

## CONTENTS AND APPLICATIONS OF CITIZENS DIPLOMACY AND TRANSFORMATION AGENDA: A CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSE

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### INTRODUCTION

Citizen diplomacy, which is one among the several types of diplomacy, stands out as people based and oriented. This is owing to its daily usage for human interactions. In the contemporary era, its value apart from the consistent and continuous utilization, suggest a dynamic import of the changing world. For while, diplomacy according to Hamihon (1996), Walton (1954), Mcdermott (1976), Alken (2005), Stinnett (2005), Brahm (2005), Shultz (2005), Lund (1996) and Zartman (2007) among others points at being a peaceful conduct,... necessity for organised dialogue...honest person sent to lie abroad... management of international relations... and, the political scheming and intrigues that are well sustained among others, citizen diplomacy, on the other hand, not only been very important, is the concept that informs that every global citizens has the rights, even the responsibility, to engage across cultures and create understanding

through meaningful person-to-person interactions (Clinton, 2003).

In the words of Hoffman (1981), citizen diplomacy is recognized as a powerful force in building and sustaining a secure, economically sound, and socially interconnected world because it brings leaders and people from across the public, private and social sectors of the world to see the value in their citizens.

Thus, Fuller (1970), one of the key pioneer of the concept, argued that citizen diplomacy is a grassroots initiative, geared towards promoting peace and development. This idea was initiated in the period of cold war between the West and East, to which the hatred and restriction puts the citizens of both regimes afar from each other. But, against the barrier, the citizen continued to travel frequently to both side, especially the Americans to alleviate the cold war. According to Fuller (1970), with the collapse of the Soviet Union,



the degree of interactions and the idea of working in a hot political spots around the world helped to develop the intents and intentions of citizen diplomacy while trying to reducing tension, racism, and hates to promoting peace. This was simply because citizen diplomacy takes place when official channels are not reliable or desirable. Then, as peoples' diplomacy, it is also a political concept of average citizens engaging as a representative of a country or cause, either inadvertently or by design.

Evidence to these events show that with the first coining of the words by Hoffman (1981), that citizen diplomacy is actually a grassroots initiative, which transcend cultural bound, exchange of ideas and possible transformation of the society from one particular or many decadence to a more value proven ideals that attract and at the same time build confidence on the populace and visitors alike.

More examples of these could be seen in the growing zeal for relationship and interaction between Israel and her Arab neighbours, North and South Korea and the Kind of racism that had vanished amongst South Africans and Afrikaners or white colors among others.

Citizenship diplomacy, which is people driven for changing the system for better goes in line with transformation agenda because the key factor of transformation is that it is the peoples' aspiration and must be people driven. But before the expected transformation can take place,

the level of orientation and mindsets of the people, government and society must be tainted towards what is best for the nation? What do the people want? What do they want to make of the country values? How can the transformation in the country attract both friends and foes, how do the citizen project or sale the country to the outside world? How is the image of the country valued or cleave for by outsiders? Then, is the government meeting up with its expectation and responsibilities? And, have it fulfill its duty to the citizens and so on?

Premised on this, the study attempts the analysis of the basic contents and applications of citizen diplomacy, citizen diplomacy in the contemporary interactions, the impact of citizen diplomacy and state transformation agenda in Nigeria with the intention of looking at the foreign policy posture, economic strength programmes and the kind of citizen qua citizen interactions and engagements, resulting from it and other effects of the concept to the general public vis-à-vis the desire for transformation.

### **CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CITIZEN DIPLOMACY**

Citizen diplomacy arguably is very interesting and vibrant in the contemporary era, as it seems to contain several array of actions and activities, existing between individuals, communities and people with a deepened ties of relationship that holistically makes the world a common village; a door-to-door neighbourhood

interactions; a person-to-person familiarization; and a nation – citizen to a nation – citizen interrelations. It is an act that did not only enhance wellbeing, but boost and projects foreign policy of participating states to mutual understanding of the core values of their existence.

Just as the scholars of this school like Robert Fuller, David Hoffman, Jenifer Clinton, Diane Chigas, Colin Powell, Sharon Teninson, Cate Malek, Alan Goodman, Christopher Washington, Fulbright and Jody William et al among others, sees citizen diplomacy as an embodiment of change, cooperation and peace amongst the people of the world. To them, it is a mission meant to promote excellence in citizens' world over. It is a network of peacemakers, peace builders and development oriented minds away from conflicts and carnage and destructions. Citizen diplomacy helps to foster international understanding and cooperation, constructive economic connections, and peaceful interactions among cultures.

