

NIGERIA

AN ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF INTERIOR, COMRADE ABBA MORO, AT THE FIRST REGIONAL MINISTERIAL-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON STATELESSNESS IN WEST AFRICA, HELD IN ABIDJAN COTE D'IVOIRE, FROM 23RD TO 25TH FEBRUARY 2015

(Delivered by Ambassador Sunday Omogiade, Nigerian Permanent Representative to ECOWAS on his behalf)

Protocols.

1. I am delighted to have the honour to address this Conference on Statelessness in West Africa. The continuous collaborative efforts of the West African States, through ECOWAS and other related regional arrangements, over the years, have had very positive impact on the governance of the various States that make up the Sub-Region.
2. Let me note here that, statelessness has grave impact on the lives of individuals and the harmony of nations. There is no gainsaying that national identity is essential for full participation in society and enjoyment of fundamental human rights. Furthermore, statelessness always carries with it attendant negative impact on the stability of any region, as tension and conflict are usually the situations where a group of people are denied national identity.
3. But the recent campaign launched by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in 2014, to end statelessness in 10 years underscores the need for all hands to be on deck towards resolving every existing case of statelessness and preventing fresh

ones from occurring.

4. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, this conference is the first of its kind in West Africa, and will no doubt provide a timely opportunity and a veritable platform for developing and promoting strategies in a region that is increasingly willing to address statelessness.
5. Furthermore, it is worthy of note the problem that in the absence of deliberate government policies in West African Sub-Region, to measure Statelessness, the number of Stateless persons in West Africa is not known, apart from Cote d'Ivoire which provides statistics that estimates stateless individuals or people of undetermined nationality.
6. Allow me to add that inadequate rules for determination of nationality and the discrepancies in various national legislations on this matter constitute a major reason for Statelessness in West Africa. It has therefore, become more apposite than ever, for all hands to be on deck towards stemming the tide of statelessness in the West African Sub-Region.
7. Let me note further, here, that the Nigerian Government, through the instrumentality of the Transformation Agenda of our President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, has continued to make national identity a major focus, as the security of the nation depends largely on an effective national identity management system.
8. With the mandate of fostering the maintenance of law, internal security and citizenship integrity, for the promotion of good governance, the Ministry of Interior of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, has continued to strive towards the provisions of internal security and related services to citizens of Nigeria and foreigners, alike, in accordance with global best practices. Needless, therefore, to say that

one of the seamless services of the Ministry of Interior under my watch, in collaboration with the Nigeria's National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) is the determination and management of the identity of citizens of Nigeria and others living in Nigeria.

9. Distinguished Conferees, ladies and gentlemen, the Nigerian Government, being a major stakeholder in the West African Sub-Region, is optimistic that this conference will elicit favorable commitment from all West African states, here present, towards the determination of nationality and a common platform for ending Statelessness in the West African Sub-Region.
10. Thank you for listening to me.