

year's budget has not been passed yet, and the state is running on emergency finances. There have been launched some investigations of past abuses, some order restored to Cabinet meetings, and some advancement in international affairs apparent from Nigeria's efforts to positively influence African peace and development. However, putting public finances back to order and debt relief are key to future reforms. The currently high oil price offers an opportunity.

Canada is viewed favourably in Nigeria. The Prime Minister's and other Ministerial visits have contributed in part to this view. Current efforts include the upcoming Conference on War-affected Children in Ghana as well as activities to Roll Back Malaria Summit in Abuja where it is planned that the Minister of International Cooperation would represent Canada. Canadian NGOs are also coming back to Nigeria with their own programmes. He looked forward to the report of the group's discussion and wished it every success.

*Collins Babalola, Common Cause, raised caution that the progress in democracy in Nigeria has not been especially apparent. Others argued that free elections, the introduction of pluralism into Nigeria's political life, and privatisation do not necessarily presuppose democratic development.* While structural problems remain (i.e., imbalanced representation in the National Assembly of various groups and corruption as a survival technique), cosmetic changes often lead to circulation of elites and reproduce patterns of bad governance. The government record of human rights abuses has improved, however, violence remains the main instrument for some problem solving.

*Several participants, including Chief Adetola Adeniyi from the Canada-Nigeria Business Group, pointed out that Nigeria has yet to be constituted as a political nation.* Legitimacy is necessary for peoples of different ethnic and political backgrounds to re-focus their loyalty and patriotism toward the Nigerian state rather than their own particular communities. Democracy, including the concepts of responsibility and accountability, is not alien to Nigerians. These concepts are being practised in communities regarded as legitimate by their members. Unrest and ethnic clashes are not caused by primordial hatreds. Instead, they are a reaction to the long-standing imbalances in resource allocation and political representation. Similarly, corruption and theft are not characteristics inherent to the Nigerian peoples. Often they are systemic survival tactics in the context of an authoritarian/illegitimate system.

Some participants agreed that at the root of the malaise in Nigeria is a flawed Constitution. The present Constitution has been drafted by the military regime and was imposed on people from the top-down. *Some believe it is imperative that the Constitution be changed to adequately reflect, in particular, the relationship between exploitation and re-distribution of resources/oil and the link between the diverse Nigerian populations and political representation (in the National Assembly and elsewhere).* It is also imperative to build constitutional consensus from the grass-roots level. All peoples should be included in the Constitution building process and their interests and concerns considered. *Without a grass-roots endorsed Constitution, the state of Nigeria will remain a phantom, said Dimeari von Kemedi from the Ijaw Youth Council.*