


CONFLICTS MANAGEMENT FOR PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA THROUGH SOCIAL MARKETING TOOLS

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Abstract

The rate of ethnic, religions, communal, social and political conflicts in Nigeria is very inimical not only to the unity of the nation, but also to its socio-economic and political development. In recent years, foreign direct investment has dropped, as foreigners are relocating their investment to other countries. It was to salvage this ugly situation that the government through its transformation agenda, made public private partnership (PPP) a cardinal priority for the achievement of the much needed economic upstart for the nation. But observers are critical that if nothing is done to checkmate the spates of bombings by the Boko Haram sect and other intractable conflicts and crises across the country, that might turn out another pipe dream. This paper which is desk-research-based therefore delves into a critical appraisal of the effects of social conflicts in Nigeria and how the tide could be stemmed through public private partnership, social-marketing communications and conflict resolution strategies, in order to enhance the country's economic growth, ameliorate youths' unemployment and consequently stem the tide of youths' restiveness, social conflicts, violence and blood-letting.

Keywords: Conflicts management, public private partnership, social marketing, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

For some years now, ethnic, religious, communal, social and political conflicts seem to be tearing the Nigeria nation apart. This problem was worsened after the 2011 general elections in the country, due to the win-at-all-costs attitude of some Nigerian politicians. Today, terrorism dimensions to violence have also entered the Nigerian social life and political diary, with bombings and news of bombings being heard every day (Amadi, 2011; Njoku, 2011; Osai, 2011). All these social problems pose great hindrances to a successful public private partnership (PPP) and general economic development in Nigeria. Foreign investors also seem to be leaving in droves, while tourism development is hard-hit. Youth unemployment keep rising dangerously every year, thereby fuelling further social crisis, crime and violence in the country. As the nation prepares for another general election in 2015, the polity is getting over-heated and the atmosphere over-charged with expectations of further violence.

Diverse reasons have been adduced by many social commentators to explain this social anomaly in Nigeria society. "Boko Haram" a group campaigning for the imposition of Sharia law on some states of the Nigerian federation, blames western education, unemployment and political injustices as being behind their actions. Since after the 2011 general election, arson, wanton destruction of lives and property have been unleashed sporadically on the police, public, churches, innocent people and even the international community which the United Nation's building bombing in Abuja typifies.

On the Niger Delta crisis, Okonta and Douglas (2001:2) observed that it started due to tensions between the foreign oil corporations and some Niger-Delta minority ethnic groups who felt they were being unjustly exploited, because despite the vast wealth from petroleum, the benefits have been slow to trickle down to the majority of the population, whose agricultural lands and aquatic culture have been largely destroyed by oil spillages and environmental pollutions. However, Emeagwali (2000:16) says the roots of the present crisis stems in a lack of understanding of the Nigerian constitution and the peoples' poor appreciation of nationhood enshrined in the constitution. Hence, ethnic cleavages take precedence over the spirit of nationhood.

Meanwhile, Angaye (2003:1) buttresses this point that it is the divisive interplay of politics, ethnicity and religion in Nigeria that has led to the recent spates of micro-nationalism, and militancy of the various ethnic movements (MEND, MOSOP, MASSOB, OPC, Boko-Haram, etc), all seeking self-determination, local autonomy, separate identity, resource control and true federalism. All these are given vent through accusations and allegations of neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization and rotation of major political offices. Kukah (2007:5) blames greed, unbridled quest for power and a culture

of materialism for the crisis. This is despite the wise counsel by some of our founding fathers like Awolowo (1961:5) that in the process of bringing out the best that is in man and of enabling him to live a healthy and happy life, the agencies of politics and religion must work in close and harmonious cooperation.

All these have been a cause of worry to well-meaning Nigerians and the international community or friends of the country. Many solutions have been put into place by the government of Nigeria with supports from the United Nations and other international NGOs aimed at keeping lasting peace in Nigeria's social and political life, all to no avail, Abati (2008:45). However, public relations and other marketing communications experts are of the view that confronting this problem frontally through an integrated or combined force of social-marketing, societal marketing, social media and conflicts/crisis management tools would do the magic, (Abratt et al, 1989; Andreasen, 1996:47; Barone, et al, 2000; Bennett et al, 2000:255).

