



## Workshop on Global Development and Religion in Nigeria

On October 2, 2017, the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) convened a workshop in Washington, D.C. to discuss the planned report on the intersection of development and religion in Nigeria. The meeting was part of WFDD's ongoing GIZ-supported research program that will review these issues in five countries, including Nigeria. The consultation convened a small group of leading scholars and development experts who brought diverse experience and perspectives on the complex intersections of religion and development in Nigeria (see Annex 1 for participants). The conversation allowed for a broad exploration of issues and challenges facing contemporary Nigeria, as well as potential avenues to improve coordination and action. The discussions helped to sharpen priority areas for analysis of the religious dimensions of key development topics. The consultation was preceded by an informal dinner, which included Cardinal John Onaiyakan, Sidi Jammeh, Jenn Hosler, and Jean Duff.

This note provides a short summary of consultation discussions, organized by the central development issues on which we plan to focus the analysis. There was general support for a focus on the issues set out in the preparatory concept note: namely a focus on growing religiously linked tensions (and peacebuilding efforts that focus on addressing them); governance and corruption; education; health; and religious dimensions of approaches on gender and youth. Looking ahead, WFDD will produce a country report and short policy briefs designed to encourage engagement and collaboration with faith-inspired actors working to achieve development goals in Nigeria. The first and primary audiences are GIZ and PaRD (Partnership for Religion and Development). The approach, which WFDD terms "mapping," involves careful review of research and documentation, as well as in-depth qualitative interviews with scholars and practitioners. In this instance, a particular focus will be on the work of non-governmental, religiously-linked organizations (termed faith-inspired organizations or FIOs)—local, national, and international.

This mapping work for Nigeria is particularly challenging (compared with other countries where WFDD works), given Nigeria's complex political landscape and changing religious environment; this dynamism was stressed during the consultation.

The hope is that workshop participants, along with several other individuals who expressed interest but could not attend, will continue their engagement as an informal advisory group, offering feedback and direction to WFDD's Nigeria work.

## OVERVIEW OF DISCUSSIONS

### *Religious Dynamics and Tensions*

Nigeria's religious institutions and beliefs shape societal dynamics and norms in many ways, though there is little consensus as to precisely how these roles play out or on their importance relative to ethnic, class, and political affiliations and identities. How religious institutions and leaders (at many levels)

contribute to current tensions and where they offer paths to solutions are our central questions. Even the most basic data is problematic (including, notably, contestation on membership in different religious communities), though clearly addressing these issues cannot be part of the current exploration. It was suggested that among the many dynamic factors at work is a significant shift away from a national Nigerian identity toward greater reliance on collective identities centered on ethnicity and religion. This is seen as contributing to tensions and conflict among communities, but also to Nigeria's broader governance challenges. An emphasis on religious identity, in particular, has stirred growing social tensions that are felt at national, state, and local levels. Also important, however, are Nigerian traditions and present realities (in some regions) of interreligious harmony and mechanisms that encourage various forms of dialogue and interaction. Several models of interreligious initiatives were cited, including women, business, and academia.

Challenges resulting from Nigeria's distinctive approaches to indigene (*jus sanguinis*) versus other definitions of citizenship were explored, leading to broader observations about the complexities around identities, where religious and ethnic identities are distinct but can overlap. One comment noted a tendency towards reticence among some leaders in highlighting their religious identity, illustrating the acute sensitivities that can surround topics linked to identities and their practical implications for policy. The ways in which religious leadership, institutions, and beliefs contribute to contemporary political divisions and tensions is a central issue for peace and development in Nigeria, both because they figure prominently in policy discussions that range from job creation to education and because they directly affect peace and stability. An example of the complex implications of religious identities and distrust is seen in approaches to IDP communities. How the communities return and resettle will have significant impact on long-term peace in northeast Nigeria.

