



CHATHAM HOUSE

Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE
T: +44 (0)20 7957 5700 E: contact@chathamhouse.org.uk
F: +44 (0)20 7957 5710 www.chathamhouse.org.uk
Charity Registration Number: 208223

Transcript

Corruption in Africa

Nuhu Ribadu

Visiting Fellow, Center for Global Development, Washington DC
Senior Fellow, St Anthony's College, Oxford University

20 May 2010

The views expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of Chatham House, its staff, associates or Council. Chatham House is independent and owes no allegiance to any government or to any political body. It does not take institutional positions on policy issues. This document is issued on the understanding that if any extract is used, the speaker and Chatham House should be credited, preferably with the details of the event. Where this document refers to or reports statements made by speakers at an event every effort has been made to provide a fair representation of their views and opinions, but the ultimate responsibility for accuracy lies with this document's author(s). The published text of speeches and presentations may differ from delivery.

Michael Peel (Chair):

Our guest today is Nuhu Ribadu, the ‘anti-corruption doyen of Nigeria’, I suppose is perhaps the best way to describe him and he certainly does not be introduced to many of you here. He currently is a Visiting Fellow at the Center for Global Development in Washington and before that he was the Head of Nigeria’s Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, which was set up in 2003 and which really was the first body of its kind to tackle financial crime in Nigeria.

As someone who lived in Nigeria at that time, I can testify to the enormous public impact that the setting-up of this body had and the vigorous debate that it sparked over the coming years at which Nuhu was at the centre. Nuhu has served on several economic and anti-corruption commissions and was a key member of Nigeria’s Economic Management team which began its work during the second half of President Obasanjo’s term in office. He was awarded the World Bank’s Jit Gill Memorial Award for outstanding public service in recognition of his efforts and before he led the EFCC, Nuhu was for 18 years an officer in the Nigerian Police Force and his final accomplishment listed that he is currently a Senior Fellow at St. Anthony’s College at Oxford University in the UK with rooms not too far away from those recently occupied by John Githongo, the former Kenyan anti-corruption chief, so he is in good company there.

So, without further ado, I am going to ask Nuhu to speak for about 20 minutes and then we will take some questions for the rest of the meeting, which will last for about one hour in total. So, Nuhu.

Nuhu Ribadu:

What a wonderful day, thank you so much. I can see so many familiar faces. It is amazing how, whenever I get into London, how I feel, as if I am back into my mother’s room 40, 50 years ago. I feel so safe, I feel so comfortable, I feel like I do not have problems anymore. London has done me incredible magic. It was probably at the time when I left Nigeria, that was the first time, I somehow got in and I felt safe. I really feel amazingly happy whenever I am in London. Thank you so much for having me here. Let me just start by thanking Chatham House and of course the Africa Programme, Mike here and all of you for this opportunity to talk to you. To make it brief because of these very distinguished people I can see here and to make it interesting to carry the discussion forward, so let’s give more time for questions but maybe I will say one or two things just as a way of setting the whole discussion going.

I am Nuhu Ribadu, certainly most of you know that and the work I did in Nigeria. We attempted to fight corruption and most of the bad things that made it impossible for us really to move forward and to address our problems and it also got me into trouble and I left the country. I left the country about two years ago, and coming out gave me the chance to really assess and reflect and see exactly what we attempted and tried to do. And these two years really made me to realize and believe that is was the right thing and that there was no other way to address these problems in Africa in countries like Nigeria better or more than the way we have attempted to do. And if there is hope for the country, we most just go that direction.

I was in Oxford and in Washington DC. I know what I did, I know what I tried to do. I knew all my life what I played and somehow the little things that we succeeded in. I know what the problem of corruption is. I know the reason why we are still at the bottom of the ladder. And I know the reason why we still continue to live on the kindness of others and I know the reasons why we continue to see all these horrible things coming out of our continent. It is simply because of corruption, mismanagement, abuse of office, not doing things properly and correctly, misuse of authority, diversion of resources to a negative use.