SOCIETAL AND SOCIAL MARKETING AS TOOLS FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

According to Erickson (2009:3), societal marketing allows for more sustainable success rather than short-term accomplishment. Essentially, the goal is to provide a marketing strategy that betters both consumer and societal well-being. It is also more socially responsible because it attempts to provide marketing concepts that are more in tune with societal needs and establishes more ethical content in practice, Dholakia (1985:112). Companies that both advertise and invest in programs that shift to environmentally friendly business practices are examples of how societal marketing can help the larger community, Reidenbach and Oliva (2003:65). Societal marketing principles and techniques could be employed to teach citizens to be much more conscious of protecting their environment for themselves and for future generations, rather than destroying it through violence and wars. Imbibing the sanctity of human life is also in line with the philosophy of societal marketing, because when human beings are denigrated, kidnapped or killed, it is the society that is killed.

Social marketing on the other hand is the planning and implementation of programs designed to bring about social change using concepts from commercial marketing, (Moore, 1993:145; Grunert, 1992; Kotler, 1994). It is the systematic application of marketing, along with other concepts and techniques, to achieve specific behavioral goals for a social good. Social marketing can be applied to promote good courses in society or to make a society avoid anti-social actions and thus to promote society's wellbeing as a whole. For example, this may include asking people not to engage in violence as a way of seeking redress, not to smoke in public areas, to use seat belts, to obey traffic rules and others (Mercer, 1992:47; Kangun, 1994:63).

Social media are media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques. Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) also define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Businesses also refer to social media as consumer-generated media (COM). A common thread running through all definitions of social media is a blending of technology and social interaction for the co-creation of value, (Wikipedia, 2010; Lazer, 2009).

Conflict and Conflict Management

Conflict arises whenever people disagree over issues, interests, values, motivations, perceptions, feelings or desires. In personal relationships, a lack of understanding about differing needs can result in distance, arguments and break-ups.

Conflict Triggers: Things To Watch

About the things to watch in conflict management Kilmann (2009) notes the following:

- **A conflict is more than just a disagreement.** It is a situation in which one or both parties perceive a threat (whether or not the threat is real).
- **Conflicts continue to fester when ignored.** Because conflicts involve perceived threats to peoples' well-being and survival. Conflicts stay with us until we face and resolve them.
- **We respond to conflicts based on our perceptions** of the situation, not necessarily to an objective review of the facts. Our perceptions are influenced by our life experiences, culture, values, and beliefs.
- **Conflicts trigger strong emotions.** If you aren't comfortable with your emotions or able to manage them in times of stress, you won't be able to resolve conflict successfully.
- **Conflicts are an opportunity for growth.** When you're able to resolve conflict in a relationship, it builds trust. You can feel secure, knowing your relationship can survive challenges and disagreements.
- **Personal Viewpoint:** If you view conflict as dangerous, it tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. When you go into a conflict situation already feeling extremely threatened, it's tough to deal with the problem at hand in a healthy way.

Conflict Management

This refers to the long-term management of intractable conflicts in society, organization, institution, community or family. The form of conflict management option or strategy to be adopted is determined by the social structure or social geometry of the case. But the functional-conflict school of thought believes that when conflict is handled in a respectful and positive way, it provides an opportunity for growth, ultimately strengthening the bond between people. Dysfunctional conflicts, like the ones in Nigeria today, are destructive and cause loss of lives, property, man-hours, investment opportunities, hunger and starvation, open violence, wars and other forms of social disruptions. On the other hand, functional or creative conflicts are constructive and reflect the differences and variety of human opinions and activity which exists in any free society. If creative conflicts between groups which are major sources of innovation, new ideas, institutions and social change are suppressed altogether, a nation becomes stagnant and static, (Nwosu, 1996:11; Nkamnebe, 2001). Is it then possible to harvest anything positive from the present conflicts in Nigeria for a successful PPP? The answer is a capital NO!!!

CAUSES OF SOCIAL CONFLICTS AND CRISIS IN NIGERIA

Angaye (2003:1) reports that compounding the problem of underdevelopment in poor countries like Nigeria is micro nationalism, ethnic, religious and communal conflicts which pose great threat to peace, security and progress. In every nation there is no complete agreement on how to share wealth, power and status among individuals and groups, and how to effect necessary changes and reforms. Since different groups and individuals have diverse interests, the aims of some groups will conflict with those of others. Effective conflict management is therefore needed for peaceful co-existence of the people.

The divisive interplay of politics, ethnicism and religion in Nigeria has led to rising nationalism and militancy of various ethnic movements, seeking self-determination, local autonomy, separate identity and true federalism. The existence of artificial and arbitrary boundaries that split ethnic groups among different local government areas (LGAs) and states has resulted in boundary disputes and demands for re-unification or separation, (Angaye, 2003:1).