It is imperative on these reasons that Goodman (2011:4-6) contend that citizen diplomacy is a concept that involves two seemingly disparate ideas: private citizens engaging in individual endeavours that serve their own interest, and diplomacy, which includes a framework for cooperation between countries. He further asserts that it is important to understand the impact of such activities on their home and host institutions; the wider communities and

public diplomacy activities at large. People-to-people contact is becoming one of the key elements of diplomacy, and citizen diplomats increasingly complement the traditional forms of political diplomacy.

Agreeing with this contention, National Council for International Visitors (NCIV) (2008:1) notes that citizen diplomacy is the concept that the individual citizen has the right, even the responsibility, to help shape foreign relations “one handshake at a time”. In it, resources of participant's communities are matched with the needs of foreign leaders and specialist. It helps to opening their homes, offices and schools to foreign visitors participating in exchange programmes.

To this effect, Chigas (2003) argued that citizen diplomacy speaks of transformation of attitude and communication, which is inextricably tied to the establishment of deep relationship of mutual trust amongst participants in official processes. To further expatiate this thought, he inferred that being both the friend or enemy at breakfast, in the meeting themselves, and at the bar at night, re-humanized the conflict, crises, and help the participants recognize that they share many fears, needs, concerns and reasoning, while this new found trust and in some cases friendship, does not always extend beyond the boundaries of workshops to the outside as a whole, these helps personal relationship are critical to developing a processes for



coming to the table and dealing with the hurdles in negotiation. This is because citizen diplomacy gives voice to silenced or marginalized moderate perspectives in the public discourses.

However, while agreeing with the notions of citizen diplomacy, Williams, Goose and Wareham (2008: xvii-xviii), posits that citizen diplomacy can complement official diplomacy or subvert it. This is sequenced to the fact that it can be taken as a practice and a form of intervention that can be extended to many part of the world, especially those in conflict, as existed in Syria. It also served as peacebuilding mechanism, of which in the latter, it was a combination of citizen diplomacy acting as specializes form of religious and conflict resolution platform.

In a differing view, however, Malek (2013) reiterated that citizen diplomacy refers to unofficial contacts between people of different nations, as opposed to official contacts between government representatives, which may include direct contacts in joint activities of various sorts or in situation mediated or facilitated by unofficial third parties, private, peacemakers, scholars or any other unofficial bridge builder. To him, citizen diplomacy can help participants break down negative stereotypes they have of each other.

Meanwhile, in a confessional statement about the working of citizen diplomacy, Washington (2014) revealed that “my first trip abroad introduced me to the

customs and hospitality of people who were very different from the people back home, and ignited my ongoing commitment to citizen diplomacy... and that the more we are exposed to other cultures, the more effective we become at increasing the connectedness of our universe and global community”. In agreement to this, Powell (2005) affirmed that “I believe that our greatest strength in dealing with the world is the openness of our society and the welcoming nature of our people. A good stay in our country is the best citizen diplomacy tool we have”.

To this end, Tennison (1987), summed up all about the value of citizenship diplomacy to the society as she posited that in early ‘80s, we Americans, determined in a period of desperation to try to reduce the tension between America and Soviet Union, begins by making decision to try their hands at diplomacy and put together the first trips to the land of the enemy. Upon arriving in Moscow, Leningrad and Tblisi, the Care Citizen Initiative travelers spread to soviet sidewalks, market places, schools and to rare apartment at the invitation of the soviet who risked dancing encounters with the KGB. The trip changed the lives of the travelers – each came back to America committed to public educators. This is citizen diplomacy at work. These contentious invariably, informed that as a citizen diplomat, you bring world issues home to doorstep of the people in the most direct way possible.

In view of the contentious and revelations of scholars above, this study, not satisfied with the kind of citizen diplomacy in most of the developing states like Nigeria and African continent as a whole wish to query certain government policies vis-à-vis dwarf foreign relations with other states, the poor manner of opening up of the system, and the level of poverty of leadership in existence in the latter. This is because, Nigerians, most of the African states citizen and other developing states' citizen in particular has suffered rejections, deportation, imprisonment and other forms of maltreatments in other countries.

A situation, which encouraged me to join issues with Idumange (2010) to query why is it that the kind of citizen diplomacy adopted, if any, by the present regime does not seem to have change the poor perception about the country? Why are the developing countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Kenya among others always at the receiving end of humiliations when wanting to receive and not having to give to other states citizens? What kind of structures and or projects of citizen diplomacy driven can we say that replicates those of the western world in Nigeria and Africa as a whole? Can the transformation agenda/amnesty training programmes of the citizens outside the country by the present government be a light at the end of tunnel? Is the transformation agenda well-armed in contents and applications in exploring the values of citizen diplomacy to be

initiated for the interest of the state or is it another hocus-pocus political agenda? Can there be a drastic change in the citizen diplomacy outlook at the end of this regime and or with a continuous order in regimes to come? What are the possible elements of citizen diplomacy advocacy on the ground in Nigeria and how has these organizations or policies helped to transform the state in closing the gap between Nigeria and other states in terms of relationship? Can one vehemently beat the chest and thumb-up for the unofficial bodies (NGO) in the country in promoting citizen diplomacy outside the country or is their attitudes and operations still suspicious to other countries?

