



CHURCH OF NIGERIA

(Anglican Communion)

THE MOST REV'D HENRY C. NDUKUBA, MA, BD, MA (Ed.)
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria.

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 2022 ANNUAL EPISCOPAL RETREAT, CHURCH OF NIGERIA, ANGLICAN COMMUNION, HELD AT IBRU ECUMENICAL CENTRE, AGBARHA-OTOR, DELTA STATE FROM MONDAY, 3RD TO FRIDAY, 7TH JANUARY, 2022.

PREAMBLE

The House of Bishops of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) met under the guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit and the leadership of **His Grace, The Most Rev'd Henry C. Ndukuba, DD**, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria, for our Annual Retreat at the Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State, from Monday, 3rd to Friday, 7th January, 2022. In attendance were 141 serving Bishops and 2 retired Bishops.

The Bishops in attendance enjoyed warm corporate fellowship in prayer, worship and seeking knowledge, addressing our minds to spiritual reawakening, revival, having focused Ministry and the importance of maintaining right standing in our walk and work with God, with the theme “IT IS THE LORD; FRESH ENCOUNTER WITH THE LIVING GOD.” (John 21: 1–25).

As the Bishops rose from the Retreat, the following Communiqué was issued.

1. Commitment to the Christian Faith: The Bishops call on all Christians to appraise our stand and commitment to the Christian faith, ensuring that our first love has not been lost, and where necessary, to make a turnaround and reconnect to the Holy Spirit, for a fresh encounter with the living God; for it is only by so doing that we can face the many challenges confronting the profession of our faith.

2. Contending the Covid-19 Pandemic:

A. The Retreat expresses serious concern over the continued global challenge posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic, even with the spread of the latest (Omicron and other) variants, and commiserates with nations that are still recording elevated fatality rates due to the pandemic.

B. On the home front, the Bishops recognize the mighty hand of God in shielding our nation against the ravaging of the Pandemic, as well as appreciate and applaud our Government at all levels for their efforts in handling the issue so far.

C. On the issue of vaccines, the Retreat recommends that Nigerians be well sensitized, providing all necessary information on the need for vaccination to avoid any waste of the vaccines, knowing the difficulties encountered in procuring these vaccines. Also, serious measures should be put in place to avoid Nigeria becoming a dumping ground for expired vaccines from other nations.

D. Nigerians are encouraged to continue to observe all the non-pharmaceutical protocols of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

3. Electoral Act Amendment Bill:

A. The Retreat commends both the Executive and Legislative arms of the Federal Government for the passage and endorsement of the Bill approving both electronic voting and electronic transmission of election results, noting that this will enhance the voting procedures and add value and transparency to our national voting exercise. We, however, caution that all participants in our electoral and voting processes ensure the smooth execution of the process.

B. The House of Bishops align herself with the National Assemblies, who, after observing the negative impacts of the indirect primaries adopted by political parties, on our political system, passed the Electoral Act Amendment Bill, and so call on the President of our nation to heed the call of the masses and append his signature to the proposed Bill.

4. Protracted State of Insecurity in the Nation: The Bishops decry and condemn in strong terms, the protracted and unabated state of insecurity in the nation, leading to unprecedented loss and destruction of lives and properties, with the attending displacement of Nigerian citizens across the nation. The recent arrest of a worshipper in one of our churches during worship service, is a very high level of disrespect and insult to the Church that should not be swept under any carpet. We are keenly watching as investigations go on. We call on Governments at all levels to meaningfully investigate, and expose the sponsors of these inhumane and ungodly acts and ensure they face the wrath of the law.

4. Cases of Jail Breaking Across the Country: We observe and condemn the disheartening and incessant cases of jail breaking across the country. However, we seriously appeal to the judiciary to be prompt in the administration of justice to avoid having suspects stay longer than necessary, awaiting trial.

5. Condition of Roads Across the Country:

A. The House laments the terrible conditions of our roads with the attending security and safety hazards. All tiers of our Government are encouraged to put some human face to their governance and reduce the suffering and loss Nigerians go through as they commute these roads.

B. To reduce the pressure on our roads, the House implores the Federal Government to put serious effort into, and focus on the improvement of, Rail Transportation in Nigeria, by building new rail ways and expanding already existing services.

6. Devaluation of the Naira: We observe with dismay, the sudden, sharp and continuous devaluation of the Naira which has resulted to unprecedented high cost of living in the nation, pushing many Nigerians into untold hardship and abject poverty. We call on Government at all levels to refocus attention to the development and support of small scale production industries and businesses, and minimize our level of importation and borrowing.

7. Tax Derivation and Allocation: The House recommends that the Federal Government revisits, and go by the constitutional provisions in regards to tax derivation by, and allocation to, States as this would make for faster development of the States.

8. National Education Curriculum: The House of Bishops observes the unhealthy disparity in the running of our National Education Curriculum. A situation where individual States decide to run different curriculum against national provisions does not create a level playground for the educational future of the nation and so should not be allowed.

9. Condolence: The House of Bishops received with deep regret and sadness, the news of the passing unto glory of one of our retired fathers, the **Rt. Rev'd Prof. Augustine O. Iwuagwu**, the retired Bishop of the Diocese of Aba. We condole with the Bishop and the faithful of the Diocese of Aba, and the family of our late father. May his soul find rest in the bosom of the Lord. We also received the news of the transition to glory of a renowned Church father, human rights activist and freedom fighter, the **Most Rev'd Desmond Mpilo Tutu**. We commiserate with Christians all over the world, and particularly the people and Government of South Africa on this huge loss and pray for his soul to rest in peace.

CONCLUSION

The House of Bishops of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) extend our heartfelt condolences to Dioceses, families and all Christians who have lost members, loved ones, and or properties to banditry, kidnapping, and all other forms of insurgency or violence. We stand with you as we pray for your consolation, comfort and sustenance.



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