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# Prospects for Democratic Consolidation in Africa: Nigeria's Transition

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### Sir Richard Gozney

Good morning everyone. Good morning especially, General, welcome to Chatham House. And I'd like to welcome everybody else here who's come this morning to listen to General Buhari. Chatham House is more independent than anything you could imagine. It is entirely neutral, it has no political stance and that is why it is a favoured venue for people of all hues from across the political spectrum to give their views, because they get an open and fair hearing here, and that is I'm sure why your people, General, and you yourself have come here today.

A couple of points of housekeeping, before we start. It's what I call the 'on, off'. To remind people that today's meeting is on the record, so what you say, General, and what anybody else says in the question and answers session can be attributed and can be used publicly with attribution. The 'off' is the usual one: please turn phones off, so we're not interrupted during the meeting. And I know you think you've turned them off, but I'm going to check mine, because I may not have done. And you might do the same.

General Buhari, you need very little introduction. People know well that you were head of state and commander-in-chief 30 years ago. Two things I would highlight is that you know all about petroleum revenues, because of the jobs you've done since then – and more than one of them – and because you know about elections; you've contested a few of those too. And also, more recently, my understanding is that you played a major role in unifying the opposition in Nigeria a couple of years ago.

When I visited you, sir, in Kaduna State, every six or 12 months when I was high commissioner there 10 years ago, two things struck me most forcibly; and I won't spare your blushes. One was the modesty of your lifestyle, visiting you at home there, in Kaduna State, which was very striking for a Nigerian politician. And secondly, sir, was of your clarity of thought and speech. We look forward to hearing more of such clarity from you today as you talk to us about the prospects of democratic consolidation in Africa and the Nigerian transition. General Buhari, the floor is yours.

### General Muhammadu Buhari

Thank you. I would like to stand by the existing protocol. I thought that this is like back home – you need two pages for protocol, but mercifully here they've been very kind to make it short and sharp.

Permit me to start by thanking Chatham House for the invitation to talk about this important topic at this crucial time. When speaking about Nigeria overseas, I normally prefer to be my country's public relations and marketing officer, extolling her virtues and hoping to attract investments and tourists. But as we all know, Nigeria is now battling with many challenges, and if I refer to them, I do so only to impress on our friends in the United Kingdom that we are quite aware of our shortcomings and are doing our best to address them.

The 2015 general election in Nigeria is generating a lot of interest within and outside the country. This is understandable. Nigeria, Africa's most populous country and largest economy, is at a defining moment, a moment that has great implications beyond the democratic project and beyond the borders of my dear country.

So let me say up front that the global interest in Nigeria's landmark election is not misplaced at all and indeed should be commended, for this is an election that has serious import for the world. I urge the international community to continue to focus on Nigeria at this very critical moment. Given increasing global linkages, it is in our collective interests that the postponed elections should hold on the

rescheduled dates; that they should be free and fair; that their outcomes should be respected by all parties; and that any form of extension, under whichever guise, is unconstitutional and will not be tolerated.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War, democracy became the dominant and most preferred system of government across the globe. That global transition has been aptly captured as the triumph of democracy and the 'most pre-eminent political idea of our time'. On a personal note, the phased end of the USSR was a turning point for me. It convinced me that change can be brought about without firing a single shot.

As you all know, I had been a military head of state in Nigeria for 20 months. We intervened because we were unhappy with the state of affairs in our country. We wanted to arrest the drift. Driven by patriotism, influenced by the prevalence and popularity of such drastic measures all over Africa and elsewhere, we fought our way to power. But the global triumph of democracy has shown that another and a preferable path to change is possible. It is an important lesson I have carried with me since, and a lesson that is not lost on the African continent.

In the last two decades, democracy has grown strong roots in Africa. Elections, once so rare, are now so commonplace. As at the time I was a military head of state, between 1983 and 1985, only four African countries held regular multiparty elections. But the number of electoral democracies in Africa, according to Freedom House, jumped to 10 in 1992/93 then to 18 in 1994/95 and to 24 in 2005/06. According to the *New York Times*, 42 of the 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa conducted multiparty elections between 1990 and 2002.

