



ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON NIGERIA



# YOUNG DEMOCRACY

## 2012 COUNTRY VISIT REPORT OF THE ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON NIGERIA



CHATHAM HOUSE



Save the Children®



British High Commission  
Abuja



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Without the interest, energy and support of a whole network of contacts in Nigeria and the UK, the Nigeria APPG would not be able continue with its work. The group is very grateful to all those who take the time to contact us, meet with us and keep us informed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Meg Hillier', written in a cursive style.

**Meg Hillier MP**

**Chair, All Party Parliamentary Group on Nigeria**

## Introduction

Nigeria is the country of greatest importance to the UK in Africa. It is crucial to regional economic and strategic interests, and it is central to progress in the areas of human rights and development. The country possesses extensive natural resource wealth<sup>1</sup> and offers great potential for agro-business, manufacturing and service industries. With an estimated population of 167 million<sup>2</sup> – the largest in Africa – effective engagement and a strong bilateral relationship is in the UK's interests: Nigeria is a leader in Africa and it offers some of the continent's best opportunities and some of its toughest challenges.

The April 2012 visit to Nigeria was the fifth visit of a delegation of British parliamentarians to the country under the auspices of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Nigeria.<sup>3</sup> The APPG recognizes the importance of building and sustaining knowledge of Nigeria within the British legislature because the country is set to become increasingly important to UK interests. It is also a complex country requiring in-depth knowledge and strong relationships for effective engagement.

The role of the APPG is to use its independent, impartial, semi-official status to play a calibrating role in Westminster and beyond to help ensure that Ministers and the UK government as a whole maintain a balanced view of Nigeria. The APPG seeks to ensure the country is better understood externally and, where it can, offers support to those groups which are working in the interests of good governance, economic progress, development and peace in Nigeria.

A great deal has changed in Nigeria since the last APPG visit in 2008. There has been a reduction in militant activity and related violence in the Niger Delta thanks to a sustained amnesty process; President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, responsible for the Niger Delta Amnesty, died in 2010; in 2011 Nigerians participated in the best electoral process the country has seen since the 1999 return to democracy; and Nigeria is grappling with a new terrorist threat

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<sup>1</sup> Proven crude oil reserves of over 30 billion barrels; over 5 billion cubic metres of proven natural gas reserves; solid minerals include tin, iron ore, coal, limestone, niobium, lead and zinc.

<sup>2</sup> National Population Commission of Nigeria, <http://www.population.gov.ng>

<sup>3</sup> The first visit, in 2005, was by a delegation of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on the Niger Delta, which later became the APPG on Nigeria.

from the group commonly known as Boko Haram,<sup>4</sup> which has rapidly risen to prominence in recent years.

There have been many other changes – both good and bad – of varying scale and significance across Nigeria’s 36 states (and the Federal Capital Territory). Many of the deep systemic challenges that have prevented transformation in the country remain: a lack of political accountability; no, slow or poor delivery of basic services; corruption and mismanagement. But the APPG is aware that Nigeria contains an array of complex issues and forces for both progress and degeneration. There is no convenient definition of the condition of the country, which will see successes and crises in the same day.

Central to the question of whether Nigeria will achieve its widely acknowledged potential is its burgeoning youth population. To realize and make sustainable big ambitions for power sector reform, agricultural development, equitable economic growth and delivery on big infrastructure projects, Nigeria needs a lot of skilled workers. For its potential to be untapped, the country’s population needs to be more than an impressive statistic: young people need genuine education and skills training, and ambitions need to be matched with opportunities.

The APPG delegation visited three states and had meetings with government officials at the state and federal levels, business and civil society organisations. A wide range of issues were discussed, among them the business environment, security, education, women’s and minority rights, and the power sector, but all of these issues were considered in terms of their relevance to the issue of Nigeria’s changing demographics.

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<sup>4</sup> The group Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad is most commonly referred to as Boko Haram; but with a proliferation of groups and potential splits within the core organisation it is difficult to provide a definitive definition to Boko Haram.

## 1. Youth in Nigeria

At around 60 million people, Nigeria's youth population (aged 18-35) is more than double the population of Ghana. Young adults comprise more than a third of Nigeria's population. The Federal Ministry for Youth Development has responsibility for this age group, and the Minister with this portfolio is also in charge of the National Youth Service Corps.

At a meeting with the then Minister of Youth and Sport, Hon. Bolaji Abdullahi,<sup>5</sup> the APPG delegation heard that every year 250,000 young people join the youth service scheme. Of these it is estimated that up to 80% do not find employment on completion of their service. Estimates put youth unemployment at between 20 and 30 million. The National Bureau of Statistics reported an unemployment rate in Nigeria of 23.9% in 2011 and it is thought that as many as 60 million of the working population could be underemployed.<sup>6</sup>



**The delegation meeting Hon. Bolaji Abdullahi, Minister of Youth Development**

Nigeria's large youth population and the question of youth development go beyond the country itself. Nigeria is of regional economic and strategic significance. It shares borders with Cameroon, Chad, Niger (with which it shares a 1500 km long border) and the Republic

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<sup>5</sup> Since the APPG visit, Hon. Inuwa Abdulkadir has been made Minister of Youth Development, while Hon. Bolaji Abdullahi is Minister of Sports.

<sup>6</sup> T. Banjoko, *Adopting a holistic and integrated approach to Nigeria's human capital*, in *NLI White Papers*, Volume 1, May 2011, p.62.

of Benin. If Nigeria can support its youth population and capture its potential, West Africa will benefit. If adequate education, skills training and jobs cannot be provided, this will have negative consequences for the region (and indeed already has), including due to migration and population imbalances, and implications for trade and security.

Today's generation of Nigeria's youth is contending with the legacy of decades of mismanagement and short-termism derived from self-interested policy-making. The effects of this legacy impact Nigerians of all ages and ethnicities, in all states and across all sectors: lack of access to basic services, insecurity and instability, inequality and injustice, and, of particular relevance to youth and children, lack of training and quality education, and lack of opportunity.