On this basis, it is affirmative true that citizen diplomacy is current and not yet fully imbibed or appropriated by most Nigerians both inside and outside our shore, not to talk of other African states that things are still in its crude stage. This is simply because the level of poverty is not only very high, the level of the quest for primitive accumulation has out-grown desires and bad and aspiring leaders who see the state treasury as an opportunity to cut and carry – home is still much with many Nigerians who also sees the Nigerian projects with misgivings. But if the concept placed on our table are properly and thoroughly scrutinized and generally accepted as a way forward in re-writing the name of this great country with golden pen, then, citizen diplomacy and the transformation agenda of the present regime and thereafter will



enthroned the much desired light of development in the Nation.

### **CITIZEN DIPLOMACY IN THE CONTEMPORARY INTERRELATIONS**

Construing from the point of view of both Fuller (1970) and Tennison (1987) above, it is evidence to note that the essence of citizen diplomacy was to creating an understanding among friends and foes, to strengthen the ties between old friends while harnessing new ones in a free world of interactions and interconnectivities; and to discovering the unknown friend/person that was never met, never dream about. The basic reasons for this, is that there might not only be an avenue to exploring the true value of the world, but to let others also know what you know and to help many to advance the course of knowledge they possess by making all to understanding themselves.

Thus, citizen diplomacy being a new way of interactions, interrelations and understanding among men without any restriction or otherwise, also emphasizes on mutual acceptance according to Rasmussen (2014), that it is not only an experience, but a lifetime continuum of opportunities to learn and enhance one's cultural competency because everything as embedded in foreign relations promotion is inclusive in the activities of citizen diplomacy. Thereby, holding the postulations of Washington (2014), that citizen diplomacy explains the future of global prosperity, peace and stability, which depends also on the increased

international cooperation, collaboration and mutual understanding. Meaning that the transformation agenda of the present regime can only be consummated by allowing the citizen to go out and sell or market the policies of the government, which in turn will boost the government foreign relations.

Obviously, not overlooking the importance of citizen diplomacy, one would be quick to agree that it is the personal relationship that make a difference in every society, but with the relevancy of its activities, the legislatures in the present time cannot promote better international relations. Alternatively, it all depends on the citizens. It is the civic engagement of the citizen diplomats that leads to cooperation and mutual understanding; it is the values placed on it that is much cheaper and far more effective than war in the contemporary society (Gelder, 2006). An example to this is the kind of cooperation, openness and interconnectivity exhibited by the West and other aware citizens of the world in ousting Col. Mammam Gadhafi of Libya and others in the wake of the Arab spring, which showed the true value of citizen diplomacy to what many termed as odd and detestable. The replication of that protest to all the seat-tight rulers of the Arab world, can also lead to the kind of change of government and the possible transformation of the state regimes to a new one in the latter.

In addition to this, the fact should equally not be forgotten, about the role

of citizens, especially as it might equally be due to the level of the growing increase in citizen diplomacy from the unofficial agents (the NGOs) that doubled the size, awareness and campaign on the 'bring back our girls' protest, both inside and outside Nigeria on the adopted Chibok school girls by Boko Haram terrorist groups.

Sequel to these deductions, it suffices then to say that the working of citizen diplomacy has made the world a smaller place, since it has been recognized as a powerful force in building and sustaining a secure, economically sound, and socially interconnected world with a uniting network (Zimpleman, 2014). This assertion has not only explained the new face of citizen diplomacy as a more unique and sophisticated tool in both individual and international dealings but it has also go in tandem with the contention of Eisenhower (1956), when he reiterated that, 'I have long believed, as have many before me, that peaceful relations between nations requires understanding and mutual respect between individuals. If only people will get together, then so eventually will nations.

In the same continuum, and from the look of things, one fact remains very clear, and that is, that citizen diplomacy is well-nurtured and profoundly established in the developed world like America, Britain, France, German, Portugal, Sweden, Denmark and Spain among others. This is simply because it engendered development, sustained

development and advance technology of these states; unlike in the developing countries like Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Egypt, Angola and Congo DR among others where the level of interaction is moribund by several hiccups and terribly sterilized by the havoc of poverty and poor leadership problems. This is why many aspiring leaders or assumed leaders in African in particular, comes to the throne with contradictions of owned wind-hooked and white-washed programmes that turned out to be a conduit pipe to stealing funds meant for development and promoting citizenship diplomacy.

