INPUTS FROM THE NORTH CENTRAL FOR THE PATRIOTS SUMMIT ON

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS, 16TH JULY 2025, AT THE TRANSCORP

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PREAMBLE

In furtherance of its determination to advocate for a new constitution

regarding Nigeria; noting the inherent limitations of the General Abdulsalami Abubakar constitution bequeathed to the country by the then departing Military Administration in 1999, a group of eminent and concerned Nigerians otherwise known as **The Patriots,** have initiated a multi-streamed strategic approach to reach all parts of the country and collate an aggregate opinion and views of fellow compatriots, for possible inclusion into the proposal for the development of a widely acceptable version of the Nigerian Constitution with input from the Nigerian people.

The major areas of focus in this regard were outlined as follows:

1. Security
2. Minority or National Identity
3. State Creation
4. Status of FCT
5. Litigation timelines for various offences
6. Departure from three to two Tiers of Government
7. Fiscal Federalism
8. Status of Traditional Rulers: Constitutional Recognition of Traditional Institutions
9. Boundary Demarcation
10. Boundary Adjustment

**1. SECURITY SECTOR REFORMS**

**1.1 Equal Representation in Armed Forces Leadership**

**Constitutional Provision to Amend:** Section 217 of the 1999 Constitution

**Current Provision Analysis:** Section 217 establishes the Armed Forces of Nigeria but lacks specific provisions for equitable representation across geopolitical zones in leadership positions.

**Proposed Amendment:** Insert new subsection (3A) to Section 217:

* (3A) The composition of the leadership of the Armed Forces of Nigeria shall reflect the federal character of Nigeria as provided in Section 14(3) and (4) of this Constitution, ensuring proportional representation from each geopolitical zone in senior command positions from the rank of Brigadier General and its equivalent in the Army, Navy and Air Force. This position should apply to all federal security and para-military institutions such as the Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Custom Services, Nigeria Correctional Service, Federal Road Safety Commission.
* Similarly, this principle should apply to Military Schools and recruitments into all the services.
* The Federal Character Commission and the National Assembly should be strengthened to enforce this stand.
* Further to the above, except in times of national emergencies, no officer should over-stay their career, command and constitutional lifespan in the service

**Rationale:**

* Promotes truly federal military and para-military services for the entire nation
* Promotes national unity and confidence in the services
* Ensures no single region dominates security decision-making
* Aligns with federal character principles already established in Section 14

**1.2 Community-Led Security Initiatives**

**Constitutional Provision to Insert:** New Section 220A

**Proposed Amendment:** "Section 220A - Community Security Initiatives

(1). The National Assembly may by law establish frameworks for community-led security initiatives to complement conventional security forces with intelligence, cooperating with the police to prevent crimes at the local level. Such arrangements should be under the guidance of the police at the community level to maintain standard and maturity.

(2). Such initiatives shall operate under the supervision of relevant state governments and in cooperation with federal security agencies.

(3). Community security initiatives shall be subject to constitutional oversight and shall respect fundamental human rights as provided in Chapter IV of this Constitution.

(4). On State police, we would rather that the Police act be amended to transfer some policing powers to State Governors in their respective States. Added to this is the need for massive recruitment and adequate investment in police service through equipping and training, welfare and elimination of decrepit housing in the various commands.

Also, operate a joint command with a special Police Fund to guarantee sustainability. The police should be funded as a first line charge. In this regard, we propose a federal police with shared command with the states. However, the Inspector General of Police should be responsible for the postings of State Police Commissioners while on assumption of duties, such commissioners of police will be subjected to shared powers with the federal

**Rationale:**

* Recognizes the reality of community self-defence in addressing security challenges
* Provides constitutional framework for regulating such initiatives
* Ensures human rights compliance
* Enhances welfare and efficiency in service
* Eliminates partisanship and delays in taking security decisions

**1.3**  Rather than state police, we support Community Policing within a federal regulatory framework

**-** Safeguards against abuse (e.g., ethnic and religious bigotry and profiling, political misuse)

- Achieve multiple Funding mechanisms

- Interoperability with federal forces

**2. MINORITY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY PROTECTIONS**

**2.1 Enhanced Minority Rights Protections**

**Constitutional Provision to Amend:** Section 42 of the 1999 Constitution

**Current Provision Analysis:** Section 42 provides general anti-discrimination provisions but lacks specific protections for identifiable minority groups.