The newspaper also reported that between 2000 and 2002, ruling parties in four African countries (Senegal, Mauritius, Ghana and Mali) peacefully handed over power to victorious opposition parties. In addition, the proportion of African countries categorized as not free by Freedom House declined from 59 per cent in 1983 to 35 per cent in 2003. Without doubt, Africa has been part of the current global wave of democratization.

But the growth of democracy on the continent has been uneven. According to Freedom House, the number of electoral democracies in Africa slipped from 24 in 2007/08 to 19 in 2011/12, while the percentage of countries categorized as 'not free' – assuming for the sake of argument that we accept their definition of 'free' – increased from 35 per cent in 2003 to 41 per cent in 2013. Also, there have been some reversals at different times in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Mali, Madagascar, Mauritania and Togo. We can choose to look at the glass of democracy in Africa as either half full or half empty.

While you can't have representative democracy without elections, it is equally important to look at the quality of the elections and to remember that mere elections do not democracy make. It is globally agreed that democracy is not an event, but a journey. And that the destination of that journey is democratic consolidation – that state where democracy has become so rooted and so routine and widely accepted by all actors.

With this important destination in mind, it is clear that though many African countries now hold regular elections, very few of them have consolidated the practice of democracy. It is important to also state at this point that just as with elections, a consolidated democracy cannot be an end by itself. I will argue that it is not enough to hold a series of elections or even to peacefully alternate power among parties.

It is much more important that the promise of democracy goes beyond just allowing people to freely choose their leaders. It is much more important that democracy should deliver on the promise of choice, of freedoms, of security of lives and property, of transparency and accountability, of rule of law, of good governance and of shared prosperity. It is very important that the promise embedded in the concept of democracy, the promise of a better life for the generality of the people, is not delivered in the breach.

Now, let me quickly turn to Nigeria. As you all know, Nigeria's fourth republic is in its 16th year and this general election will be the fifth in a row. This is a major sign of progress for us, given that our first republic lasted five years and three months, the second republic ended after four years and two months, and the third republic was a stillbirth. However, longevity is not the only reason why everyone is so interested in this election.

The major difference this time around is that for the very first time since transition to civil rule in 1999, the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) is facing its stiffest opposition so far from our party the All Progressives Congress (APC). We once had about 50 political parties, but with no real competition. Now Nigeria is transitioning from a dominant party system to a competitive electoral polity, which is a major marker on the road to democratic consolidation. As you know, peaceful alternation of power through competitive elections has happened in Ghana, Senegal, Malawi and Mauritius in recent times. The prospects of democratic consolidation in Africa will be further brightened when that eventually happens in Nigeria.

But there are other reasons why Nigerians and the whole world are intensely focused on this year's elections, chief of which is that the elections are holding in the shadow of huge security, economic and social uncertainties in Africa's most populous country and largest economy. On insecurity, there is a genuine cause for worry, both within and outside Nigeria. Apart from the civil war era, at no other time in our history has Nigeria been this insecure.

Boko Haram has sadly put Nigeria on the terrorism map, killing more than 13,000 of our nationals, displacing millions internally and externally, and at a time holding on to portions of our territory the size of Belgium. What has been consistently lacking is the required leadership in our battle against insurgency. I, as a retired general and a former head of state, have always known about our soldiers: they are capable, well trained, patriotic, brave and always ready to do their duty in the service of our country.

You all can bear witness to the gallant role of our military in Burma, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Darfur and in many other peacekeeping operations in several parts of the world. But in the matter of this insurgency, our soldiers have neither received the necessary support nor the required incentives to tackle this problem. The government has also failed in any effort towards a multidimensional response to this problem, leading to a situation in which we have now become dependent on our neighbours to come to our rescue.

Let me assure you that if I am elected president, the world will have no cause to worry about Nigeria as it has had to recently; that Nigeria will return to its stabilizing role in West Africa; and that no inch of Nigerian territory will ever be lost to the enemy because we will pay special attention to the welfare of our soldiers in and out of service, we will give them adequate and modern arms and ammunitions to work with, we will improve intelligence gathering and border controls to choke Boko Haram's financial and equipment channels, we will be tough on terrorism and tough on its root causes by initiating a comprehensive economic development plan promoting infrastructural development, job creation, agriculture and industry in the affected areas. We will always act on time and not allow problems to

irresponsibly fester, and I, Muhammadu Buhari, will always lead from the front and return Nigeria to its leadership role in regional and international efforts to combat terrorism.

