

# newsletter

## Sanwo-Olu, Dabiri- Erewa urge more collaborations with Nigerians abroad, as diaspora remittances increase

By Khadija Shehu Bamalli



In a gathering that underscored the vital role of Nigerians living abroad, Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu and the Chairman of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, celebrated the significant contributions of the Nigerian diaspora.

The event, ConnectEDiaspora Fireside Chat 2024, held in collaboration with NiDCOM's Homestrings Programme in Lagos, highlighted the increasing impact of diaspora remittances on the nation's economy.

According to the Central Bank of Nigeria, diaspora remittances saw a notable rise from \$336.61 million in September 2024 to \$402.38 million in October 2024. Represented by Deputy Governor Dr. Obafemi Hamzat,

Governor Sanwo-Olu urged Nigerians abroad to maintain a deep connection with their homeland and its rich cultural heritage. He shared his personal journey of returning to Nigeria after working in the United States, emphasizing the importance of identifying opportunities and contributing to national development.

He also cautioned against perpetuating negative narratives about Nigeria, noting that many foreigners find success within the country despite its challenges.

Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa echoed these sentiments, encouraging the diaspora to continue their active participation in Nigeria's socio-economic growth.

She emphasized that addressing the nation's challenges requires collaboration between Nigerians at home and abroad. Highlighting the government's commitment, she noted that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is implementing proactive reforms to tackle these issues.

The event also showcased the achievements of distinguished Nigerians, including actress Omotola Jalade Ekehinde and world chess champion Tunde Onakoya, serving as a testament to the global impact of Nigeria's talent.

The ConnectEDiaspora Fireside Chat 2024 exemplified the strengthening bond between Nigeria and its diaspora, showcasing a shared commitment to the nation's progress and prosperity.

## NASS commends NiDCOM, pledges increased funding, building of a diaspora plaza

Oyibe Christian Mathew

The Joint National Assembly Committee on Diaspora Affairs has commended the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) for its outstanding performance, despite its very limited resources. The committee vowed to push for increased funding and building of a Diaspora plaza for the Commission. This was one of the highlights during the 2024 Budget Performance Review and the presentation of the 2025 Budget proposal in Abuja by Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Chairman/CEO, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission.

Presiding over the joint session, Sen. Victor Umeh, Chairman, Senate Committee on Diaspora Affairs and NGOs, noted the significant difference between NiDCOM's 2024 and proposed 2025 budgets proposal. He stressed the need for better financial support and infrastructure for a Commission whose impact has been felt and is critical to Nigeria's national development.

Commending the prudent leadership style of Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Sen. Umeh acknowledged her efforts in boosting diaspora engagement despite provision of embarrassingly low resources, noting the increase in diaspora remittances and investments in the country. Members of the Joint Committee, including Senators Ezenwa Onyenwuchi, Ibrahim Dakwambo, Onawo Ogoshi as well as Hon. Auwalu Abdu Gwalabe, shared their thoughts on external funding sources, diaspora data mapping, in fighting amongst members of NIDO across continents, among other issues.

The lawmakers unanimously agreed that NiDCOM is underfunded and resolved to advocate for a revision of the Appropriation Bill to reflect an increase to be able to meet up with its core mandates. Presenting NiDCOM's 2024 budget performance, Dabiri-Erewa said that the Commission managed a total budget of ₦263,125,368 million achieving 99 per cent execution rate. However, despite a capital budget of ₦1,685,630,449 billion, no releases have been made so far from the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation. For 2025, Dabiri-Erewa said the proposed budget allocates ₦363,943,894 millions for salaries and wages; ₦377,098,274 millions for overhead costs, and ₦541,037,512 millions for personnel costs. Dabiri-Erewa also listed the Commission's strategic plans for 2025, including enhancing diaspora engagement, increasing personnel capacity-building, and developing infrastructure to support investment and welfare programmes. She reiterated the urgent need for a dedicated Diaspora Plaza, not only to serve as office for the commission, but a hub for Nigerians abroad when they visit home. Responding to inquiries about external funding, the NiDCOM Chairman disclosed that the Commission relies on sponsorships and partnerships from well-meaning organisations for its major events, as it currently receives no external funding or grants.

She equally stressed the importance of diaspora data mapping, expressing hope that the establishment of a physical structure to facilitate accurate and real-time data collection is in the process. On the issue of in fighting amongst

various chapters of Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation (NIDO), Dabiri Erewa stated that such attitude does not augur well for positive development, while calling on NASS committees on diaspora to intervene. The NiDCOM Chairman

expressed her gratitude to the members of the Joint Committee for its unwavering support and assured the Committee of the Commission's commitment to achieving its mandate.

## NiDCOM AT FIVE: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

By Deborah T. Anaelechi



The Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) was established five years ago as a crucial link between Nigeria and its millions of citizens living abroad. Created to align the country's vast diaspora with its development goals, the Commission has made notable progress despite facing challenges that reflect the complexity of its mission.

Since its creation in 2019 under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration, NiDCOM has recognised the immense contributions of over 17 million Nigerians worldwide. These individuals act as ambassadors, innovators, and contributors to

Nigeria's development. Under the leadership of Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, NiDCOM has become a shining example of diaspora engagement, advocating for their rights and fostering their involvement in national progress.

### Achievements over Five Years

One of NiDCOM's outstanding accomplishments is its commitment to safeguarding Nigerians abroad. By offering consular support during crises and quickly advocating for citizens in distress, the Commission has consistently prioritised the welfare of Nigerians, no matter where they live.

To honour diaspora contributions, NiDCOM celebrates National

Diaspora Day every July 25, recognising the remarkable achievements of Nigerians abroad. In 2023, it introduced the National Diaspora Merit Awards to recognise Nigerians making exceptional contributions on the global map.

The Commission has also strengthened its diaspora engagement strategy by appointing State Diaspora Focal Point Officers (SDFPOs) across all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, encouraging grassroots involvement. Additionally, the annual Nigeria Diaspora Investment Summit (NDIS) has become a hallmark event, attracting diaspora investments into key sectors of the Nigerian economy.

Cultural and historical connections have been rekindled through events such as the Badagry Diaspora Door of Return festival, organised in partnership with the Lagos State Government. This initiative boosts tourism and celebrates the shared history between Nigeria and its diaspora.



NiDCOM has also partnered with the Ministry of Interior to address operational challenges faced by Nigerians abroad; thereby streamlining passport renewal and collection processes for greater efficiency and accessibility.

### Communication and Advocacy

Understanding the importance of effective communication, NiDCOM has created various platforms to engage with the diaspora. From its TV programme The Diaspora to newsletters, social media, and plans for an online radio station, the Commission ensures regular updates and outreach to a broad audience in the Diaspora.

The annual Diaspora Town Hall Meetings, incorporated during presidential visits abroad, allow Nigerian diasporas to engage directly with the President and other Nigerian government representatives. These sessions encourage open discussions about welfare and national policies to move the country forward.

Additionally, NiDCOM has handled more than 1,000 diaspora petitions, resolving numerous welfare issues and reaffirming its dedication to addressing the concerns of Nigerians abroad.

### Addressing Irregular Migration

NiDCOM has been unapologetic in its advocacy against irregular migration, raising awareness about its dangers through partnerships with international organisations; such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM); National Agency for the Prohibition and

Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), and educational campaigns. The Commission has actively promoted safer, legal migration options while emphasising the importance of making informed decisions.

