The Role of the Nigerian National Assembly in the Economic Diplomacy of External Debt Relief; 1999-2006

Christopher Ochanja Ngara [*]

Abstract

This paper examines the role of the Nigerian National Assembly in the economic diplomacy of external debt relief between 1999 and 2006. Using secondary data, the findings show that the National Assembly played a critical and complementary role to the Executive arm in attaining Nigeria's foreign policy objective of securing external debt relief. This paid-off with the grant of US$18 billion debt relief to Nigeria by the Paris Club of Creditors in 2005. Since the 1999 Constitution provides for shared responsibility between the Executive and the National Assembly in foreign policy, the effective participation of both arms of government in foreign policy making is necessary for the development of clear and focused policy goals as well as effective coordination of domestic forces in forging a robust and effective foreign policy.

Key Words: Nigeria, National Assembly, Foreign Policy, Democracy, External Debt, Debt Relief, Economic Diplomacy

[*] PhD Political Science, Research Fellow, *National Institute for Legislative Studies, National Assembly, Abuja*

1. Introduction

Economic reform was a major item on the policy agenda of the President Olusegun Obasanjo Government from 1999 to 2007 (Alli, 2010). The economic reform also involved a vigorous pursuit of a multifaceted foreign policy objective of achieving improved international trade; attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI); development assistance and cooperation; recovery of looted funds deposited in Western financial institutions by the former Nigerian Military Head of State, late General Sani Abacha; and pursuit of debt relief (Jibrin 2004; Alli 2010). Debt relief campaign became a key component of what emerged as Obasanjo's version of economic diplomacy (Abutudu 2011, p 45). President Obasanjo embarked on numerous foreign trips to canvass support, particularly from Western Nations, for debt cancellation and repatriation of looted wealth deposited in Western financial institutions.

Initially, Obasanjo's economic diplomacy and his global campaign for debt cancellation/relief and loot-recovery received mixed reactions locally and internationally. Many observers, including members of the National Assembly, saw the campaign for debt relief and recovery of stolen monies kept in foreign bank accounts as needless and unlikely to achieve positive results. Some foreign creditor nations argued that Nigeria was not a poor country and could afford to pay its debt if she was prudent and accountable in managing its huge oil revenues (*The Guardian* 2005; Alli 2010). In addition, Obasanjo's frequent foreign trips which later came to be known as "shuttle diplomacy" was heavily criticised as needless, and a waste of time and national resources. Public opinion prominently implored the President to limit his frequent travels and concentrate on tackling the numerous domestic problems confronting the nation.

Despite these criticisms, President Obasanjo sustained his vigorous campaign for debt relief and recovery of Nigeria's assets stashed away abroad. He used international platforms such as the African Union (AU), Commonwealth, the G8 and the United Nations in pushing for debt relief and the release of stolen monies stashed in Western Banks. President Obasanjo's central argument was that Nigeria was a nascent democracy emerging after several years of military dictatorship; and Nigeria being Africa's largest democracy needed to be nurtured and supported; and affirmed that Debt relief will amount to granting the country a democracy dividend (Okonjo-Iweala 2008).

President Obasanjo also argued that it was morally wrong for Western Banks to keep monies looted by corrupt African leaders and their associates. The campaign of Nigeria's government received tremendous support from Britain following the assumption of Tony Blair as Prime Minister of that country. The campaign got a further boost with the ascension of Blair as the Chairman of the G8 and the European Union in 2004 and 2005, respectively.

An important diplomatic adventure such as the quest for debt relief could not be undertaken in a democracy without the input of the legislature especially in a presidential system where the legislature has a sound leverage particularly on "power of the purse." This paper examines the role of Nigeria's National Assembly in the economic diplomacy of debt relief between 1999 and 2006.