These defects, deficiencies and decimations, most find in the developing states of Africa like Nigeria during the long years of military aberrational rule and at the onset of democratic governance under Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo; the self-made life president of Zimbabwe – Robert Mugabe, Dennis Sasso Ngueso of Congo Republic, Paul Biya of Cameroon, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and many other deadwoods on the throne of several African states governance replicating the opposites to establishing a platform where everything about citizenship diplomacy and contemporary interrelations are not only killed but daily monitored and restricted, thereby making the development of such under a social civility context impossible, because they cannot give what they have denied themselves to the citizen who are increasingly aware as the days goes by. Forgetting therefore, the common Igbo



adage that one cannot be a witch and at the same time, a poor man/woman. To, therefore, demanding that they must choose one, as their times are up. So that the citizen can involve themselves in the development of the contents and applications of citizen diplomacy goodwill, that invariably helps and encourage the transformation of the states; bearing in mind that citizen diplomacy in the contemporary interrelation helps to build individual while increasing the collective global fluency, which in turn creates economic opportunity, contributes to peace and stability, and develops leadership skills through global problem solving.

#### **THE BASIC CONTENTS AND APPLICATIONS OF CITIZEN DIPLOMACY: AN ANALYSIS**

Agreeing that citizen diplomacy is the right – if not the obligation of the individual citizen to be personally engaged in international relations in the contemporary era, shows that persons or groups engaging with people from other countries is an important boost to the host economy with adequate security guaranty. In countries where such is practiced, you notice that the essence is not only to exchange ideas, make friends and gain an understanding of each other's culture and way of life, but it makes all the parties believe in the power of citizen diplomacy and involvement in the state governance through international exchanges.

In view of this, according to Centre for Citizen Initiative (1983), Institute of

International Education (2011) and National Council for International Visitors (2008), the basic contents and applications of citizen diplomacy include: Cultural/Social Exchanges Programmes, Educational/Scientific Exchange Programmes, International Exchanges Programmes, Agricultural Initiative, Environmental Initiatives, Developmental Programmes, Productivity Enhancement Programmes, Economic Development Programmes, Citizen Initiative Centres, and C.I.C. smaller programmes among others, meaning that, any other programmes not listed can be incorporated provided it is meant to promote citizen diplomacy. It is arguably to point out that the programmes contents cannot be the same everywhere, but instead there should be resemblance or a linkage, much as there is no standardization in the project of citizen diplomacy (Muller, 2008).

Meanwhile, beside the argument on the non-uniformity of programmes, one should not lose sight that there one some countries that these programmes are not known to, and neither do they understand the processes, plans and or workings of it at all. While this gap might have weakened most of the countries that it is unknown to, it might also have impacted greatly to advance the courses of the countries that practice it to an immeasurable height and wealth. On the other hand, there are countries that had engaged in it unknown to them, but because of the lack in knowledge, they had remained where they are till

date. Meaning that, international relations had gone beyond legislative officialdom into the hand of the common citizens who have the time and opportunities to interact with other countries' citizens in a more decent and interconnected frequencies.

With meaningful objective to explaining the workings of the above stated contents, let's look at some critical questions, such as: How are organizations creating citizen diplomacy opportunities for the individuals from the outlined contents? What are the reasons for involving citizens instead of the normal technocrats or politicians? What programmes are being designed to address the emerging Needs? What tools and information are available to advance purposeful global engagements? Why has the message of citizen diplomacy failed to reach every citizens of the world, particularly in the developing countries? Why has the government machinery failed to inform the citizens adequately on what they ought to know? And what are the possible impacts of citizen diplomacy to states in the contemporary discourse?

With attentions drawn to the raised questions above, the study at the same time will be attempting to evaluate the workings of the stated contents of citizen diplomacy side by side:

(i) **Cultural and Social Exchanges Programmes**

Among nation and citizen culture is a very vital issue. The culture of the people speaks for itself. It

projects the value of the people or group. Thus, according to Zimpleman (2014), through people-to-people exchanges of cultural values, activities, friendship among others is established, which also in the word of Orbach (2010), we envision a world that thrives because of true global engagement, where individuals and communities' benefits from person-to-person interactions that results in greater understanding between people and cultures. The greatest asset to this is the citizen diplomacy.

Hence, citizen diplomacy does a lot in engaging people across culture, makes people to learn others' culture, like dancing, music, relic, language and believes toward creating shared understanding and mutual benefits. It can be either way, that is, one traveling to the other and vise-versa, as we usually and always see people from different cultural backgrounds coming to Osun-Oshogbo festival every year. They not only visit the country but they learn many things about her while at the same time helping to publish the country's image in a good light. Just as Rourke (2001) argued in the opposite that cultural misunderstanding can lead to tragic result, while the positiveness of it makes people to exchange idea, makes fund and gain an



understanding of each other's way of life.