Right from the time when I joined, when I started my public life and my public career in 1983/4, when I joined the Nigerian police force as a qualified lawyer, I did work in the police force and I saw what corruption could do to people and to a country. I saw how impossible for you it is to have security and law and order with a corrupt police, how easily... [inaudible] will be abused, and things will be distorted.

I participated in some of the most important things in the country, e.g. as a member of an investigation of COOs (Chief Operating Officer), two or three at which I participated. I understood clearly the fundamental reasons why you see poverty and starvation in countries like Nigeria simply because of corruption. And I know what they did to us: dictatorships. I participated as a member in a lot of enquiries investigating cases of civil and ethnic arrest, religious crisis. So many of them I participated and I know the reason why we have them, simply because of corruption.

All this, I did it. Personally I was part of it. I investigated and probably persecuted some of the most important cases that took place in my country. I was the one who brought Abacha to justice in Nigeria, I challenged them to court [sic]. I saw what they did to our people. I actually went through it. One individual with an opportunity to do what is right for his own people. He

[Abacha] probably took as much as 10% of earnings of the entire country into its own personal use and that of its own family. I investigated and established that Abacha took as much as US\$ 6 billion from Nigeria. But it is not just him, several others are like him. So that's my own experience and I think that is good for people like us to be heard. If you want to carry this debate forward, if you want to understand the nature of this problem, it is important for you to listen to those people who did the physical work. We had lots of ideas, studies, researches, and for years we have been talking about it, and it is really more than what others might think.

Just as I was coming from Washington, there was a study published that was conducted recently. Raymond Baker, a very good friend, maybe some of you will know, worked with the World Bank, IMF and other institutions in Washington and came out with the figure that as much as about US\$ 854 billion went out of Africa in the last 39 years. A study with facts and figures, and that was conservative and according to them, it might even go up to US\$ 1.6 trillion. This is money, domestic money that ought to be used for development and growth and addressing the problems of the continent. It went out, went out to the rich part of the world that does not even need it. The [inaudible] of people, stolen from the poorest and allow us to continue to live on charity, diseases, killing ourselves.

The fundamental problem confronting us and the reason why we are not doing much, that the world has left us and has moved so fast, simply because we mismanaged, we wasted the resources that we had. Instead, our own leaders turned into criminals, stealing from their own people. And the world helped them; the world sat down and did not do much about it. And we continue to live with that.

We tried to do something about that and Nigeria is a very good example. Nigeria is probably not the most corrupt country, no maybe not, probably not as corrupt as most African countries, but probably Nigeria speaks and talks more about it. That is the reason. I mean look at it, I can tell you we have facts and figures. Maybe again of course, Nigeria is a little bit richer, but Nigerians are people that just do not keep quiet. And they struggle and they fight, and there are people who always they do, they do their best. Look at Nigerians in the UK: they work so hard, they succeed in most of the things they are pursuing. We make so much noise and if we see physical infrastructure development in Nigeria, it is far better than that in most of the African countries. It is therefore not only a Nigerian issue, it is an African issue, countries with challenges and difficulties and problems.

Nigeria did more than any other country in addressing it, I was part of it. We had a chance in 2003, partly because of Obasanjo, an opportunity of pressure that came from outside. And maybe one of the things I wanted to bring out is that what could be done about it, what things could make a difference? And we got an opportunity by accident, by chance. And we intended to address our own problems. And in 2003, Nigeria was corrupt. When we got that chance it was a piece of paper that was given to us. People in the leadership did not know, did not exactly understand what the problem was. And with the way we are going, we realized that maybe that might be the solution or the possibility for us to get in and also to catch up with the rest of the world in standards, in doing the right things, law and order. And we put it into practice and we saw the difference.

The first month that we worked and we set it gradually, little by little. The simple reason why we succeed was because we were not even corrupt ourselves. Corruption took over and destroyed everything to a point where we, the few people who refused not to be, would make a difference. We went round and got them and that was what the signal was. But I also understood that it is not an issue that could be done by us alone.