2. Historical Background to External Debt Crisis in Nigeria

Scholars seemingly concur that the origin of foreign debt in Nigeria dates back to 1958 when Nigeria received US$28 million from the World Bank to facilitate the construction of 1780 kilometre-rail-line from Kuru in Jos, Plateau State to link Bauchi and Borno States (Oche 2006; Henshaw 2009; Ifeoma 2011; Wapmuk and Agbalajobi 2012). Nigeria obtained its first loan from the Paris Club of creditor countries in 1964 for a sum of US$13.1 million. The loan, taken from the Italian government, was expended in constructing the Niger Dam. From 1964 to 1970, Nigeria borrowed moderately. Despite a devastating Civil War from 1967-1970 (Okonjo-Iweala 2007, p. 2), foreign debt remained low and was less than US$1 billion. However, the low level of indebtedness suddenly and dramatically soared between 1971 and 1981 (the oil boom years) as the military governments borrowed without fiscal discipline to finance state projects (Okonjo-Iweala 2007). At the height of the oil boom, the military dictators encouraged a wasteful consumption premised on the persistence of high oil prices. For the most part, Nigeria's debts were not contracted on concessionary terms, hence the grant element was very small (Jubilee Plus 2001, p.11).

Wapmuk and Agbalajobi (2012) observe that most of the foreign debt secured by Nigeria between 1958 and 1977 were concessional loans from bilateral and multilateral sources with low interest rates and longer repayment period. Hence, Nigeria's foreign debts were at a minimal level and did not soar to a crisis dimension. With the fall of oil price in 1978, the General Olusegun Obasanjo's government ran into balance of payment deficit and resorted to external borrowing to finance government programmes. Thus, the government borrowed the sum of US$1 billion from the international capital market on commercial terms, thereby raising Nigeria's total debt stock to US $2.2billion (AFRODAD, 2007). This marked the country's entry into non-concessional commercial borrowing. As the oil glut persisted in the 1980s, Nigeria's economic crises worsened.

Following the transition to civil rule in 1979, Alhaji Shehu Shagari became Nigeria's President. From 1981 through 1982, there was a decline in the price of crude oil in the international market and Nigeria ran into shocks. The economic deficits were further compounded by the consumerist preference for imported goods by Nigerian elite. Furthermore, government's economic strategy of import substitution also depended heavily on imported raw materials and machinery (Ishola, Olalaye, Ajayi and Giwa 2013). In order to salvage the economy from total collapse, President Shagari approached the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a loan of 2.4 billion naira. At this point, the share of loans from bilateral and multilateral sources had declined substantially, while borrowing from private sources increased considerably (Wapmuk and Agbalajobi 2012).

By 1982, Nigeria's total external debt stock had risen from US $2.2 billion in 1979 to US $13.1 billion. The political class and the ruling elite were involved in official corruption which drained national resources. Some of the ill-gotten wealth went into foreign bank accounts, so there was capital flight. According to Ogbeidi (2012, p. 8), over $16 billion in oil revenues were lost between 1979 and 1983 during the reign of President Shehu Shagari. The attendant crisis (generated by the massive looting of national treasury and official corruption) led to the eventual overthrow of the Shagari Regime by the military on 31 December, 1983.

General Muhammadu Buhari, who became the Head of State after the 31 December, 1983 military coup ruled for one year, eight months. His strained relationship with the West and, by extension, Western financiers and creditors did not permit his regime to contemplate external borrowing.

When General Ibrahim Babangida took over as the Head of State in 1985, the nation's debt rose astronomically from US$13.1 billion in 1982 to US$19 billion. Money was borrowed to finance projects but the projects were either poorly executed or not implemented at all. Yet, Nigeria's debt service obligation rose to a whopping US$4 billion (Nwagwu and Okoye 2014). Unlike his predecessor, General Babangida re-opened discussions with the IMF and the outcome led to the adoption of the Structural

Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986, with its attendant harsh conditionality and negative socio-economic effects on the Nigerian population. Olukoshi (1998) observed that the objectives of SAP in engendering domestic savings and investment and achieving sustainable debt servicing regime was not realized. By 1991 (six years into Babangida's administration), Nigeria's external debt profile had risen to US$33.4 billion (Aina 2006). Due to the diplomatic crisis faced by the Babangida's government towards the end of his regime, not much borrowing was done. Thus, by the end of December 1995, Nigeria's foreign debt stood at US$ 32.6 billion (Wapmuk and Agbalajobi 2012).