(ii) **Educational/Scientific Exchanges Programmes**

Citizen diplomacy has tremendous impact on the effectiveness of education, through exchange programmes. It impacts the ability of entire countries, regions and people. School exchange programme among students both in sciences and humanities helps to boost the international relations of nations.

This exchange programme can be done through scholarship, fellowship, grant and even seminar/conferences. Citizen diplomats can be students, teachers, athletes and artists. It helps to engage undergraduates, graduates and researchers to explore their futures as globally competent leader. Apart from creating innovation, students are oriented into campus life, connect to resources opportunities in the school and, adequately equipped for future. Citizen diplomats need not work for only government; they can be teachers, students or anyone who has the opportunity to interact with people from other countries. As a citizen diplomat, student exchange programmes is ideal, the benefits are immense (Zimpleman, 2010).

(iii) **International Exchange Programmes**

This is a process whereby both individual and group may engage in exchange programmes. The international exchange programmes include business and academic communities with expressed intent of pursuing strategies to strengthen a country's commitment to citizen diplomacy. International exchange can be by way of tourism, exhibition, shows, films, seminar and or other manners of showcasing wealth, culture, fashion and beauty contest among others. As contributors to a global community, every individual understand and acquired positive impact they expect as a citizen diplomats and are empowered to acting meaningful and purposeful to their society, because citizen diplomacy is a builder of bridges (Albright, 2001).

(iv) **Agricultural Initiative**

To enhance food sufficiency, especially in countries where urban migration and rural drift has rendered the agricultural sector impotent, Nigeria and many other poor countries inclusive, citizen diplomacy on agricultural initiative is established to involve every citizen in order to get food on their table for survival. With government credit facilities, everyone is encouraged to plant crops in the areas which includes: urban garden, rooftop garden,

support for new and old private farmers, massive seeds lifts, ocean shipments of food for supplies. Application of modern techniques of farming is important into the country to engage farmers. These new way of carrying out citizen diplomacy are geared toward food sufficiency and economic growth.

Of which away from all the previous failures, the groundnut pyramid, millets, maize and cotton in the Northern Nigeria wouldn't have today being a history; that the palm oil and fruits in the Eastern Nigeria wouldn't have now be a dirty job; that cocoa and rubber plantations in the South-West Nigeria may have even be rhetoric as it is today; that yams, rice, pumpkins among others always found in Benue, Abakaliki, Rivers and Calabar may not have been stories today, but all could well be blamed on lack of citizenship diplomacy and moribund officialdom. The youths who are supposed to market all these farm products then are otherwise caught up in frivolities and lost in chase of ego, get rich quick syndrome and other meaningless things owing to poor guidance and direction.

(v) **Environmental Initiatives**

This is the idea of every citizen being involved in solving environmental problems like ecological hazard, erosion control, promote the building of dam,

quality water cleanup, nuclear cleanup and avoiding land distortion and exertions, planting tree to preserve environmental degradation. Citizen diplomacy makes it easier for everyone to be involved in protecting the environment.

Being environmental-earth friendly (Davis, 1999). Groups, volunteers, organisation and individual are involved.

(vi) **Economic Development Programmes**

This involves organizing a business training programme for young people. Granting empowerment loan to graduate and trained business aspirants who will in turn employ others to reduce unemployment. The U – win programme in the transformation agenda could serve but it is not open enough to accommodate the aspirations of the jobless youths. Private funds and financial contribution from government and individual are made available to train, fund and sponsor or grant small loans to the candidates to start something that in the long - run, will boost the state economy.

(vii) **Productivity Enhancement Programmes**

This could be a process of involving the citizen diplomacy in renovating, experimenting and evolving policies of old that promote productivity. In this



respect, volunteers are absorbed, trained, sent out to teach and train others in order to enhance efficiency and productivity. Experts on a particular field are brought to lecture, inform and encourage others with weak ability or lives in fear to succeed.

(viii) **Citizen Initiative Centre Smaller Programmes**

According to Tennison (2008), individual are encouraged to take up self-employed schemes, small medium enterprises (SME), micro-enterprises businesses and a non-profit management initiative among others, so as to contribute to the economic posterity of the nation. In the same process, computer training and business centre for call and receive are established.

In view of the above stated contents and brief highlights of how such programmes can be applied or made to work, the citizen diplomat in their states of host or at home are expected to be seen doing something unique to project the states' interests, even when the contents are not standardized. It is also imperative to accentuate according to Nye (2010) that it is the inability of those who initiated such programmes, coupled with poor information delivery and possible failure in influencing the citizen diplomats could well be one of the

causes and weak acceptance of the policies. He was also of the view that for a citizen diplomacy to work in sustaining the system internationally, that the recruitment of private citizen with soft sell of ideas and intentions are better accepted rather than hard sell that goes with threat, intimidation, attacks and blackmail.

