

STUDENT WORKBOOK

The background of the cover features a teal gradient with silhouettes of numerous hands raised, holding Nigerian flags. The flags are depicted in a lighter shade of teal, creating a sense of movement and collective action.

Pluralism & Inequality in Nigeria:
Factors Inhibiting and Promoting
Development



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Founded in Ottawa by His Highness the Aga Khan in partnership with the Government of Canada, the **Global Centre for Pluralism** is an independent, charitable organization. Inspired by Canada's experience as a diverse and inclusive country, the Centre was created to advance positive responses to the challenge of living peacefully and productively together in diverse societies.

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Description

This student workbook is intended for students to use as part of the Social Science **Global Politics** course in the International Baccalaureate (IB) as well as any course exploring the complexity of the challenges we face in the 21st century. The materials provided examine to what extent Nigeria’s federal model has mitigated group grievances and addressed regional socio-economic inequalities or increased ethnic and religious competition. This unit is comprised of seven tasks and offers a unique exploration of political power-sharing between several groups in the wake of protracted ethnic violence. Learning materials provide opportunities to examine inequality and development and the role of federalism, ethnicity and institutions in achieving social change and furthering respect for all groups.

Students can follow along with the accompanying slide Presentation and Overview.

Related Concept	Pluralism: An ethic of respect for diversity. In a pluralistic society, every person is valued and included as an equal member, regardless of ethnic, religious, gender, socio-cultural or other differences. Individuals, governments and civil societies make choices and take action to promote respect, recognition and belonging. (Global Centre for Pluralism)
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For IB Use

Primary Key Concept	Inequality refers to a state of affairs where equality between people or groups of people is not realized and the consequent potential compromises of justice and liberty. Inequality often manifests itself through unequal access to resources that are needed to sustain life and develop individuals and communities. Consequently, the concept is closely connected to discussions of power and of who holds the rights to these resources and their proceeds. Inequality can be examined both as a phenomenon within and between societies..
IB Key Concepts	Inequality, Conflict, Development, Sustainability, Human Rights, Power (IB definitions on last page)
IB Core Units	<p>In the Global Politics course, there are three core units: People, Power and Politics. Within these, there are four compulsory units, listed below. This case study on Pluralism and Inequality in Nigeria, fits within the “Development” unit.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Development<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Factors that may promote or inhibit development• Debates surrounding development: challenges of globalization, inequality and sustainability2. Peace and Conflict<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Causes and parties to conflict• Evolution of conflict• Conflict resolution and post-conflict transformation

IB Core Units	<p>3. Human Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Codification, protection and monitoring of human rights• Practice of human rights <p>4. Power, Sovereignty and International Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nature of power• Operation of state power in global politics• Function and impact of international organizations and non-state actors in global politics
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TASK 1

Background on Nigeria

1 Learn about Nigeria:

- a. Watch Stratfor’s video: “[Nigeria’s Geographic Challenge](#).”
- b. Read the text below from the [Global Centre for Pluralism’s](#) case note on Nigeria (March 2017):

Nigeria is one of Africa’s most diverse and deeply divided states. The colonial decision to merge Northern and Southern Nigeria created a single political entity from two regions with limited common history and few cultural ties. Colonial rule exacerbated these differences, solidifying religious and ethnic identity as salient political distinctions and creating conditions that have contributed to persistent instability. The divide between North and South continues, marked by serious variations in economic development and access to basic social services. Religious disputes have periodically provoked tensions between the regions, especially since the rise of more fundamentalist strains of Islam during the 1980s.

Nigeria’s regional structure has also generated competition between ethnic groups. The status of the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa-Fulani as dominant ethnicities within their respective regions has generated tensions with minority ethnic groups. The strong association of communities with particular territory has also created conflict between “indigenes” claiming nativity within a given area and other Nigerians, who are sometimes viewed as internal migrants, denied equal rights and granted limited access to land. Competition for control of state institutions, abetted by pervasive corruption and conflict over the spoils of Nigeria’s natural resources (especially oil), have further complicated and contributed to these sources of instability.¹

¹ All the italicized boxed text in the Workbook is taken from a case study commissioned by the Global Centre for Pluralism: “Federalism and Group-Based Inequalities in Nigeria” by Daniel Agbiboa (March 2017). The research paper and the case note can be found [here](#).