General Sani Abacha, who took over power in 1993, inherited the diplomatic crisis faced by his predecessor, General Ibrahim Babangida, over poor human rights records and failing to return the country to democracy. General Abacha's military government faced series of international sanctions, hence little attention was paid to debt servicing, especially to the Paris Club (Callaghy, 2009). General Abacha and some members of his administration siphoned Nigeria's wealth and deposited them in foreign banks. It is estimated that Abacha stashed over US$4 billion in London, Washington, Frankfurt and Zurich (Jubilee Plus 2001). General Abdulsalam Abubakar assumed power in 1998 and attempted to revive relations with the Paris Club by making a goodwill payment of US$1.5 billion to the Club (Okonjo-Iweala 2007).

President Olusegun Obasanjo on assumption of office on the 29th May, 1999, adopted a foreign policy strategy that brought the issue of foreign debt relief and recovery of the country's looted assets in Western banks into the forefront of international, economic diplomacy. As at the end of 1999, Nigeria's total foreign debt was US $28.0 billion. Paris Club had the highest share of 73.2 percent (Wapmuk and Agbalajobi 2012). The IMF put the stock of Nigeria's debt at US$31.9 billion at the end of 2000, amounting to about 75 percent of GDP and about 180 percent of export earnings. Debt service due in 2000 was about US$3.0 billion or 14.5 percent export earnings (Adepoju, Salau, and Obayelu 2007, p. 6). By 31 December, 2004 when external debts were being reconciled for negotiations with the creditors, Nigeria's external debt stood at US$ 35.994 billion; 86 percent or US$ 30.9 billion owed to Paris Club (Okonjo-Iweala 2007).

3. Some Features of Nigeria's External Debt

President Obasanjo, in 1999, inherited a foreign debt burden of US$28 billion that had accumulated over a period of 41 years. Most of the debts were incurred by previous military administrations and a significant percentage of the debt were penalties for not meeting debts obligations, controversial interest rates on loans rather than the principal money borrowed. By 2005, Nigeria had paid over US$35 billion in actual debt service payments; yet, the country was still indebted to the tune of US$36 billion (Henshaw 2009, p.2).

Based on its findings, Jubilee Plus (2001, p. 5) reported that 65% of projects, accounting for 76% of the value of funds loaned to Nigeria failed:

i. These amounted to $2.6 billion, or approximately 10% of Nigeria's outstanding debt value, or 20% of outstanding principal;
ii. That about 50% of the total debt (US$14 billion) were "phantom" debts because they accrued as penalty for non-payment;
iii. That US$5.6 billion of Nigeria's debts, approximately 40% of the outstanding principal of US$14 billion were looted and stashed in foreign accounts by past Nigeria's military rulers.

Besides, most of Nigeria's external loans were received under the guise of funding the health, educational, agricultural, infrastructure and manufacturing sectors. However, a look at these sectors today raises questions on what the loans were actually used for (Henshaw 2009, p. 8).

4. Foreign Debt Relief Deal between Nigeria and the Paris Club of Creditors

From 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo focused on economic diplomacy of debt relief for Nigeria. Of particular note is the government appreciation of the indispensable linkage between domestic and foreign policy. To gain the confidence of creditor nations, the Obasanjo government, in October 2000, established the Debt Management Office (DMO), an agency charged with the sole responsibility of managing Nigeria's debt portfolio. The government also initiated laudable reform programmes particularly in the civil service, the banking sector, anti-corruption crusade, privatization and commercialization etc., under the overall framework of the National Economic Empowerment and

Development Strategy (NEEDS). These reform programmes were fallouts of the Policy Support Instrument (PSI) initiatives of the IMF, a precondition to reach a deal with the Paris Club.

These domestic reform initiatives raised the confidence of creditors and multilateral financial institutions on Nigeria and created favourable consideration for Nigeria's debt relief bid. The effort of the Federal Government with the strong support of the National Assembly yielded results in 2005 when the Paris Club (Nigeria's leading creditor) wrote-off [US$18 billion (60 percent) of the US$30.4 billion] part of the country's foreign debt even though she was not eligible under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. The deal represented one of the highest debt buyback for a low income country in about fifty years of the Paris Club existence. Suffice to say also that Nigeria became the first sub-Saharan country to fully exit the Paris Club debt (USAID 2006).