Complementing the facts of the above notions, Skidmore (2011), notes that most organizations or agencies that involves in citizen diplomacy are private non-profit organisation (NGOs), institutions that sponsored, civil society groups among others, who should not in any way be neglected. In the same continuum, Nye (2010) argued that in the current epoch, where public diplomacy has done more by publics, that both democratic and autocratic government has find themselves caught on different sides of a Clift stick, because citizen diplomacy is increasingly important, but far from easy in global information age, where decentralization and diminished control may be central to the creation of soft power.

With the existence of this kind of refined citizen diplomacy working in the civilized society to enhance the foreign policy of their states, could this also happened in the developing society, like Nigeria and many others states, where many are still grappling with the endemic menace of corruption, where

poverty, misplaced priorities and bad leadership thrives? To examining that, the next section where the former in the present dispensation is engendering a transformation agenda programme shall be vividly discussed with comparism on whether there is anything like citizen diplomacy, and if it does exist, is the kind of citizen diplomacy masses driven, since it is very clear that this is not the first time such elusive programmes or policies are being introduced to the people without any success attached to it.

**CITIZEN DIPLOMACY AND  
STATE TRANSFORMATION  
AGENDA: THE NIGERIA  
EXPERIENCE EVALUATED.**

In the present statecrafts, apart from deviating from the past stereotyped and conservative system of interrelations among men, has gradually come to see and accept the involvement of everyone in the international governance of the state away from the officialdom of international relations and foreign policy processes and procedures. Hence, citizen diplomacy is now a powerful tool in defining one's own nation to the rest of the world. To which, Gottermoeller (2014), notes that citizen diplomacy has the potential to create a group of individual relationships to maintain goodwill when formal diplomacy undergoes disruptions. This is because, it is a kind of people-to-people interaction that was almost impossible in the past due to huge distance, but, which had till this day become the world's best and most available means of

interrelations. Much so, the rise in internet system and the subsequent collapse of distance that had instead increased travel in international stage, initiate an effective communication and influence one another greatly to become very important useful tool.

A fact, Nye (2010), confessed by saying that citizen diplomacy is the best way for a country to sell its story to a foreign country; the selling of a positive image of a country is often best accomplished by private citizens.

The above contentions when considered in respect of Nigeria, tends to make one to be troubled as to whether the presupposed giant of Africa has actually explored this new platform in boosting her diplomatic relations with the outside world. However, record had shown that Nigeria adopted the concept of citizen diplomacy in 2007, but in a wrong footing as Adejumo (2011) reiterated from the stands point of the then Minister of Foreign Affairs – Chief Ojo Maduekwe, who posits that citizen diplomacy in Nigeria is construed from a different angle of understanding; simply because Nigerian foreign policy still focuses on the Nigeria citizen at home and abroad. The Foreign Minister further argued that Nigeria is not shifting away from the traditional approach to foreign relations, but that they will focus more on the citizen. Meaning that the kind of citizen diplomacy in Nigeria is a mechanism meant to protect the image and integrity of the country and reacts against nations that are hostile and



nation who had labeled the country as a corrupt state.

Complementing the critic against the Minister's policy statement, Nwozor (2012) noted that since the idea was mooted in 2007, that there does not seem to be any structure on the ground for its logical pursuit, depicting the Achilles heel of Nigeria's foreign policy – making that is covered with lack of continuity and extreme personalization of its processes.

However, in counting the faults in the Nigerian foreign policy of yester-years that had focused on Afro-centric philosophy, to which Idumange (2010) faulted as failed leadership inability to define her national interest and the nation sudden loss of its competitive edge in African diplomacy; coupled with the shallow view of the Minister's policy statement, Okeke and Aniche (2014) admits that the initiators of the contradictory citizen diplomacy in 2007 failed or ignored the interface between domestic politics and international politics and erroneously thought that the two can be separated from each other. They however, placed the shortfall on the intense class struggle for power and the long years of military rule and its militarization, which everything was marginalized including the citizen welfare at home let along abroad where citizen diplomacy was at zero level.

Premised on this identified hiccups in engendering sound citizen diplomacy in Nigeria vis-à-vis the enumerated

contents and possible workability guides of the contents, the present regime under President Goodluck Jonathan did launched a transformation agenda, meant to tackle not only the floors in the Nigerian foreign policy among others but also to cover all facets of the Nigerian economy and the state politics. The study, mindful of the intrigues in state governance, however, examines the transformation agenda, the experience so far, and the place of citizen diplomacy vis-à-vis Nigerian foreign relations.

To elucidate on this, the following questions may act as a poser and guide: What are the responsibilities and possible failures on duties of the previous regimes? Why are Nigerians looked at with great suspicion everywhere even in the present dispensation? What are the basic factors that informed the present government to seek for the transformation of the society? What are the possible solutions acting as a linkage toward promoting the country's images? How strong is citizen diplomacy under the transformation agenda guidelines? And how have the government efforts been towards confronting the failed value of the country outside her domain?