### Establishing Global Partnerships

NiDCOM has excelled in building strategic relationships with foreign governments, international organisations, and diaspora communities. By organising cultural exchanges, diplomatic engagements, and trade missions, the Commission has enhanced Nigeria's global reputation while fostering mutual understanding and collaboration.

This innovative approach to diaspora engagement has drawn attention from other countries. Nations like Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Namibia, Ghana, and the SADC have visited NiDCOM to understudy and adopt best practices for engaging their diasporas.

### Capacity-building and Recognition

To maintain high standards, the Commission prioritises staff development, providing continuous training and capacity-building opportunities to improve service delivery. These efforts highlight NiDCOM's commitment to excellence in carrying out its responsibilities. NiDCOM's contributions have not gone unnoticed. The Commission has received numerous accolades, including the Business Day Award and the Guardian Distinguished Award, in recognition of its work in diaspora affairs. It was also ranked among

the top 20 outstanding MDAs in 2021.

It's no surprise that under the leadership of Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, NiDCOM has been highly praised by various stakeholders:

*"The energy is here in Nigeria. I want to thank Auntie (Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa), for caring for us and all that, she has been doing"*- Anthony Joshua, Nigerian-British Boxing Champion.

*"I commend NiDCOM and the passion of its Chairman, Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa who has brought a lot of zeal to the work of the Commission"*- Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, former Vice President of Nigeria, at the 2021 Nigeria Diaspora Investment Summit.

*"I thank the Chairperson and CEO of the Nigerian Diaspora Commission, my dear sister, Honourable Abike Dabiri-Erewa, for organising this event and for her outstanding leadership on this issue"*- Hajia Amina J. Mohammed, Dep. Secretary-General, UN, at the National Diaspora Day 2022.

*"NiDCOM is enjoying quality leadership under Dr Dabiri-Erewa. The reward for hard work is more work. You have to keep it up and give a little more push until the Diaspora can relate with the country in one dial"*- Amb Zubairu Dada, past Min. of State, Foreign Affairs, Nigeria.

*"Having served meritoriously in your first term and asserted the relevance of the Commission, it's our belief that your second term will be used in solidifying the Commission and expanding the base of diaspora engagement in the pursuance of implementation of the Nigeria National Diaspora Policy"*- Dr Bashir Obasekola, former Chairman, NIDO Europe.

*“Tapping the potentials of the Nigerians in diaspora community; we have many Nigerians scattered all over the globe; and NiDCOM, headed by Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa OON, has done a no man’s job. She has been globetrotting to engage with Nigerians in the diaspora...it is such an important organisation...”* - Sen. Victor Umeh, Senate Committee Chairman on Diaspora Affairs and NGOs, at the 2024 Budget Performance Review and the presentation of the 2025 Budget Proposal by the Joint National Assembly Committee on Diaspora Affairs.

### Challenges

Despite its achievements, NiDCOM has faced significant disadvantages such as bureaucratic bottlenecks, limited resources, no dedicated office building and uncertainties in

foreign policies. While these obstacles have tested the Commission’s resilience, they have also reinforced its determination to succeed.

### Reflecting on Five Years

To celebrate its fifth anniversary, NiDCOM hosted an event in Abuja that brought together staff and stakeholders to reflect on its progress. Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa praised the team for their hard work and dedication, expressing gratitude for their efforts while acknowledging the hurdles they have overcome.

### Conclusion

NiDCOM’s journey over the past five years is a testament to passion, resilience, and commitment. It has successfully connected Nigerians abroad with their homeland,

fostering a bond that strengthens the nation. As NiDCOM builds on its achievements, it holds the promise of a more prosperous Nigeria.

As it continues to grow, the Commission remains keen on innovation, expanding partnerships, and exploring new opportunities for collaboration. NiDCOM has a mission that transcends diaspora engagement but seeks to establish a legacy of shared growth and prosperity.

Looking ahead, Nigeria’s future is closely bound to the strength and success of its diaspora. By empowering Nigerians abroad and leveraging their potential, NiDCOM aims to drive national development and create a brighter future for all.



# DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT: CALIFORNIA SEEKS INVESTMENTS, PARTNERSHIP IN AFRICA, AS DELEGATION VISITS NiDCOM

Oyibe Christian Mathew



Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Chairman/CEO, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) says more investment should be targeted at capacity building to grow a bolstering Nigerian economy and promote brain circulation. The NiDCOM Chairman stated this at a strategic meeting with Dr Toks Omishakin, the Secretary, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), in Abuja. She emphasised the importance of knowledge transfer and skill development in driving economic growth.

The NiDCOM Boss highlighted the need for training programmes to equip Nigerians with the technical know-how, necessary to improve efficiency and productivity in the transportation sector. The Chairman added that this is a step into aligning with President Tinubu's vision of growing the country into a trillion-dollar economy. The NiDCOM Boss further stated that educating the public will enable them become environmentally

conscious and find ways to promote activities that protects the planet. She suggested that the California Transport Secretary to include more key actors such as the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), on research, training and capacity.

Dabiri-Erewa also praised Omishakin for using his position for the common good of all, which is a Nigerian core value, and assured him of future collaboration with the Commission. Dr Toks Omishakin, expressed his general concern about air quality, affected by pollution and other environmental factors. According to him, transport activities contribute a great share to environmental and air pollution which has significant impact on the population's health. Omishakin stated that CalSTA seeks a collaboration that aims to foster stronger ties between Nigeria and California, by leveraging the expertise and influence of the Nigerian diaspora

in the US, through infrastructure development, economic development and knowledge/skill transfer.

With Africa as their latest addition, he expressed CalSTA's commitment to investing in sectors such as technology, energy, and green jobs, and highlighted the potential for collaboration with Nigerian tertiary institutions, like the University of Lagos, to develop advanced training programmes for students. In addition, he informed that CalSTA is ready to invest in Nigerian states with strong investment sectors that is viable in California. Dr. Aditya Ramji, Director, Global South Clean Transportation Center and part of the delegation, agreed that training is vital to ensure local capability in promoting climate actions among the youth.

Ramji noted that the training programme will focus on providing Master's and PhD students with the knowledge and skills needed to address the challenges facing Nigeria's transportation sector. The California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) is a state cabinet-level agency that develops and coordinates transportation policies and programmes for California, to ensure safe, sustainable, convenient and affordable transportation for citizens.



# DABIRI-EREWA APPLAUDS CARDOSO ON LAUNCH OF NON-RESIDENT NIGERIAN ACCOUNTS

by: Daraojimba Izuchukwu

---



Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Chairman/CEO, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), has lauded Mr. Olayemi Cardoso, Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) for introducing the Non-Resident Nigerian Ordinary Account (NRNOA) and the Non-Resident Nigerian Investment Account (NRNIA).

In a statement issued by Abdur-Rahman Balogun, the Commission's Head, Media, Public Relations and Protocols, the move is a strategic initiative to enhance diaspora engagement and bolster Nigeria's economic growth.

Dabiri-Erewa emphasised the pivotal role of diaspora remittances, noting its status as the highest source of foreign exchange to Nigeria, which surpasses oil revenues.

She further highlighted the importance of strategic engagement with the diaspora community, stating, "Nigerians, home and abroad, must join hands to develop Nigeria, as no foreigner will do this for us".

The NiDCOM Boss urged Nigerians in the diaspora to leverage these new financial packages. She also commended the CBN's proactive approach in strengthening ties with the diaspora, citing recent engagements towards optimising remittances and boosting the country's finances.

he NiDCOM Chairman expressed optimism that the launch of the NRNOA and NRNIA would help increase economic contributions from Nigerians worldwide.