On the economy, the fall in prices of oil has brought our economic and social stress into full relief. After the rebasing exercise in April 2014, Nigeria overtook South Africa as Africa's largest economy. Our GDP is now valued at \$510 billion and our economy rated 26th in the world. Also on the bright side, inflation has been kept at single digit for a while and our economy has grown at an average of 7 per cent for about a decade.

But it is more of paper growth, a growth that, on account of mismanagement, profligacy and corruption, has not translated to human development or shared prosperity. A development economist once said three questions should be asked about a country's development: One, what is happening to poverty? Two, what is happening to unemployment? And three, what is happening to inequality?

The answers to these questions in Nigeria show that the current administration has created two economies in one country, a sorry tale of two nations: one economy for a few who have so much in their tiny island of prosperity; and the other economy for the many who have so little in their vast ocean of misery.

Even by official figures, 33.1 per cent of Nigerians live in extreme poverty. That's at almost 60 million, almost the population of the United Kingdom. There is also the unemployment crisis simmering beneath the surface, ready to explode at the slightest stress, with officially 23.9 per cent of our adult population and almost 60 per cent of our youth unemployed. We also have one of the highest rates of inequalities in the world.

With all these, it is not surprising that our performance on most governance and development indicators (like Mo Ibrahim Index on African Governance and UNDP's Human Development Index) are unflattering. With the fall in the prices of oil, which accounts for more than 70 per cent of government revenues, and lack of savings from more than a decade of oil boom, the poor will be disproportionately impacted.

In the face of dwindling revenues, a good place to start the repositioning of Nigeria's economy is to swiftly tackle two ills that have ballooned under the present administration: waste and corruption. And in doing this, I will, if elected, lead the way, with the force of personal example.

On corruption, there will be no confusion as to where I stand. Corruption will have no place and the corrupt will not be appointed into my administration. First and foremost, we will plug the holes in the budgetary process. Revenue producing entities such as the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and Customs and Excise will have one set of books only. Their revenues will be publicly disclosed and regularly audited. The institutions of state dedicated to fighting corruption will be given independence and prosecutorial authority without political interference.

But I must emphasize that any war waged on corruption should not be misconstrued as settling old scores or a witch hunt. I'm running for president to lead Nigeria to prosperity and not adversity.

In reforming the economy, we will use savings that arise from blocking these leakages and the proceeds recovered from corruption to fund our party's social investments programmes in education, health, and safety nets such as free school meals for children, emergency public works for unemployed youth and pensions for the elderly.

As a progressive party, we must reform our political economy to unleash the pent-up ingenuity and productivity of the Nigerian people, thus freeing them from the curse of poverty. We will run a private sector-led economy but maintain an active role for government through strong regulatory oversight and deliberate interventions and incentives to diversify the base of our economy, strengthen productive sectors, improve the productive capacities of our people and create jobs for our teeming youths.

In short, we will run a functional economy driven by a world view that sees growth not as an end by itself, but as a tool to create a society that works for all, rich and poor alike. On March 28, Nigeria has a decision to make: to vote for the continuity of failure or to elect progressive change. I believe the people will choose wisely.

In sum, I think that given its strategic importance, Nigeria can trigger a wave of democratic consolidation in Africa. But as a starting point we need to get this critical election right by ensuring that they go ahead, and depriving those who want to scuttle it of the benefit of derailing our fledgling democracy. That way, we will all see democracy and democratic consolidation as tools for solving pressing problems in a sustainable way, not as ends in themselves.

Permit me to close this discussion on a personal note. I have heard and read references to me as a former dictator in many respected British newspapers including the well-regarded *Economist*. Let me say without sounding defensive that dictatorship goes with military rule, though some might be less dictatorial than others. I take responsibility for whatever happened under my watch.

I cannot change the past. But I can change the present and the future. So before you is a former military ruler and a converted democrat who is ready to operate under democratic norms and is subjecting himself to the rigours of democratic elections for the fourth time.