The consultation lingered on the realities and perceptions of North and South divisions, which play such vital roles in how narratives about Nigeria's history, as well as how current priorities and possibilities for development and security, are framed. Among other observations, we were cautioned against an overly simplistic perception of a North-South divide and undue emphasis on the religious dimensions of security problems in the Northeast, notwithstanding their widespread repercussions in terms of internal displacement, hunger, and disruption of lives.

Governance challenges in some regions, for example in Kaduna State, where large communities of both Christians and Muslims are present, have obvious, if complex, links to religious affiliations. The dichotomy in narratives about the roles of religion in tensions was highlighted: some see tensions as primarily, if not entirely, the product of ethnic and economic divides (herders versus sedentary farmers), while others emphasize the degree to which such divisions have taken on and been accentuated by religious divisions, inflamed by political machinations that are often deliberate. Numerous challenges linked to religious differences and tensions exist, both for political competition and in the framing and application of laws, with the notable instance of sharia law.

A topic that has attracted considerable attention in various circles, including those of development, peacebuilding, and security, is the need to understand better the appeal of extremist ideologies and groups like Boko Haram. What are the roles of religious identities and beliefs and of various religious personalities in underlying tensions and in violent conflicts? The focus of this review will be on

assessing the “state of knowledge” on the topic and its pertinence for the diverse peacebuilding approaches. The differences in the situation of various regions were highlighted; there is no common “narrative” as to how religious identities fuel either extremism or violence, as there are wide variations among regions. Over-simplification is a common, but misleading, tendency. Diversity within both Islamic and Christian communities should not be neglected, not only in the manifestations and causes, but also in looking toward solutions; these divides are often more significant than the Christian-Muslim divisions that receive attention.

Important questions were posed during the discussions, reflecting, above all, differences or uncertainties in analysis of the situation:

- What trends can be highlighted in intergroup relations in different regions?
- How solid are traditions of appreciating religious differences that are a source of pride, especially among communities in the southwest?
- What are the best approaches to responding to increasingly plural religious communities? What works and what does not?
- How are the roles of the more traditional (established) religious communities significant (including where they are affected by various forms of syncretism)?
- How are the roles of megachurches, including their diaspora links, significant, especially in shaping social and economic attitudes on a range of development topics?

### *Peacebuilding*

Nigeria sees a wide variety of peacebuilding efforts, many national and local, with others supported by various external partners. Some focus on specific regions and states, while others are national in scope. With the multi-dimensional and complex nature of conflicts, peacebuilding efforts reflect this diversity, starting with quite different understandings of what drives conflict and which theory of change can lead to successful interventions to bring about peace and social change.

The group highlighted their understanding that little meaningful coordination exists among the different actors. Robust analysis of conflict dynamics and grievances is vital to success, and the review may be able, by taking a broad overview, to point to areas where there are gaps in knowledge or discordance in analysis and strategic approach. Looking to best or better practices is one clear avenue. Sokoto State was cited as an example of where peaceful co-existence between different religious groups seems to thrive and further study could be useful in developing a successful approach. The engagement of local organizations was emphasized as crucial, and the review should draw on available experience in its analysis. The Peace and Security Working Group in Abuja, formed by a group of national and international NGOs, is a coordination group whose leadership rotates among various organizations active in northeastern Nigeria. A secretariat oversees the continued coordination process, which has allowed the group to address gaps and avoid duplicate efforts in the peacebuilding process.

The politicization of peacebuilding is a challenge, reflected inter alia in patterns of competition among organizations. Government pressure and disincentives have sidelined certain actors in the peacebuilding process, another complicating factor.

### ***Governance and Corruption***

The well-known phenomena of weak governance and endemic corruption in Nigeria have significant effects on the religious landscape and vice versa. The discussion focused on efforts to engage religious leaders at various levels, independent of or in conjunction with the current government's initiatives to combat corruption. Likewise, the ways in which religious communities understand and respond to the topic bear examination. The group was reminded that religious leaders and communities are far from immune to poor governance and corruption. The normalization of corruption in Nigeria is a factor in its prevalence; many tend to view it as more a nuisance, perhaps inevitable, rather than a crime or fundamental social ill. With widespread immunity, the impetus to action is diluted, and some public officials are quite upfront about accepting bribes. Some participants described a hopeful cultural shift that they perceive, at least an incipient one, toward less overt corruption and more fear around committing this crime. However, the path ahead is far from clear.