Nigeria's debt was successfully negotiated with the Paris Club in May 2005 under the "Naples Terms" debt relief which means the Club would write-off a minimum of total debt stock or a debt reduction of up to 67 percent (Ifeoma 2011). The terms of the deal reveals that the Paris Club willingness to forgive US$18 billion out of the US$30.4 billion owed in return for a payment of US$12.4 billion arrears and buyback (USAID 2006). Nigeria-European Commission (2002) rightly observe that the diplomatic success recorded by President Obasanjo and his administration in achieving debt relief resulted from a relentless global campaign complemented by a supportive and cooperative National Assembly.

5. The Role of the National Assembly in Nigeria's Economic Diplomacy of Debt Relief

On 2nd August, 2000, a correspondence from President Olusegun Obasanjo was announced and read on the floor of the Senate informing it that the Federal Government had negotiated a Standby Agreement (SBA) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that would pave the way to approach the Paris Club (Nigeria's leading external creditor) to reduce Nigeria's foreign debt. The letter referenced *PRES/134* dated 26th July, 2000, and titled "Nigeria's Standby Arrangement (SBA) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) read thus:

> *…the purpose of having an IMF approved SBA therefore is to engender international confidence in the management of the economy which is required to… pave the way for our formal approach to the Paris Club for*

> *talks that may eventually lead to the reduction of our external debt… the indication that have been given by the Heads of States of most of the fifteen developed countries to which Nigeria owes her external debt under the Paris Club arrangement is that the debt owed to them by Nigeria belong to their citizens. The Government of the creditor countries, therefore, needs to convince their electorates that Nigeria is running a viable system of sound economic management required to place her economy on the path of sustained growth….During the beginning of the Medium Term Programme, Nigeria's external debt is expected to qualify for reduction by not less than 67 percent of its net present value under the Naples Debt Reduction Initiative (Senate Votes and Proceedings 2000, p. 64).*

President Obasanjo's letter was in accordance with the relevant provisions of the law which requires the President to inform the National Assembly on issues relating to the economy and the management of external debts. However, while the Executive vigorously pursued its objectives of external debt relief and the return of looted money stashed in Western Banks, the National Assembly complemented the Federal Government's efforts in its engagements, particularly at the inter-parliamentary assemblies. At the 105th 106th, 107th and 112th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) conferences in 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2005, respectively, for instance, the voice of Nigeria's National Assembly resonated on the global call for external debt relief and repatriation of stolen wealth from Western financial institutions (Ngara 2016).

In March 2005, event took a dramatic turn when the House of Representatives passed a unanimous resolution describing Nigeria's external debt as illegitimate. Painfully, the House observed that "Nigeria's debt stock as at 1985 was about US$19 billion and between 1985 and 2005, Nigeria had repaid a total of US$37 billion to all her creditors including the Paris and London Clubs of creditors (Henshaw 2009). The House of Representatives called for the total cancellation of Nigeria's external debt and urged the Federal Government to stop further payment of foreign debts owed to external creditors (Henshaw 2009; Raffer 2010; Okereke 2012; and New Telegraph 2014). Prominent members of the National Assembly such as Mr. Farouk Lawal (then House Committee

Chair on Finance), insisted that Nigeria must repudiate the debts (Okonjo-Iweala 2012).

The resolution passed by the House of Representatives to repudiate Nigeria's external debt put the Nigerian Senate under pressure to do the same (Okonjo-Iweala 2012). On the 22 March, 2005, the Senate in collaboration with the Debt Management Office (DMO) convened a roundtable conference on debt relief for Nigeria. It resolved, among others, that a combined National Assembly delegation undertake a tour of creditor countries to canvass for total cancellation of the country's external debts. The Nigerian legislators undertook the visits in two sets. The first trip (from 24th April to 7th May, 2005), was to the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy, while the second trip (from 16th to 22nd May, 2005) was to France and Japan (Udoma 2005; and Eghe and Usman 2012).