Nigerians have embraced democracy and the relative success of the 2011 elections is as much a result of an engaged and interested population as it is due to electoral reforms and a change of leadership in the electoral commission. However, there is deep and growing antipathy towards Nigeria's ruling elites.

Many are disappointed that civilian rule has not met expectations. The January 2012 protests and strikes over the fuel subsidy removal and consequent soaring of fuel prices – to more than double in some places – and related inflation (12.6% in January 2012<sup>7</sup>) were a significant signal to Nigeria's ruling elites that the accountability gap is beginning to close and that citizens can effectively mobilise over an issue when pushed.

All of those with whom the APPG held meetings were cautious about assumptions linking poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment to insecurity and conflict, in the absence of accurate and credible data. However, there was common agreement that problems of militancy in the Niger Delta, radicalisation in the north and criminal activity more generally cannot be understood without reference to lack of opportunity for Nigeria's youth.

It was noted that one of the main issues with the sustainability of the post- amnesty process in the Niger Delta is the availability of jobs. But 60% of the Niger Delta's population of 32million is under 30 years of age – so those who were engaged in militancy comprise only a

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<sup>7</sup> O. R. Ibrahim, "Nigeria: Petrol Price Hike Pushes Inflation up – Bureau", *Daily Trust*, 21 February 2012, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201202210774.html>



fraction of the population.<sup>8</sup> The Federal Minister of Youth Development also remarked that “There is a link between the lack of skills and jobs and the rise of radicalisation. But across Nigeria there are regional differences in the consequences of youth unemployment and it is not possible to generalise.”<sup>9</sup> So while the costs of lack of youth training, engagement and employment are widely acknowledged, the true costs and complexities are difficult to measure – as indeed are the potential benefits of capturing this portion of the population’s energy and productivity.



The delegation with students of the Niger State College of Education, Minna

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<sup>8</sup> Meeting with business and oil company representatives, Lagos, Monday April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Hon. Bolaji Abdullahi, Minister of Youth Development, Abuja, Wednesday April 25<sup>th</sup> 2012.

## 2. Institutional Change and Narrowing the Skills Gap

Nigeria is grappling with both a current and future skills deficit, for government institutions and for the private sector. And in the meantime a large proportion of its working age population – both skilled and unskilled is looking for employment. This population needing both training and job opportunities is set to grow.

Many of the senior officials the delegation met with lamented the decline in education standards and skills provision in their country. The Director General of the National Power Training Institute of Nigeria told the delegation that there has been no structured training or recruitment in the power sector since 1989.<sup>10</sup> One of the most harmful costs of a turbulent history and poor governance has been the lack of investment in people. This has had far-reaching ramifications not only for individuals' aspirations and prospects, but for Nigeria's institutional capacity and management of its resources.

However, on its visit the APPG delegation observed the vast differences and diversity of Nigeria – and as noted earlier there has been change in recent years, imperceptible as this may be in many areas. Lagos was frequently held up to the delegation as an example of a state where the government has forged ahead with a successful reform agenda and has demonstrated that resource rents do not bring change, which comes rather from investment in infrastructure and human resources. The government is focussed on expanding the number of people with vocational skills and Lagos State

Polytechnic and Portsmouth's Highbury College in the UK have partnered to create a Vocational Skills Village.

### Box 1: Potholes in Lagos – Chi Onwurah MP

The Ehingbeti 2012 conference was a refreshing surprise in many ways. When I was working as a telecoms engineer in Nigeria in 2001-2003, driving along Victoria Island's (VI) roads was a slow and often dangerous business with potholes the size of small cars and hours-long 'go-slows'. But the journey to the Ehingbeti conference was completed quickly and smoothly with potholes no more visible than in many UK towns. The second surprise was the location, the Eko hotel had clearly undergone a considerable refurbishment with the addition of a large conference centre, suggesting a focus on business and communications which was not there before.

The third surprise was the most important. I was very impressed by the breadth and depth of the skillset on display at Ehingbeti 2012. Speakers were well informed and the conference covered a broad set of economic, business and social areas, focusing on the four key drivers of growth in Lagos State: Power, Agriculture, Transport, Housing (PATH). The vision and leadership of Governor Fashola was evident, but was clearly not limited to him: vision and leadership are shared by his team.

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<sup>10</sup> Meeting at the Federal Ministry of Power, Abuja, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

The move to institutionalise practices in Lagos has helped to boost investor confidence in this state.<sup>11</sup> Lagos serves as a demonstration of where private sector opportunity and success has helped to motivate improved performance within the public sector as expectations have grown. The success of Lagos State government policy and its record so far on delivery may have created a virtuous circle where expectations, demand and delivery grow as government meets more of its commitments. The key test on whether best practice really has been institutionalised in Lagos State will come after the 2015 elections.

Progress in Nigeria is not limited to Lagos and other state governments have demonstrated a commitment to reform. The Niger State Government is seeking to rebuild confidence in governance through ambitious projects on education, housing and healthcare. During its visit to Minna, the APPG delegation was told that since 2007 enrolment in the state's schools has doubled to 1.3million.



**Meg Hillier MP with HE Babatunde Fashola SAN, Governor of Lagos State and HE Kayode Fayemi, Governor of Ekiti State at the Lagos Economic Summit**

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<sup>11</sup> Meeting with business and oil company representatives, Lagos, Monday April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012.



**The delegation met with students on the Female Teacher Scholarship Scheme**

The delegation visited the Niger State College of Education in Minna, which is training around 18,000 students with around 500 teachers. There is particular emphasis in the state on girls' education and the training of female teachers. The delegation met with young women attending the college who are benefitting from a Female Teacher Scholarship Scheme,<sup>12</sup> which enables young women, including those with children, to attend the college.

