citizenry'. However **attitudinal change** has been helped by the absence of money even in the political system and we thank TSA and the anticorruption drive for this. NISER should provide the cost of an elected official in lives, time and money during the elections, election tribunals and salaries and perks and staff. This cost should be related to output.
- ☞ If legislators feel burdened by citizens' demands, and rightly so if they are innocent of all the above circumstances and allegations, the citizens feel cheated by legislators. Political education and social citizenship need to be emphasised.

- ❧ Every citizen and many groups which 'sell' or 'give' their allegiance to party and individual legislators in National and State House of Assembly may expect a 'return on their investment'. Such groups include the public, the Civil Society groups, Faith based organizations, artisans, community, transport and Trade groups and allied groups.
- ❧ The correct and proper identification of the duties and responsibilities of elected public officials must go in tandem with proper conduct by legislators and the correct and proper identification of the duties and responsibilities of constituents with proper conduct of the electorate.
- ❧ The citizens see the money that goes into elections and what is made during elections and they remember all the broken promises of all past political leaders and governments. Therefore they think that they are right in seeking their 'share' directly from each representative politician in need of a vote or acclaim or a 'rent a crowd' because they have such low expectations from governance and legislation.

❧ The citizens in the constituency have burning, urgent, usually cash financial family and business needs now not in 'the fullness of political time or when the policy comes out and is domesticated or practicalised or comes into force or. four years' time. They will never understand why with so much wealth displayed by the political class positive improvements are no made to the policies that govern their lives. They see the Bills in the Assembly for years and the Travesty Democracy bills governing their movement and business that tax and fine them and terminate their businesses, get them arrested and subjected to human rights abuses by 'state's men and women in uniform'.

- ❧ When politicians are elected, selected or seize office they know exactly the answer to the question **'What Is In It For Us?'** – money, power, money power even though that is not The Correct Answer it is The Corrupt Answer. Corruption is not only Pecuniary Corruption, it can also be Policy Corruption – killing other people's business while promoting one's own. Constituents are like corporate shareholders. Constituents have the right to ask for dividends from their company -the Nigerian government at state, LGA and Federal level. They ask the WIIFU question. **What's In It For Us?**
- ❧ Do not misunderstand me. For me **'Dividends Of Democracy'** are misrepresented in Nigerian by a wrong definition to reduce expectations of governance from the constituency. DODs are not the 'minimum standards' offered the people like the routine mundane health –drugs and clean hospitals- and education – empty exercise books, desks, library books- and transport –pothole filling, new roads- services expects of good governance so loudly touted as DODs by lazy nonperforming and corrupt politicians giving the constituents the crumbs that fall from the feast of governance.

it needs to be emphasised that DOD is part of ways to fertilise the ground for democracy without which the constituents will not feel the presence of the representatives.

Worldwide DODs are out of the box, spectacular, life changing, 'wow factor' achievements and services provided things that have eluded us to date. But denied of these real DODs the citizens have been forced to tow the toning down of the true meaning in the Nigerian political lexicon and jargon changing its meaning to **any tiny thing a politician does**.

- ❧ Until true federalism and properly and peacefully elected well-educated morally sound 'people programme oriented politicians, legislators and chairmen' occupy legislatures and LGAs we are going nowhere as a country or nation.
- ❧ Constituents know what they need to make life better. Politicians often do not. Legislators think and often act as if the only way to secure loyalty to themselves and their party is to bribe the constituents or pander to their petty needs while ignoring the development of the constituency.
- ❧ Please refer to the beginning again for the conclusions. Thank you and God Protect Nigeria. Amen.

NOA's SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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