These visits were strategic not only because they were targeted at leading financial centres in Europe, but were scheduled ahead of G8 Summit holding between 6 and 8 July, 2005 at Gleneagles, Scotland. The objective was to bring the issue of Nigeria's external debt to the forefront of international discourse and possibly influence its inclusion in the agenda of the G8 Summit. During the visits, the National Assembly delegation worked on convincing its counterparts from several creditor countries that Nigeria was serious about its reform programmes and should be supported by passing appropriate and supportive legislation (Okonjo-Iweala 2012). In the United States, the delegation met with Sheila Jackson Lee (a leading Member of the House Judiciary Committee) and 12 other members of the American Congress. They include: Sanford Bishop (member of the House Appropriations Committee) and three Senators namely; Barrack Obama, Chuck Hagel and Christopher Smith (Okonjo-Iweala 2012; and New Telegraph 2014). The members of the United States Congress indicated willingness to help Nigeria push for debt relief. Sheila Jackson specifically indicated her willingness to write the then US Secretary of State, Ms. Condoleeza Rice and the US Treasury Secretary, John Snow to canvass debt relief for Nigeria (Udoma 2005).

The campaign for debt relief by the Nigerian Federal Government paid-off in May 2005 when the Paris Club of Creditors announced a partial write-off of Nigeria's external debt to the tune of \$18billion, representing 60 percent of the debt owed the Club. On the 8th November, 2005, there was indication of further progress on the deal when the National Assembly received a correspondence from President Obasanjo asking for a Supplementary Budget of US$12 billion to pay outstanding debt to Paris Club of creditors. In the House of Representatives, the letter referenced PRES/134 dated 25 October 2005 and titled: *A Bill for an Act for a Supplementary Budget of 12.4 billion US Dollars to pay Outstanding Debt to Paris Club of Creditors* was read in plenary by Mr. Deputy Speaker. The letter read thus: “I hereby present, for formal consideration and passage into law by the House of Representatives, the attached Bill which provides for the issue out of the Federation Account, an additional total sum of N1, 612,000,000,000.00 or equivalent of US$12,400,000,000.00 for the payment of outstanding debt to the Paris Club of creditors” (House of Representatives Votes and Proceedings 2005-2006, p. 367). The payment of $12.4billion to the Paris Club led to the eventual exit of Nigeria from its indebtedness to the Paris Club of creditors.

President Obasanjo, in his letter referenced PRES/134 to both the Senate and the House of Representatives informed the National Assembly on the status of the Paris Club exit deal. A copy of the letter to the House of Representatives dated 24th May, 2006, and entitled: *Brief on Paris Club Exit Payments* read by the Speaker in plenary reads as follows:

> *The House of Representatives may recall that on October 20, 2005, Nigeria successfully adopted comprehensive debt treatment, allowing us to secure a full and permanent exit from the country’s Paris Club debts. Following the endorsement of the deal, the National Assembly appropriated the sum of $12.4 billion from the Consolidated Revenue Fund in November 2005 to finance the exit. As intimated to you on various occasions, the funds were sourced from excess crude savings which had accrued in 2005, with the full consent of all stakeholders. The states concerned reimbursed their part of the balance to be paid to Paris Club. I am pleased to formally report to the House that the Paris Club debt has now been fully consummated and Nigeria is no longer indebted to Paris Club… (House of Representatives Votes and Proceedings 2005-2006, p. 921-922).*

The information of Nigeria’s total exit from the Paris Club was received with excitement by the National Legislators. This mood was reflected in the opening address of then Speaker, House of Representatives, Alhaji

Aminu Bello Masari at the beginning of the Third Legislative Session of the 5th Assembly on the19 July, 2005. The address read at plenary reads thus:

