



NIGERIA

OPENING STATEMENT OF NIGERIA DURING THE ADOPTION
OF ITS THIRD CYCLE UPR OUTCOMES AT THE
40TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Delivered by

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MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

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GENEVA, 14TH MARCH, 2019

Mr Vice President

I am delighted to be here today as Head of my country's delegation to the 40th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. To ensure inclusiveness, the delegation of Nigeria is multi stakeholder in composition.

2. As expressed by my delegation during the 31st Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, in the presentation of the 3rd cycle report, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) constitutes an integral and principal platform of the UN Human Rights system, as well as a mechanism for constructive engagement in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Mr Vice President

3. Nigeria reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations Human Rights UPR process and International Human Rights Treaties to which Nigeria is a state party. In this regard, our Government will continue to partner and collaborate with the Human Rights Council, and all UN human rights Mechanisms, to enhance the promotion and protection of the rights of the citizens.

4. Following the presentation of my country's 3rd Cycle UPR Report at the 31st Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, a total of 290 recommendations were made to Nigeria, to provide responses in due course and to adopt, no later than the 40th session of the Human Rights Council. Let me avail myself of this

opportunity to, once more, thank you for this opportunity for the adoption of Nigeria's responses at this Session of the Human Rights Council

5. Nigeria had earlier supported 230 recommendations and noted 60 recommendations of the 290 recommendations. After extensive consultations with relevant stakeholders, I am happy to inform you that Nigeria has further supported additional 10 recommendations, bringing the total to 240 out of the 290 recommendations, of which it has noted 50. The additional 10 recommendations are: recommendations number **61, 287, 34, 33, 69, 274, 276, 181, 182** and **183**, as contained in paragraph 148 of the Report. The acceptance of the 240 recommendations is borne out of Nigeria's strong desire to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights and to give effect to its obligations under relevant international human rights treaties to which the country is a party.

Mr Vice President

6. It is gratifying to inform you that supported recommendations are currently being processed by relevant Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, with the objective to commence necessary steps to give effect to the accepted recommendations.

7. With particular reference to the recommendations which the Government has noted, we have grouped them into the following themes for ease of reference:

a. Death Penalty: (Paragraphs 148 (1-8, 124 to 136)

8. These recommendations relate to the abolition of the death penalty or recommendations for Nigeria to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aimed towards the abolition of the death penalty. We wish to state that the Government has noted these recommendations, as the position of Nigeria on the subject matter, as contained in its second periodic report, remains the same. However, efforts are on-going between the Federal and State Governments in Nigeria to formalize the prevailing voluntary moratorium on the death penalty.

b. Sexual Orientation, LGBTI, Gender Identity and Recommendations to repeal all relevant legislation that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or same sex marriage: (Paragraph 148 .67, 148.71 to 81)

9. With respect to same sex marriage, LGBTI and sexual orientation, Nigeria does not support these recommendations, because same-sex marriage is against our national values. It is important to state that the Marriage Act defines marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman. Christianity and Islam, which are the major religions in Nigeria, also recognise marriage as a relationship between a man and woman. Same –sex marriage is not in the culture of Nigerians. Nigeria makes reference to its second periodic report on this subject and this firm position remains the same. The Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act does not detract from the fundamental human rights

of any person in Nigeria. Therefore, there is no basis to allege any form of discrimination.

c. Paragraph (148.182 and 183)

10. The treatment of the case of Ibrahim El Zakzaky is guided strictly by the legal process and there has been no interference whatsoever by the Government. He is presently standing trial for multiple allegations of murder. Once his trial is concluded, the Government is bound to comply with the outcome.

d. Paragraph 148.9

11. The first leg of this recommendation is to the effect that Nigeria should adhere to human rights instruments which it is not yet a party, in particular, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at abolishing the death penalty. We do not support this recommendation, as we are not obliged to adhere to instruments to which Nigeria is not a party. We, however, support the second leg of the recommendation with respect to International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and the African Union Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). Nigeria has ratified the Kampala Convention and a Bill to domesticate same is currently before the National Assembly.

Mr Vice President

12. I want to avail myself of this opportunity to reiterate that the Nigerian Government is firmly committed to promoting and protecting the human rights of all persons. While much has been done in this regard, across a broad range of fields, we acknowledge that challenges still remain. We assure the international community of our unwavering determination to meet these challenges in order to further improve the human rights situation in our country, in a transparent, verifiable and sustainable manner.

I thank you.