As much as corruption is our own problem, and I still believe that it is we that need to confront it, but we need the world to help us and support us. But the corruption we are talking about is not just the problem of Africans or Nigerians. It is your problem because it is the cause of e.g. drug trafficking, child trafficking, it is the cause of credit card fraud that you are daily confronted with. Not to talk of the poverty, the killings. So you must just go to Sierra Leone and to continue to think and contemplate about what will be the next trouble spot in the world. It is the cause of the problem of Sudan, it is all, it is the cause of everybody's problem. It is not just us. So therefore the world will have to just work together.

And the way we did it, I got resources and the solutions were simple. I came to London two months into the work and it was organised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and they gave me the chance to meet with the most strategic people, the Metropolitan Police, NCIS. Amazing guys, wonderful individuals that decided and understood what needed to be done because it is a problem we can not confront ourselves alone. We sat down, we told them that we are serious. We told them that we wanted to make a difference and that that thing is far, far more than our own capacity. Help us! We had a dream to build a system that can work. An agency that can deliver. Help us with that! Help us operationally!

And it started with London. The magic thing about Nigeria and London is that whatever you do, it really determines what the rest of the world will look at and think. It was the UK that started this whole idea of addressing the problem of corruption in Nigeria in 2003. That made it an international thing and the US took over and then the whole world came up with it. And it started with few police men from the Metropolitan Police, few of them. But only these few individuals, the difference they made, is incredible. It is unbelievable in terms of the impact it had back home. The economic miracle that it caused in Nigeria, the change of attitude, the message that they sent to this despotic leaders, powerful individuals, who steal from their own people. They take it out and have safe havens where they sit and enjoy it with their own families. Metropolitan police went after few, maybe they arrested two or three of such individuals with couple of millions of pounds with them. That message was amazing.

In 2005, we had it on record that as much as about US\$ 10 billion are going out of Nigeria. Two days after the sharing of the national revenues, I mean we have what we call national share of revenues, where the state and the federal government will sit and share whatever their own portions. Two days after it you see it, a rise in the exchange rate and the entire money goes out [of Nigeria]. And it comes here fast before it goes to other places. By the time the Metropolitan Police acted, in 2006 when they arrested two or three governors, in 2006 we saw a reversal of flow of capital. As much as US\$ 15 billion went back to Nigeria. US\$ 15 billion on record! That was the money that fuelled the growth in the capital market. Recapitalise our banking sector, help some of the little [inaudible] and made a big difference in a short period of time in our country. Few individuals in the Metropolitan Police. Far, far more than anyone in DFID or any other person could have done to help. Our problem is not an issue of continuing to give us aid. It is rather doing something to help us to make good use of what we have. Most of us do have enough to really solve our own problems. Some other countries might yes, might want to continue to rely on aid assistance but so many other do not need that. The support you could do and that could make a difference to help us to reduce that possibility of our own leaders continuously stealing from their own people and to denying us the chance to make any meaningful difference in our own lives.

What we did at that time, for the first time in the history of our country, a country that never had one single conviction for over 40 years of our independence. In three years time, we got conviction in close to 300 cases. But not ordinary cases, powerful cases, including of course I told you what I have seen what had happened in the Nigerian Police Force. How impossible

it is for you to get law and order and security if you have a corrupt police. My own boss, the Inspector General of the Police, the person we investigated, we got him with as much as about US\$ 150 million. We took that money from him and sent him to jail.

The Niger Delta you continue to hear about, we attempted to do something about it. At the time when we started working as much as 100,000 barrels of crude oil was stolen from the country. 100,000 barrels! We worked within a short period of time and we reduced it to less than 10,000 barrels. We continued to talk about Niger Delta but nobody seems to understand what it really is about. At that point, we had governors in the Niger Delta, literally the richest people you can find in the world. Not business men, but public officers with public money, supposed to address the problems of those in that region. One of them for god's sake is e.g. James Ibori who the Metropolitan Police is continuously trying to bring to justice. Rightly because he committed offences in your own country and he has done so much to damage his own people. One individual! Personally myself, he gave me US\$ 15 million, cash! For me to stop to attempt to bring him to justice. I used it as evidence to prosecute him. But how possible for you to have peace and stability and security in a system where a governor can have that much money? But it is not just him. There are so many others like that.