You may ask: why is he doing this? This is a question I ask myself all the time too. And here is my humble answer: because the work of making Nigeria great is not yet done, because I still believe that change is possible, this time through the ballot, and most importantly, because I still have the capacity and the passion to dream and work for a Nigeria that will be respected again in the comity of nations and that all Nigerians will be proud of.

I thank you for listening.

## Questions and Answers

### Sir Richard Gozney

General, presidential candidate, thank you very much indeed for those words and for sticking closely to the time, as I thought you would. We're going into questions now, for those who've been watching on what I think is called 'live stream', you can send in questions using the hashtag #CHAfrica, and they, I believe, will be passed to me and I will pass them to the General in principle. Otherwise, when people want to ask questions, please state your name and affiliation if you have one, confine yourself if you would, please, to one question, because I don't think we'll get through enough people otherwise. I'm afraid I reserve the right to cut off, well, to curb anyone who wants to make a rival speech because that is not this morning's agenda. General, do you want to sit there or do you want to take back to the stand for the questions? As you like, whichever you feel more comfortable.

### General Muhammadu Buhari

I think I will stand there.

### Sir Richard Gozney

Right, let us have the first question.

#### Questions

How do you propose to grow the Nigerian economy considering the fact that the global economy is still in recession? And then, you said something about choking Boko Haram. Would you propose to grant a general amnesty?

In view of the current state in Nigeria in terms of the huge, huge need for change, and therefore the cry for the general to take power and bring about the change, the high expectation is such that people will really be looking for some quick solutions in view of this deep, deep need for change. What would the general do in, say, the first 100 days when elected to power, to sustain these expectations that the Nigerians have for him to bring about positive change?

Nigeria was outstanding in leading in the Ebola crisis and you showed us what you are capable of. I'm just wondering in your leadership, how you're planning to carry that forward in terms of strengthening health systems in Nigeria, and particularly focusing on women and children – who are the most vulnerable in the population?

You made mention of the fact that you would disarm Boko Haram and that you would arm the Nigerian army to be able to deal with – combat – Boko Haram. But it is also widely reported in the Nigerian dailies that you once said that an attack against Boko Haram was an attack against the north. And I wondered, sir, if you therefore armed the army to then attack Boko Haram and destroy their properties, would that not still be an attack against the north? Thank you.

### Sir Richard Gozney

Thank you. I think we'll take a pause there. General, if you answer some of those questions.

### General Muhammadu Buhari

Well, well, Boko Haram has taken the day. The first question: amnesty for Boko Haram. I would not go to office with that promise. I have mentioned in my address how at least 13,000 Nigerians have been killed by Boko Haram, how millions of them have been displaced. They are put in different camps, we call internally displaced persons' camps; schools have been burnt. There is so much disruption to normal life. People are not able to farm, and while they farmed they could not harvest. And for me, to say I will give amnesty [to Boko Haram]; I think I am going to be unfair to the system. We want to secure Nigeria. We must have the time to collect enough intelligence to make sure that those that we got are given the chance and civil cause to be properly prosecuted.

The second one: high expectations and what to do with the first 100 days. Yes, I respect that question because quietly I was thinking about these high expectations. Those who are following the trail of our campaigns can see how people are turning out, some becoming emotional and crying. I am really getting scared that if I get there they will expect miracles within the next week or months. That would be very dicey handling that one. I think we have to have a deliberate campaign to temper high expectations with some reasonableness on the part of those who are expecting miracles to happen.

Just to go first to the 'first 100 days',<sup>1</sup> some of it is fraudulent and I don't want to participate in any fraud in any form. Nigerians know that we are in trouble as a people and as a country. When we get there we will quickly get correct intelligence of what is on the ground and inform Nigerians and just learn what I have just read. We will make sure that the appropriation and application of public resources will not be allowed. You would be surprised by how much savings we will realize. That saving will be ploughed back into development and this is what I can promise. But I would remove that '100 days'.