**Proposed Amendment:** Amend Section 42 to include new subsection (3):

1. The State shall take special measures to protect the rights of minorities including but not limited to:

(a) Indigenous peoples and their traditional territories.

(b) Religious minorities.

(c) Linguistic minorities.

(d) Persons with disabilities.

(e) Other vulnerable groups as may be determined by law.

2. There shall be established a National Commission for Minority Rights with powers to:

(a) Regulate, supervise, and enforce the provisions of this section relating to specified enforceable rights, language rights, access to land, resources and access to public service employment and appointments to political positions.

(b)Establish reserved legislative seats or “Minority Caucuses” in National/State Assemblies;

(c) Investigate violations of minority rights;

(d) Recommend appropriate remedies;

(e) Promote awareness of minority rights;

(f) Report annually to the National Assembly.

**Rationale:**

* Provides explicit constitutional protection for vulnerable groups
* Establishes enforcement mechanisms
* Aligns with international human rights standards

**2.2 Inclusive Education Framework**

**Constitutional Provision to Amend:** Section 18 of the 1999 Constitution

**Proposed Amendment:** Insert new subsection (4) to Section 18:

Educational curricula at all levels shall:

(a). Promote the rich cultural diversity of Nigeria;

(b). Include the teaching of Nigerian languages and cultures; (

(c). Foster national unity while celebrating diversity;

(d). Ensure balanced representation of all regions in historical narratives.

(e). Encourage various ethnic and cultural associations to promote local languages within the regions

**Rationale:**

* Promotes cultural preservation and understanding
* Guaranteed compulsory access for every Nigerian Child to basic education and promote equal access to higher education
* Strengthens national cohesion through inclusive education

2.3 Affirmative Action. Create policies to address historical injustices and promote equal opportunities for Minority groups.

2.4 Ensure national awareness to promote understanding and respect for Minority rights.

2.5 Protection from discrimination based on ethnicity or religion.

**3. STATE CREATION FRAMEWORK**

**3.1 Specific Criteria for State Creation**

**Constitutional Provision to Amend:** Section 8 of the 1999 Constitution

**Current Provision Analysis:** Section 8 provides basic requirements for state creation but lacks detailed criteria for assessment.

**Proposed Amendment:** Insert new subsection (6) to Section 8:

(6) In addition to the requirements in subsections (1) to (5), the creation of new states shall be guided by the following criteria:

(a). Economic viability and capacity for self-sustenance;

(b). Cultural and ethnic cohesion of the proposed state;

(c). Geographic contiguity and accessibility;

(d).Minimum population threshold as determined by the National Population Commission;

(e). Availability of natural and human resources;

(f). Security considerations and border integrity.

**Rationale:**

* Ensures systematic evaluation of state creation requests
* Prevents creation of economically unviable states
* Promotes sustainable development

**3.2 Inclusive State Creation Process**

**Proposed Amendment:** Insert new subsection (7) to Section 8:

The process of state creation shall include:

(a). Extensive consultation with affected communities;

(b). Impact assessment studies;

(c). Public hearings in affected areas;

(d). Consideration of minority rights and interests;

(e). Environmental and social impact assessments

**4. STATUS OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**4.1 Enhanced FCT Framework**

**Constitutional Provision to Amend:** Section 299 of the 1999 Constitution

**Proposed Amendment:** Amend Section 299 to include new subsections:

(3) The Federal Capital Territory shall serve as a model for national development and unity, showcasing the best of Nigerian diversity and excellence.

(4) The FCT shall maintain cooperative relationships with surrounding states through:

(a) Joint planning for regional development;

(b) Shared infrastructure projects;

(c) Cultural and educational exchanges;

(d) Environmental protection initiatives.

**4.2 FCT Representation Enhancement**

**Proposed Amendment:** Insert new Section 299A:

Section 299A - FCT Representation

1. The Federal Capital Territory shall have enhanced representation in national decision-making bodies commensurate with its status as the seat of government. (2) FCT representatives shall participate in the National Economic Council and other relevant federal bodies.