# ARGUNGU FISHING FESTIVAL

by Oyibe Christian Matthew

The Argungu Fishing Festival is an annual four-day festival in the state of Kebbi, in the north-western part of Northern Nigeria. This is an annual four-day fishing festival that has been held in the north-western state of Kebbi it is a festival that has been in celebration for over Eighty (80) years since 1934. It is held at the beginning of March, and thousands of fishermen come to compete to catch the largest fish on the Sokoto River using only traditional handmade nets. It is considered as one of the most famous cultural events in Nigeria.

## What's the History behind the Argungu Fishing Festival?

The festival began in the year 1934, when the Emir of Argungu Alhaji Muhammadu Sama was inspired to create a festival that will showcase the rich cultural heritage of the region, to promote the unity of the people and as a mark of the end of the centuries-old hostility between the Sokoto Caliphate and the Kebbi Kingdom. The Emir invited fishermen from different communities to participate in the competition to

catch the largest fish from the Matan Fada River using traditional methods. The region is made up of fertile river areas, with lots of irrigation and orchards, making a fishing festival an ideal way to celebrate the new peace, and it's been celebrated every year since.

Despite facing challenges in recent years, such as security concerns and environmental issues, the Argungu Fishing Festival continues to be celebrated annually, attracting visitors and tourist from around the World. The festival remains an important cultural event in Nigeria and a symbol of unity and tradition for the people of Argungu and Kebbi State at large.

## How the Argungu Fishing Festival been Celebrated:

The four-day festival features kabanci—a series of water competitions including hand fishing, canoe racing, wild duck catching—as well as other traditional practices, such as the local style of wrestling and boxing. Dancing and singing add to the

festivities as well. There's a heavy focus on celebrating traditional skills from the Kebbi region, and one of the most iconic competitions that takes place during the festival is a one-hour race to catch the largest fish using traditional fishing tools; many participants use their hands to catch fish. To begin the fishing season and this one-hour competition, the Matan Fada river's custodian, Sarkin Ruwa, ensures the river's safety by gaining permission to fish from the river oracles. Once the race has begun, drumming and dancing accompany the competitors and entertain the onlookers. More modern fishing tools are banned, in order to focus on skill and to help keep the festival sustainable. Some of the fish caught are truly enormous – in 2005, the winning fish weighed 75 kg, and needed four men to hoist it onto the scales!

## Why is the Fishing Festival Important?

### Religious Rites

The religious rites associated with the festival are regarded as its



essence, for through them prayers are offered to gods and ancestors for protection and prosperity. The rites, primarily the sacrifice of a goat, hens, fruits, and vegetables, are performed by the Homa, Sarkin, Ruwa, and Jirgi at the Sokoto river the day before the festival starts.

### Cultural Activities

Before the fishing starts, an impressive display of aquatic cultural activities takes place - canoe race, swimming on a gourd and with a clay pot balanced on the head, diving competitions, wild duck hunting, fishing with bare hands, and water relays. Wrestling and boxing competitions, archery, motor rally, arts and crafts and agricultural exhibitions, local music, and dance troops are non-aquatic cultural activities.

### Grand Fishing

The major event, which is the fishing competition, takes place on

the fourth and final day of the festival and lasts for an hour. The Homa signals the start of the competition, after which thousands of fishermen dive into the river to hunt for the biggest fish. The use of modern fishing equipment is not allowed; thus, traditional nets and gourds are used. After that, singers rent the air with traditional Kebbawa rhythms. Another sect rattles huge gourds filled with seeds to drive the fish to shallow waters.

### Local legends about the festival

The Argungu Festival comes with its share of mystery and supernatural events. The custodian of the Matan Fada River is called Hussaini Makwashe or Danggalidaman Makwashe (doubles as the Sarkin Ruwa: river fishing official). Until he okays the commencement of the festival, no one can catch any fish in the river. The fishes reportedly remain invisible to fishermen until the Hussaini Makwashe invites the fishes to the festival. A month before the festival, invitations are

extended to fishes in other rivers connected to the Matan Fada River. They must arrive early before the competition else; they will not be allowed to partake in the competition. The Makwashe is also in covenant with the crocodiles in the river. A day before the fishing festival, he directs them to hide until it is over.

### Tourism

The Argungu Fishing Festival is one of the tourist events not just in the north but in Nigeria as a whole. It attracts thousands of guests from all over the world, thereby being a significant source of foreign exchange. It further boosts the hospitality industry in Kebbi state. The tourism importance of this festival was felt when it was suspended, but its re-emergence signifies prosperity for Nigeria, Kebbi state, and Argungu town.



# CULTURAL POTENTIALS OF KOGI STATE

by Oyibe Christian Matthew



Kogi State, located in central Nigeria covers a total land area of about 29,833 square kilometres (11,525 square miles).

It is known for its diverse geography, including mountains, valleys, and rivers. The state is rich in natural resources and has agricultural and mineral resources that contribute to its economy.

Kogi State is also notable for its cultural heritage and historical sites, with its incumbent Governor Usman Ododo who assumed office on the January 27, 2024.

Kogi State has significant cultural potential in various areas: Diversity of Ethnic Groups: Kogi State is home to a diverse range of ethnic groups, each with its own unique language, traditions, and cultural practices.

This diversity contributes to a rich cultural tapestry that can be showcased through various cultural events and programs. Traditional Arts and Crafts: Kogi State has a rich tradition of arts and crafts, including pottery, weaving, beadwork, and metalwork.

These traditional skills can be promoted and preserved through cultural exhibitions, workshops, and training programs.

Festivals and Celebrations: The state hosts a variety of festivals and celebrations throughout the year, including the Ebira Carnival, Okun Festival, and the Igala Cultural Festival. These events provide opportunities to showcase traditional music, dance, and rituals.

Cultural Heritage Sites: Kogi State is home to several historical and cultural heritage sites, including the ancient seat of the Igala kingdom, the confluence of Rivers Niger and Benue, and the

colonial-era Lokoja Railway Station. These sites can be developed as cultural tourism destinations.

Cuisine and Culinary Traditions: The state's culinary heritage, with dishes such as pounded yam, egusi soup, kogi rice, and local delicacies, can be promoted through food festivals, culinary tours, and cooking classes.

Arts and Performing Arts: Kogi State has a vibrant arts scene with talented artists, musicians, and performers.

Art galleries, theaters, and cultural centers can support and showcase local talent while attracting visitors interested in the arts.

By harnessing these cultural potentials, Kogi State can promote cultural exchange, tourism, economic development, and community empowerment.

First, Rich cultural heritage: Kogi State is home to a diverse range of ethnic groups including the Ebira, Igala, Nupe, and Oworo.

Each of these groups has their own unique traditions, customs, and festivals that contribute to the rich cultural tapestry of the state.

Secondly, Traditional craftsmanship: The people of Kogi State are known for their traditional craftsmanship in areas such as pottery, weaving, woodworking, and metalwork. These skills have been passed down through generations and continue to be an important part of the local culture.



cont'd from page 10

Thirdly, Festivals and celebrations: Kogi State is known for its colorful festivals and celebrations, which often involve music, dance, and traditional rituals.

Some of the most popular festivals in the state include the Igala Yam Festival, the Ebira Cultural Festival, and the Oworo Fishing Festival. Fourthly, Culinary traditions: Kogi State has a rich culinary heritage, with traditional dishes that reflect the diverse ethnic groups that make up the state.