The discussion suggested that a broad review of the approaches of government actors, civil society, and local and international organizations toward anti-corruption strategies must be the backdrop for delving deeper into potential religious roles. State actors deserve priority attention, especially governors who are in strategic positions, to better coordinate their efforts with members of civil society. That said, it was acknowledged that religious actors are positioned to inform a bottom-up demand that could reinforce leadership initiatives on this front.

In various contemporary anti-corruption coalitions, religious entities have roles that may be limited in practice. Some leading religious actors, to include mainline Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Catholic, and Muslim leadership in Nigeria, have publicly condemned corrupt practices and collaborate with prominent anti-corruption civil society organizations – particularly focused on the sectors of education, health, and transportation. However few faith-inspired organizations (FIOs) have an articulated anti-corruption policy within Nigeria, and many are quite reticent to address the topic directly, often preferring to distance themselves from what are perceived as the political dimensions of corruption accusations. Since many view religious and local leaders as bearing special responsibility for practical and ethical leadership—and they clearly have many assets, such as communication skills, a physical presence, and infrastructure, that are pertinent for the anti corruption effort—a more collaborative and coherent focus on the problem (to the extent possible) would seem worthwhile, however uncertain the prospects and sensitive the topic. Strategies can focus on varying roles, ranging from the grassroots level to specific sectors to state and national levels, and potentially target specific sectors and forms of corruption.

### ***Education***

Nigeria's educational systems face multiple problems, and religious institutions are involved in various, and often complex, ways. The discussion centered on how these links might contribute to broader efforts to strengthen the educational system. One central issue is education of girls—Nigeria currently ranks second lowest in the world for number of girls in school, with particular challenges in the northern states. The issue has links to child marriage where religious actors play particularly direct roles. Deliberate policies and attitudes colored by religious teachings contribute to this situation and to the wide disparities by state. Education quality is a major concern, with particularly stark disparities existing between the North and the South. These have deep historical roots accentuated by present economic

and social factors. With wide variations in educational systems across Nigerian states, the roles that religious actors play need to be examined on a case-by-case basis. Political and social fragmentation have resulted from a fractioned education system that fails to support efforts to enhance social cohesion.

Recommendations for focus in the review included: first, seeking to clarify the various forms of direct religious involvement in education (Muslim, Catholic, and Anglican schools and universities, for example); second, issues around curriculum involving both “religious literacy” and promotion of a pluralistic worldview; third, investigating how different religious communities approach gender roles and enrollment of girls; and lastly, how far approaches centered on schools and universities contribute to peacebuilding and to addressing issues of corruption.

### ***Health***

Health is a development priority and may be the topic where most purposeful attention has been paid, particularly to interreligious cooperation and government outreach to religious communities for development purposes. This is both because religious, and especially Christian, groups are major service providers and because of specific outreach to religious actors around national HIV/AIDS and malaria programs. The Nigerian Interfaith Action Association (NIFAA) emerged to support ambitious cooperation programs involving the government and international partners on malaria. A review of the experience offers an obvious starting point.

The neglect of mental health was cited as a possible issue to explore. Nigerians may speak more openly with their church leaders about mental health concerns than to health personnel, which might offer an avenue for future action.

Disparities among states, and consequently, among religious communities, in health services are a significant issue. Anti-vaccination sentiment is a symptom of both disparities and specific attitudes that fuel suspicion of externally-linked programs. This is an experience that has involved both negative and positive religious leader roles.

### ***Gender and Youth***

As is commonly the case, a wide range of issues around gender roles have significant religious links. These include the status of women within families and institutions, widespread child marriage, reproductive health issues, and attitudes toward LGBTI communities. Likewise, religious communities have wide-ranging approaches to engaging youth.