In accepting to put on course the transformation agenda programmes, the government admitted that there were challenges facing the nation and from which are expected solutions and achievement by making use of human and natural resources to reducing

poverty, creating wealth, employment generation, value re-orientation, economic transformation, telecommunication reform, agricultural rejuvenation and improvement of security generally among others. The baseline was to increasing investment opportunities and accelerate network development that could thereby, positively impacting greatly on the national economic development of the country.

It also sought to developing effective public and private sector partnership, especially towards designing and implementing economic reform programmes and to give effect to specific goals of the vision 20:2020. The government intentions under the transformation agenda was also to be a key player in the world economy; the largest and strongest economy in African; to achieve a great height in reforming government institutions; growing private sectors initiatives and improving social development (ALTON, 2009) among others.

Specifically, the transformation agenda did not spell out any major intention toward foreign relations (citizen diplomacy), even when the notion of battered image abroad still hunt the citizens outside the shore of Nigeria. The only area one could commend the government is in the area of maintaining the existence of Technical Aid Corp (TAC), that are narrow in scope and the Amnesty Training Programmes of the Niger-Delta militants, thereby

suggesting that the regime is as good as making the mistake of other regimes before it. And, to which all had failed in their responsibilities and duties in projecting a sound citizen diplomacy outlook. The effect of TAC and Amnesty trained persons are not being felt in our foreign policy relations. Thereby agreeing with Idumange (2010) that in most countries, Nigeria is represented by diplomats who have no idea of their functional responsibility, hence, they cannot defend Nigeria's national interest feverishly even in the face of brazen violations.

The transformation agenda look more of domestic instead of being a balance project touching both domestic and international sphere. Simply, because most of the programmes are in the hand of official diplomats who may as well not be able to sell its details favourably to the outsiders, which also support the reaction of Oyetunde (2008), that unfortunately, Nigeria foreign policy relations is static, unprogressive and that it is not benevolent to most Nigerians outside the shore. A Nigerian citizen visiting the embassy for help will likely be given every reason possible not to render help in a foreign land. A Nigerian seeking help in a foreign land will most likely be left hanging... (Adaramola, 2007).

The citizen diplomacy, if any at all, in this respect, is very weak. The transformation agenda investment drive ought to be left in the hand of individuals and private citizen diplomats instead of



the normal officialdom, thereby re-echoing the stand of the then Foreign Minister – Chief Ojo Maduekwe in 2007, that the nation is not shifting away from the traditional foreign policy doctrine to complete citizen diplomacy due to reasons best known to them.

The transformation agenda of the current government may have a purposeful meaning, if only the citizens are allowed to be involved in the drives and spreading of the rich culture, social initiatives, wealth creation of the government in the midst of many nations through citizen diplomacy, which will in turn, attract many other nations' citizens, professionals and businessmen to Nigeria and vice-versa.

It is evidence that lack of openness of the transformation agenda, sad enough, is one of the major problem bedeviling not only the programmes but also the Nigerian foreign relations, even after three years or more of its initiation/introduction. The effects of this shortfall have contributed immensely to the failures in redeeming Nigerian image abroad. The economic activities and wealth creation are still based on officialdom and coupled with insecurity in some part of the country, thereby encouraging weak investors friendly as no vibrant citizen diplomacy that ought to conscientised prospectors are in existence. Regrettably also, the only exchanges programmes known and are working today are those seen sponsored by stated governments and or private sectors. Most of the NGOs are

seen by the government officials as enemy of the state due to lack of sincerity in policy initiation and implementation.

## CONCLUSION

Citizen diplomacy being a concept that affirms that the individual has the right, even the responsibility to help shape his nation's foreign policy relations toward sound economy, decent polity, sound social structure, wealth creations and cultural values, and or ... sell its story to a foreign country. selling a positive image... (Nye, 2010). It suffices to point out that the establishment of the Nigerian Technical Aid Corp (TAC) at the inception of democratic dispensation in Nigeria was not properly streamlined to be the beginning of citizen diplomacy of the foreign affairs office, since TAC was a platform where educated – Nigerian professionals are selected and sent to help poor and needy countries with low capacity, while at the same time expected to project the image of the country first among those nations. The rendered services in this respect, range from Medical, Health Services, Agriculture, Academics, Artists and others to those that lack such initiatives, facilities and manpower.

The transformation agenda supposedly to be the pivot to which every foreign relation (that is citizen diplomacy) against the narrow and dwarf scope of TAC, but the agendas for transformation was silent and to some extent, still dwell on the old traditions of foreign relations, thereby failing to make the

transformation a people oriented, citizen driven and mass friendly. The Foreign Affairs Ministry is completely shielded in a cocoon of officialdom that had been the major causes of the several failures.