4.3 The **Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA)** which is saddled with the responsibility to shoulder the nation’s **Capital (Executive, Legislature and Judiciary)** including the diplomatic and administrative structures only serves as an appointed **Second-Tier** government which administers the entire FCT and serves as the link between the people of FCT and Federal Govt.

4.4 The FCT has one (single) **Senatorial District** compared to the three (3) **Senatorial Districts** Constitutionally allocated to each of the states of the federation. Likewise, the only two (2) existing **Federal Constituencies** in the FCT is viewed as far insufficient for the large number of people living in the FCT as part of their counterparts (people) who reside in the states of the federation enjoying more democratic and constitutional rights.

4.5 Therefore, additional Area Councils for the existing six (6) Area Councils in the **FCT** is necessary for effective participation of the people (both urban and grassroots) in the governance of the FCT.

4.6 Upgrading of the existing Development Areas is hereby proposed, i.e. Rubochi, Karshi, Yaba, Zuba, Kubwa and Galadimawa Development Areas to the Status of **Area Council.** These additional Area Councils joined with the existing ones, therefore, will be twelve (12) Area Councils in the FCT.

It is also recommended that the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) be upgraded to the status of **FCT MAYORALTY elected by the people.**

**4.7 ADMINISTRATION** in view of its responsibility to shoulder the **SEAT** of the Federal Government i.e. The National Assembly and the VILLA including the Diplomatic and Administrative Structures as well as its responsibility to administer the remaining part of the FCT. Just like the Governor in the state will operate, the entire FCT Administration will be headed by an elected **MAYOR** with the **FCT** **MAYORAL ASSEMBLY** operating with him.

Further to the above, the **FCTA** will function as **FCT** **MAYORAL ASSEMBLY** delineated into twenty-four (24) **FCT MAYORAL**

**4.8 ASSEMBLY** **CONSTITUENCIES** with each producing **MAYORAL ASSEMBLY MEMBER** i.e. two (2) from each Area Councils through election for representation of the grassroots people in the Mayoral Assembly.

Also, for effective participation and representation in the National Assembly the only existing single Senatorial District in the **FCT** should be increased to three (3) Senatorial Districts in line with what is obtainable in the states of the federation. Likewise, the only existing two (2) Federal Constituencies in FCT should be increased to six (6) Federal

Constituencies to be arranged as follows:

**4.9 FEDERAL CONSTITUENCIES**

* 1. **AMAC & Karshi** Federal Constituency
  2. **Bwari & Kubwa** Federal Constituency
  3. **Gwagwalada & Zuba** Federal Constituency
  4. **Rubochi & Kwali** Federal Constituency
  5. **Abaji & Yaba** Federal Constituency
  6. **Kuje & Galadimawa** Federal Constituency

**4.10 SENATORIAL DISTRICTS**

1. **AMAC, Karshi**, **Bwari & Kubwa** Area Councils
2. **Galadimawa, Kuje, Kwali & Rubochi** Area Councils iii. **Zuba, Gwagwalada, Yaba & Abaji** Area Councils

**5. LITIGATION TIMELINES AND CASE MANAGEMENT**

**5.1 Enforceable Litigation Timelines**

**Constitutional Provision to Insert:** New Section 6A

**Proposed Amendment:** Section 6A - Litigation Timelines

(1) Courts shall dispose of cases within the following maximum timelines:

(a) Magistrate Courts: 6 months from filing;

(b) High Courts: 18 months from filing;

(c) Court of Appeal: 12 months from filing;

(d) Supreme Court: 9 months from filing.

(2) Extensions may be granted only in exceptional circumstances with written justification.

(3) The National Judicial Council shall establish mechanisms to ensure compliance with these timelines.

**Rationale:**

* Addresses the critical issue of delayed justice
* Provides clear benchmarks for judicial performance
* Enhances public confidence in the justice system

**5.2 Case Management Framework**

**Proposed Amendment:** Insert new Section 6B:

Section 6B - Case Management

All courts shall adopt modern case management systems including:

(a) Electronic filing systems;

(b) Automated case tracking;

(c) Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms;

(d) Continuous judicial education programs.