Some popular dishes include pounded yam with egusi soup, okro soup, and tuwo masara.

Lastly, Historical sites: Kogi State is home to a number of historical sites and landmarks that showcase the state's cultural heritage.

These include ancient palaces, traditional shrines, and archaeological sites that offer insights into the history and traditions of the people of Kogi State.

In conclusion, the Cultural Potentials of Kogi State includes: Rich cultural heritage, traditional craftsmanship, festivals and celebrations, culinary traditions and historical sites.



## OGUTA LAKE: THE JEWEL OF IMO STATE AND THE GUARDIAN OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

By Daraojimba Izuchukwu Augustus



Oguta Lake, nestled in Oguta Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria is not just a body of water but a living testament to the cultural heritage of the Igbo people. The lake, renowned for its serene and attractive appearance, holds a significant place in the spiritual and cultural beliefs of the local communities.

Oguta Lake, Nigeria's second-largest natural lake, is a sight to behold. Its clear blue and brown water creates a

tranquil environment that attracts both locals and tourists. The lake is bordered by lush greenery and rolling hills, which contribute to its calm and pristine atmosphere.

The beauty of Oguta Lake is further enhanced by its distinct feature of having two rivers- the Ogbeide River and the Urashi River- which meet within the lake but do not mix. This phenomenon adds a mystical charm to the lake, sparking various local myths and beliefs.

The locals regarded the two rivers as a married couple, distinguishing them as male and female. The blue river, thought to be female is known as Ogbeide while the brown river is called Urashi and believed to be male. It is said that they had a disagreement and from



that point onwards, they have flowed on separate paths. This tale is a significant part of the community's oral tradition and is passed down through generations.

The cultural importance of the Oguta Lake is further emphasised by its role in traditional activities. The Lake is a vital source of livelihood for the local people, who engage in fishing and farming along its banks. Traditional boats, crafted from local wood, are commonly seen gliding across the lake, reflecting the age old practices of the Oguta people.

During festivals, the Lake becomes the focal point of celebrations. One of such event is the Iriji (New Yam Festival), where the community

gathers to honour the gods and celebrate the harvest.

The festival is marked by vibrant dances, music, and rituals performed by the Lake, reinforcing its status as a sacred site.

For the people of Oguta, the Lake is more than just a body of water; it is a symbol of their identity and a source of pride. The Lake's significance extends beyond its physical beauty. It is a reminder of the deep connection between the people and their environment, as well as, the importance of preserving their cultural heritage.

In recent years, efforts have been made to promote Oguta Lake as a tourist destination with the aim of

sharing its beauty and cultural importance with the wider world. However, these efforts are balanced with the need to protect the Lake's fragile ecosystem and the cultural practices that have sustained it for generations.

Oguta Lake remains a place of wonder and reverence, where nature and culture intertwine in a harmonious dance. For those who visit, the Lake offers not only a glimpse of Nigeria's natural beauty but also a deep sense of respect for the traditions and beliefs that have shaped the lives of the people who call this place home. As a guardian of both nature and culture, Oguta Lake stands as a testament to the enduring power of heritage in the face of modernity.

## GLOBAL ALLURE OF NIGERIA'S DETTY DECEMBER

By Khadija Shehu Bamalli

As the calendar turns to December, Nigeria transforms into a vibrant atmosphere of celebrations, a viral phenomenon known as "Detti December." This trendy term, derived from the word "dirty," signifies a time when Nigerians wholeheartedly embrace the festive spirit, immersing themselves in fireballing events, gatherings, and cultural showcases. Throughout December, major Nigerian cities like Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt become epicenters of activity. The air is filled with the rhythms of Afrobeats as both local and international artists grace stages, turning nights into unforgettable musical experiences. Cultural festivals offer a window into Nigeria's rich heritage, with traditional dances,

art exhibitions, and theatrical performances captivating audiences. Culinary enthusiasts are treated to a gastronomic adventure, savouring dishes like Nigerian jollof rice, Fufu, Amala and succulent suya at bustling food fairs. For those on vacations, the nation's picturesque beaches, from Tarkwa Bay to Elegushi, host lively parties where guests dance under the stars, and the ocean breeze adding to the enchantment.

Detti December extends its embrace beyond Nigeria's borders, inviting global travelers to partake in its exuberance. Visitors are drawn to the country's dynamic culture, the genuine warmth of its people, and the promise of creating lasting memories. It's also a time when the diaspora returns home,

reuniting with loved ones and reconnecting with their roots, while tourists gain an authentic insight into the nation's soul.

Nigerian December offers a plethora of events, with highlights around Christmas and New Year's.



## cont'd from page 12

Cities like Lagos, with its renowned nightlife, and Abuja, known for its cultural landmarks, provide diverse experiences.

This has led to a significant economic boost in 2024, as Lagos State experienced over \$71.6 million generated in revenue across its tourism, hospitality, and entertainment sectors during the Detty December. This surge can be said to be driven by an influx of approximately 1.2 million tourists, including many Nigerians returning home and international visitors.

Hotels, restaurants, and event venues saw increased patronage, highlighting the substantial economic impact of this annual celebration. Packing comfortable attire, an open heart, and a readiness for adventure will guarantee you a memorable time.

Detty December is more than a series of events; it's a celebration of life, unity, and the indomitable Nigerian spirit. Whether you're dancing to pulsating beats, indulging in flavorful dishes, or simply soaking in the joyous atmosphere, Nigeria during this festive season offers an unparalleled experience.



## MORE NIGERIANS WIN ELECTIONS ABROAD, AS NIDCOM CONGRATULATES THEM

by: Daraojimba Izuchukwu



Four more Nigerians have won elections into various elective positions, a United States-born Nigerian, Dr Oye Owolewa, District of Columbia, Chiaka Barry, Ginninderra District, Australia, Segun Adeyina, Georgia, USA and Yemi Mobolade, Colorado Springs, USA. In a congratulatory message to them, NIDCOM Chairman/ CEO, Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa hailed their victory at the polls. The NiDCOM boss applauded them for breaking such records in the political arena of their different places of residence and setting standards.

While Dr Oye Owolewa was re-elected as the Shadow Representative for the District of Columbia under the Democratic Party, Chiaka Barry got elected into the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Legislative Assembly covering the Ginninderra District under the Liberal Party, Segun Adeyina was re-elected as State Representative of district 110, Georgia, USA and Adeyemi Mobolade elected as the Mayor of Colorado Springs, in 2023, making history as the first black person to attain such feat.

Dabiri-Erewa commended their relentless efforts and strive to success, urging them to keep up the resilient spirit as they carry out their duties respectively.

She prayed to God for protection, strength and direction in their new positions while also encouraging them to continue putting in their best in the discharge of their duties.

Dr Oye Owolewa, a Pharmacist was re-elected as shadow Representative of the District of Columbia in US on the platform of Democratic Party and thanked his supporters for the confidence repose in him.

Chiaka Barry is an experienced legal officer with exceptional and diverse skills in litigation, alternative dispute resolution, legislative drafting, policy development, project management and a passionate community leader who has dedicated her life to serving others.

Segun Adeyina on his part has held many high positions in Georgia and for over 25 years has worked in IT programme and

## cont'd from page 13

project Management for Fortune 500 Companies across multiple industries, including General Motors, Ascension Health System and Hewlett Packard/ Cap Gemini.

