



## **PRESS RELEASE: THE NIGERIA SOCIAL COHESION SURVEY** **#NSCS2022**

# **Nigeria Social Cohesion Index remains weak at 39.6%** **– New API Report**

**Abuja, Nigeria, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022** – Africa Polling Institute hereby releases the 2022 Nigeria Social Cohesion Survey (#NSCS2022) Report. The current survey builds on two past editions (2019 and 2021) to compute the Nigeria Social Cohesion Index and measure citizens perception on the state of social cohesion. The 2022 Nigeria Social Cohesion Index (NSCI) was computed as 39.6%. This score remains below the average of 50%, and represents a 4.6% declined from the 2021 index of 44.2%; indicating a weakening on the state on cohesion in the country over the last one year.

Africa Polling Institute (API), with the support of Ford Foundation, conducted a nationally representative to measure social cohesion in Nigeria, between the months of May and June 2022. The study adopted a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, with Citizens Perception Survey (CPS) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) adopted for primary data collection. A total of 7,245 contacts were contacted, out of which 5,178 interviews were completed, representing a response rate of 71.5%. All interviews were conducted by Face-to-face Household Interviews, using the Stratified Random Sampling technique; with citizens aged 18 years and above. The interviews were conducted in five major languages: English, Pidgin, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba; and geographic quotas were assigned to ensure that all Senatorial District and States were proportionately represented in the sample.

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. Drawing from the literature, and building upon the 2019 and 2021 survey round, this current edition captures attitudes and perceptions of citizens using thirteen key indicators to measure social cohesion in Nigeria – **Identity, Trust, Social Justice, Participation & Patriotism, Natural Resource Governance, Gender Equity, Impunity, Corruption, Polarization, Peacebuilding, Coping strategies, Self-Worth and Future Expectation.**

Overall, the results of the Nigeria Social Cohesion Survey 2022 and the Nigeria Social Cohesion Index, computed with a score of 39.6%, demonstrates a weakening of the state of social cohesiveness in the country; owing the increasing polarization along ethnic, religious, economic and political fault lines.

### **Key Findings from the 2022 Social Cohesion Survey**

#### **‘Identity’ Indicator**

Overall, 81% of Nigerians feel comfortable with the dual identity of being identified as both Nigerian and from their ethnic group, but to different proportions. Remarkably, 66% of citizens opined that the country is much more divided today (in 2022) than it was four years ago; compared to only a few (10%) who said the country is much more united today and 20% who believe that the country has stayed the same.

#### **‘Trust’ Indicator**

Religious leaders were rated more favourably by citizens (50%), followed by traditional leaders (43%). Citizens’ trust for President Buhari’s Government, the National Assembly and the Judiciary have all declined to 17%, 16% and 22% respectively. The data reveals that the National Assembly is the least trusted

public institution in Nigeria, compared to the Nigeria Police Force (20%), which was the least trusted in the 2021 survey.

### **‘Social Justice’ Indicator**

About 6 in 10 Nigerians (61%) expressed the view that the Federal Government isn’t making enough effort to promote a sense of inclusion for all ethnic groups; as opposed to only 12% who assess the government’s effort positively, and 27% who assess their efforts fairly.

### **‘Participation & Patriotism’ Indicator**

Majority of Nigerians (71%) are “Extremely or Somewhat Willing” to cooperate with fellow citizens to make Nigeria more united; while 65% say they are “Extremely and Somewhat Willing,” to participate in the political process to make Nigeria a better place. However, 42% expressed willingness to join the military to defend the Nigerian state.

### **‘Impunity’ Indicator**

A large majority of Nigerians (96%) consider human rights abuses and violations a problem in the country; while 44% believe that such many cases of human rights violations are never reported to the Police. Interestingly, 60% of citizens are “Very or Somewhat Likely” to report such cases to Community and Religious Leaders as opposed to the Police (56%).

### **‘Gender Equity’ Indicator**

More than half of Nigerians (53%) rate the current administration’s efforts at promoting gender equity “Poorly”; as against 15% who rate government favourably. About 8 in 10 Nigerians (80%) agree that boys and girls should have equal access to education; 71% agree that both males and females should be judged based on their qualifications, competence and track records; 61% agree that women should be given the opportunity to lead in politics, corporate entities and religious organizations; and 60% agree that women should be given equal opportunity to family inheritances.