> *…As we settle down to business, I am sure we should be elated at seeing the gains of some of our past and recent efforts already bearing fruits. The most recent is the decision of some Nigeria's creditors under the Paris Club to write off over $18 billion, of our foreign debt, amounting to 60% with further promise to increase to 67%. Hon. Members will recall that during the last session, this House vigorously campaigned for debt repudiation. We unanimously passed a resolution to that effect which was promptly conveyed to Mr. President. May I congratulate the National Assembly for this achievement. While thanking the international community for their kind gesture. Let me also convey your congratulations to Mr. President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, for this achievement and submit that this is a vote of confidence by the international community on the federal government of Nigeria… (House of Representatives Votes and Proceedings 2005-2006, p. 1-2).*

Okereke (2012) and Raffer (2010) rightly observed that the eventual decision by the Paris Club of creditors to write-off part of Nigeria's external debt even though she was not considered among the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), has to do with the intention of the creditors to avert the moral issues raised by debtor nations. The possibility of official repudiation of external debt by debtor countries especially where it received the backing of national parliament such as the case with Nigeria raised the need for caution. In spite of this, Nigeria would have found it difficult to realise the foreign policy objective of securing the debt relief if the National Assembly had not lent its support and cooperation to the Federal Government. Despite the seeming cooperation between the Executive and the National Assembly on the matter, there were disagreements on processes and procedures.

Section 80(3) of the 1999 Constitution, for instance, provides that: "No moneys shall be withdrawn from any public fund of the Federation, other than the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation, unless the issue of those moneys had been authorised by an Act of the National Assembly." Similarly, Section 80(4) states that: "No moneys shall be withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund or any other public fund of the Federation, except in the manner prescribed by the National Assembly" (CFRN, 1999). Despite these clear provisions, the Federal Government withdrew money from the Consolidated Revenue Account and paid the sum of $12.4 billion to the Paris Club of creditors to fulfill its part of the debt exit agreement before the Supplementary Appropriation Act made for the same purpose was passed by the National Assembly (Falana 2010; and Mudashiru 2015). According to Bugaje (2015) "the Federal Government paid the US$12.4 to the Paris Club before approaching the National Assembly for approval which contravenes of the law"

This development led to dissension among members of the National Assembly particularly in the House of Representatives, but was not loud enough to hold the executive accountable. Bugaje (2015) noted that "the executive made a mess of the National Assembly, despite the determination by me [Usman Bugaje] and some members to throw the Bill out for not following due process, somehow, the presidency used whatever means possible to enlist the support of members and the Supplementary Appropriation Bill was eventually passed in contravention of the law".

In spite of the crisis generated by the manner in which the US$12.4 was paid to the Paris Club, the Executive nevertheless enjoyed a good measure of support and goodwill from the National Assembly in the pursuit of its economic diplomacy of debt relief. The support and cooperation by the National Assembly was instrumental to the eventual exit of Nigeria from the Paris Club of creditors. The synergy and cooperation between the Executive and the National Assembly led to the development of clear policy direction as well as effective coordination of domestic efforts towards the realization of the foreign policy objective.

Even though the relationship between the Executive and the National Assembly throughout the period between 1999 and 2007 was fractious and rancorous, it was not difficult to persuade the National Assembly to cooperate with the Executive on the debt relief matter. Explaining the reason for the National Assembly's support for the Federal Government's foreign policy on debt relief, Bugaje (2105) opined that "I think it was clear to the National Assembly that if Nigeria has to service her debt, there will be no money to undertake capital or recurrent expenditure. The legislators realized the burden of the debt more vividly and were concerned about what project will go to their respective constituencies and the likely impact on their electoral fortunes. Thus, debt relief became a priority for members".

However, while the campaign for the debt relief was going on, the conduct of the national legislators at home was in sharp contrast to the professed reform agenda of the Federal Government. From 1999 when the Assembly was inaugurated till when the debt relief was granted by the Paris Club in 2005, the National Assembly was embroiled in various corrupt acts such as misappropriation of resources, contract scam, forgery and other sharp practices. These corrupt practices undermined the anti-corruption crusade of the Federal Government intended to win the confidence of creditor countries.