On the other hand, Adeyemi Mobolade is a Nigerian-American businessman and politician, whose election as the 42nd Mayor of Colorado Springs, USA.

The election has been described as historical in Colorado springs for being the first black to be elected into the position. End.

cont'd from  
page 13  
<<<

## NiDCOM BOSS ELATED AT YOUNG NIGERIAN'S VICTORY ON 2024 FIA FR WORLD CUP

by Oyibe Christian Matthew



Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Chairman/CEO, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) has congratulated young Ugo Ugochukwu as he clinched the 2024 FIA Formula Regional (FR) World Cup title at the 71st Macau Grand Prix.

In her congratulatory message issued by Abdur-Rahman Balogun, Director of Media, Public Relations and Protocols, elated Dabiri-Erewa described the victory as evidence of his resilience and quest for success. The NiDCOM boss while applauding this epoch record breaking feat bringing glory to his country, which has not been achieved by anyone in the past 40 years, commended his strive for success, relentless determination and love for Motorsport.

She prayed for God's protection on him while urging him to keep up the good Nigeria spirit and bring more glory to the nation. Ugo Ugochukwu, a Nigerian-American son of a former Nigerian Queen, Oluchi Onweagba began his racing journey at an early age as a car racing wonderkid with kart

racing, a variant of motorsport in 2013.

His resilience, doggedness, dedication and determination to success has led him to clinch this victory as he never give up but keep pushing till the end of the race against all odds. Ugochukwu made his first mark in motorsport when he won the ROK Cup USS championship title and expanded his horizons by competing in European aeries, securing second place in the Mini ROK Cup and Mini 60 Italian Championship.

He had a breakthrough in 2017 when he won the Mini X39IAME All Star Finals and the IAME International X30 Mini Cup showcasing his prowess on the global stage.

His exceptional talent and charisma has been the bane of his success. "Congratulations Ugochukwu, Wishing you more wins in your future endeavours"



## ‘DETTY DECEMBER’:

Advice on Imposition of tax, bad advice, exploitative- NIDCOM

by: Daraojimba Izuchukwu

The Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) has described the suggestion by one Chief Dokun Olumofin, proposing a \$500 tourism tax for Nigerians in the diaspora returning home during the festive “Detty December” period as ill-advised and potentially exploitative.

In a statement by the Commission's Director of Media, Public Relations and Protocols Unit, Abdur-Rahman Balogun, said such proposal is counter productive, and is all shades of No.

The statement described such an advise as counterproductive and would rather discourage than encourage many Nigerians planning to come home. Such advice will no doubt mitigate efforts of the Diaspora Commission in encouraging the Diasporans to visit home, invite others and invest.

Besides, the remittances of the diaspora in 2024 alone was the highest so far into the economy, they have been investing massively in various sectors of the economy. The said N54 billion that Lagos hotels alone raked in December 2024, according to a report by an advisory firm MO Africa Company Limited, is domiciled in the Nigerian economy, so why tax Nigerians coming to their country for various reasons and promoting their country positively?

Such advice is also seen by NIDCOM as some sinister move to damage the image and revenue streams of the government just as its enforcement will equally pave way for corruption.

For now, the Commission believes that the government does not need to issue direct tax as it is already raking in money through channels of indirect

taxes on all visitors through entertainment and other sundry services.

The role of government in providing critical infrastructure, such as security, and ease of transportation, as seen under the Renewed Hope agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu should rather be encouraged and sustained, while the diaspora organically continues to return home and contribute to the nations growth and development.

NIDCOM reiterates that government should continue to provide an enabling environment for all, which encourages the diaspora to come back home for holidays and invest more in the country. NIDCOM also commends the Lagos state government for providing a world class environment for Diasporans and tourists in general, projecting that the numbers will continue to grow, while encouraging all states to do same and the country be prepared for more positive implosions in the country's tourism and entertainment landscape.

It is pathetic to note that while the world is lowering barriers to get more inflows and tourists into their country and economy, Chief Olumofin is suggesting increasing costs and raising barriers for Nigeria.

Olumofin had in a formal letter to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu proposed a 500 dollar tax on all Nigerians and tourists coming home between November and January.

## NiDCOM at 5: TRANSFORMING DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT WITH VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

By Juliannah Vincent-Yakubu



As the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) celebrates its fifth anniversary, it has cemented its position as a transformative force in bridging Nigeria and its global diaspora. Established to harness the expertise, resources, and networks of millions of Nigerians abroad, NiDCOM has redefined diaspora engagement, driving unity, fostering investment, and promoting national development.

Under the exceptional leadership of Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, NiDCOM has consistently delivered on its mandate, achieving milestones that validate its creation. Through flagship initiatives such as the Nigeria Diaspora Investment Summit (NDIS), the Commission has attracted millions of dollars in investments from the diaspora. Beyond the over \$90 billion in remittances sent by the diaspora in the last five years, NiDCOM has provided a structured framework for Nigerians in the diaspora to invest in the country through the annual NDIS, in partnership with private sector led Nigerian Diaspora Summit Initiative (NDSI).

The institutionalisation of the National Diaspora Policy 2021 has also fostered tangible growth in

agriculture, technology, and healthcare amongst others, The Diaspora Data Mapping and the creation of the +600 Compendium of Diaspora Champions further underscore its commitment to excellence.

NiDCOM's unwavering dedication to the welfare of Nigerians abroad is evident in its swift interventions during crises. From rescuing trafficked migrants in Ghana to evacuations from Libya, Sudan, Ukraine, Saudi Arabia, Bosnia Herzegovina, and South Africa, amongst others, the Commission has showcased a strategic and compassionate approach. Over the last five years, NiDCOM has received and resolved more than 1,000 petitions, addressing the concerns of Nigerians abroad.

The Commission has also played a pivotal role in celebrating Nigeria's rich cultural and academic heritage. Events such as the Badagry Door of Return Festival and the development of the Nigerian Grand Book: MAGNUM OPUS highlight its commitment to preserving history and promoting intellectual excellence. Initiatives like the African Diaspora Research Centre of Excellence at the University of Ibadan and the Home Strings Programme, which connects second and third-generation diaspora Nigerians, demonstrate NiDCOM's forward-thinking approach to sustaining relationships with Nigerians

abroad. It is no surprise that over nine countries have visited Nigeria to understudy NiDCOM (Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Namibia, Ghana, South Korea, Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), Zimbabwe and Zambia).

Through its National Diaspora Day celebrations and National Diaspora Merit Awards, NiDCOM has provided platforms to honour the achievements of Nigerians abroad, fostering national pride. Its Diaspora Weekly TV programmes, Quarterly Lecture Series, and collaborations with MDAs, missions and consulates abroad, embassies, international partners, and private organisations have broadened its impact, making diaspora engagement more dynamic and inclusive.

With these remarkable achievements and with limited resources, it is clear why I completely disagree with Ambassador Kukah's suggestion in his write-up on the Kemi Badenoch issue that NiDCOM should be led by a "career ambassador." Unless, of course, the Bishop is recommending that an official designation of "Ambassador" be added to her name! In fact, she deserves the title "Ambassador Plenipotentiary" "The Commission's accomplishments under Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa's leadership speaks volumes. Who has been more ambassadorial than Dabiri-Erewa herself? She has not only

redefined diaspora engagement but has also exemplified visionary leadership through tireless advocacy, strategic partnerships, and tangible results.