According to UNICEF, 1,494 women have been enrolled in the scheme since 2008 and in Niger State 467 women have enrolled in 2011-12.<sup>13</sup> For many of these women these scholarships provide the only route to furthering their education and opening opportunities for future employment. Many of the young women said that they would return to their communities after completing their training to support girls and women in the communities.

Such cases provide positive examples of where change can be brought at an individual level, which will have wider local, regional and ultimately national consequences. Education continues to be a major challenge across the country: both in terms of numbers enrolled and in terms of quality. 10.5 million school-age children in Nigeria do not attend school, which is more than double the number of out-of-school children in the next highest ranking country, Pakistan. Nigeria accounts for 17% of children globally who are not receiving an education.<sup>14</sup> One senior official also noted that "Education is not necessarily preparing the young for jobs – many completing secondary school are barely literate." It was also noted that part of the

### **Box 2: Women and Change – Meg Hillier MP**

When we visited the Niger State College of Education we heard that the young women on scholarships were being encouraged not to seek to change too much on return to their villages – rocking the boat would put the chances of other young women obtaining further education at risk.

As women who had benefitted from education which had changed our lives Chi and I were struck by this. Stifling ambition to change and grow was not something we found easy. But we were told that there was a fear that community elders and the young women's husbands and fathers would not want more women trained as teachers if they came back with aspirations that clashed with local culture. The goal is to secure more female teachers and more girls attending school as a result.

There are many issues of gender equality in Nigeria. To tap the country's potential more women need more opportunity. The example above shows how difficult such change is.

<sup>12</sup> The scheme is managed by the state government, with funding from DFID administered by UNICEF. The FTSS is also being run in Sokoto state, Katsina state and Bauchi state.

<sup>13</sup> The costs of the scholarships, about £200 each per year, are split between DFID (25%), state governments (72%) and local government (3%). The college and the state government provide additional support with off-campus accommodation.

<sup>14</sup> Education for All Monitoring Report, *Policy Paper 04* (June 2012), <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002165/216519E.pdf> pp.1-2.

skills gap was a result of too many high school graduates opting for university as they aim for white-collar jobs.

It is in the interest of Nigeria's international partners, including the private sector, to contribute to narrowing the skills gap in Nigeria. Future demographic growth will be a challenge for the country and the region; but it is also an opportunity for private investors.



**Meg Hillier MP with Gwam Community School children**

### 3. Investing in Nigeria: Risk and Reward

There are risks to doing business in Nigeria, and entry for newcomers may be difficult. The World Bank ranks Nigeria 133 out of 183 economies for ease of doing business.<sup>15</sup> Political uncertainty and short-termist policy has created an attitude among many foreign businesses that they must operate on short time-horizons and seek to recoup their investments as quickly as possible. Investors are attracted to Nigeria because of its resources and market potential – but they are concerned about contract sanctity, security and the lack of infrastructure. Nigeria's cause is also not helped by the negative headlines it is making internationally due to terrorist activities in country – a relatively recent phenomenon.

This new threat is real and very serious, but it does not characterise or dominate the country and it feeds a negative narrative of Nigeria that is too generalised. A broader and more nuanced understanding of the country's diversity and complexities is needed so that opportunities can be identified and made the most of.

While there are some states which, for reasons of poor governance or security, international and Nigerian investors would do well to steer clear of, there are those with dynamic and reformist governments who wish to leave legacies of visible change and thriving economies. They look to British companies to bring strong management teams and expertise that can help to augment capacity within Nigeria – which will benefit the investors' business while also bringing longer term benefits to Nigeria in the form of best practices, skills and new technologies.

There are particular opportunities in Nigeria for UK investors: in engineering design, consultancy and project management, in health, education, agriculture and ICT. UK businesses can make more of the UK's strong cultural and historic ties to Nigeria – in particular with such a large Nigerian diaspora living in the UK with particular skills in a range of professions. It is important to be cautious and pragmatic about what can be achieved in Nigeria, but investors that make the right choices in terms of industry and identify the best local business partners stand to gain the most.

In general there is a largely positive perception of the UK and its companies within Nigeria – in particular for standards of implementation and corporate governance. However, risk

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/nigeria/>

aversion often based on sometimes decades-old negative experiences of some investors or lack of information or contacts for medium-sized businesses mean that British companies are losing out to those of emerging powers. UKTI is working to build its network of contacts of reputable Nigerian companies to link up in partnerships with British businesses – and so vastly reduce the risks to the UK companies. But the APPG delegation observed frustration that, although the UK is increasing its efforts to support commercial engagement in Nigeria, it is being outpaced by newcomers who are more openly and aggressively representing their businesses of all sizes.

Foreign investors remain wary of large public-sector contracts: a number of ongoing high profile instances pertaining to contract sanctity and repayments have left the federal government struggling to build investor confidence for high-value projects. Lagos and other reformist states notwithstanding, there is also uncertainty regarding prospects for implementation of crucial reforms, for example related to the Petroleum Industry Bill and in particular after the January 2012 fuel subsidy protests. But the unpopular fuel subsidy removal was part of a wider federal government reform plan for Nigeria, which if implemented and effectively managed could be transformative in the coming years, and in particular for the country's young adult population – who themselves could be transformative for the nation if given the opportunity.

#### 4. The Importance of Reform; The Importance of Delivery

In addition to education and skills, the APPG discussed Nigeria's reform plans for the power sector and investment in agriculture was repeatedly raised as being crucial for Nigeria's future progress – and especially for shifting the fortunes of the north of the country. Delivery on power-sector reform is the most complicated, costly and multifaceted reform that the government must deliver – but it is this reform in particular that will change Nigeria's prospects.