The alleged "misconduct" of the national legislators raised fundamental questions on their integrity and capacity to engender accountability, transparency and the rule law (Baba 2011). For the same period, public criticisms of the National Assembly focused on the extravagant allocation of benefits to its members (collecting as much as US$1.5 million in a country where more than half of its population live below the poverty line), thereby further expanding the gap of inequality between representatives and voters (Lewis 2011). In 2000, members of the National Assembly emasculated Obasanjo's anticorruption bill until the IMF threatened to disapprove Nigeria's debt rescheduling negotiations. Dr. Chuba Okadigbo, then President of the Nigerian Senate replied the IMF that it could go to hell (Iliffe 2011). Not long after, Okadigbo was indicted for corruption by a Senate investigative committee and consequently removed from office as the President of the Senate.

Conclusion

The campaign for Nigeria's external debt cancellation stood out as one foreign policy objective in which the 4th and 5th National Assemblies respectively exhibited a high level of cooperation and synergy with the Federal Government of President Obasanjo despite underlying friction in legislative-executive relationship. The support was informed more by a shared concern about the possibility that the debt crisis may shut down the government rather than a willing commitment for partnership. Because of the shared objectives and commitments, President Obasanjo facilitated the travels of the national legislators around the world to canvass support for Nigeria's debt relief campaign.

However, the corruption scandals in the National Assembly slowed down the progress on the external debt relief campaign. This is because it created the impression (among creditor-nations) that official corruption was responsible for Nigeria's indebtedness; and that Nigeria could pay its external debts if only it could be more prudent and accountable in the management of its resources. The strong sense of common purpose, cooperation, collaboration and synergy between the Executive and the National Assembly, Nigeria successfully drove its economic diplomacy of external debt relief to a positive conclusion with rewarding outcome.

References

Abutudu, M. (2011). Federalism, Political Restructuring, and the Lingering National Question. In S. Adejumobi (Eds.) *Governance and Politics in Post-Military Nigeria: Changes and Challenges (pp. 23 – 60),* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Adepoju, A. A., Salau, A. S. and Obayelu, A. E. (2007). The Effects of External Debt Management on Sustainable Economic Growth and Development: Lessons from Nigeria. Munish Personal RepEc Archive. March 1. http//mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de /2147/.

AFRODAD (2007). *Nigeria: Foreign Debts, Stolen Wealth, IFIs and the West, Harare: African Forum and Network on Debt and Development*. Available at www.afrodad.org, Accessed on 28 April, 2015.

Aina, A. D. (2006). Globalization and the Retrenchment of an African Economy: Revisting Post - $18 Billion Debt Cancellation in Nigeria. *The Journal of Pan-African Studies* 1(4): 35-49.

Alli, W. (2010). Nigeria's Foreign Policy of Democratic Transition and Economic Reforms. In S. Adejumobi (Edt.), *Governance and Politics in Post-Military Nigeria: Changes and Challenges, (pp. 144-172).* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Baba, Y. T. (2012). The Legislature and Fifty Years of Nigeria's Nationhood: Counting the Costs of Institutional Decay" In Abdulrahman et al (Eds.) *50 Years of Nigeria's Nationhood: Issues and Challenges for Sustainable Development, (*pp. 71-96), A Publication of Faculty of Social Sciences, Usman Danfodio University Sokoto.

Callaghy, T.M. (2009). Anatomy of a 2005 Debt Deal: Nigeria and the Paris Club. *Working*

Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999). http://www.nigeria-law.org/Cons titution OfTheFederalRepublicOfNigeria.htm.

Eghe E. V. and Usman, S. H (2012). Debt Relief: Implications for the Nigerian Economy. *International Journal of Research in Management, Economics and Commerce.* 2(6): 1-17

Falana, F. (2010). Constitutionalism, Rule of Law, and Human Rights. In S. Adejumobi (Eds.) *Governance and Politics in Post-Military Nigeria: Changes and Challenges (pp. 125 – 143),* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jibrin, A. (2004). *Obasanjo and the New Face of Nigeria's Foreign Policy.* Kaduna: M.O.D. Press and Publishers.

Lewis, P. M. (2011). *Nigeria Country Report*. Centre for Social Science Research. South Africa: University of Cape Town.