## **NEXT STEPS AND RESEARCH PLAN**

The plan is to deepen our research from secondary sources and continue studying areas of particular interest, especially where there are development policy links. Outputs will include a country report and targeted issue briefs. Interviews will appear on the website.

This document was reviewed by participants and reflects their observations. WFDD will likewise seek comments on the draft country report and on its dissemination. We invite further reflections and suggestions as we proceed.

## ANNEX 1: CONSULTATION PARTICIPANTS

**Pauline H. Baker**, President Emeritus, The Fund for Peace & Senior Governance Advisor to Creative Associates International

Currently, Pauline H. Baker is serving as a Senior Governance Advisor to Creative Associates International. Dr. Baker served as President of The Fund for Peace for 15 years from 1996 to 2010. She has also served as a Professorial Lecturer at The Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and as an Adjunct Professor at the Graduate School of Foreign Affairs at Georgetown University. A political scientist and specialist on African affairs and fragile states, Dr. Baker lived and worked in Nigeria from 1964 to 1975. She also conducted research in South Africa and served as Staff Director of the Africa Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. She earned her doctorate with Distinction from UCLA in 1970 and did her undergraduate work at Douglass College, Rutgers University.

**Ambassador John Campbell**, Council on Foreign Relations, Africa Policy Studies

Ambassador John Campbell is the Ralph Bunche senior fellow for Africa policy studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. From 1975 to 2007, Ambassador Campbell served as a U.S. Department of State Foreign Service officer. He served twice in Nigeria, as political counselor from 1988 to 1990, and as ambassador from 2004 to 2007. He also served as deputy assistant secretary for human resources, dean of the Foreign Service Institute's School of Language Studies, and director of the Office of UN Political Affairs. From 2007 to 2008, he was a visiting professor of international relations at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He was also a Department of State mid-career fellow at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. Ambassador Campbell received a BA and MA from the University of Virginia and a PhD in seventeenth century English history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Foluyinka Fakoya**, Georgetown University, Global Human Development Master's Program

Foluyinka Fakoya is a Master's candidate at Georgetown University's Global Human Development Program. Prior to Georgetown, Ms. Fakoya worked with The Education Partnership (TEP) Centre, where she conducted research on the Nigerian education sector and produced comprehensive reports to support ongoing development interventions. Before joining TEP Centre, Ms. Fakoya spent a year teaching French at a public school in Kaduna State as part of her National Youth Service. During that period she also volunteered with the Educating Nigerian Girls In New Enterprise (ENGINE) initiative, where she provided supplementary weekly STEM and life skills classes to 30 girls in rural Northern Nigeria. She received a BA in Economics and Sociology from Amherst College.

**Pastor Nathan Hosler**, Church of the Brethren, Office of Public Witness

Nathan Hosler is the Director of the Church of the Brethren's Office of Public Witness based in Washington, DC. In this capacity, he works on a range of policy and peacebuilding issues and convenes a working group on Nigeria. Previously he served as the Ecumenical Peace Coordinator of the National Council of Churches USA as well as worked with the Peace Programme of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) and taught peacebuilding practice and theology at Kulp Bible College in northern Adamawa State (2009-2011). The Church of the Brethren has been working in northeastern Nigeria since the 1920s. He holds a Masters degree in International Relations focusing on religion and peacebuilding and is writing a PhD in Religion and Theology focusing on peace.

**Marinus Iwuchukwu**, Duquesne University, Theology Department

Marinus C. Iwuchukwu is an Associate Professor of Theology at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and chair of the theology department. Dr. Iwuchukwu specializes in interreligious dialogue, inclusive religious pluralism, and media and religion. Prior to Duquesne University, he was on the faculty of a public college in Kano, Nigeria for twelve years. Dr. Iwuchukwu currently teaches undergrad courses in world religions and culture; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; and dialogue among religions. At the graduate level his seminar classes are focused on religious pluralism, freedom of religion, and interreligious dialogue. He received the 2014 "Humanity Day Award" from Islamic Center of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. He is the author of two books and a co-editor of one. The title of his most recent book is: *Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Postcolonial Northern Nigeria: The Challenges of Inclusive Cultural and Religious Pluralism*. He is also the current chair of the Consortium for Christian-Muslim Dialogue at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA. He is a current Visiting Research Fellow of University of Chester, Chester, England and the 2017 Resident Research Theologian of Gladstone's Library in Hawarden, Flintshire, UK.

