



PRESS RELEASE: THE NIGERIA SOCIAL COHESION SURVEY #NSCS2019

Nigeria is not a Socially Cohesive country:

More needs to be done to promote Trust, Equity, Inclusion and Hope – New Survey

Abuja, Nigeria, October 29th, 2019 – The Africa Polling Institute (API) has recently released the Nigeria Social Cohesion Survey report #NSCS2019. The report amongst other findings has revealed that Nigeria is not a socially cohesive country; and more needs to be done by the government to promote oneness, trust, equity, inclusion and hope for the future.

The nationwide survey was conducted by Africa Polling Institute (API) to measure social cohesion in Nigeria. A total of 7,901 respondents were contacted, with 5,019 interviews completed to a response rate of 63.5% of respondents who were 18 years and above. All interviews were conducted between April 24th and May 20th 2019, by Face-to-face Household Interviews, using Stratified Random Sampling technique. The interviews were conducted in five major languages: English, Pidgin, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba; and geographic quotas were assigned to ensure the selection of a nationally representative sample proportionately covering all senatorial districts and states, including the FCT.

The concept of social cohesion refers to the willingness of citizens of a country to cooperate and work together towards ensuring the survival and prosperity of the country. Based on the literature, Five Key Components were used to measure social cohesion in Nigeria – Identity, Trust, Equity and Social Justice, Patriotism, and Self-Worth and Future Expectation.

From the “Identity” Component, the survey revealed that 82% of Nigerians prefer to Identify themselves equally as Nigerian and from an ethnic group; including 25% who prefer to identify more from an ethnic group, than being Nigerian. Yet, about 1 in 10 Nigerians (10%) were found to prefer identifying themselves as only from their ethnic group, and not Nigerians.

In addition, 45% of Nigerians say the country is much more divided today than it was 4 years ago; compared to only 26% who said it is much more united and 29% who said the country has remained the same. Interestingly, further analysis revealed that the South-East (70%), South-South (59%) and North-Central (47%) regions had the highest proportion of respondents who thought the country is much more divided today, compared to the North-West (35%), South-West (29%) and North-East (29%) regions. Nigerians were also asked about their

current feeling of the nation. From the result, 55% said they feel truly proud of the nation; while 30% said they feel really disappointed and 13% said they feel indifferent.

From the “Trust” Component, about 4 in 10 Nigerians (42%) say they trust the government of President Muhammadu Buhari, with “A lot of trust” from 14% and “Some trust” from 28%. However, about 1 in 5 Nigerians (21%) said they do NOT trust the government of President Buhari.

In comparison to the President’s 42%, only about a third of Nigerians (33%) say they trust the National Assembly as an institution of government, with “A lot of trust” from only 5% and “Some trust” from (28%)”. However, about a quarter of Nigerians (25%) said they do NOT trust the National Assembly. Similarly, only about a third of Nigerians (32%) say they trust the Judiciary as an institution of government, with “A lot of trust” from only 4% and “Some trust” from 28%. In the same vein, almost 1 in 4 Nigerians (24%) said they do NOT trust the Judiciary. Furthermore, 42% of Nigerians said they trust people of other ethnic groups “A lot” (9%) or “Somewhat” (38%); while only 47% said they trust people of other faiths and religious affiliations “A lot” (11%) or “Somewhat” (36%).

From the “Equity and Social Justice” Component, most Nigerians are of the opinion that all Nigerians are not equal under the law. From the survey, 70% of Nigerians believe there are persons above the law in Nigeria; compared to only 20% who believe the law protects everyone in Nigeria equally.

Also, 80% of Nigerians believe that Government treats their ethnic group unfairly. This is comprised by 52% who believe that government “sometimes” treats their ethnic group unfairly; as well as 19% and 9% who said they are “Often” and “Always” treated unfairly by government, respectively. Similarly, 74% of Nigerians believe their religion is treated unfairly by the government; with the majority (55%) saying their religion is “Sometimes” treated unfairly.

More findings under the Equity and Social Justice Component revealed that 65% of Nigerians rate the efforts of the Federal Government at promoting a sense of inclusion for all ethnic groups “Poorly”. Again, respondents in the South-East (78%), South-South (73%) and North-Central (70%) regions constitute the highest proportion of citizens who rated the efforts of government poorly, in terms of promoting a sense of inclusion for all ethnic groups.

From the “Patriotism” Component, 73% of Nigerians are willing to cooperate with fellow citizens to work for a more united Nigeria. Similarly, 70% of Nigerians are willing to participate in the political process to make Nigeria a better place for all. However, only 48% of Nigerians said they would be willing to join the Military, if needed, to defend the unity of the Nigerian State. Furthermore, on the issue of marriage, while 72% of Nigerians are willing to support

marriage between two people of different ethnic groups; only 46% of Nigerians are willing to support marriage between two people of different religious affiliations.

From the “Self-Worth and Future Expectation” Component, 45% Nigerians said they feel dissatisfied with their lives right now; compared to 40% who said they feel satisfied, and 15% who were simply indifferent. In addition, the survey sought to probe if Nigerians would consider relocating from the country, with their family, if offered an opportunity. In response, about half of Nigerians (50%) said they would not be willing to relocate. However, on the contrary, about a third (32%) expressed willingness to relocate with their family if presented with an opportunity. And 18% simply said they were unsure as to whether or not they would relocate.

Interestingly, of the 32% who expressed willingness to relocate, the top three reasons were: to search for greener pastures (26%), better job opportunities (23%) and improved security (16%). Besides, 8% said they would seize the opportunity to relocate in order to give their children a better life. In addition, the survey revealed that the United States of America (28%), United Kingdom (15%) and Canada (14%) topped the list of countries for prospective relocation. Lastly, majority of Nigerians (66%) still expressed hope for the future, as they believe the future of the country would be much better than it is today.

In summary, a socially cohesive society is one that works towards the wellbeing of all its members, fights exclusion & marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging for all, promotes trust & oneness, and offers its members the opportunity for upward mobility (The Nigerian Dream??). Going by this, the survey highlights that Nigeria cannot be said to be a socially cohesive nation. Therefore, a lot needs to be done by the Nigerian government to address issues of exclusion and perceived marginalization, which are breeding tensions in parts of the country. With the high rate of poverty and unemployment, particularly amongst the youth demography, and the number of out-of-school children; there is urgent need for a widening of the social investment programme in order to deepen social inclusion and promote a sense of belonging for all Nigerians, especially those at the bottom of the pyramid.

Finally, while Nigerians remain resilient and committed to working together for a better country; there’s need for a national dialogue to help renegotiate the faultlines that currently exist in our shared existence as a nation. The National Orientation Agency (NOA), civil society organizations, traditional institutions, religious organizations and the media have an ever increasing role to play in order to promote oneness, mutual trust, social justice and hope.

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