2 Answer the questions:



- a. **Connect** — What do you already know about Nigeria?
- b. **Extend** — What new ideas did you get that EXTENDED or pushed your thinking in new directions?
- c. **Challenge** — What is still CHALLENGING or confusing to get your mind around? What questions, thoughts or puzzles do you have now?

TASK 2

Nationalism, Ethnicity, Federalism and Pluralism in Nigeria

1 Fill in the following table:

TERM	DEFINITION
State	
Nation-State	
Ethnic	
Unitary State	
Federal State	

2 Read:

With a population of about 200 million, Nigeria is the largest country in Africa by population, with 300 ethnic groups and 250 languages. Three major groups—the Igbo in the southeast, the Hausa-Fulani in the north and the Yoruba in the southwest—make up two-thirds of the national population. The country’s ethno-linguistic diversity has been a source of communal, regional and national tensions in modern Nigeria since its foundation in 1960. Deep divisions not only permeate socio-political life but also threaten to tear the state apart in the absence of a dominant, cohesive influence at the centre. The search for workable structural arrangements to balance the country’s divergent and decentralized interests has preoccupied every successive government.

Despite Nigeria’s somewhat tumultuous history, the federal character of the state would seem to have mitigated more serious violence. Federalism has localized conflict, created a balance between major ethnic groups (precluding any one from seizing control of state authority) and preserved a degree of diversity in each of the regions. At the same time, superimposing a federal system on economically and culturally diverse regions has created powerful incentives to engage in a winner-takes-all politics that encourages redistributive tendencies on the basis of group identity and which has systematically failed to address large gaps in living standards across the country. These deep inequalities have at least in part fuelled the rise of Boko Haram and contributed to continuing nationalist conflict in the Niger Delta.

The current constitution aspires to “recognize the diversity of the people” and “promote a sense of belonging and loyalty among all the people of the Federation.” However, tensions surrounding the federal election in 2015 have again brought longstanding regional and religious sources of conflict to the fore.

- 3 **Explain** the relationship between nationalism and ethnicity in Nigeria.
- 4 **Take notes** on the slides about pluralism.
- 5 **Take notes** on Daniel Agbiboa’s² video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wSNi9cJYps>.
- 6 **Answer:** How does the concept of pluralism apply to the Nigerian context?

2 Daniel Agbiboa is the author of the Global Centre for Pluralism’s research paper, “[Federalism and Group-Based Inequalities in Nigeria](#).” He is Assistant Professor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, United States. He holds a PhD in International Development from the University of Oxford. His research focuses on themes of conflict, security and development in sub-Saharan Africa.

TASK 3

Links to Theory I

1 Read:

Nigeria's challenges with managing diversity can be traced back to the historical origins of the state. Post-colonial rulers inherited a tripartite federal structure based on regional autonomy that conferred effective control over national life to the three major ethnic groups. Without mediating influences, the resulting territorial and economic disparities among the regions generated tensions. There was a stark imbalance between the political power of the Hausa-Fulani and the socio-economic strength of the Yoruba and the Igbo. This federal structure, coupled with a problematic Westminster majoritarian model, produced significant turbulence in the decade following independence.

The creation of a more inclusionary federal system has been critical to Nigeria's continuance as a state. This objective has been pursued on two fronts: through the steady expansion of the number of states and by attempting to transform the federal political structure into an engine for greater pluralism through the recognition and accommodation of group differences. Today, the Nigerian federation is comprised of a multiplicity of states, and a "Federal Character" principle, introduced in the constitution of 1979, seeks to ensure that individuals from a plurality of states, ethnic and religious groups make up both the national government and its constituting political parties.

