

CITIZEN SECURITY

BEING PAPER PRESENTED

BY

ERNEST C A NDUKWE, FNSE, FNIM, FAE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

NIGERIAN COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

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THE CONCEPT OF SECURITY

Security is one of the most fundamental issues currently in the global world. The international society, every nation state, tribe, family and each individual is concerned about their security. The United Nations was actually formed to ensure global peace and security following the conclusion of the 2nd world war. Today, people go to great lengths to ensure they feel secure. In Nigeria today, the average home has additional burglary proofed window and doors, high electrified barbed wire fences and much more. In the more developed countries, homes are fitted with security cameras and door peep holes. Some homes even have pre-authentication on their telephones before calls can be connected.

The struggle for safety and security has led to various national and global wars. The 1st world war was fought because of the growth of nationalism across Europe, as well as unresolved territorial disputes by nation states. The second world war also was triggered by the breach of national security caused when Hitler invaded Poland, Japan took over Manchuria, Japan attacked the US Fleet at Pearl Harbor and Germany invaded the USSR.

Even the recent Gboko Haram led insurgence in Nigeria was triggered by an apparent need to secure what they felt was their local identity. America also invaded both Afghanistan and Iraq in preemptive strikes in order to forestall the wars which they believed their enemies had planned to in their shores. America commenced a preemptive war to protect their citizens, their identity and their way of life.

CONCEPT OF NATIONAL SECURITY

It is no gainsaying that for every nation, society and individual, security is the number one concern. This need for security is further strengthened by the belief that the concept of security is tied to the concept of freedom – and in this case, freedom from attack, from oppression, freedom from fear and freedom from the feeling of being a victim. There can be no true security without freedom and no

freedom without security. The Greeks from the very beginning understood the symbiosis between the two concepts. It must be said that that security and freedom can also be viewed as antithesis, for example when your freedom to open your windows fully is curtailed by your need for security, and your freedom of speech is hampered by the need to secure your life. The American Benjamin Franklin understood this dichotomy when he said, “ *those who give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety*”. Notwithstanding the sometimes antithetical implications, the symbiotic relationship is the more generally accepted view, and in recognition of their apparent linkage, in October 2005, the European Commission developed a Strategy for External Dimensions of Justice, Freedom and Security, which was adopted by the Council in December 2005,

For a nation state, its central focus is its citizens and how to ensure their safety and security. Today, this need to protect and ensure security for our citizens can be seen by the various international protocols and agreements which nation states accede to, that cover protection for their citizens in foreign nations. Indeed, this need to care for citizens is the reason why nation states establish Diplomatic missions in host nations. A nation’s government has the primary responsibility also for the protection of its borders. This is very critical especially as Governments realize that security is essential for national development. If a country’s trade borders are porous for example, that market becomes a dumping ground for other markets’ goods, which essentially will impede the growth and development of the nation’s local industries. If the immigration borders are open, a country is subject to interference from neighbouring states and dissidents will filter through whom one day might cause riots and threat to life and security of the local people. The influx of migrants also hampers a nation’s ability to manage its resources and cater for the basic necessities to its own people first and foremost.

With war always an ongoing threat, every nation seeks to protect its borders because war causes the destruction of all infrastructure and destroys the citizen’s

sense of security.

THE CONCEPT OF CITIZEN SECURITY

Parents seek to have a secure home for their children, mothers seek to secure their children; fathers their family; and clans their communities. For a business man, it is also imperative that his premises and business operating environment is secure.

The concept of citizen security is the concept of safety. The search for security by a nation's citizens, leads them to search for tools that guarantee their security. For physical protection of their lives and property, citizens - parents, businessmen - search for tools such as fences, gates and security men which help ensure their security.

Security however encompasses much more than the physical safety of life and property. Security relates to the totality of a person's wellbeing and this is influenced by various factors. For example, an employed citizen who is financially able to meet the needs of his family is a citizen who is secure. When a citizen is able to apply knowledge to improve his standard of life, that citizen is secure. Therefore, the ability to apply knowledge which helps a citizen make the correct decisions is fundamental to security. It is only through knowledge that a citizen would be wise enough to protect his home using barb wired fences, guard dogs and security men. It is only through the application of knowledge that a citizen know to puts his money into a bank where it can be accrue interest, instead of leaving it under his pillow.