**Father Ludovic Lado**, Georgetown University, School of Foreign Service

Fr. Ludovic Lado, S.J. is an anthropologist and activist. His research concerns social justice in Cameroon with regard to the Catholic Church and Cameroonian politics, particularly the presidency of Paul Biya. In general, he aims to provide a constructive critique for the sake of building a new society and greater justice. Fr. Lado, S.J. earned his degree in philosophy at the College of St. Peter Canisius in Kinshasa, a degree in theology at Hekima College in Nairobi, a Master's Degree in Theology at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Boston, and his Master's and Doctorate in Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford.

**Amy Lillis**, Georgetown University, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy

Amy Lillis is a Rusk Fellow at Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy. Ms. Lillis is a Foreign Service Officer with the Department of State, where she last served as the Acting Special Representative in the Secretary's Office of Religion and Global Affairs. She was responsible for developing programs, networks, and training to expand Department capacity to understand religious dynamics and engage religious actors for a more effective foreign policy. Some of Ms. Lillis' other Foreign Service assignments include Islamabad; the Office of International Religious Freedom; Istanbul; and, Lagos. Ms. Lillis earned her B.A. in Political Science from Lewis and Clark College, and an M.S. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University.

**Omobolaji Olarinmoye**, Hamilton College, Government Department

Omobolaji Olarinmoye is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Government in the Department of Government at Hamilton College. His areas of specialization include comparative and African politics; Nigerian politics; development studies; and peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. Dr. Olarinmoye was a post-doctoral Global Leaders Fellow at Oxford University (2011) and Princeton University (2012), a Cadbury Fellow at the Centre of West African Studies, University of Birmingham, and a Programme on Ethnic and Federal Studies doctoral fellow at the Department of Political Science, University of Ibadan. He has also held positions with the South-South Research Exchange Programme on History of Development and CODESRIA. Olarinmoye holds a doctorate in Political Science

(Comparative Politics) from the University of Ibadan, an M. Phil/D.E.A in African Politics from the Institut D'Etudes Politique/Centre D'Etudes d'Afrique Noire, Bordeaux, and an M.sc and B.sc in Political Science from University of Ibadan.

**Oge Onubogu, USIP, Africa Programs**

Oge Onubogu is senior program officer for Africa Programs at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) where she leads the design, implementation, and management of programming in Nigeria. Prior to joining USIP, she managed governance, citizen engagement, and election observation programs across Southern Africa and in Nigeria with the National Democratic Institute (NDI). She also worked as program officer for Anglophone West Africa with the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) where she oversaw democratic governance projects and managed a multi-million dollar grants portfolio to civil society organizations across Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Cameroon. Ms. Onubogu has consulted with the World Bank, observed elections with the Carter Center, and coordinated refugee resettlement programs with the International Rescue Committee. She earned her MA in International Development from Brandeis University, and BA in International and Area Studies from the University of Oklahoma.

**Damaris Seleina Parsitau, Brookings Institute**

Damaris Seleina Parsitau is an Echidna Scholar at Brookings, as well as an affiliated Research Associate and Visiting Research Fellow at the University of South Africa. She previously held Visiting Research Fellowships at the University of Cambridge and the University of Edinburgh. Dr. Parsitau has over twenty years' experience in teaching, research, leadership training, advocacy, affirmative action, and mentorship. She is the founder and convener of the Kenya Women Rising, and the Youth and Transformational Leadership Development Programs, both leadership and mentorship incubation programs that invest in women and youth. A thought leader in girls' education in Kenya, she is also the founder of Let Maasai Girls Learn, an initiative that seeks to rally global, regional, and local action for girls' education throughout Maasailand in Kenya. Dr. Parsitau's research at Brookings focuses on girls' education in Maasailand, aiming to illuminate promising approaches to working with Maasai leadership to advance the educational opportunities of Maasai girls. She holds a PhD from Kenyatta University on religion, gender, and public life in Kenya, as well as an MA from the University of Nairobi and a BA from Egerton University.