South Africa generates 40,000 megawatts of electricity for its population of 50 million, while Nigeria can currently produce 3,300-3,500 megawatts. Of this, 1,100 megawatts are generated by private power plants operated by Shell, Agip and AES. Around 660 megawatts of the electricity that can currently be produced is 'stranded electricity' because of transmission limitations. And distribution companies do not currently adequately meter or bill for consumption, which is therefore heavily subsidised by government, and which in turn has stymied investment in generation and transmission.<sup>16</sup> The Presidential Task Force on Power estimates that domestically produced goods cost 40% more than they would if there was adequate electricity provision. It goes on to state that "by 2020 the cost of Nigeria's poor power supply would be up to 20 trillion Naira (USD 130 billion) per annum if the situation remains the same."<sup>17</sup>

The federal government has stated its intention to implement the 2005 Electoral Power Sector Reform Act to decentralise and privatise the power sector. The reform is intended to improve management in the sector and to stimulate new investment – the Central Bank of Nigeria estimates that the sector needs USD 10 billion new investment per year. The Federal Ministry of Power is seeking to complete the process of fully privatising distribution and generation by October. Evaluations of the bids for the generating companies slated for privatisation is ongoing while the July deadline for the pre-qualification of bidders for the distribution companies was kept despite attempts from some quarters to delay the process.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.nigeriapowerreform.org/index.php/power-supply>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.nigeriapowerreform.org/index.php/sector-reform>

<sup>18</sup> For the full list of pre-qualified bidders see <http://www.bpeng.org/bureau/Privatisation%20Updates/Shortlisted%20EOIs%20for%20PHCN%20Companies.pdf>



The British government is working with Nigeria to double power supply by 2015.<sup>19</sup> In addition to DFID, the power-sector reforms are supported by USAID, the World Bank, the United States Ex-Im bank and the China EXIM bank.<sup>20</sup> Successful power reform is clearly essential to Nigeria – for its people and to tap its potential. Given the scale of change, the levels of investment required, the complex infrastructure needed and the implications of the need for increased metering and billing, many observers are clearly sceptical about the chances of the reform succeeding.

One of the main challenges to the reform comes from labour unions over concerns for job security and pension schemes through the unbundling and privatisation of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN). There is the related challenge of the availability of qualified engineers and technicians needed to make the reforms achievable and sustainable – as noted previously, there has been no structured training in the power sector for more than twenty years.<sup>21</sup> But this in one area in particular in which the UK can provide assistance: both in training and in certification of Nigerian training standards.



**The delegation at the Federal Ministry of Power**

<sup>19</sup> UK/Nigeria Communiqué, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2011, <http://ukinnigeria.fco.gov.uk/en/news/?view=PressR&id=632784582>

<sup>20</sup> Federal Ministry of Power, Abuja.

<sup>21</sup> Director General of the National Power Training Institute of Nigeria, Meeting at the Federal Ministry of Power, Abuja, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

This is a make-or-break reform for Nigeria. The APPG found that too often the bar is set too low for what can be achieved in Nigeria, in part because of the negative narrative that has evolved around it, and also because failure to deliver is too quickly ascribed to the difficult and complex environment. The APPG is clear that there is great potential and that there are examples – such as in the stock exchange where new leadership is demanding infrastructure of an international standard – of change which refuses to accept less than what is needed to meet international standards.

Agriculture was also raised as a sector essential to critical change. Though neglected in the same way the power sector was, the sector still employs the most people in Nigeria and contributes 44% of the country's GDP.<sup>22</sup> Historically Nigeria dominated West Africa for exports of groundnut and palm oil, cotton and cocoa. But Nigeria currently spends around GBP 1.4 billion annually on rice importation.<sup>23</sup> It also imports wheat, sugar and fish. One National Assembly Member argued that while agriculture is key

to progress and development in the north, (while southern Nigeria can additionally depend on trade and commerce), it is important that it is seen as a business opportunity rather than solely a development issue – the sector can deliver on a number of fronts.<sup>24</sup> The perception of the sector is changing and Standard Chartered bank in Nigeria has a new agribusiness team.<sup>25</sup>

Both federal and state governments have an interest in reducing Nigeria's dependence on food imports and in diversifying away from dependence on oil revenues. The Federal Government has an Agricultural Agenda which aims to increase domestic food supply by 20 million metric tons by 2015 and to create 3.5 million jobs in the sector over the next five years. The government strategy is to use reforms in the distribution and sale of fertilisers, in financing and marketing institutions, and through working with state governments. But the

### **Box3: Mangoes from Minna – Chi Onwurah MP**

On the way back from Minna to Abuja I bought mangoes for the journey. The stall holder sold me twelve for 50 naira (about 20 pence). They were excellent quality and at less than two pence each, great value. Small, yellow and very ripe, they were the sort that, in the UK, generally come from Brazil or Pakistan. Later that day in Abuja I met a Nigerian friend and asked her to try one. She said that in Abuja, she would typically pay 50 naira for a mango like that. In a market in Hackney, one of these mangoes would cost about 80 pence and in Newcastle about one pound. It was an interesting example of agro economics. In the 150 kilometres from Minna to Abuja the price went up ten times. Covering the further 4,700 kilometres from Abuja to London their price could rise four fold. But Nigerian mangoes are never found in UK markets. It is cheaper or easier to transport them the 8,800km from Brazil or 6,200km from Pakistan. The Nigerian agribusiness still has a way to go.

