

# Keeping Faith in A Stagnated Economy

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Whether we like it or not, the Nigerian condition politically and economically is calling very seriously for national attention especially from the perspectives of the youths who are always referred to as the "future". My recent participation in a Television program "Patitos Gang" as a senior panelist on the theme "Leadership, mentorship and next Generation along with senior development oriented persons such as Pat Utomi, Fela Durotoye, Linus Okorie and 'Gbenga Sesan (the Nigerian Youth IT Ambassador), opened my eyes to the imperatives of holding a national Youth summit independent of Government support and inputs.

This is with a view to generating a very valuable and reliable data on how to grow the national economy, because really, questions have been raised by various stakeholders as to the mystery behind the sudden over-performance of the Nigerian when he finds himself outside the shores of this country, and yet held down in terms of his productive capacity when he is in Nigeria. Questions have also been raised concerning the efficiency of our educational system, A recent report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) raised serious issues as to the employability of the Nigerian graduate, the global competitiveness of the Nigerian graduate has dwindled in the last decade. The national policy choice (if any) on capacity building for the Nigerian youth is faulty, non-implement able.

A recent survey by a team of researchers on how far the FGN has implemented his own national strategy otherwise known as NEEDS indicates that the government has largely undermined the document in favour of other political exigencies. This is an unacceptable practice as it has the capacity to undermine the Government commitment for national renewal, the 2006 budget is a far cry away from the Developmental objectives of the Government. Indeed, all National institutions such as the Police, power & energy, the Judiciary and other law enforcement agencies of government are in very serious need of restructuring and reforms for the purpose of galvanising enough confidence in the Nigerian society by both foreign visitors and Nigerian nationals.

The challenge therefore is for all institutions of Government to put in extra effort in their various schedules, the I don't-care attitude of yester-years must be discarded in place of positive attitude to work, the incidence of bribery and corruption must not only be fought through rhetoric by government officials but must be seen to be fought by all stakeholders. As a matter of fact, the real challenge is on the average Nigerian to say no to any vice that could derail the realisation of his bright future, by collaborating with each other to condemn acts such as the flouting of traffic laws, examination malpractice, get rich quick syndrome, unnecessary attempt to check out of the country without any clear mission.

And no matter the guise, discouraging each other from giving bribe to policemen along the roads, ensuring that all vehicle documents are valid to avoid been forced to

bribe the police. On a serious note, we must indeed begin to see beyond the Nigeria of today and attempt to forecast into the future how our nations should look like say in the next 10-25 years, and steps must be taken to realise them one after the other, great countries of today such as Japan, Singapore and China grew their economies out of nothing, but today they have become great stakeholders in a globalised world.

The leadership problems associated with democratising or transiting economies worldwide is not a Nigerian disease. Indeed countries such as South-Africa, Botswana, Chile, and Brazil have peculiar issues affecting their democratic development. The solution therefore lies on management of these peculiarities. The Nigerian democratic condition in terms of how it is stabilised to become full blown law based democracy is an all stakeholders affair. The 2007 general elections presents a great opportunity for the Nigerian youths to prove their worth by assisting and indeed volunteering to keep the ballot box sacred from the preying hands of the monster of rigging and manipulation. Keeping the faith therefore requires serious sacrifice on the part of the Nigerian Youths, the professional, the ordinary artisan on the streets, our men and women, the market people and indeed all segment of the Nigerian society.

We the youths of the country must continue to have faith in the nation. We must strive to rekindle hope in the society we are born, all our talents or potentials must be kinetised towards realising the national vision, growth and development, because really, if we allow the insignificant minority of 419 and cyber criminals to continue to dominate the national sphere of influence, then we may end up like Sodom and Gommorah. However if all energies are geared towards the collective realisation of the common good, then Nigeria may become the proverbial land where milk and honey are not only flowing, but security of lives and properties is preserved, for now and the future.