How well has this vision of Nigerian federalism as an engine of pluralism translated into practice? On one level, the relative absence of violent conflict suggests Nigeria's federal system has managed the country's diversity through a reasonably effective set of interethnic compromises. One of the key developments of Nigerian federalism has been to establish countervailing structures to limit the power of the majority ethnic groups which are now dispersed across the territory in 22 of the country's 36 states. This dilution of ethno-regional influence has increased the authority of the central government as well as amplified the voice of ethnic minorities in federal matters.

In addition to balancing political interests and tensions, Nigeria's federalism has also helped to manage competing state and group interests in the economic and social domains. Federalism has created a system for the redistribution of oil revenues from the oil-rich Niger Delta to the rest of the federation. The constitution also recognizes the right of states to establish customary courts. This provision has allowed Nigeria's Muslim-dominated Northern states to establish Sharia courts with civil jurisdiction over matters of personal law.

2 Answer:

- a. What measures have been taken that resulted in “negative peace”?³
- b. Have these measures resulted in “positive peace”? If so, how?

3 Watch an interview with Samuel Huntington in which he discusses his “Clash of Civilizations” theory: “Samuel Huntington on the ‘Clash of Civilizations’” <https://charlieroose.com/videos/17838> or **read** Huntington’s theory proposed in his 1993 article, “The Clash of Civilisations?”⁴

4 Answer: In your opinion, does the conflict in Nigeria have a “civilizational” character? Why or why not?

5 In their book, *Why Nations Fail* (2012) Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson identify several characteristics for extractive and inclusive institutions.

- a. **Review** the chart below (created based on the characteristics that Acemoglu and Robinson identify).
- b. **Answer:** How did federalism result in the creation of extractive institutions?

Inclusive vs Extractive Institutions:

Inclusive countries	Extractive countries
Rule of law	Rule of elite
Equality for all: Solid property rights	Some are more equal than others
Aimed at effectiveness and efficiency	Aimed at interests of the ruling class
Encouragement of entrepreneurship: incentive to invest	Encouragement of clientelism: incentive to be government official or politician

³ Negative and positive peace are concepts covered in IB curriculum. To learn more, visit <http://kanglaonline.com/2012/07/understanding-violence-triangle-and-structural-violence-by-rajkumar-bobichand/>.

⁴ Originally published in *Foreign Affairs* (summer 1993). Available (with a subscription) here <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1993-06-01/clash-civilizations>.

TASK 4

Nigeria's Development Challenges

1 **Read** the Executive Summary and the Introduction of the International Crisis Group's report: "Herders Against Farmers: Nigeria's Expanding Deadly Conflict" <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/252-herders-against-farmers-nigerias-expanding-deadly-conflict> (September 2017) and identify the challenges to development.

2 **Create** a poster about one of the following sections:



- a. Drivers of the Violence (6 factors)
- b. The Toll and Impact
- c. Deficient Responses (5 factors)
- d. Steps to Help Address the Conflict (5 factors)

** see examples on slides*

3 **Run** a [Chalk Talk Routine](#)⁵ based on the posters:

- a. What ideas come to mind when you consider this idea, question or problem?
- b. What connections can you make to others; what responses?
- c. What questions arise as you think about the ideas and consider the responses and comments of others?

⁵ See Overview document for details on how to conduct a Chalk Talk Routine.