Accusations and allegations of neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalisation, nepotism and bigotry are common, Angaye (2003:2) observed. Today, struggles for the control of power at the centre have become a major cause of social crisis up to a terrorism dimension in the country. All these are big stumbling blocks to a truly successful PPP in Nigeria.

TYPES OF SOCIAL CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA

Ethnic Conflicts: These are conflicts that mainly have ethnic or tribal backgrounds, colourations or roots. They are usually incited, fuelled or championed by ethnic political, socio-cultural or militant groups.

Here in Nigeria, such groups include the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), the Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASOB), the Odua People's Congress (OPC), the Boko Haram, the Arewa Peoples' Front (APF), the Egbesu, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC), the Niger Delta Peoples' Volunteer Force (NDPVF), the Niger Delta Vigilante group (NDV), just to mention a few.

Religious Conflicts: These are conflicts that are ignited under religious motivations, dogmas or grievances, usually incited by religious leaders or their followers. In Nigeria, such conflicts include the Maitasine religious riots of the early 1990s, the various Sharia conflict religious riots in the country, the Miss-World religious riot of 2005 and the recent Boko Haram (Education-is-sin) religious violence in the Northern parts of Nigeria and many more.

Environmental Conflicts: These could be exemplified by the various conflicts and crises in the Niger Delta by such peoples like the environmental activist, late Ken Saro-Wiwa, Asari Dokubo, Adaka Boro, and by such groups like the MEND, MOSOP, NDPVF and many others.

Communal Conflicts: These are usually ignited by land and boundary disputes, chieftaincy disputes and contests for one economic, social or political interest or the other. Examples are the Ife-Modakeke conflict, the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict, the Jos crisis, the Warri-Itshekiri conflict and quite a number of such other festering sores in Nigeria's social life.

Economic Conflicts: This manifests in the form of mass poverty and unemployment, and the resultant communal, ethnic, religious and class conflicts. Rather than the chains of poverty, the poor has little or nothing in the form of property to lose and are easily engaged by war-mongers as mercenary fighters. Poverty increases the number of people prepared to kill or be killed for a given cause.

NIGERIA GOVERNMENT'S TRANSFORMATION AGENDA AND ITS RELEVANCE TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

According to Usigbe (2011: 2), the Government's Transformation Agenda, which is steeply anchored on promoting economic development and employment generation in Nigeria, has the following key elements:

Macro-Economic Framework and Economic Direction: A baseline GDP growth rate of 11.7 per cent per annum for the period 2011-2015. It assumes that the projected GDP growth of the period will be driven largely by the oil and gas, solid minerals, agriculture, ICT equipment and softwares, telecommunication, wholesale and retail trade, tourism and entertainment, manufacturing, building and construction sectors.

Job Creation: To pursue policy measures to reinvigorate various sectors of the economy and enhance their employment generating potentials, including implementing a youth employment safety net support programme that includes conditional cash transfer and vocational training; development of industrial clusters; reviewing of university curricular to align with industry job requirements and promotion of apprenticeship/work experience programmes and joint ventures; enforcement of mandatory sub-contracting and partnering with locals by foreign construction companies and implementation of mandatory skills transfer to Nigerians by foreign construction companies.

Public Expenditure Management: To correct the high recurrent expenditure of Government which has over the years crowded out capital expenditure, exacerbating the already abysmal state of infrastructure. Recurrent expenditure has fluctuated between 47.5 per cent in 1999 to 80.29 per cent in 2003, while capital expenditure accounted for only 19.71 per cent of total government expenditure, increased to its highest level of 38.37 per cent of total expenditure in 2009. It has grown much worse from 2011 till date due to government borrowing to finance recurrent expenditures. To remedy the situation, under the transformation agenda, government will entrench a culture of accountability by beginning to sanction and prosecute officers that breach established financial management rules and regulations.

Governance: The Transformation Agenda's policies on governance are motivated by Nigeria's inability to decisively tackle most development challenges such as poverty, unemployment, security and deplorable state of infrastructure. These include political governance, economic governance, corporate governance and effectiveness of institutions. During the life of this administration, the policies and programmes directed at addressing governance challenges, will

focus on the public service; security, law and order; the legislature; anti-corruption measures and institution; the judiciary; economic coordination and support for the substantial private investment.