<sup>22</sup> President Jonathan's remarks at the inauguration of the Agricultural Transformation Implementation Council, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2012, [http://www.nigeriafirst.org/article\\_11767.shtml](http://www.nigeriafirst.org/article_11767.shtml)

<sup>23</sup> Meeting with National Assembly Members, British High Commission, Abuja, Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2012

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.standardchartered.com/ng/about-us/en/>

federal government acknowledges the need for successful power-sector reform and improvements in Nigeria's road network to make its Agricultural Agenda viable.<sup>26</sup>

The government of Niger State, which makes up 10% of Nigeria's landmass and is Nigeria's largest producer of rice, is seeking to increase its rice production. With investment and 100,000 hectares of land it is aiming through large-scale farming to produce enough rice for domestic consumption and export.<sup>27</sup> The Kwara State Government undertook an initiative through its Shonga Project to invite Zimbabwean farmers to start commercial farms in the state as a way to share best practices in the sector, and in Lagos State agriculture is one of the government's four priority areas for economic progress and poverty eradication. DFID is at the initial stages of a Rural Agriculture Markets Programme (RAMP), which aims to raise the incomes of 500,000 people in northern Nigeria by improving market access for poor producers and increasing economic activity and trade.

Nigeria will have presidential and gubernatorial elections in 2015. It is hoped that the Independent National Electoral Commission will build on its record of 2011 to hold an even more improved electoral process. But there are many challenges outstanding and the tragic violence in the north after the 2011 elections could be repeated, and other parts of the country will not be immune. This leaves the government and its international partners limited time to deliver on these crucial reforms. The APPG hopes that enough time, resources and political will can be galvanised during this short window of opportunity to enable tangible progress in these crucial reform areas. Action in these areas is not limited to government and the private sector; civil society and Nigeria's powerful global diaspora also have their roles to play.

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<sup>26</sup> President Jonathan's remarks at the inauguration of the Agricultural Transformation Implementation Council, 15th May 2012, [http://www.nigeriafirst.org/article\\_11767.shtml](http://www.nigeriafirst.org/article_11767.shtml)

<sup>27</sup> Meeting with the Executive Governor of Niger State, HE Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, Minna, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

## 5. Engaging Communities, Connecting Diasporas

Community engagement is essential to ensuring that government top-down reform efforts actually work. Many observers have noted that part of the difficulty in gathering information about Boko Haram and similar groups, and in responding to them effectively, comes from the distancing of traditional leaders and governing authorities at all levels from communities. This disconnect has created an environment ripe for the abuse of power as it is so difficult to hold leaders to account. It also means that when the tables are turned and government and leaders need access to and assistance from communities, they have limited access beyond immediate patronage networks. This has left the most vulnerable exposed to the machinations of those in positions of power – both formal and informal.

Some states are taking steps to re-engage with communities through state activities and developments. The APPG delegation visited the Gwam Community's Primary School in Paikoro Local Government Area, Niger State, in which the community has become more engaged since 2009 through a School Board Management Committee (SBMC). The SBMC has given the community a greater understanding of the running of the school through budget tracking and monitoring of activities and engagement with the administration. The SBMC runs a number of committees and carries out fundraising activities for the school, which have so far provided for a new roof on one of the classroom buildings with government support. The SBMC has also worked to increase girls' enrolment in school, to reduce school absences and drop-out as it knows parents and community members, and has organised adult education classes. The Gwam SBMC is an example of community action that gives people a stake in and control over change, while increasing community and government interaction.

Such community action is incredibly important across Nigeria. Although conditions in the Niger Delta in terms of security have improved since the presidential amnesty, many outstanding challenges remain pertaining to development, infrastructure and service provision, and environmental clean-up and protection. Militancy and crime evolved out of injustices in the region and lack of opportunities for redress. In the Niger Delta context it is particularly important that communities feel connected to authorities and decision-makers in a way that engagement translates into visible change on the ground – in order that communities feel that they have impact, that they have control over their futures and that they can stimulate change.



**Chi Onwurah MP with the Gwam Community School Board Management Committee**

The relative calm brought about by the amnesty in the Niger Delta offers a valuable opportunity to do some new work and take forward existing efforts to deepen community engagement, and deliver on a number of fronts, especially development and on the environment in oil-producing areas. But this requires genuine will, constructive input and impetus from all those involved. Wider reform efforts relating to power and agriculture will also have a significant impact here.

It is crucial that civil society in Nigeria is active, robust and credible: Nigeria needs a civil society that can put pressure on the system when and where needed in a constructive and informed way. The January fuel price strikes and protests made evident the potential of civil society to influence government and bring change.<sup>28</sup> It is not only for government and the private sector to improve on delivering change – civil society must have a role in this also.

This is also an area in which Nigeria's global diaspora may bring great benefit. Nigerians form part of a global community with millions of people of Nigerian origin living across the world. There are thought to be at least one million British Nigerians and Nigerians living in the UK alone. Much of this sizeable diaspora continues to have important links with Nigeria –

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<sup>28</sup> Dinner with civil society organisations, Lagos, Monday April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012.

especially in sending remittances, which for many is a means of survival – and many people are involved in a variety of projects across the country, be it in business, health, or education. Diaspora Nigerians engage both as individuals and through organisations, and this is a great resource in terms of skills, education and ideas.

These groups and the communities they engage with in Nigeria face communication and logistical challenges, and challenges relating to overlap where there is a proliferation of groups active in certain areas or sectors.<sup>29</sup> Nigeria's international partners that host large diaspora groups and are interested in supporting development and reform efforts would greatly benefit from effective engagement of these diaspora organisations and individuals. The Nigeria Leadership Initiative is an example of an organisation that brings together Nigerian professionals in Nigeria and internationally to support development of values-based leadership skills with the aim of supporting development in Nigeria. The Central Association of Nigerians in the United Kingdom (CANUK) is an umbrella organisation for Nigerian groups in the UK – it represents 80 different associations and 18 other affiliate/associate members.<sup>30</sup> If supported in the UK and other home countries to connect similar efforts and link up with effective local partners in Nigeria, real change could be brought to specific communities and in specific areas. Bolstering Nigerian civil society is one of the areas where the diaspora has shown signs of significant engagement and could further assist where invited to do so.