Leadership is about execution and impact, not titles or ceremonial roles. Dabiri-Erewa's ability to mobilise resources, foster global collaborations, and deliver measurable outcomes has

transformed NiDCOM into a trailblazer for diaspora engagement in Africa and beyond. Her efforts have set a new benchmark for public service, reaffirming that the key to progress lies in visionary leadership.

As NiDCOM continues its journey of excellence, the future holds boundless possibilities. The

Commission stands as a testament to what can be achieved through innovation, determination, and a deep commitment to connecting Nigerians, no matter where they are in the world. While there is undoubtedly more work to be done, here is a toast to the solid foundation laid by Abike Dabiri-Erewa over the last five years, taking the issue of diaspora from obscurity to prominence.

## THREADS OF IDENTITY: THE VIBRANT HERITAGE OF THE CHAMBA PEOPLE

By Juliannah Vincent-Yakubu



The Chamba people, a significant ethnic group in Taraba and Adamawa state of northeastern Nigeria, are celebrated for their rich cultural heritage, which is deeply expressed through their unique traditional attire.

Spanning the borders of Nigeria and Cameroon, the Chamba culture thrives in its language, beliefs, and artistry, extending its influence across the Bali states of Cameroon, such as Bali Nyonga, Bali Kumbat, and Bali-Gham. While other ethnic groups in Ghana and Togo share the name Chamba, the Chamba of Nigeria and Cameroon remain distinct in

their traditions and cultural identity. Closely connected to their neighbors, the Mumuye, Jukun, and Kutep, the Chamba people have preserved a vibrant cultural identity that shines through their attire. This clothing transcends mere functionality, serving as a symbol of their history, artistry, and pride. Crafted with precision and care, their garments feature bold patterns, vivid colors, and intricate embroidery that are as visually stunning as they are meaningful.

The men's traditional attire, often referred to as regal and commanding, includes a flowing

robe made of handwoven fabric with geometric patterns in bold colors like red, black, and orange. These patterns are more than decorative; they hold cultural significance, representing stories of strength, leadership, and unity. A matching headpiece completes the ensemble, while accessories like beaded necklaces and traditional staff add an extra layer of authority and cultural symbolism.

The women's attire is equally captivating. Long flowing dresses made from the same richly decorated fabrics are tailored with dramatic sleeves and intricate embroidery that convey both elegance and cultural pride. Accessories such as beaded necklaces, earrings, and bracelets enhance the look, adding a glamorous touch to the traditional outfit. Hair is styled with great care, often adorned with beads or headbands that reflect the Chamba's attention to detail and love for ornamentation.



These traditional garments are particularly striking during festivals and ceremonies, such as the New Yam Festival, weddings, or other communal celebrations. The attire is worn with pride, bringing the community together in a vivid display of unity and cultural reverence. The Chamba's use of color, typically a harmonious blend of red, black, white, and orange adds to the vibrancy of these occasions, making their gatherings an unforgettable spectacle of tradition and artistry.

The attire also incorporates cultural motifs that carry deep

meanings. Patterns and symbols woven into the fabric narrate stories of Chamba history and traditions, serving as visual markers of their identity. Beyond the clothing itself, ceremonial accessories such as masks and headgear used in dances and other rituals further underscore their creativity and cultural expression.

Through their attire, the Chamba people strike a delicate balance between tradition and modernity. While their clothing is deeply rooted in history, its timeless designs allow it to resonate in contemporary settings. This adaptability speaks volumes about

the Chamba's ability to honor their heritage while embracing the present.

For the Chamba, clothing is not merely a statement of fashion, it is a testament to their enduring pride and cultural identity. Whether seen at a vibrant festival or as part of a diaspora cultural showcase, their traditional attire is a bold reminder of the richness of their history. It is more than fabric and thread; it is the visual heartbeat of a people proud of who they are and where they come from, a cultural treasure that will continue to captivate and inspire for generations to come.

## THREE MORE NIGERIANS WIN ELECTIONS IN THE US, NIDCOM CONGRATULATES THEM

by: Daraojimba Izuchukwu

Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Chairman/CEO, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) has celebrated three more Nigerians who won their respective re-election into various districts in the United States of America.

They are Reps Gabe Okoye representing Georgia District I02, Phil Olaleye Representing 59th District of the Georgia and Solomon Adesanya, a Democrat, representing 43rd District in Georgia House of Representatives. Dabiri-Erewa in the congratulatory message issued by the Director of Media and Public Relations of the Commission, Abdur-Rahman Balogun described the trio as worthy ambassadors of Nigeria. The NIDCOM boss said the re-election victory was not accidental but

proven track records of their performances in office to their respective constituents earned them the victory.

Gabe Okoye is an E n u g u - born Nigerian-American Civil Engineer who on November 8, 2022, became a legislator elect at the 2022 US midterm elections representing Georgia State and he took office on January 9, 2023 and got re-elected in the Nov. 5, 2024 election.

On the other hand, the 39 year old Solomon Adesanya is an American businessman and a politician. He was elected on November 8, 2022,



in the 2022 US midterm elections and won the re-election to the Georgia House of Representatives covering the 43rd District mainly Marietta and a small part of Northwest Atlanta. Adesanya won the seat in a district historically held by a Republican on Nov. 5, 2024. The Harvard trained Phil Olaleye, is a United States politician and the former

executive director of a non-profit educational foundation.

He was elected Nov. 8, 2022 as a Member of the Georgia House of Representatives from the 59th district and assumed office January 9, 2023 before his re election on Nov. 5, 2024 as a legislator

representing Georgia House of Representatives District 59 under the Democratic Party.

Thus far, five Nigerians which include Dr Oye Owolewa, District of Columbia, Segun Adeyina, Georgia, USA, Gabe Okoye , Phil Olaleye and Solomon Adesanya

won their respective re- elections in the US, while Chiaka Barry, Ginninderra District won in Australia and Yemi Mobolade Mayor of Colorado Springs, USA had won his historic election in 2023.



## HUMAN TRAFFICKING: 13 MORE GIRLS TRAFFICKED TO GHANA RETURN, AS NIDCOM SAYS 163 TRAFFICKED VICTIMS RESCUED SINCE JULY 2024

by Oyibe Christian Matthew

The Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) alongside other stakeholders have rescued another set of 13 trafficked girls from Ghana thus bringing the total repatriated back to the country since July 2024 to 163. Among the 163 included the 13 girls that were rescued and brought back to Nigeria. The rescued operation was as a result of the combined and coordinated efforts of the Ghanaian Anti-Human Trafficking Police , The Rescue Live Foundation International, and NIDO Ghana working in collaboration with NIDCOM.

Speaking on the latest efforts, Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa ,

Chairman/CEO Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), expressed her gratitude to the First Lady , Senator Oluremi Tinubu, the Governor of Ebonyi State, His Excellency, Governor Francis Nwifuru for their support in facilitating the safe return of the girls back to the country. She also commended the vital roles played by Chief Callistus Elozieuwa, BOT Chairman (Rescue Live Foundation International/NIDO Ghana), and the Ghanaian Anti-Human Trafficking Police Unit in bringing the traffickers to justice. She reiterated NiDCOM's commitment to protecting Nigerians in the diaspora under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's

Renewed Hope Agenda, which gave priority to combating human trafficking and safeguarding the rights of Nigerian citizens at home and in the Diaspora.

A statement by the Commission's Head of Media and Public Relations, Abdur-Rahman Balogun, stated that the rescued young girls, ages 19 to 30 years, are from Ebonyi, Benue, Kaduna and Rivers states.