TASK 5

Inequality in Nigeria: Political Factors Affecting Development

- 1 Read the definition for the IB key concept Inequality below.
- 2 Using a 3-2-1 Bridge activity, **state**
 - a) 3 relevant words
 - b) 2 questions about the text
 - c) 1 metaphor or simile

Inequality	Inequality refers to a state of affairs where equality between people or groups of people is not realized and the consequent potential compromises of justice and liberty. Inequality often manifests itself through unequal access to resources that are needed to sustain life and develop individuals and communities. Consequently, the concept is closely connected to discussions of power and of who holds the rights to these resources and their proceeds. Inequality can be examined both as a phenomenon within and between societies.
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3 Read:

*... despite success in checking national domination by a few large ethnic groups and in enabling the sharing of economic resources, Nigerian federalism has generated several perverse outcomes. **First**, the number of states has proliferated from a three-region structure to the present 36-state structure. This fragmentation has served to deepen ethno-regionalism. One result has been persistent conflict over revenue sharing among and between the federal government and the states, some of which are economically non-viable and exist mainly as vehicles for access to federal finances.*

Second, the increase in the number of states has also had the effect that the geo-political space within which Nigerians can claim full citizenship rights has shrunk. The 1979 Constitution created a quota system for each state at the national level, but only Nigerians indigenous to a particular state qualified as representatives. “Non-indigenes” were thus denied full citizenship and the potential socio-economic benefits of mobility.

Third, the centralization of political authority and increased opportunities for rent-seeking from the redistribution of oil revenues have contributed to the corruption, waste and mismanagement of public resources for which Nigeria has become notorious. The federal government has centralized the ownership and control of oil resources in such a way that nearly all states and local government areas depend primarily on transfers.

Fourth, and finally, while the application of Sharia Law in the North has given public recognition to religious heritage of Muslims, it has also been a source of exclusion for women and non-Muslims in these regions. Nor have these forms of cultural recognition done much to redress the persistent educational and economic deprivation prevalent in the North’s Muslim-majority states. The Boko Haram⁶ insurgency has emerged both as a form of protest to draw attention to the region’s plight and as an economic vehicle for some of the region’s most impoverished citizens. It would appear that Boko Haram is infusing religion into a long-churning brew of regional grievances about corruption and the inequitable distribution of wealth and power in Nigeria that has increasingly delegitimized the secular state.

- 4 **Answer:** Do Nigeria’s federal arrangements mitigate group grievances and disparities or serve to stoke ethnic and religious competition?
- 5 **Read** the BBC article “Nigeria Midwife Murders: Brutal IS Tactics Rekindle New Fears” (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-45876440> [October 2018]). Outline the impacts of Boko Haram in Nigeria.
- 6 **Read** what Francis Fukuyama writes about “social mobilization” as a dimension of development in *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy* (2014, chapters 12, 13, 27 and 36).
- 7 **Answer** the questions:
 - a) What are the implications in this case study?
 - b) How do your answers link to the key concept of Violence?

6 See “Regional Responses to Boko Haram” (June 2017) in the Annex at the end of the Workbook.

TASK 6

Links to Theory II⁷

- 1 **Read** chapter 14 (part 1) in Fukuyama’s *Political Order and Political Decay on Nigeria*.⁸
- 2 **List** the factors affecting development.
- 3 **Read** part 2 of Fukuyama’s chapter on Nigeria.
- 4 **Answer:** To what extent is Nigeria a “stable state” (Fukuyama)?
Give supporting examples for all three aspects: 1) rule of law, 2) accountability and democracy, and 3) strong and modern. **Fill out the first row of the chart below.**

NIGERIA	Rule of Law	Accountability / Democracy	Strong & Modern
Examples / Challenges			
Relating Key Concepts			

- 5 **Relate** key IB concepts to the three aspects (see the table at the end of the Workbook).
- 6 **Read** “Regional Responses to Boko Haram” (found in the Annex at the end of the Workbook).
- 7 **Outline**, with examples, other factors inhibiting development in Nigeria.

7 This task connects to theory typically covered in the IB curriculum. This includes a term that Fukuyama calls “repatrimonialization.” He defines this as a form of corruption and views it in two ways: 1) kin selection, i.e., nepotism, in which you look after your own family, tribe or religious group; 2) reciprocal altruism, in which you do someone a favour with the expectation that they will repay you. This can also be linked to the “Dutch Disease,” which refers to a situation when a state relies exclusively or to a large extent on one resource or sector alone in their economy. Any fluctuations in that sector make it highly vulnerable. The connection could be made with the oil sector in Nigeria, for example.