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<sup>29</sup> Meeting of the APPG with Nigerian Diaspora representatives, Houses of Parliament, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.canuk.org.uk/>

## 6. Disparities, Extremes and Security

As previously mentioned Nigeria suffers from a poor reputation internationally: a recent Chatham House-YouGov survey found that 16% of British people polled felt especially unfavourable towards Nigeria, while only 1% felt especially favourable towards it.<sup>31</sup> The flow of information on Nigeria to the world is limited and tends to be focused around issues of security, crime and underdevelopment. So the details are missed, as are the stories of positive change and new opportunity.

But there is a very real threat to parts of Nigeria, especially in the North East and around Abuja, from the Boko Haram terrorist organisation and connected groups. The APPG delegation was in Abuja on the day of the attacks on newspaper offices in the Federal Capital Territory and in Kaduna. Although Boko Haram activity has so far been focused in the north of the country, it does have wider implications. It can be a catalyst for greater fragmentation of Nigeria's people: the delegation heard how distributors who used to transport goods from Lagos to Kano no longer do this due to security concerns.<sup>32</sup> This will have an effect not only on business and the economy, but also on the sense of cohesion between people who live vast distances from each other.

Nigeria has over many decades dealt with an array of security threats, but the new phenomenon of suicide bombers within Nigeria and the randomness of Boko Haram's victims is shocking and makes this threat particularly difficult to deal with. The APPG delegation learnt that the Federal Government is working on a new national strategy to respond to terrorism and radicalisation, while considering other ongoing and emerging threats the country may have to deal with. The group learnt that Nigeria is working with its neighbouring countries to deal with the problem of terrorism, which is taking advantage of the countries' multiple long and porous borders.

The APPG also learnt that while the UK is able to offer assistance in terms of sharing expertise, advice and best practices from its own experiences, the terrorist phenomenon is uniquely Nigerian, having emerged in a local context, and therefore any effective and sustainable strategy for dealing with this threat will have to be Nigerian-owned and -led at

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<sup>31</sup> J. Knight, R. Niblett, T. Raines, *Hard Choices Ahead: The Chatham House YouGov Survey 2012* [http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Europe/0712ch\\_yougov\\_surveyanalysis.pdf](http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Europe/0712ch_yougov_surveyanalysis.pdf) (2012) p.26.

<sup>32</sup> Meeting with National Assembly Members, British High Commission, Abuja, Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2012

all levels of government and leadership. But there is also a regional dimension to this problem, given the long and porous border between Nigeria and Niger, and new threats emanating from the coup in Mali. So the UK will also need to coordinate more closely with France on assistance provided, given French links to the region.<sup>33</sup>

The threat of terrorism in Nigeria is not only about security however – and there is much debate in Nigeria over the root causes of the problem. On the one hand, it was argued to the delegation that violent extremism cannot be explained only in terms of poverty and pointed out that the Boko Haram leadership has never said it is fighting to eradicate poverty in northern Nigeria.<sup>34</sup> In keeping with all challenges that Nigeria confronts, this new one is multifaceted and the solution to it will come from multiple policy areas. Whatever is at the root of such violence, extremism in Nigeria has emerged in a context of extreme conditions.

Borno State, where Boko Haram emerged and focuses most of its activity, and neighbouring Yobe State in Nigeria's North East suffer the worst poverty in the country according to National Bureau of Statistics data. Borno State ranks second worst in the country for gender development<sup>35</sup> and, along with Yobe State, has the lowest adult literacy rates.<sup>36</sup> Of Nigeria's geopolitical zones, only the North East and South East are classified as underdeveloped by the UNDP – and life expectancy in the North East and South South is the lowest in the country, averaging 47 years. (But the highest life expectancy in Nigeria is only 51 years – in the South West). What all this data means at an individual level is that for many Nigerians life is a mere process of survival from day to day.

So although radicalisation and violent extremism cannot be explained purely through the prism of poverty and lack of education and opportunity, it is clear that these factors have a strong role to play, and it was a common view among some National Assembly Members that disparities in wealth in Nigeria are too great and that as part of the strategy to contain the current problem and prevent further radicalisation, it is necessary to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Foreign and Commonwealth Office Questions, House of Commons, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm120619/debtext/120619-0001.htm>

<sup>34</sup> Meeting at the Offices of the National Security Adviser, Abuja, Thursday April 26<sup>th</sup> 2012.

<sup>35</sup> The UNDP Gender-related Development Index (measures achievement in the same basic capabilities as the Human Development Index does, but takes note of inequality in achievement between women and men.

<sup>36</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report Nigeria 2008–2009: Achieving growth with equity*, UNDP, Abuja, (2009). p.91-94.

<sup>37</sup> Meeting with National Assembly Members, British High Commission, Abuja, Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2012



This is why delivery of the above-mentioned reforms within a strict timeframe is vital – and why sustained UK support for these reforms, pressure and engagement for improved governance, and delivery of a strong, comprehensive and nuanced development programme through the Department for International Development and its partner organisations is so important. This is an issue that crosses national borders as well. With a food crisis in the Sahel, pressure is likely to increase on Nigeria as people cross the border from Niger in search of food and services. But the APPG heard that in parts of northern Nigeria there are significant problems with nutrition and access to food. Malnutrition is a major cause of deaths of under-fives and it is estimated that 42% of children in Nigeria are stunted due to malnutrition.

Funded by DFID and working with UNICEF and local authorities, Save the Children is working on an Action Against Hunger Programme, which aims to improve the nutrition of 6 million children. Save the Children works in eight states in northern Nigeria and it receives government backing

in its work but this is a striking example of the vast disparities that exist in the country, when set against developments seen in Lagos State. Economic progress in the South West beyond Lagos State is important as the state is already experiencing significant population growth and the government is cognizant of its limitations to sustain its positive record and cope with a big influx of people from less developed areas who believe their opportunities for employment will be greater in Lagos.