### **‘Coping Strategy’ Indicator**

In terms of social protection, 53% of Nigerians said they do not rely on the government for support with the challenges of poverty and insecurity in Nigeria; compared to 47% who affirmed that they rely on the government. Also, 68% “disagree and strongly disagree” that the government is doing enough to assist Nigerians to cope with the present economic realities. However, 15% agree that government is doing enough. In other to cope with the challenges of poverty and insecurity, 44% of Nigerians resort to “Relatives, Ethnic and Communal groups for succour”; while 41% resort to “Prayers in their Churches and Mosques” and 12% resort to “Support from Government” to survive.

### **‘Polarization’ Indicator**

Over half of Nigerians (53%) “agree and strongly agree” that Nigeria is more polarized today (in 2022) than it was under the previous administration. On the key causes of polarization, more Nigerians consider Ethnicity (62%), Political affiliation (60%) and Religion (57%) as the top three factors that have divided the country today (in 2022) compared to the previous administration.

### **‘Future Expectation’ Indicator**

Overall, almost 6 in 10 (60%) citizens believe that the future of the country would be much better than it is presently; compared to 27% who expressed pessimism that the future would be much worse; and 6% simply do not foresee any change in the future.

### **Comparing Data from 2021 and 2022 Survey Rounds**

#### **The 2021 and 2022 survey rounds reveal marked differences:**

The data reports that the proportion of citizens who believe that the country is much more divided today than it was 4 years ago increased slightly by 1% from 65% in 2021 to 66% in 2022.

Citizens trust for President Muhammadu Buhari declined by 9% from 26% in 2021 to 17% in 2022. Similarly, trust for the National Assembly (NASS) declined by 6% from 22% in 2021 to 16% in 2022; while trust for the Judiciary also declined by 5% from 27% in 2021 to 22% in 2022.

Nonetheless, the data reveals that the proportion of citizens who believe that Nigeria will be better in the future increased marginally by 1%, from 59% in 2021 to 60% in 2022. However, on the contrary, there was no difference in the proportion of citizens who believe that the future of Nigeria would be much worse than it is today (27% in both 2021 and 2022).

### **Recommendations**

API recommends that the Federal Government strengthens existing policies, legislation and institutions, that help to create a sense of belonging, promote trust, foster good governance and provide a conducive atmosphere for citizens to thrive and fulfil their life aspirations. In this connection, Nigeria's legislation and policies on citizenship should be rejigged to encourage social and inclusive citizenship that de-emphasize indigeneity and discourage the exclusion of citizens based on indigeneity. Such unemployment and poverty alleviation programmes like the Nigerian Social Investment Programme (NSIP) and NAPEP should be revived and strengthened to tackle the problems of poverty, unemployment and underemployment. In addition, the Federal Government should adopt a hybrid of conventional and unconventional peacebuilding initiatives as the main thrust of its conflict management strategies. It is worth noting that state like Lagos and Oyo operate Alternative Dispute Resolution Centres, attached to the State Ministries of Justice. The Centres deploy a hybrid of conventional and local peacebuilding mechanisms of negotiations, remediation and arbitration to mediate on individual and group conflicts, and build peace among parties.

It has been established that Nigerians trust traditional and religious leaders more than public officials and institutions. To absolve the problem of trust deficit, traditional and religious leaders should intensify efforts to mitigate against local conflicts, discrimination and hate speech, since they are closer to the people and earn more trust of the people than the government.

CSOs can also play a huge role in helping to rekindle public trust for civil authorities. While there's evidence to suggest that effective implementation of programmes and policies that improve the livelihood and wellbeing of citizens can help to rebuild trust; CSOs can guide government towards focusing on policies, programmes and projects that would have more impact on the lives of citizens, especially at the grass-root levels

Citizens should engage their leaders and other critical stakeholders in dialogue and ensure they render an account of their stewardship. In doing so, emphasis should focus on contributions to social cohesion and building a strong and prosperous Nigeria. Citizens should discourage statements and actions that can impede the peace and unity of the country, and avert conflicts, chaos and civil unrest; especially as the country gears up the next General Elections. Also, the trend of destroying and vandalizing public properties needs to stop.

Finally, while Nigerians remain resilient and committed to working together for a better country; we reiterate the need for a national dialogue to help renegotiate the fault lines that currently threaten our shared existence as a nation.

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