They were lured to Ghana under the false promises of employment but were instead forced into exploitative situations and bound by an oath of secrecy, while the traffickers are making money from the dastardly act.

NiDCOM representative, Mr Akinboye Akinsola, who accompanied the ladies back to Nigeria, where they were handed over to the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) for rehabilitation and reintegration said these set of ladies surrendered themselves willingly, having heard of the earlier operation

conducted in Kpone Katamanso and Tema.

Chief Callistus Elozieuwa said with Rescue Live Foundation International/NIDO Ghana's assistance, the ladies were provided shelter for some days after they all willingly indicated their interest to come back home.

The Ebonyi state Commissioner

for Special Duties, Mr Valentine Okike Uzo, thanked the Governor for his willingness to bring the ladies back home which in line with his efforts to care for all Ebonyi indigenes both home and in the Diaspora.

He assured that all efforts are in place to ensure a proper rehabilitation for the victims from Ebonyi state.

## MORE NIGERIANS WIN ELECTIONS ABROAD, AS NIDCOM CONGRATULATES THEM

by: Daraojimba Izuchukwu

Four more Nigerians have won elections into various elective positions, a United States-born Nigerian, Dr Oye Owolewa, District of Columbia, Chiaka Barry, Ginninderra District, Australia, Segun Adeyina, Georgia, USA and Yemi Mobolade, Colorado Springs, USA. In a congratulatory message to them, NiDCOM Chairman/ CEO, Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa hailed their victory at the polls.

The NiDCOM boss applauded them for breaking such records in the political arena of their different places of residence and setting standards.

While Dr Oye Owolewa was re-elected as the Shadow Representative for the District of Columbia under the Democratic Party, Chiaka Barry got elected into the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Legislative Assembly covering the Ginninderra District under the Liberal Party, Segun Adeyina was re-elected as State Representative of district I10, Georgia, USA and Adeyemi Mobolade elected as the Mayor of

Colorado Springs, in 2023, making history as the first black person to attain such feat.

Dabiri-Erewa commended their relentless efforts and strive to success, urging them to keep up the resilient spirit as they carry out their duties respectively.

She prayed to God for protection, strength and direction in their new positions while also encouraging them to continue putting in their best in the discharge of their duties. Dr Oye Owolewa, a Pharmacist was re-elected as shadow Representative of District of Columbia in US on the platform of Democratic Party and thanked his supporters for the confidence repose in him.

Chiaka Barry is an experienced legal officer with exceptional and diverse skills in litigation, alternative dispute resolution, legislative drafting, policy development, project management and a passionate community leader who



has dedicated her life serving others.

Segun Adeyina on his part has held many high positions in Georgia and for over 25 years has worked in IT programme and project Management for Fortune 500 Companies across multiple industries, including General Motors, Ascension Health System and Hewlett Packard/ Cap Gemini.

On the other hand, Adeyemi Mobolade is a Nigerian-American businessman and politician, whose election as the 42nd Mayor of Colorado Springs, USA. The election has been described as historical in Colorado springs for being the first black to be elected into the position.





## Japa and Japada: Navigating Nigeria's Complex Migration Landscape

by: ROSE MORIBINRIN

In recent years, Nigeria has experienced a significant rise in migration, commonly referred to as the "Japa syndrome." This trend, largely driven by young Nigerians seeking better opportunities abroad, underscores the country's deep-seated socio-economic challenges. However, an equally important yet less discussed phenomenon is "Japada," which refers to the reverse migration of Nigerians returning home after living abroad. Together, these trends reveal the complex and multifaceted nature of migration in Nigeria, sparking vital discussions among policy makers, scholars, and the public. The Japada Phenomenon "Japada," derived from the Yoruba words "Ja" (to leave or escape) and "Pada" (to return), encapsulates the growing number of Nigerians choosing to return home after years spent abroad. This reverse migration is beginning to reshape Nigeria's migration patterns and carries significant implications for both returnees and the broader society.

The Nigerian Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), established in 2017, plays a crucial

role in this evolving narrative. NiDCOM serves as a bridge between the Nigerian government and its diaspora, focusing on harnessing the potential of Nigerians abroad for national development. Through initiatives like diaspora mapping, investment promotion, and remittance facilitation, NiDCOM aims to support Nigerians living abroad while encouraging those considering a return to contribute to national progress.

The Challenges of Japa The "Japa" phenomenon is primarily driven by economic instability, lack of opportunities, and insecurity within Nigeria, resulting in significant brain drain. Many young Nigerians, in search of better prospects, embark on perilous journeys that often lead to harsh realities. Instead of finding the greener pastures they sought, they frequently encounter exploitation, discrimination, and difficult living conditions in foreign lands.

Some face extreme risks, including human trafficking, xenophobic violence, and severe health

challenges due to poor accommodation and harsh climates. Irregular migration, often pursued without proper documentation, leaves many Nigerian youths vulnerable to exploitation and human rights abuses. Without legal protection, they are forced to work in dangerous and degrading conditions, far removed from the opportunities they imagined. Moreover, the psychological impact of racism and discrimination compounds their struggles, limiting access to employment, housing, and basic services, and making it difficult for them to integrate into their host societies.

NiDCOM acknowledges these risks and actively works to mitigate them. The Commission emphasises the importance of informed decision-making, advocating for legal migration pathways while highlighting the potential contributions of the Nigerian diaspora to national development.

NiDCOM encourages those who choose to migrate to stay engaged with their homeland, contributing to its development even from abroad. Education and Skills as Keys to Safe Migration At a recent conference organised by The Companion, an association of Muslim professionals, Nigerian youths were advised to acquire the necessary education and skills before considering migration. The event, themed "Between Patriotism and Self-Preservation," addressed the challenges and uncertainties that Nigerian youth face both at home and abroad.

Prominent speakers, including the Deputy Senate President, Senator Barau Jibrin, the Minister of State for Youth Development, Hon. Ayodele Olawande and the NiDCOM Chairman/CEO, Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa stressed that while migration is a fundamental right, it must be undertaken with a clear understanding of the associated risks. They also called for greater government support to create an environment that dissuades young Nigerians from taking dangerous migration routes. The Benefits and Costs of Migration While the "Japa" trend has led to considerable brain drain, it has also brought notable benefits. Nigerians abroad contribute significantly to the economy through remittances, medical missions, and investments in sectors such as agriculture, ICT, and housing development. However, these gains often come at a high personal cost, as many migrants endure exploitation, discrimination, and a loss of freedom.

NiDCOM views "Japada" as an opportunity to reintegrate returnees into society, offering

support services to ease their transition and encouraging them to contribute to national growth. By harnessing the skills and resources of both emigrants and returnees, Nigeria can create an environment where all citizens, whether at home or abroad, can thrive and contribute to the nation's development. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Vision for Youth Empowerment In light of the challenges posed by the "Japa" and "Japada" phenomena, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration has placed youth empowerment and employment at the forefront of its agenda. Recognising that the future of Nigeria hinges on the success and well-being of its young people, the President has outlined several key initiatives aimed at addressing these pressing issues.

**National Youth Employment Action Plan:** This initiative seeks to create millions of jobs for young Nigerians through public and private sector partnerships. By fostering entrepreneurship, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and enhancing vocational training programmes, the plan aims to equip Nigeria's youth with the skills and opportunities needed to thrive in the modern economy.