## ANNEX 2: DINNER PARTICIPANTS

### **Cardinal John Onaiyekan**, Archbishop of Abuja

John Onaiyekan has been the Archbishop of Abuja since 1994 and was named cardinal in November 2012. He was previously the president of the Christian Association of Nigeria, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, and Bishop of Ilorin. He participated in the 2008 Madrid forum of the Alliance of Civilizations on the role of religious leaders in promoting security and in 2012 was Pax Christi International's Peace Laureate. Born in Kogi State, Nigeria, Onaiyekan completed his religious studies in Rome in 1969 and was ordained as a priest later that year. He subsequently taught at St. Kizito's College, Isanlu and became rector of St. Clement Junior Seminary in Lokoja in 1971; he earned his doctorate in 1976, afterwards becoming Vice Rector of Saints Peter & Paul in 1977.

### **Sidi C. Jammeh**, known as **Baba Fadama** in Nigeria, Chairman Emeritus World Bank Group-IMF African Society

A retired Senior Economist of the World Bank, Dr. Jammeh has been working in the Agricultural and Rural sector of Nigeria since 1998. As the Task Team Leader, he led the design of the flagship community-driven projects, including the Nigeria Fadama II Project (\$160 million total project costs) from 2004-2008, which is an international best practice; as a consultant on the Fadama III Project (total project cost: \$450 million, of which IDA Credit: \$250 million); and more recently (April/May 2013) Fadama III Plus Additional Financing (IDA credit of \$200 million), as WB support for the implementation of the Government's Agricultural Transformation Agenda. Dr. Jammeh has travelled extensively in Nigeria, having visited all 36 States plus FCT of the Federation and more than half of the 774 local government administrations (LGAs) to engage Federal, State and Local government officials, religious authorities and traditional leaders, rural community organizations, NGOs and public and private sector service providers in extensive stakeholder consultations and to conduct other project-related work.

### **Jennifer Hosler**, Community Psychologist, PhD candidate

Jennifer Hosler (MA, PhD candidate) is a Community Psychologist, with research and practice in peacebuilding, interfaith engagement and cooperation, religious settings, and international development. Ms. Hosler has worked in program development and evaluation, grassroots peace education and capacity building, and community organizing, in settings such as northern Nigeria, Haiti, and Washington, DC. Additionally, she is a licensed minister in the Church of the Brethren, serving as a co-pastor at Washington City Church of the Brethren, and doing research, teaching, and training at congregational, district, and national levels. Presently a full-time PhD student in Community Psychology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Ms. Hosler has previous training in Community Psychology (MA, Community Psychology and Social Change) and also in biblical and theological studies (BA, Biblical Language).

### **Jean Duff**, Joint Learning Initiative and Partnership for Faith & Development

Jean Duff leads the Partnership for Faith & Development (PFD) supporting faith groups in their work with governments and with international public and private sector bodies, for impact on local community health and development. She serves as Coordinator of the Joint Learning Initiative (JLI) on Faith & Local Communities, Senior Advisor to Advocates for Development

Assistance, and Advisor to the Programa Inter-Religioso contra a Malaria, in Mozambique. In 2008, she co-founded the Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty (CIFA) at Washington National Cathedral. While at CIFA, Ms Duff convened the Global Initiative on Faith, Health and Development, an international collaboration to advocate for full inclusion of faith-based assets in development. Previously, she led Washington National Cathedral's global poverty program as Managing Director of the Center for Global Justice and Reconciliation. In 2008 she co-convened the Women, Faith and Development Alliance. Ms Duff has an MPH in Epidemiology from Columbia University and an MA in Clinical Psychology from University College Dublin.