**PENALTY FOR DELAY**

* Should courts exceed litigation timelines without valid justification, judges may face administrative sanction by the NJC.
* Cases involving vulnerable groups or constitutional matters should receive priority hearing.

**6. Regional Governments/Tiers of Government**

Presidency and prime minister (FRENCH SYSTEM) TO DISPARSE PPOWER

6.1 Instead of three tiers of government, i.e. Federal, State and Local governments, we hereby recommend:

The resort to regional government using the old 12 states structure as foundational platform while retaining the 36 states to be headed by Lt-Governors and 12 regional assemblies less the 36 state assemblies to debate budgets, development plans and regional cooperation in major areas of security, agriculture, investments, trade, education among others.

It is our contention that the Federal should focus more on citizenship and rights issues, external relations, territorial defence, elections, national solidarity, science and innovation among others.

6.2 States should therefore be empowered to create as many local governments or development areas as they may wish, expend their own resources to cater for the development of these areas based on developed regional protocols and legislative controls.

**6.3 Local Government Autonomy**

If state governments create such Local or Development Councils, they should have defined areas of concentration to ensure independence and potentially enhance grass root development and democracy through both political and financial autonomy.

**6.4 Recommendations**

Ensure Autonomy for Local or Development councils

**7. FISCAL FEDERALISM**

We propose a constitutional review of revenue allocation formula advocating for:

7.1 Derivation principles to apply to solid minerals

7.2 Equalization funds for underdeveloped regions

7.3. The provision of the 1963 constitution for retention of resources from the states should be inserted in a manner that such states retain 50% of their resources while federal takes 50%. This will encourage states to look inwards.

**8. CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION OF TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

**8.1 Traditional Rulers' Constitutional Role**

**Constitutional Provision to Insert:** New Section 277A

**Proposed Amendment:** Section 277A - Traditional Institutions

1. The institution of traditional rulers is hereby recognized as an integral part of Nigerian society and governance.

2. Traditional rulers shall serve as custodians of culture, tradition, and customary law within their domains.

3. Traditional institutions shall play advisory roles in matters of local governance, conflict resolution, and cultural preservation.

4. The Roles of Traditional Rulers should be clearly spelt out in the constitution.

5. Minority groups should be allowed to retain their traditional systems of governance. Consequently, they should operate as chiefdoms.

6. The appointment of Traditional rulers should be solely left in the hands of King Makers. Appointment by Governors has politicized the process and thereby eroding their status and respect in society. Their neutrality is also brought to disrepute.

**8.2 National Council of Traditional Rulers**

**Proposed Amendment:** Insert new Section 277B:

Section 277B - National Council of Traditional Rulers

(1) There shall be established a National Council of Traditional Rulers consisting of recognized traditional rulers from each state.

(2) The Council shall advise the Federal Government on matters of national importance, particularly those relating to culture, tradition, and social harmony. (3) The Council shall meet at least twice annually and may be consulted on constitutional amendments affecting traditional institutions.

**9. BOUNDARY DEMARCATION AND ADJUSTMENT**

**9.1 Clear Demarcation Criteria**

**Constitutional Provision to Amend:** Section 2 of the 1999 Constitution

**Proposed Amendment:** Insert new subsection (3) to Section 2:

(3) Boundary demarcation and adjustment shall be based on:

(a) Historical and traditional boundaries;

(b) Geographic and topographic features;

(c) Economic and administrative considerations;

(d) Community consent and participation;

(e) Proven historical Records, Gazzettes and agreements

(e) Environmental and ecological factors.

**9.2 Inclusive Boundary Adjustment Process**

**Proposed Amendment:** Insert new subsection (4) to Section 2:

(4) Boundary adjustment processes shall include:

(a) Extensive community consultation;

(b) Independent surveying and mapping;

(c) Conflict impact assessment;

(d) Compensation mechanisms for affected communities;

(e) Ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

**Traditional Rulers**

As the custodians of traditions and culture, traditional rulers play a vital role in ensuring peace and community development. However, the Emirate system in the northern part of Nigeria and particularly the middle belt, has continued to erode the traditions and culture of, particularly the minorities.