#### **Education and Skills Development:**

The Tinubu administration is committed to overhauling the educational system to ensure it meets the demands of the 21st-century job market. This includes investing in STEM education, digital literacy programmes, vocational training centres, and the Student Loan Programme.

By bridging the gap between education and employment, the government aims to better prepare Nigeria's youth for future challenges and opportunities. Social Support Systems: Understanding the socio-economic challenges facing Nigeria's youth, the administration is also focused on strengthening social support systems.

This includes healthcare, the Renewed Hope housing initiative, and various social safety nets to ensure that young Nigerians have a stable foundation upon which to build their futures. Government and Community Responses to the Migration Crisis The Nigerian government and various organisations are increasingly focused on addressing the migration crisis.

During National Diaspora Day 2024, NiDCOM Boss, Abike Dabiri-Erewa emphasised the need for collaboration between Nigerians at home and those abroad to build a better Nigeria. The event, themed "Japa Phenomena and Its Implications for National Development," highlighted how migration can be both a challenge and an opportunity for the country.

The Companion's conference echoed these concerns, urging the government to improve the socio-economic conditions that drive the "Japa" trend. Speakers called for the development of infrastructure and youth engagement initiatives to retain talent within Nigeria, while also encouraging the diaspora community to remain connected and contribute to national development.

The Future of Migration in Nigeria the ongoing discussions around "Japa" and "Japada" highlight the need for a balanced approach to migration. The Nigerian government, through initiatives such as those led by NiDCOM, is working to address the challenges and leverage the opportunities presented by these migration trends.

As Dabiri-Erewa noted, there is an urgent need for synergy between Nigerians at home and abroad to build a better future for the country. The focus should not only be on reducing the outflow of talent but also on creating conditions that make staying or returning to Nigeria an attractive option.

**Moving Forward:** Migration and National Development The "Japa" and "Japada" phenomena illustrate the dynamic and often challenging nature of migration in Nigeria. While the desire to seek better opportunities abroad is understandable, it is essential to balance individual aspirations with the broader needs of national development.

NiDCOM, along with other stakeholders, is working to ensure that migration is not merely an escape but a step towards building a stronger, more resilient Nigeria. By leveraging the potential of both those who leave and those who return, Nigeria can foster a future where all its citizens, regardless of location, can thrive and contribute to the nation's progress. The

government's role in creating an environment that nurtures talent and provides opportunities at home is more critical than ever.

With the right policies and programmes, Nigeria can transform the challenges posed by "Japa" and "Japada" into opportunities for sustainable development and national growth.

## FOOD CORNER

By. Babra Busa Bisong



Ewedu is a popular soup mostly eaten by the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria; it is often served with amala. It is very nutritious and delicious. I will start by sharing with you the ingredients required to make our Ewedu.

Ingredients

1. Ewedu leaves
2. Water
3. Kanwa
4. Ijabe (Ewedu Broom) or blender.
5. Seasoning and salt to taste
6. Eru woro (locust beans)
7. Ogiri

### Steps on how to prepare (Preparation)

1. We will start by washing our Ewedu leaves. After that, place a pot and water on the heat, add a

table spoon of kawan (potash) and leave to boil.

2. Pour the washed Ewedu leaves and leave it to continue boiling in the water until it is soft.
3. Once they are all soft, you can use what is called ijabe (a short broom mainly used for this purpose). Otherwise use a blender to chop your leaves.
4. After all this is done pour back your Ewedu into the pot and place it back on the heat, add the Eru (locust beans).
5. Add salt and seasoning cube to taste. Note that you need to be as fast as possible so the soup still maintains its greens and still draws. It is that simple.





## ADVERT RATES FOR DIASPORA NEWSLETTER

The Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) has repackaged its Monthly Diaspora Newsletter with juicy and far reaching news for and from our Nigerians in Diaspora. The Newsletter when produced is distributed far and wide to all our stakeholders both within and outside the country through E-copy and colour printed version.

We are therefore pleased to invite you to be one of our sponsors by showcasing your adverts or products at the minimal subsidised amount by the commission.

Our advert rates for a full page is **N3,500,000 (Three Million, Five Hundred Thousand Naira)** for one year subscription while monthly payment attracts only **N350,000 (Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira)** per page.

Contact via email:  
[rahmor2001@yahoo.com](mailto:rahmor2001@yahoo.com);  
[diasporanewsletter19@gmail.com](mailto:diasporanewsletter19@gmail.com);  
or reach out via:  
08052729751; 08167614759

Signed by:  
Head, Media, Public Relations and  
Protocols Unit (NiDCOM),  
**Abdur-Rahman Balogun**

# DID YOU KNOW?

By:- Maryam Kehinde Abdulazeez

1



A cup of **chopped red bell pepper** contains nearly three times more vitamin C than an orange — 190 mg. Red peppers are also a great source of vitamin A, which promotes eye health.

2



**Lithium** is the world's lightest metal, silvery in colour and extremely corrosive in its pure form. Popularly used in the production of batteries, lithium ignites on contact with water and can easily burn flesh.

3



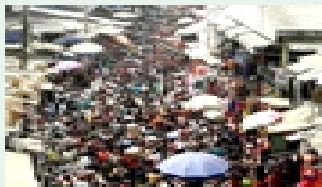
The letter '**E**' is the most popular letter in the alphabet.

4



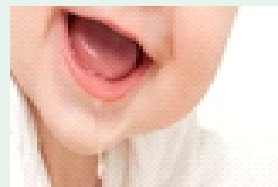
In 2013, the first artificially reproduced human tooth was created in China. The scientists were able to create the tooth using stem cells extracted from human urine.

5



**Onitsha market in Anambra**, Nigeria is the biggest market in West Africa.

6



Your mouth produces about one litre of **saliva** each day.

**Sources:-** [my.clevelandclinic.org](http://my.clevelandclinic.org), [ImeObiOnitsha.org](http://ImeObiOnitsha.org), [nursingtimes.net](http://nursingtimes.net), [comicphonics.com](http://comicphonics.com), [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com), [chicagohealthonline.com](http://chicagohealthonline.com).

# MEET OUR MEDIA TEAM

The Diaspora Newsletter is an official Bulletin  
Published by NiDCOM Media And Public Relations Unit

\* **Abdur-Rahman Balogun**

Editor-in-Chief

\* **Gabriel Odu**

Deputy Editor-in-Chief

\* **Violet Nwosu**

Assistant Editor-in-chief

\* **Juliannah Vincent-Yakubu**

Correspondent

\* **Deborah Anaelechi**

Correspondent

\* **Balogun Raimi Bidemi**

Correspondent

\* **Maryam Abdulazeez**

Correspondent

\* **Samson Eliiah Simeon**

Correspondent

\* **Olufunke Oloye**

Senior correspondent

\* **Rosemary Moribirin**

Correspondent

\* **Omolabake Omoniyi**

Correspondent

\* **Bridget Temtsen**

Correspondent

\* **Akinsola Akinboye**

Correspondent

\* **Akinkunmi O. Oyehan**

Graphics Designer

\* **Babra Busa Bisong**

**Oyibe Christian Mathew**

**Daraojimba Izuchukwu**

Correspondent


\* **Khadija Shehu Bamalli**

Correspondent

Email us at: [diasporanewsletter19@gmail.com](mailto:diasporanewsletter19@gmail.com); or reach out via:

+2348033198077; +2348174383962

For further enquiries, visit our website: [nidcom.gov.ng](http://nidcom.gov.ng)

  @nidcom.gov.ng

 Nigerians in Diaspora Commission