Health – Ebola. Luckily, the governor of Rivers State is here, Chief Rotimi Amaechi. It is him and the governor of Lagos state that experienced Ebola and they did extremely well by moving fast enough. They didn't wait for the central government to make sure that they had done something about it. Nigeria was certified Ebola-free. So we are lucky that we had very competent, and by fabulous coincidence, APC governors in place to kill Ebola. So I think health is one of the areas that had been allowed in those 16 years we've had to really deteriorate. The life, especially in the rural areas, is pathetic. And because of lack of basic facilities in the rural areas that aggravate the movement of able-bodied bodies to population centres and that increases the rate of crime because of lack of jobs, lack of facilities; lack of even basic things to survive. So I think an APC government has done a lot of studies and our manifesto has consciously looked at this. We will try as much as possible to make sure that infrastructure led by power and the social sectors led by education and health as rapidly as possible are given to the people. That is a promise and we have got it into our manifesto. We will keep our promise intact.

Attack on Boko Haram [being an attack] against the north. I think this is very, very uninformed opinion. Out of those 13,000 casualties, I believe 12,000 are northerners. So how can northerners feel an attack on Boko Haram is an attack on them? The schools that are vandalized, the children that were killed, even the Chibok girls, over 220 of them that have been missing for 10 months, all of them are northerners, or most of them are northerners. So I think one has to examine one's, I think, reason for believing or disbelieving allegations against part of the country, any part of the country. It is just like saying the stealing of the crude [oil] of about 200,000 barrels a day is the people from Maiduguri or Sokoto are responsible for it; most of them, they have never seen the sea! It's this type of thing. I assure you that people generally in the north are fighting Boko Haram in their own way, by passing intelligence to the law enforcement agents

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to a document recently circulated in the Nigerian media, purportedly ascribed to General Buhari, on his goals for the first 100 days in office.



about their movements and so on. They are doing their best to fight Boko Haram because they are the biggest casualties. Thank you very much.

### Sir Richard Gozney

Thank you. Let's take a second batch of questions.

#### Questions

What will be your number three priorities, in terms of top three priorities in terms of attracting foreign investment to Nigeria, be it in oil and gas, or power, or any other sector?

General, sir, you are very known to fight corruption and the problem with that by some Nigerians is that when you take office you are going to start investigating each and every political office-holder from 1960 to date. So how will you clear the minds of such Nigerians, the way you are going to fight Boko Haram when you take office? Thank you very much.

I think one thing we can say about Nigeria today, is that it has never been as divided against itself as it is today; sometimes a deliberate policy by those who should know better. Were you to win the election in March, what practical steps would you take to address this problem?

I have a question around the credibility of the election on 28 March. Given the postponement, there's been some question mark, credibility question mark, associated with this election, which would make it difficult to accept the outcome, if indeed the election doesn't go in your favour. My question then becomes: what processes does the opposition party have in place to ensure that the election is free and fair and that credibility issues would not result to some sort of civil uprising in the country?

### Sir Richard Gozney

Thank you. I'm going to stop there with this batch because I want the general to answer two questions that have come in on Twitter, out of many that have come in.

The first question is: 'Young people have been engaged in this election in greater numbers than ever before. How will you keep them engaged?'

Secondly, on a slightly lighter note, perhaps: 'What will General Buhari, what will you do, sir, about the high salaries paid to members of the National Assembly?' Looking at nobody in particular in the front row. General do you want to take those?

### General Muhammadu Buhari

Yes, I will attempt to take these. The first one I have here is on attracting foreign investment. I think foreign investment, I think I mentioned briefly in my address here, what they need is what we need: security. Nobody will take his resources in an environment that is insecure. So this is why security is one of our first priorities, to make sure we secure the country. And then we efficiently manage it. The difficulty in management is getting jobs and stopping corruption and so on. So really, attracting foreign investment is to persuade the investors the world over that Nigeria once more is posed to cooperate with them by securing the country and participating as much as possible to make them recoup their investment because it is not a question of having every right. They don't invest just for humanitarian reasons, let me put it that

way. They want to invest so that they recover their capitals and make some profit; this is what sustains the world economy. So we have to think very quickly and put in place assurances and improve the system so that the environment is made suitable for investment.