Justice and Judiciary: The policy thrusts of the justice and judiciary sector will be achieving greater independence for the judiciary in terms of funding, improving capacity and efficiency in judicial service delivery, eliminating all forms of corruption in the administration of justice in Nigeria, enhancing the capacity of the justice ministry to superintend prosecution and improving professionalism in legal practice for better service delivery. It is expected that a free and transparent judicial system will certainly increase the confidence of foreign investors in the economy.

Legislature: Under the planned period, the thrust of the policy will be to facilitate the creation of a dynamic, constitutionally effective and public responsive legislature that is proactive in its legislative duties and independent but aware of its constitutional partnership with the executive and judicial arms of government. Other policy measures include regular auditing of the activities and publication of annual reports of the national and state legislatures to promote greater transparency and accountability in the use of public funds; promote greater public interest in the scrutiny of legislative actions; and inform public debate to these ends. Attention will be paid to human capital development policies, programmes and projects because of government's belief that investing in human capital development is critical.

Education: The priority policies for the development of education is aimed at promoting primary enrolment of all children of school-going age, irrespective of the income profile of the parents; engage in the provision of infrastructure such as classrooms across all levels, so as to ease over-crowding, increase access and reduce pupil/teacher ratio; and enhance the efficiency, resourcefulness and competence of teachers and other educational personnel through training, capacity building and motivation.

Health Sector: The health sector policy is geared towards achieving human capital development goals, through the National Strategic Health Development Plan (NSHDP). The NSHDP is the vehicle for actions at all levels of the health care delivery system which seeks to foster the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs) and other local and international targets and declaration commitments.

Labour and Productivity: Here, the agenda is to focus on the implementation of the National Action Plan on Employment Creation (NAPEC) targeted at creating five million new jobs annually within the next three years, establishment of more skills acquisition centres; implementation of local content policy in all the sectors, especially in the oil and gas industry in order to boost job creation in the country.

Manufacturing: Under manufacturing, the agenda seeks to promote private sector investments through the creation of an enabling environment that allows for substantial improvement in efficiency, productivity and profitability, significantly increase local manufacturing local content and linkages with other sectors of the economy, ensure global competitiveness for manufactured goods, make Nigerian manufactured goods major foreign exchange earners and achieve rapid and sustained economic growth through broadening of the nation's productive base.

Oil and Gas: In oil and gas, the focus will also be on the promotion of private sector investment in both the upstream and downstream activities of the oil and gas, deregulation of the industry and promotion of environmentally friendly oil and gas exploration and exploitation methods; strengthening capacity building programmes especially in core technical areas; provision of funding mechanisms for pre-bidding geosciences and surveys of deep water offshore, gas flare-down to reduce pollutions and increase supply for domestic use and power generation, and local content development.

Infrastructure Policies, Programmes and Projects: Here, the infrastructure deficit in the country in key development areas such as power, transportation, housing, Information Communication Technology (ICT), Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Niger Delta will be critically addressed. Between 2011 and 2015, key priority policies will be pursued to develop infrastructure and consequently engender sustained growth and development in the country.

Power: The policy thrust here is to increase investment in the power sector during the period. This will cover investments in four areas of power generation, transmission, distribution and alternative energy. This is expected to increase generation and transmission capacity in order to provide adequate and sustainable power, intensifying rural electrification efforts in a more efficient manner; and achieving optimal energy mix using the most appropriate technology. The strategies to be adopted in achieving these include creating a deregulated and competitive electric power sector to attract foreign and local investments through PPP initiatives.

Information and Communication Technology: The proposed investment for the ICT sector between 2011 and 2015 is expected to be significantly increased. The agenda will focus on the development of a national Knowledge Based Economy (KBE) 10-year Strategy Plan, sustained human capacity development in ICT; creation of a favourable and friendly investment and enterprise environment through transparency in tax systems, anti-trust laws, incentives and trade policies that would stimulate local and foreign investments in ICT, as well as development of infrastructure, particularly global connectivity as a prerequisite to leveraging the benefits of the global economy, improving domestic productivity and attracting foreign investments. Other strategies are: creation of an enabling environment through appropriate policies, legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks and enhancing Public -Private Partnership (PPP) in project funding, financing and management.

