

control of the military).

5. *Institution Building to strengthen democratic culture*: institutions that support the development of a democracy should be set up and strengthened. It is especially important to think about formal federal structures/institutions.

Evaluating sector-specific reforms, Douglas Anglin, Canadian Council for International Peace and Security, said that considerable progress has been already made in transferring the military under civilian control. However, the Parliament is not working very smoothly and the passage of Bills takes excessive amount of time (for instance, the anti-corruption bill dragged on for 8 months in the Senate). There are some worrying signs in constitutional reforms with proposals calling for a Constitution based on ethnicity and/or affiliation to a political party. Neither of which are seen as helpful to national reconciliation.

Paul Puritt from the Canadian Labour Congress said that despite all the obstacles for democracy to take root at the federal/national level and through Track I activities, there are some optimistic signs at the grass-roots level. The trade union structure in Nigeria, for example, exists and pressured successfully for a minimum wage increase. Kenna Owoh, Interchurch Action, also emphasised the importance of local and municipal forces in democratisation. There have been efforts to encourage citizens at the community level to read local budgets and provide input in South-West Nigeria, for instance. These small local sites of democratic practices serve as a countervailing movement to the anti-democratic forces. The role of Churches and Mosques was also raised. Religious institutions have enormous mobilising power and often serve as public sites during government failure to provide services like healthcare or education. Dimieari Von Kemedi said that things are happening even in one of the most desperate areas of Nigeria – the Niger Delta, where unrest goes hand in hand with state-sanctioned violence. Young people are recognising the problems. Efforts are being made to address conflict before it flares up.

*Taba Cooney, Informetrica, turned attention to economic reforms and the need for privatisation.* She pointed out that President Obasanjo is not inclined to take hard economic decisions and remains statist. Privatisation, along with other reforms, has been postponed while public infrastructure decays. Some currency reforms have been initiated to primarily attract foreign investment. The issues of the debt and the inability to pass the 1999 budget have to be addressed. A regulatory framework should be established to facilitate foreign investment.

*Others, including Terisa Turner, warned against large scale transfers of public/common property to private corporations.* Democracy does not necessarily mean private property ownership and certainly not corporate ownership. Instead, it may involve common property sharing more amendable to respect for human rights and environmental protection (than corporate ownership). Similarly, Kenna Owoh, said that private sector interests must be laid bare, especially when commercialising such vital community resources as water. Dimeari von Kemedi reinforced the message by stating that investment must always come before profits. Companies must respect human rights and acquire a "social licence" from communities within which they