Corruption investigations. I have tried to win or earn the confidence of those who are scared of me because of previous antecedents. I have managed to visit 35 out of 36 states, and I have held meetings with industrialists and so on in Lagos, in Kano, and have seen church ministers, leadership in Abuja in different groups. Whatever I do at the meetings I made sure; I said when I get there I will draw a line. What is with the judiciary that will encourage the judiciary to quickly deal with it. But if we insist on making records as you are suggesting that from 1960 upwards then we would have nothing to do and we may fail to achieve anything. While we have a manifesto, whatever we do we have to try to see that the promises we have made and put in writing, we meet them. So, we have said, from the day we are sworn in, those who are responsible for public funds and properties should work according to the law because there is no ministry [to which] you go in Nigeria, or parastatal, where there are no financial instructions and administrative instructions. It's a question of just ignoring the regulations on the ground. I think Nigerians, they have the capacity for making an about-turn, and I am hoping that Nigerians will become accountable wherever they are.

Nigeria divided against itself. I haven't appreciated the full import of that question. We have a problem as a people. If you are following my statements, I warned at least six months ago that we have to be careful about 'Somalia-ization' of Nigeria. We are a group of nationalities, let's put it that way. There were some people who wanted to put it [that way]. We are so many different people culturally, religiously, different backgrounds. We happened to come together courtesy of the British in 1914. We find it very difficult to separate now because there is so much intermarriage and we have become so interdependent. Our constitution has been very deliberate in, I think, respecting our sensitivities as a people and the freedom given in that constitution is a guarantee that we will certainly manage our differences among ourselves. So I'm afraid, I hope that person who asked that question is living here and not in Nigeria. We are making a lot of effort to make sure that we continue to understand ourselves and accommodate ourselves in spite of whatever impression is created about the differences among ourselves. So I, especially when people are talking too much about religion, I said the military is the most cohesive of all the institutions in the country and having been in the military from second lieutenant to a general; holding all the positions almost without exception of command and staff up to a general, and becoming head of state: the Nigerian military has always been at least 80 per cent Christian. If there is so much religious divide, I would never have reached the position I reached. After today, there is nothing you can do; that's why I am so confident about these differences. The most difficult one is the religious one, but if we can go over the religious one, then others, I think, will be easier to deal with. So I think I am more confident and hopeful in Nigerians than whoever asked this question.

Credibility of elections, 28 March; what [credibility] the opposition has. What we have firstly is our manifesto. Let Nigerians see what we are promising them and I believe they will respect it. We are screaming to high heavens and we are very impressed with our success so far; how the United States and Europe is openly backing us as far as having free and fair elections is concerned. We are very grateful to the Americans and to the Europeans; especially the British; that they are on the government on a daily basis literally, telling them that they must not do anything against the Nigerian constitution. And that's what we need. That's the bottom line. So if we don't do ... if we are not worth anything back at home I think they have to be reminded to be respectful of the British and Americans for a lot of reasons which I would not like to mention here. So I think they will listen to them and allow us to have free and fair elections.

How we can engage young people. Wherever I go I mentioned it. More than 60 per cent of the Nigerian population are considered to be youth. Most of them are unemployed and that is the trouble we are in. When I moved throughout the 35 states, how some of these young men and women from the airport to the venue of addresses, to the house of community leaders. How they will be jogging along the buses we are travelling in, sweating, but never getting tired. It makes me even more frightened. If you get those people and you spend one, two years and they haven't seen any difference, I think we will be in trouble. So I am very, very conscious of that. It will be a great incentive for me to work hard to make sure they get something to do! Just to be in peace myself. Yes, high salaries of the national assembly. There are some national assembly members here! A lot of them are not going back because they haven't won their party's primaries. But even though they cannot go back, I think they will remain relevant in their constituencies. So I wouldn't like to touch their salaries now. I don't know that I will be constrained to touch them when I get there. Thank you very much.

### Sir Richard Gozney

General, we're almost out of time. I'm going to take two more questions.

#### Questions

I just wanted to ask you sir, how do you feel that at this very moment everyone is screaming for change and the Nigerian people have chosen you. I see it on the TV, I see it everywhere, people are literally yearning for change, clamouring for change. How do you feel personally that these people are calling for you, sir?

My question is that in the context of the brilliant speech you have given us sir, relating to the Nigerian democracy and Africa, do you consider that the success of this next democratic process is going to be a template for the rest of the African continent? And that this APC government already has the templates in all the APC states that we have about how to govern and govern effectively? Thank you very much.

### Sir Richard Gozney

Thank you. I'm going to add two questions from Twitter. I thought those two questions were nicely gentle for you, General, so I'll give you two to finish up with which are a bit tougher.