The concept of citizen security therefore suggests that a citizen's socio economic wellbeing is achieved when they have access to knowledge and when that knowledge can be applied. In today's world, knowledge is acquired and applied through the use of ICT, and through the use of the internet. Thanks to the ICT revolution, a citizen is able to apply for, and get a job anywhere in the world using the internet. A citizen can study online and improve themselves from the best universities without leaving their home. A citizen can study the stock and FOREX

markets and ensure a good return on their investments. Thanks to ICT, even citizens' money in the bank is bettered secured thanks to e-alerts. The benefits of the ICT revolution means that a citizen can feed his family, put a roof over their heads, and feel secure in his future. None of this could have been achieved without the benefit of knowledge which in today's world, comes through ICT.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND ICT SERVICE PROVIDERS TO CITIZEN SECURITY

The role of ICT to the development of a nation and to citizen security cannot be overemphasized. A recent publication by the Malaysian based Global Knowledge Partnership organisation reviewed the question of whether Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) are a fast track to making poverty history. Drawing on their knowledge and experience, leading experts examined the potential and actual role of ICTs in meeting major development challenges such as fighting poverty, promoting gender equality, fostering participation in political processes and increasing transparency. They concluded that *"ICTs can be a unique and powerful platform for promoting sustainable human development, provided the focus is not on technology but on the people who use them."* The publication further stated that *"the power of ICTs can most effectively be harnessed through the participation and cooperation of all stakeholders in all sectors of society government, civil society and private sector"*.

In view of the role of ICT to development which leads to security, it is recommended that Government put in place policies that ensure the continued growth and spread of ICT to all sectors of the Nigerian economy and to its citizenry, as a way of ensuring citizen security.

As key stakeholders, the ICT Service Providers in Nigeria understand the need of for security by citizens, that is why today we see value added services like e-alerts, m-banking, e-taxation, and fast broadband speed that allow citizens carry out research and searches on the internet. Today, we even have service providers who for a minimal fee, link citizens up to job alerts on their mobile. These services ensure citizen security and sense of wellbeing. Thanks to these and other

initiatives, the Nigerian citizen is an informed and therefore, a secure citizen.

BENEFITS OF ICT TO CITIZEN SECURITY

Permit me to take a sample of some of the ways that ICT has helped transform the Nigerian society and therefore, helped improve its citizen's sense of security.

Economic Industrial – the most dramatic impact of telecoms in Nigeria has undoubtedly being on the economic front. It is now widely accepted that the productivity and competitiveness of all economic sectors and their capacity to innovate in terms of products, services and processes increasingly depend on Information and Communications networks. People, businesses and communities with ready access to information technologies are better equipped to participate actively in the global economy. International investors that demand efficient and reliable access ICTs as basis for investing are now taking Nigeria seriously because telecom access is now readily and speedily available.

Health Care – With the development of mobile communications, teleconferencing facilities and multi-media capabilities of telecommunications, spatial differences between medical specialists, medical centres and patients are being eliminated. Today, doctors on call are easily reachable, and medical staff can administer initial medical services to a patient through a remote doctor. All of these have positive impact on a citizen's security.

Education – The advent of ICT have revolutionalized education in Nigeria. Students have access to current research data, online university databases and the ability to study remotely and also have lectures delivered to them remotely from industry practitioners in far flung countries when they use the internet. The internet has also become a Universal Library, where

books, journals, articles and other materials can be sourced right within the confines of individual's homes in any part of the Globe.

Transportation – In Nigeria improvement in communications networks has greatly enhanced services such as monitoring of travel schedules and flight bookings. Citizens are secured when they can guarantee their attendance at a crucial business meeting.

Rural Development – With about 80% of Nigeria's population located in rural areas, access to information and knowledge is crucial for citizen security. The local farmer must be aware of market prices, and local communities can only best integrate into the larger society through the availability of information which is delivered seamlessly through ICT. When citizens can make informed life decisions, they are a people secured.

CONCLUSION

The ability to be secure and to be free is tied to the availability of communication. The World Wars were made possible, above all else, by a combination of fast communications such as the telegraph and radio.

There can be no growth without communication, and there can be no security without communication. For the individual to feel secure there must be the concept of growth and this only comes through knowledge and information. It is therefore imperative that through the medium of ICT, all industry stakeholders work towards empowering the citizens to the place of security.

Thank you.

Ernest C. A. Ndukwe, OFR
Chief Executive Officer,
Nigerian Communications Commission