Henshaw, K. (2009). Leaving the Debt: Nigeria's Borrowing and the Call for Moratorium. *Social Action Briefing No. 1,* September www.saction.org. Retrieved on 28/4/2015.

House of Representatives Votes and Proceedings (2005-2006). *Fifth National Assembly 19 July*

Ifeoma, E. E. (2011). Nigeria Foreign Policy and the Politics of Debt Relief. *Canadian Social Science* 7(2): 153-165.

Ilife, J. (2011). *Obasanjo, Nigeria and the World.* New York: Boydell and Brewer Inc.

Ishola, S. A., Olalaye, S. O., Ajayi, E. O. and Giwa, A. B. (2013). External Debt and the Nigerian Economy: An Empirical Analysis. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* 2(6): 42-50.

Jubilee Plus (2001). Drops of Oil in a Sea of poverty: The Case for a New Debt Deal for Nigeria. *New Economic Foundation.* London: Cinnamon House.

New Telegraph (2014). Lee: American Congresswoman with Nigeria on her mind. http://newtelegraphonline.com/lee-american-congresswoman-nigeria-mind/ retrieved 23/4/2015.

Ngara, C. O. (2016). The Nigeria's National Assembly and Inter-Parliamentary Diplomacy: An Assessment of the Fourth and Fifth National Assembly. *African Politics and Policy* 2(2): 1-9.

Nigeria-European Commission (2002). Country Support Strategy and Indicative Programme for the Period 2001-2007. *Development Partnership Agreement.* Abuja: 15-16 July.

Nwagwu, C. and Okoye, K. (2014). Management of External Economic Relations and the Crisis of Development in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* 2(9): 32-49.

Oche, O. (2006). The Obasanjo Administration and the Diplomacy of Debt Relief. In Ogwu, U. J. and Alli, W. O. (Eds.) *Debt Relief and Nigeria's Diplomacy*, Lagos: NIIA.

Ogbeidi, M. M. (2012). Political Leadership and Corruption in Nigeria Since 1960: A Socio-economic Analysis. *Journal of Nigeria Studies* 1(2): 1-25.

Okonjo-Iweala N. (2008). Nigeria's Fight for Debt Relief: Tracing the Path. In L. Brainard and D. Chollet (Ed.), *Global Development 2.0: Can Philanthropists, the Public, and the Poor make Poverty a History, (pp. 101-109),* Washington DC: The Brookings Institution.

Okonjo-Iweala N. (2012). *Reforming the Unreformable: Lessons from Nigeria.* Cambridge: MIT Press

Okonjo-Iweala, N. (2007). Nigeria's Fight for Debt Relief: Tracing the Path. *Paper Presented at the Conference on New Vehicles to engage the Public.* Wednesday, August 1.

Okereke, D. (2012). *Africa's Quiet Revolution Observed from Nigeria*. Northampton, UK: Paragon Publishing.

Olukoshi, B (1998). The Elusive Prince of Denmark: Structural Adjustment and the Crisis of Governance in Africa, Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.

Raffer, K. (2010). *Debt Management for Development: Protection of the Poor and the Millennium Development Goals.* Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.

Senate Votes and Proceedings (2000-2001). National Assembly Debates. Federal Republic of Nigeria, Wednesday, 2nd August. Senate met at 2.50 p.m.

Udoma, U. U. (2005). Report of the Campaign for Debt Relief to Nigeria's Principal Creditor Countries Undertaken by the National Assembly Team in April and May 2005. Presented to the Senate on Thursday 2nd June 2005 by the Senate Chief Whip Senator Udoma Udo Udoma, Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

USAID (2006). *Democracy and Governance Assessment of Nigeria* Vermont, USA http://www.nigeria-consulate-ny.org/News/Sept02/president_response.htm Retrieved 4/6/2015.

Wapmuk, S. and Agbalajobi, D. T. (2012). The Obasanjo Administration and the Campaign for External Debt Relief for Nigeria. *Journal of Social Science and Policy Review* 4: 30-44.

MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS

The Guardian, (2005). March 14.