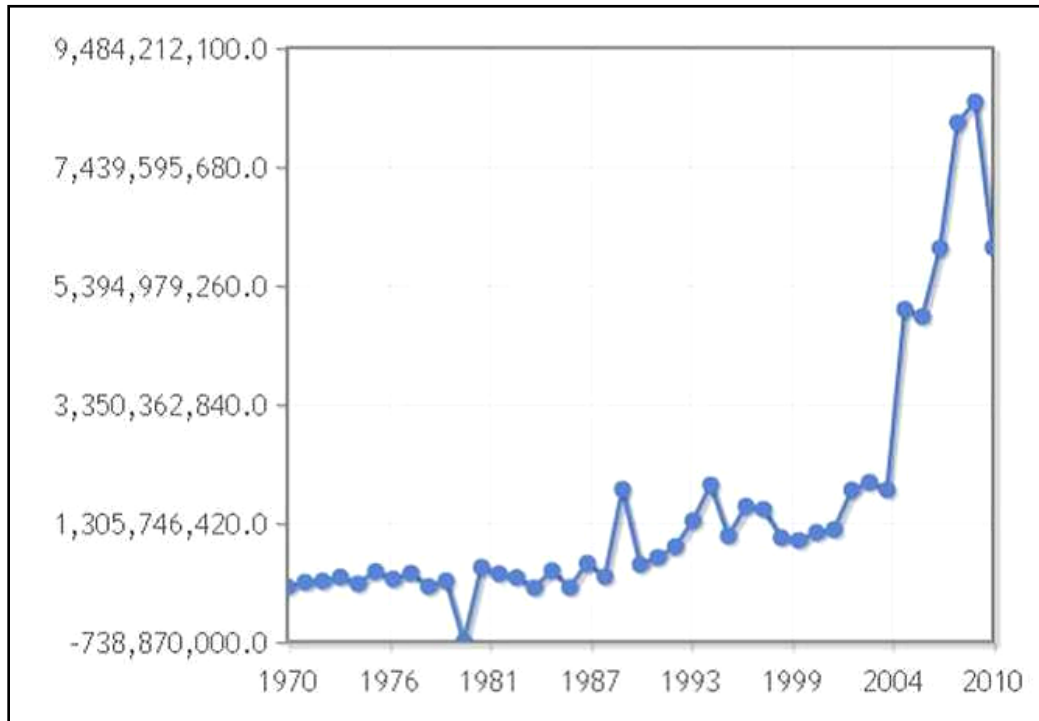
Transportation: Government's policy thrust here is to increase investment within the period. The investment would cover roads, railways, inland waterways, ports and airports development. The main policy thrust during the Plan period is to evolve a multimodal, integrated and sustainable transport system, with greater emphasis on rail and inland waterways transportation. An enabling environment for Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is being created by designing new policies, legislation and institutional framework that would support the envisaged transformation of the sector.

Good policies, you might say, but empirical evidence point to the fact that the country's problem does not lie in the lack of ability in reeling out sweet and flowery policies, but in their implementations. Hence, Nigerians and the international community are watching with keen interest to see whether the Government would deliver on its words, and thus, promote economic growth and employment generation for the teeming youths in the country.

EFFECTS OF SOCIAL CONFLICTS ON ECONOMIC GROWTH AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

In a study by Ugwuanyi and Odigbo (2012), to determine the effect of religious, ethnic and social crisis on foreign direct investment net inflow into Nigeria between 1970-2010, it was discovered that from 2009 till date when the Boko Haram crisis heightened, some businesses run by foreigners are closing and relocating to other African countries, leading to loss of jobs by Nigerians. The country's economy is being destroyed, factories are closing down, worsening the unemployment situation in the country. See figure one below, which shows the slide in foreign direct investment inflow from 2009.

Figure 1: Foreign direct investment, net inflows (BoP, current US\$)



Source: International Monetary Fund, Balance of Payments database, supplemented by data from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. <http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/nigeria/foreign-direct-investment>.

From figure 1, it could be seen that foreign investment inflow began to fall from 2009 till date, exactly the period when the Boko Haram crisis heightened in the country. From 2005 to 2010, the country’s balance of payment index was also at its lowest in 2010, just a year after the Boko Haram crisis climaxed (see table 1 below).

Table 1: Nigeria’s Balance of Payment Index, 2005 – 2010 (in \$billion)

Year	Value
2005	4.44
2006	3.34
2007	3.64
2008	3.96
2009	5.08
2010	2.99

Source: International Monetary Fund, Balance of Payments database, supplemented by data from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and official national sources. <http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/nigeria/foreign-direct-investment>.