8 Available for purchase through Amazon, <https://www.amazon.ca/Political-Order-Decay-Industrial-Globalization/dp/1491584874>.

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- 8 Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler’s “Greed vs Grievance” theory⁹ discusses how greed (such as for money or power) is the main cause of civil conflict rather than grievances (such as inequality, lack of democracy or human rights, etc.). **Summarize** arguments for both sides of the argument from this case study. How do they affect development and inequality in Nigeria?

Greed in Nigeria	Grievances in Nigeria

⁹ Read about the theory: <https://www.econ.nyu.edu/user/debraj/Courses/Readings/CollierHoeffler.pdf>.

TASK 7

Nigeria Through a Pluralism Lens

1 Read through the Global Centre for Pluralism’s drivers of inclusion and exclusion.

LIVELIHOODS AND WELLBEING

Quality of life

- Equality of outcomes for individuals and groups
- Equitable access to and benefit from resources

LAW, POLITICS AND RECOGNITION

How governments act

- Defining and sustaining inclusive citizenship
- Institutional mechanisms
- Norms, policies, resources

CITIZENS, CIVIL SOCIETY AND IDENTITY

How citizens act

- Inclusive citizenship practices
- Expression of multiple identities (civic, ethnic, gender, religious)
- Arena for redefining inclusion

EDUCATION, RELIGION AND MEDIA

Transmission of norms

- Intergenerational learning
- Intercultural exchange
- News, the internet, social media, the arts

HISTORY AND MEMORY

The past in the present

- Impact of past grievances
- Gaps between official and remembered past
- Inclusive remembering

PLACES AND SPACES

Landscapes of cultural exchange

- Neighbourhoods and cities
- Rural areas and communities
- Public-private connections: families, cyberspace, work

TRANSNATIONAL AND REGIONAL INFLUENCES

Potential impacts of external actors

- Neighbourhood influences
- Historic border making
- Transnational identities
- Virtual communities
- International norms, institutions and actors

2 A) Find examples of how Nigeria has **inclusive** institutions, which foster pluralism and development, by looking through and/or watching:

- the above “drivers of inclusion and exclusion”
- Acemoglu and Robinson’s “Extractive and Inclusive Institutions” (Task 2)
- The NowThis World video “How Powerful is Nigeria?”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3EvNIw5L8E>
- The SpiceTVAfrica video “Spice Focus: Queens of Africa”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRo2X1Goq1A>

B) Find examples of **extractive** institutions hindering development in Nigeria in Ha-Joon Chang’s *23 Things They Don’t Tell You About Capitalism*, “Thing 11: Africa Is Not Destined for Underdevelopment.”

C) Fill out the table below.

Inclusive Institutions	Extractive Institutions

3 Read the article “Nigeria: What Muhammadu Buhari’s Re-election Means for Africa’s Biggest Economy” from *The Conversation* (March 2019), <https://theconversation.com/nigeria-what-muhammadu-buharis-re-election-means-for-africas-biggest-economy-112806>, about the 2019 elections.

4 Based on the article, **update the descriptors** for the following three drivers of pluralism in Nigeria:

DRIVER 1: LIVELIHOODS AND WELLBEING

- Federalism has enabled a more balanced distribution of centrally controlled revenues from Nigeria’s extensive natural resources, most especially those generated by oil.
- At the same time, distributive federalism has led to conflicts between the central government and the states, giving rise to competition, corruption and increased opportunities for rent-seeking.
- Despite successes toward political power-sharing, profound economic and educational disparities persist between the North and South and among the country’s 36 states.