Compounding the shortfall of TAC by adding more to the problem on the ground, the Amnesty training programmes of the Niger-Delta militants that ought to act as an exchange programmes does not in any way suite the projecting of citizen diplomacy as most beneficiaries are not educated, not well informed, and mannerly uncultured to interacting in a high frequency with the host let alone interacting on citizen diplomacy level, since “man can only give what he has upstairs”.

On this basis, the Foreign Affairs Ministry needs to open up the ideals of citizen diplomacy through the efforts of the government by equally making the transformation programmes a citizen oriented and not inclusive only to the members of the regime. Then, looking at the weakness and non-chalant attitude of Nigerians toward the project and citizen diplomacy values, the individuals, groups and organisation supposed to be conscientised on the need for everyone to braze up with reality. Technology had eluded us; the ideals of citizen diplomacy must not abandon us.

Although, reasons may abound against citizen diplomacy apathy, probably due to the failure on the side of the government not being friendly outside the country, since these are the crops of

citizens who would have to carry on the programmes on their own volition. They feared that the government and the embassies are not benevolent enough to be given such a treats. Much as no incentive, no help or whatsoever, as some might have even lived under bridges or keep on hiding from one place to the other for long before they could find their feet in the host state whereas the country’s embassy exists, hence, the best was to stay away from the mission.

Conclusively, one of the noticeable factor that seems to be a hindrance in the working and establishment of true citizen diplomacy in Nigeria may be located in level of class struggle, craze for power and pen-chat for primitive accumulation and the growing insecurity in virtually all the regions of the country, to which those who have the intentions of coming home with the intent of going back with such state ideals and projections are scared and threatened. Thus, making this study to accept in content the views of Okeke and Aniche (2014), that the intense struggles for state power over other things including the citizens welfare or wellbeing that are marginalized both at home and abroad, forms the processes that hindered the implementation of Nigerian Foreign Policy thrust embedded in citizen diplomacy.

Furthermore, the incapacitation of the Nigerian mission abroad, according to Nwozor (2012), in terms of crisis of funding, manpower challenges and the timely intervention in protecting the



interest of Nigerians demanding the expansion of the frontier of diplomacy politicking by harnessing the abundant human resources to meet the goal of its foreign policy are still absent.

Finally, for citizen diplomacy to succeed, it must be backed up with the sincerity of purpose and approach to Nigeria's entire problem at home (Adejumo, 2011). The establishment of citizen diplomacy in Nigeria is desirable, noteworthy and must be pursued. It is a policy that is inherently proactive, decidedly dynamic and conceived to achieve a goal as many may be asking where is the citizen in our foreign policy.

### RECOMMENDATION

Sequel to the highlighted hiccups that had formed a trajectory to undermine the true value of citizen diplomacy for long in the Nigerian government and politics with particular reference to the current regime, which had adversely affected the foreign policy relations of the country, even in the midst of the ongoing transformation agenda programmes, this study mindful of the several scholarly assertions stands to suggest that it would be better if the following silent and delicate points are considered without any prejudice towards meeting up the very essence of government to the people and society.

(i) The transformation agenda should include Citizen Diplomacy ideals in the Foreign Affairs Ministry as a central body to handle everything

related to citizen welfare, wellbeing and relationship to their host.

- (ii) There should be the establishment of Citizen Diplomacy Commission under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate all related matters.
- (iii) The transformation agenda should be operated on the people driven platform so as to achieve the required result.
- (iv) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs by matter of urgency should divorce itself from old paradigm or traditional processes of interacting and relating with her host/citizens and nations alike and enthrone citizen diplomacy.
- (v) Citizen diplomacy body under the transformation agenda should be allowed to unite all networks of citizens – individual, group and organizations. It should be allowed to creating global fluency and explore resources available to promoting the image and natural economy of the country.
- (vi) There should be a well-established data collection approaches in all the embassies. The idea of using social media and any other network should be encouraged.
- (vii) There is the need to increasing funding for the works of the citizen diplomacy for sustainability, especially if the transformation agenda must have a meaningful impact on the citizen with greater result oriented.

- (viii) The established citizen diplomacy commission should be allowed to sponsor and develop young leaders for careers in public and international affairs and conduct semi-annual conferences for membership on current international issues.
- (ix) The documenting and educating of the people on the impact of citizen diplomacy programmes should be encouraged and carried out by organizations, stakeholders, and government so as to encourage other interests in engaging in such duty and responsibility.
- (x) The federal government should task the education ministry in collaboration with citizen diplomacy commission to creating programmes such as international educational council to encourage exchange programmes, international training of teachers, academia and knowledge enhancement productivity.

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