For its part, Nigeria's National Assembly is demonstrating a growing willingness to engage the presidency. At a meeting with the Deputy Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives, the need for a greater push on the good governance agenda was acknowledged. Capacity issues due to high turnover notwithstanding, the National Assembly

#### **Box 4: Health Challenges – Meg Hillier MP**

On a previous visit to Nigeria I met a doctor and midwives at a remote health clinic in Kano and this time we met with NGOs that work to deliver major health programmes. Save the Children told me that the challenge of getting doctors to work in remote rural areas remains difficult.

The difference between a well-attended conference in Lagos with leading national and international businesses and discussion about how to keep children alive was a stark reminder of the great divide between the richest and the poorest in Nigeria. Many children have no contact with the health system. In Adamawa state it's estimated that 25 per cent of children born are not immunised. Malaria is an issue across the whole country – where it's cheaper to import nets than produce them locally as manufacturing costs are so high.

In 2011 figures for polio were higher than in 2010. Of the \$1 billion spent globally on polio eradication, about \$50 million is spent in Nigeria. The security situation in northern Nigeria will make tackling polio harder. Add to this the stigma families with a disabled child suffer, and they face being trapped in poverty – shortening the child's life expectancy even further.

Some are taking steps to tackle the problems. We heard from the Governor of Niger State how he is working to eradicate polio by insisting that all children are immunised as a condition of enjoying the rights of Niger state residency. There is a need for community health workers and in particular women, who are closer to the population which needs support.

has demonstrated at key moments a robust approach to tackling controversial issues that would otherwise have further undermined progress in Nigeria.

Reforms and the linked narrowing of both the wealth gap and accountability gap are important steps towards resolving current challenges but also future problems that could threaten the country's progress. Disparities and extremes are bad for all Nigerians and could generate internal population shifts that put too much pressure on resources in some areas and further reduce development potential in others.



**The delegation meeting with the Deputy Speaker of the House Representatives, Hon. Emeka Ihedioha at the National Assembly**

## Conclusion

Nigeria faces a host of connected challenges: from development to security and to a complex reform agenda. The greatest risk is that the ongoing and emerging challenges Nigerians and those engaged from the outside are seeking to overcome outweigh the energy, resources and commitment dedicated to tackling them. If so the challenges will remain self-sustaining, capturing Nigeria in a cycle of decline. This is why the resources available for international engagement on Nigeria must be used in the most effective way possible – and the Nigerian diaspora has a role to play in this – to improve the livelihoods of ordinary Nigerians and give people opportunities to contribute to economic progress and development in the country.

Nigeria's future success depends on developing its workforce and capturing the potential of its young population. Nigeria's economy will grow considerably, but unless federal and state reform agendas succeed now, progressive change will be stifled by future challenges stemming from demographic growth in an environment without the institutions and resources to cope with such expansion.

In some areas and sectors, good leadership that has identified key points for change and delivered on policy has demonstrated what can be achieved in Nigeria. Across the country there are opportunities and momentum to create incremental change that will bring faster wins to build towards national transformation. Strong leadership in government, business and civil society is key, in particular for fostering stronger institutional capacity. Nigeria's international partners should continue to be strongly engaged to support such momentum and leaders who have demonstrated the will and capacity to deliver.

The negative narrative around Nigeria has emerged out of real problems. Poor infrastructure and lack of basic services challenge everyone on a daily basis, regardless of background or employment. Carrying out a simple task in Nigeria takes more time and resources than the same task would in the UK because of obstacles related to corruption, infrastructure and services. Internationally, greater resources need to be committed to understanding and effectively engaging with this important African power. It is encouraging that the British Government has committed more resources to its High Commission in Abuja and that DFID has a 2012/13 bilateral aid budget for Nigeria of £185million and is running 30 projects with

a total budget of £918,675,536<sup>38</sup>. It is also about using these resources effectively and as efficiently as possible.

There are four areas where the APPG believes international partners, and in particular the UK can be most effective in supporting change in Nigeria:

1. In improving access to and quality of education and skills training and supporting this through provision of assistance with certification of training standards by UK institutions that can offer universally recognised certification;
2. In supporting UK businesses of all sizes, in cooperation with the Nigerian government and private sector partners, to enter Nigeria in key industries where businesses have greater scope to be successful while being able to bring strong management, skills and technology transfer;
3. In supporting efforts to bring power sector reform plans to fruition;
4. In engaging Nigerian diaspora individuals and organisations in the UK and US in a formal network that can assist efforts in Nigeria in specific sectors and states or communities.

There is a range of issues and specific details that the length of the APPG visit to Nigeria did not allow the delegation or this report to look into substantively, for example women's rights, developments in the Niger Delta, current trends in the East, the role of local government and regional differences. The APPG will continue with its work on Nigeria and hopes to be able to send delegations of parliamentarians to the country more frequently.

The Group relies on expertise and support from those engaged on Nigeria to inform its work. As an independent group it is therefore important that the APPG hears from as broad a range of stakeholders active in and on Nigeria as possible. As the international role and importance of Nigeria is set to grow, so the APPG will shape its agenda to feed into debate and discussion in support of positive outcomes for the country and the region. There is much more to Nigeria than stereotypes and external assumptions about the country suggest, and as conditions in the country improve it will be part of the APPG's role to improve understanding of the country's scale and diversity and the positive role it can play.