DRIVER 2: LAW, POLITICS AND RECOGNITION

- Federalism has moderated the possibility of domination of the national state by the three largest ethnic groups as well as strengthened smaller ethnic minorities.
- Despite its deficiencies, Nigeria's federal system is credited with mitigating more serious intergroup violence.
- The definition of citizenship in the federal structure has tended to exclude those who are not indigenous to a state, thereby undermining the notion of inclusive citizenship.

DRIVER 3: CITIZENS, CIVIL SOCIETY AND IDENTITY

- The provision for Sharia Law to specific regions is an innovative constitutional response to popular pressures for ethno-religious self-rule that has nonetheless led to the exclusion of women and secular Muslims.
- The growing strength of the Boko Haram insurgency reflects the failure of the federal system to redress the economic and educational disparities that have fuelled the group's success.

Conclusion

The experience of Nigeria federalism over the last 50 years shows that building inclusive institutions and recognizing minority voices are the only paths to political legitimacy grounded in the effective governance of diversity. The country's record of implementation is mixed. On the one hand, federalism in Nigeria has succeeded in promoting a degree of political inclusion. On the other, the country continues to experience pervasive group-based economic exclusion and inequality. Nigeria's federalism contains contradictions, such that the very mechanisms of inclusion also operate as levers of exclusion. Nevertheless, the balance sheet on the whole is positive. Despite its democratic deficits and the challenges posed by the rise of an assertive and even violent Islamist movement, Nigeria today is a more integrated country than it was in the 1960s. The country's multi-state federal system has proved a relative success in managing and moderating the ethnic chauvinism of majority groups, while giving minorities a greater voice at the centre and fostering "national unity in diversity." The task of nation-building—in part by correcting the deep-seated horizontal inequalities that now impede pluralism and in part by ending the rampant corruption that feeds group-based competition—remains a work in progress.

Some Relevant IB Key Concepts and Their Definitions

Concept	Explanation
Power	Power is a central concept in the study of global politics and a key focus of the course. Power can be seen as ability to effect change and, rather than being viewed as a unitary or independent force, is as an aspect of relations among people functioning within a social organization. Contested relationships between people and groups of people dominate politics, particularly in this era of increased globalization, and so understanding the dynamics of power plays a prominent role in understanding global politics.
Sovereignty	Sovereignty characterizes a state's independence, its control over territory and its ability to govern itself. How states use their sovereign power is at the heart of many Important Issues in global politics. Some theorists argue that sovereign power is increasingly being eroded by aspects of globalization such as global communication and trade, which states cannot always fully control. Others argue that sovereign states exercise a great deal of power when acting in their national interest and that this is unlikely to change.
Legitimacy	Legitimacy refers to an actor or an action being commonly considered acceptable and provides the fundamental basis or rationale for all forms of governance and other ways of exercising power over others. The most accepted contemporary source of legitimacy in a state is some form of democracy or constitutionalism whereby the governed have a defined and periodical opportunity to choose who they wish to exercise power over them. Other sources of legitimacy are suggested in states in which such an opportunity does not exist. Within any proposed overall framework of legitimacy, individual actions by a state can be considered more or less legitimate. Other actors in global politics and their actions can also be evaluated from the perspective of legitimacy.
interdependence	In global politics, the concept of interdependence most often refers to the mutual reliance between and among groups, organizations, geographic areas and/or states for access to resources that sustain living arrangements. Often, this mutual reliance is economic (such as trade), but can also have a security dimension (such as defence arrangements) and, increasingly, a sustainability dimension (such as environmental treaties). Globalization has increased interdependence, while often changing the relationships of power among the various actors engaged in global politics.
Human rights	Human rights are basic claims and entitlements that, many argue, one should be able to exercise simply by virtue of being a human being. Many contemporary thinkers argue they are essential for living a life of dignity, are inalienable, and should be accepted as universal. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN in 1948 is recognized as the beginning of the formal discussion of human rights around the world. Critics argue that human rights are a Western, or at least culturally relative, concept.

