

REMARKS

BY THE

**HONOURABLE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AMBASSADOR AMINU BASHIR WALLI, mni, CON**

ON THE

**OCCASION OF THE 2ND PLENARY SESSION OF THE NIGERIA-
GERMANY BI-NATIONAL COMMISSION,
HELD IN BERLIN, GERMANY**

ON

TUESDAY, 21ST OCTOBER, 2014

PROTOCOL

Your Excellency, Mr Frank – Walter Steinmeier, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed my great pleasure to address participants at this unique occasion of the 2nd Plenary Session of the Nigeria – Germany Bi- National Commission. I particularly wish to express profound appreciation to the government of Germany for the generous hospitality extended to me and members of my delegation since our arrival. You may recall that the inaugural Session of Nigeria- Germany Bi-National Commission was held in your beautiful city, Berlin, precisely at the Foreign office, at the side-line of the Official visit of my President, H.E. Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR in April, 2012.

2. It is to underscore the importance attached by my Government for a vibrant and resilient economy that I am leading the Nigerian delegation to this 2nd Plenary Session of the BNC.

3. As you are no doubt aware, Nigerian – German relations have been very cordial and friendly since the establishment of Nigeria’s diplomatic Mission in your country. There is a shared economic fortune between the two countries, Germany being the leading economy in Europe, while Nigeria leads in Africa with GDP in excess of \$500billion. The evidence of this strong and warm relationship could be seen in the numerous German companies that are operating successfully all over Nigeria.

4. Your Excellencies, I believe that Nigeria has a lot to offer as well as to learn from Germany’s unprecedented progress and prosperity as the strongest economy in Europe. I therefore make haste to call on our friends to

participate in Nigeria's quest for economic development which is anchored on the Transformation Agenda of the present administration of President, H.E. Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR.

5. It is pertinent to acknowledge the recently-approved grant of 21.5 million Euro from the German Government to Nigeria for the programme "Promotion of Renewable Energy" for the energy sector which is being processed. I also wish to acknowledge, the 15 million Euro for eradication of polio programme currently on-going and yet another 5 million Euro for security strategy purposes. The various forms of assistance from your government are deeply appreciated by the Government and people of Nigeria.

6. Nigeria is presently witnessing an upsurge in terrorist activities in some parts of the country. In prosecuting this war, the Federal Government of Nigeria is mindful of the

sincere concern expressed by the German government about global and regional terrorism, human rights issues, including the rights of minorities. This occasion affords me the opportunity to set the record straight. Our counter-insurgency strategy is multi-faced, focusing on dialogue, empowerment re-orientation, education, job and wealth creation. We have launched the Victims Support Fund, in addition to the Presidential Initiative on North East for the development of the region.

7. I am pleased to note that the Nigerian Armed Forces have regained control of some key towns in the North eastern states of Nigeria, which were hitherto under the control of the insurgents. We have also ensured that in this war, the Armed Forces observe their Rules of Engagement, respecting the human rights of the people in the affected areas. It is important to note that a secure atmosphere must be created for a full enjoyment of

human rights by all. Nigeria therefore requires the concerted efforts and cooperation of its sub-regional neighbours and the International Community, especially friendly countries like Germany, to continue to address the challenges posed by the Boko Haram insurgency.

8. In the last few months, I have held series of meetings with my counterparts from our neighbouring countries and development partners, in addressing the insurgency in my country. The result of our joint efforts has paid off with the recent ceasefire deal reached between the Nigerian Armed Forces and Boko Haram Sect. I am confident that with concerted efforts of our Armed Forces, our neighbours and development partners, the security situation in the North-eastern part of the country will soon return to normalcy.

9. In spite of the aforementioned challenges, Nigeria's economy is an investment haven. Needless to say, Nigeria's economy is open for investment to the German

private sector in the spectrum of sectors such as Power, Oil and Gas, Agriculture, Infrastructure, etc. I believe the immense opportunities in these sectors must have been adequately presented to the Private Sector yesterday at the German - Nigerian Business Forum by the Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment and members of our delegation. The meeting and the deliberations of the various Working Groups this morning has afforded us the opportunity for both sides to revisit all draft Agreements and drafts MoUs exchanged during the inaugural Session. Our experts from both sides have been able to conclude all outstanding issues in order to accelerate the momentum of our cooperation in all spheres.

10. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, may I recall that at the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, last month, our President, H.E. Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, declared to the world

that Nigeria was free of the EBOLA Virus. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has now officially confirmed that Nigeria is indeed free of the virus. This is a testament of the personal commitment of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, to the eradication of the disease, and the aggressive efforts of the Nigerian Government and the people of Nigeria who complied with the WHO instructions on preventive measures that have succeeded in containing the spread of the disease. In recognition of the variant and successful efforts of the Nigerian government, there is therefore no basis for stigmatisation and discrimination against Nigerians travelling all over the world.

11. Sadly, however, our sister West African neighbours are still battling the deadly disease. I call on our development partners to increase support to current efforts at controlling the Ebola Virus disease as well as to see that the Ebola Virus disease is contained in the West Africa Sub region. Nigeria has donated the sum of \$3.5

million towards this effort and would be happy to have Germany and our EU partners come on board.

12. Let me conclude by commending our counterparts, the German Foreign Office, corporate organizations, as well as investors for organising this plenary session. There is no better time for Nigeria and Germany to forge closer relations than now. We expect our partners to take full advantage of the opportunities provided in Nigeria through this platform to participate in the on-going Transformation Agenda of Government, in all sectors of the Nigerian economy.

13. Ladies and Gentlemen, as we commence deliberations on the reports of the various Working Groups, it is my expectation that the outcome of our interaction would move the BNC process between the two countries to an enviable height, for the mutual benefit of our people.

13. Thank you for listening.