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<sup>38</sup> <http://projects.dfid.gov.uk/default.aspx>

## Appendices

### Appendix I: Nigeria APPG Visit Itinerary, Sunday April 22nd – Friday April 27th 2012

#### Delegates:

**Meg Hillier MP**, Member of Parliament for Hackney South & Shoreditch; Nigeria APPG chair

**Chi Onwurah MP**, Member of Parliament for Newcastle Central; Nigeria APPG Secretary

#### Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2012

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- 1135** Depart London Heathrow  
**1800** Arrive Lagos (BA0075)  
**1800 – 1930** Travel to Federal Palace Hotel  
**2030** Informal dinner with Deputy High Commissioner Peter West and team at the Federal Palace Hotel

#### Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2012

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- 0730 - 0830** Breakfast meeting with oil company and business representatives at Federal Palace Hotel: key issues around oil, energy and the Niger Delta  
**0930** Depart Federal Palace Hotel for Eko Hotel  
**1000 – 1330** Lagos Economic Summit, Eko Hotel  
10:30 Meeting Mrs Olayinka Oladunjoye, Lagos State Commissioner for Education  
11:00 Attend address of HE Babatunde Fashola SAN, Governor of Lagos State  
11:30 Meeting with Ms Arunma Oteh, Director General, Securities and Exchange Commission  
**1330** Depart Hotel for Eko Atlantic City Project  
**1345 – 1500** Eko Atlantic City Project Visit  
**1500** Depart project  
**1530 – 1600** Meeting with Mr Oscar Onyema, CEO, Nigeria Stock Exchange  
**1630** Return to hotel  
**1830** Depart hotel for British High Commission Residence  
**1900 - 2100** Dinner with civil society leaders at Deputy High Commission

#### Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012

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- 0915** Depart Murtala Muhammed Airport, Lagos  
**1100** Arrive Abuja  
**1100 – 1500** Drive to Minna  
**1600 – 1730** Meeting with Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, Executive Governor of Niger State and Chairman of Northern Governors Forum, and State Commissioners  
**1900 – 2100** Dinner with with Dorothy Akenova, International Center for Sexual and Reproductive Rights

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

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- 0800** Depart Hotel
- 0900** Visit Niger State College of Education
- 1100** Visit Gwam Community and SBMC Project
- 1230** Drive to Abuja
- 1500 – 1700** Meeting with Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, Deputy Speaker of the House Representatives and House Committee Chairs at the National Assembly
- 1730** Return to Hotel
- 1900** Depart Hotel
- 1930** Dinner hosted by Deputy High Commissioner Giles Lever with Members of the National Assembly

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

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- 0800 – 0900** Breakfast meeting with Jerome Okolo, National Think Tank of Nigeria
- 1030 – 1130** Meeting with staff of the Office of the National Security Adviser
- 1200 – 1330** Lunch with Save the Children Health Partners
- 1400 – 1500** Meeting with Mr George Ugwu, Special Assistant to the Honorable Minister Professor Barth Nnaji; Dr Abdullahi Hassan, Director for Investment and Sector Development, Federal Ministry of Power; Engr Reuben O. Okeke, Director General, National Power Training Institute of Nigeria, et al.
- 1500** Return to Hotel
- 1900** Cultural Evening, Infusion

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

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- 0600** Depart hotel for Abuja Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport
- 0845** Depart Abuja
- 1505** Arrive London Heathrow

## Appendix II: Nigeria APPG Membership

<b>Meg Hillier MP</b>	<b>Member of Parliament for Hackney South &amp; Shoreditch; Nigeria APPG chair</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Chi Onwurah MP</b>	<b>Member of Parliament for Newcastle Central; Nigeria APPG Secretary</b>	<b>Labour</b>
Richard Fuller MP	Member of Parliament for Bedford; Nigeria APPG vice-chair	Conservative
Diane Abbott MP	Member of Parliament for Hackney North and Stoke Newington; Nigeria APPG vice-chair	Labour
Gordon Banks MP	Member of Parliament for Ochil and South Perthshire	Labour
Anne Begg MP	Member of Parliament for Aberdeen South	Labour
Elizabeth Berridge	Baroness Berridge of the Vale of Catmose	Conservative
Clive Betts MP	Member of Parliament for Sheffield South East	Labour
Lyn Brown MP	Member of Parliament for West Ham	Labour
Alistair Carmichael MP	Member of Parliament for Orkney and Shetland	Liberal Democrat
James Clappison MP	Member of Parliament for Hertsmere	Conservative
Tom Clarke CBE MP	Member of Parliament for Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill	Labour
Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP	Member of Parliament for The Cotswolds	Conservative
David Davies MP	Member of Parliament for Monmouth	Conservative
Jim Dobbin MP	Member of Parliament for Heywood & Middleton	Labour
Frank Dobson MP	Member of Parliament for Holborn & St Pancras	Labour
Frank Doran MP	Member of Parliament for Aberdeen North	Labour
Nigel Evans MP	Member of Parliament for Ribble Valley	Conservative
Helen Goodman MP	Member of Parliament for Bishop Auckland	Labour
Andrew Gwynne MP	Member of Parliament for Denton and Reddish	Labour
Bishop Justin Welby	House of Lords; Bishop of Durham	Non-Affiliated
Stephen Hepburn MP	Member of Parliament for Jarrow	Labour
Adam Holloway MP	Member of Parliament for Gravesham	Conservative
Jim Hood MP	Member of Parliament for Lanark and Hamilton East	Labour
Mark Lancaster MP	Member of Parliament for Milton Keynes North	Conservative
John Leech MP	Member of Parliament for Manchester Withington	Liberal Democrat
Ian Liddell-Grainger MP	Member of Parliament for Bridgwater	Conservative
Ian Lucas MP	Member of Parliament for Wrexham; Shadow Minister for Middle East and Africa	Labour
John Mann MP	Member of Parliament for Bassetlaw	Labour
Ann McKeichin MP	Member of Parliament for Glasgow North	Labour
Eric Ollerenshaw OBE MP	Member of Parliament for Lancaster and Fleetwood	Conservative
John Robertson MP	Member of Parliament for Glasgow North West	Labour
Jim Sheridan MP	Member of Parliament for Paisley and Renfrewshire North	Labour
Mark Simmonds MP	Member of Parliament for Boston and Skegness	Conservative
Chuka Umunna MP	Member of Parliament for Streatham	Labour
Michael Weir MP	Member of Parliament for Angus	SNP



ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON NIGERIA

**THE ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON NIGERIA**

**Chair: Meg Hillier MP**

**House of Commons**

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