Inequality	Inequality refers to a state of affairs where equality between people or groups of people is not realized and the consequent potential compromises of justice and liberty. Inequality often manifests itself through unequal access to resources that are needed to sustain life and develop individuals and communities. Consequently, the concept is closely connected to discussions of power and of who holds the rights to these resources and their proceeds. Inequality can be examined both as a phenomenon within and between societies.
Conflict	Conflict is the dynamic process of actual or perceived opposition between individuals or groups. This could be opposition over positions, interests or values. Most theorists would distinguish between non-violent and violent conflict. In this distinction, non-violent conflict can be a useful mechanism for social change and transformation, while violent conflict is harmful and requires conflict resolution.
Sustainability	Definitions of sustainability begin with the idea that development should meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Sustainability today has three fields of debate—environmental, sociopolitical and economic. In global politics, mechanisms and incentives required for political institutions, economic actors and individuals to take a longer term and more inclusive well-being perspective in their decision-making are particularly important.
Development	Development is a sustained increase in the standard of living and well-being of a level of social organization. Many consider it to involve increased income; better access to basic goods and services; improvements in education, health care and public health; well-functioning institutions; decreased inequality; reduced poverty and unemployment; and more sustainable production and consumption patterns. The focus of development debates in contemporary global politics is on issues faced by developing countries, and on the imperative of shifting the focus from modernization (seen as Westernization). However, all societies and communities face questions about how to best promote well-being and reduce ill-being.

ANNEX

Regional Responses to Boko Haram¹⁰

The rise of Boko Haram has posed a complicated challenge to pluralism in West Africa. Widely recognized as a violent terrorist group, Boko Haram has primarily operated in Northern Nigeria, where the population is predominantly Muslim and also poorer than the largely Christian south of the country. These overlapping social divides in Nigeria have been a constant source of ethnic and religious tension since the country's independence, and Boko Haram's insurgency is but the most recent example of these tensions.

Traditional military responses have proven to be ineffective. Militants have taken advantage of the extreme porousness of the borders between Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Benin to seamlessly move between the countries and increase recruitment. This has forced Nigeria to rethink its approach to counter-insurgency by working with regional partners despite past conflicts to arrive at multilateral military solutions.

However, non-military responses are also needed in order to address the underlying issues that have been at the root of violent extremism in the region. One issue that has had a lasting impact on the area is environmental insecurity near the Lake Chad Basin. Once considered one of the biggest lakes in the world, it has now shrunk to approximately 10% of what it was in the 1960s. This has done significant damage to the region by reducing arable land and forcing traders to move with the shrinking lake, thus undermining local economies.

Connected to this is the fact that youth unemployment and disenfranchisement is rampant, particularly in the north. Many people suspected of working with Boko Haram have said that the driving reason behind joining was that the group provided them with jobs. Policy-makers and other civil actors need to counter this by creating opportunities to bring young people into the mainstream through increased job creation. Second, the overlapping social divides between the richer Christian south and poorer Muslim north have enabled Boko Haram and other groups to create a narrative of existential struggle that many alienated youths can identify with, since these inequalities affect them directly. These narratives need to be engaged on an ideological level as well as an economic one. Local religious leaders need to be engaged with to counter radical

¹⁰ This commentary is based on Daniel Agbiboa's remarks at the "Reducing Group Inequalities" event held at the Global Centre for Pluralism on 30 March 2017.

ideologies with alternative narratives that bring disenfranchised northerners and Muslims into the larger civic space as equals.

For the Global Centre for Pluralism, the case of Boko Haram demonstrates two things: first, that military responses are not sufficient for dealing with the underlying issues of exclusion and inequality that some countries are dealing with. Second, efforts to address exclusion and inequality, whether in the political, economic or social domain, need to be done simultaneously with similar efforts in other domains so that they complement each other. In order for this to happen, local leaders need to take an active interest in addressing these concerns because pluralistic outcomes do not happen automatically. Rather, they require choices to be made at all levels of governance and in all domains of society that difference is something to be respected and valued, not excluded.