These show that religious, ethnic and social insecurity are having a significant negative effect on balance of payments and foreign investment into the country (Ugwuanyi and Odigbo, 2012). It also poses dire consequences on youth unemployment. Youth Unemployment is defined as unemployment in the age bracket 15 to 25 (World Bank, 2012). It was because of this, that the chairman of the Nigerian petroleum Subsidy Reinvestment and Employment Programme (Sure-P), Dr. Christopher Kolade, bemoaned the rising rate of unemployment in the country, saying that no fewer than 40 million Nigerians are without jobs. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria's unemployment rate averaged 14.60 per cent from 2006 until 2011, reaching an all time high of 23.90 per cent in December 2011 (Thisday, 2013). Hence, the World Bank noted that poverty reduction and job creation have not kept pace with population growth, implying social distress for an increasing number of Nigerians. Progress towards the fulfilment of many of the Millennium Development Goals has been slow, and the country ranked 153 out of 186 countries in the 2013 United Nations Human Development Index, in spite of its annual growth rates of 7 percent. The World Bank then lamented that job creation in Nigeria has been inadequate to keep pace with the expanding working age population (Premiumtimesng.com, 2013). According to Ojo (2013), there is just no way a country experiencing high inflation, unemployment and poverty can be said to be developing even if its economic growth is in double digits. Since, poverty reduction and job creation have not kept pace with population growth, this implies social distress for an increasing number of Nigerians.

RECOMMENDED SOCIAL-MARKETING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION PANACEA

Our recommended social marketing and conflict-resolution strategies for arresting dysfunctional social conflicts in Nigeria for a successful PPP are as follows:

1. Periodic social research must be initiated by the government to track issues that are likely to balloon into conflicts and nip such in their buds.
2. Integrated stake-holders meetings should be held from time to time at both national, states, local governments and community levels to sieve the feelings and opinions of the populace. These harvests of opinions will then be factored by policy makers into their social and security plans for the nation.
3. Integrated Multi-Media Marketing Communications approach should be employed by the government in enlightening Nigerians on the dangers of violence and the need to shun such ignoble acts. The integration of social marketing, societal marketing, social media and crisis management strategies will help to effectively market peace in Nigeria, and thereby promote the PPP project.

4. The entrenchment of the spirit of sustainable development as exemplified in the Brundtland report (WCED 1987) which de-fines sustainable development as that which "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs?
5. The incorporation of public relations and marketing communications practitioners into our national conflict-management committees for better results. They have the training to discern issues in the natural environment that could be pregnant with crisis and advise governments on how to proactively nip such in the buds.
6. Addressing the problem of inequalities in the distribution of wealth, power and status in the country, as a major source of conflicts in the land today. The nagging unemployment problem in the land must be tackled head-on by the government.
7. The problem of marginalization, domination and oppression in the country ought to be addressed too, by offering Nigerians equal opportunities at all levels.
8. The entrenchment of good, transparent and service-oriented governments at all tiers of governance in Nigeria (federal, states and local governments) so as to win and sustain the confidence of the public, forge national integration and promote economic progress.
9. The strengthening of such vehicles of social control as the family, educational institutions, law enforcement agencies and their incorporation into the transformation agenda for a successful PPP.
10. The carrying along of religious bodies and traditional and socio-cultural institutions in the transformation agenda in order to stem the tide of political, ethnic and communal conflicts, and usher in the much needed peaceful climate for a successful PPP.
11. There should be zero-tolerance to corruption at all levels of the country's social spheres. The Law enforcement agents should no longer demand bribes and collect illegal levies from motorists openly and shamelessly on the roads, seaports, border posts, airports and the likes. There should also be quick dispensation of justice in the country, especially over corruption matters in order to win back the confidence of the public.
12. Electoral frauds that usually ignite untold social crisis in the country by politicians should be totally discouraged. The employment of innocent youths for thuggery, violence, political assassinations and ballot box snatching during elections, should also be discouraged as a major factor leading to social conflicts and crises in the country

CONCLUSION

The existence of social peace is a sine qua non for development in any society. The present government of Nigeria has made public private partnership (PPP) a pivot of its transformation cum development agenda. But this lofty dream will be difficult to realize under a climate of social insecurity. In this paper, the manifestations and ramifications of social conflicts and the consequent negative effects on the nation's economic development, youths' employment generation capacity, foreign direct investment inflow and general societal well-being. All these could be addressed through social marketing and conflict resolution tools of dialogue, social re-engineering and compromise.

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