The first one is: 'Do you have a position on Sharia law?'

Secondly: 'Is it relevant to the election, your age? What would you plan to say to people about your own age?' And on that note we will finish.

### General Muhammadu Buhari

It's a pity we are ending up with my age! But all the same, how do I feel? Certainly I have replied to a number of the young who have followed our convoys through all the 35 states we have visited out of 36; and I have mentioned here that I am scared of the high expectations, that's what I'm afraid of, the high expectations. People want change and the interesting thing about it is across the country, I started my campaign in Bayelsa, the president's state, and throughout the south-south, southeast, southwest, north-central and the three geopolitical zones in the north, the crowds, you can't say this one is bigger than that one related to the population of respective states. That's what makes the high expectations frightening because you can't tell these young people that there is no money or that you can't put some input into

agriculture or mining, something that will absorb them at least initially. You can't improve their schools, especially the tertiary institutions. We are thinking of quickly putting in an experienced, competent team as a sort of think tank to quickly advise us how we are going to ease this problem, because it's real and its coming. We cannot hurry it off.

Success to be a sort of template for Africa – APC's role. Well I think I have covered it really in the address I have read. Change is certainly coming, and democratically. Bringing the example of the Soviet Union, why an empire in the 20th century collapsed without a shot being fired; everybody went home. Now there are 18 republics [sic] also; can convince anyone that multiparty democracy is the best form of governance. But the biggest caveat is elections must be free and fair. This again comes to the issue why am I attempting for the fourth time? I'm not trying to enforce myself. But, 2003 we spent 30 months in court and ended up in the Nigerian Supreme Court. 2007 we lasted about 20 months in the courts and again ended up in the Supreme Court; 2011 we were again in court for about eight, nine months and ended up in Supreme Court. My personal insistence to keep on going until I get to the highest legal, constitutionally legal, body is to document our belief that we believe in a multiparty democracy system. If we fail to learn from other people's mistakes that have developed their system for generations, our expectation of getting there overnight is not realistic. But let us document it. That it is those times of attempt to stabilize the system; that there are some of us in Nigeria that are serious about it. We are prepared to make the physical and material sacrifices to be lasting to the [inaudible]. But I think for the fourth time, I think I will encourage others to go if anything went wrong.

Now, age and relevance. I am very happy that I have been able to visit 35 states out of 36. I haven't broken down. Somebody announced me dead yesterday. I had a call from Maiduguri that somebody was listening to a friend crying saying Buhari had died in hospital in London. So he called me and I laughed my head off. So certainly I would be expecting too much if I don't expect people are wishing me dead. I am very pleased I am fit. My doctors have declared me fit and I am going back for the final onslaught on PDP. Thank you very much.

### Sir Richard Gozney

Did you have a view on Sharia law?

### General Muhammadu Buhari

You see I don't like this one so much on Sharia, that's why I omitted it. I had to answer so many questions about Sharia when I have closed meetings especially with the Christian community. The problem is the Nigerian constitution is superior. Sharia is put on the same level with customary laws, its relevance is limited to inheritance, marriage and so on. So that, cultures and communities accept. So Sharia is limited to the constitution. So anybody who wants to change to Sharia will have to go and change the constitution.

### Sir Richard Gozney

General, thank you very much indeed for what I found a fascinating address and some very straightforward answers to a wide range of questions. Everyone will take their own impressions of today. I suppose most in my mind will be three things that have stuck out, though people will have other groups.

The three things that I will take away from here was your firm statement about the importance of the electoral timetable now, as amended, but that elections alone do not democracy make. Secondly, your highlighting security and the importance of the welfare and morale of the Nigerian soldiers who are up

there trying to deal with Boko Haram. Thirdly, something I'm sure will be quoted back to you if it is not already, that corrupters will not be appointed.

I'm going to ask you in a moment, audience, to show your appreciation again to General Buhari, after that will you please stay in your places because the general has a number of press interviews he is going to give and if everyone comes up and talks to him, he will never get to them. I know it's not Nigerian custom, but we're in London, so instead of flooding to the front could you stay put until General Buhari has left the room. Thank you very much indeed for an inspiring talk.