This tells you the story about corruption and our own problems. And even now, when we are talking about, we are still thinking that we are getting peace. No, actually, it is corruption that is bringing a little bit of peace now because those boys that are complaining, have been given money. And that is the corruption we are talking about. It is so sad it has become a way of life in our own system. We tried to go around and continued to track this problem and so on. But the changes that this work that we did within this short period of time - and there is no time for me to go any further because I really want to have the chance for those questions - made a difference, changed the country within a short period of time. And Nigeria is so different from the rest.

In 2003, I saw a very simple, basic thing that can show you some indication of how addressing problems of corruption could change us as a country and as a society. In 2003, we had less than US\$ 7 billion in our own reserves, in 2007, we had US\$ 67 billion. In addition to wiping out almost entirely our own foreign debts. Thankfully, thanks once again to the UK, because UK government headed that initiative and part of the reason why they did it was simply because they thought we were different, that we have changed. We got off the ITF [sic] list, through which so much money got into our own country and indeed our own banks started to go out and becoming dominant

in the continent. Things started changing so fast. Our image improved greatly, those who could make a difference in our own lives, started to have confidence in the way we do things. Metropolitan Police can work with us. Everyone can work for with us. And that is the greatest difference, help, you can give to countries like us.

If you look at what happened to the continent, to Africa, you realize that it is just criminal mismanagement, despots that caused the problems of the continent. And there is no any other way you can change that continent or reverse those tears unless you stand up to address them. The problems of the continent are caused by the Mabutus, the Idi Amins, the Samuel Dos, Kenyattas. They are the ones who cause it. No more and no less. Unless something is done about the continuation of that, unless something can be done about the Mugabes of this world, the chances are little that we really can move forward. It is about leadership, it is about understanding of what are the things we can do right now to improve the way we do business and manage ourselves. It is about having fairly good laws that will promote transparency and accountability, public procurement, physical responsibility law, freedom of information laws, anti-corruption laws. It is the implementation of those laws and I think the world can do that, it would not cost nobody nothing. It is just about saying "yes, those are the things you have to do and we will stand by you if you do it and if you do not do it, we will not do business with you". This rigor would stop those people, those leaders, who continue to steal from their own people. And I have seen it. The initiative that UK started in 2003 made a difference in Nigeria. I have seen others, e.g. who refuse to do it, e.g. with France. This money is belonging to Nigeria, it is not belonging to France or America or anybody. It is our own money, it is our own contract. You can not keep fighting about it, it is not right. But they refused.

On another case, we sent a mutual legal assistance request and it took them two years to translate it from English to French language and then they refused. I went to America, I met the FBI and it changed the entire work they did. They took up the matter, but not only that matter, they took up so many other cases, as of today, they also handled cases of their own companies doing business in Nigeria. And as result of which they penalized them, close to about US\$ 3 billion were taken of such companies as result of their misbehaviour in Nigeria but the effect is back home. It is changing the way business is done and I hope and I see, maybe as Western world is doing fairly well that the Chinese, the Indians will also understand and maybe change or try to do what is right. Hopefully through this we maybe can see a difference and the less we address corruption in Nigeria, I mean Africa, the

chances are that we will not be able to address all those problems, whether it is to make poverty history or human rights or abuse of woman or so on. It will be a difficult thing, it will take us a long time to address it unless we address corruption, mismanagement, abuse of office, misuse of authority. That is where the challenge is. That is what I think that all of us, the good people of the world, those who are concerned, those who are interested, must pay attention. And we have seen that it can be done. Thank you so much

Q&A SESSION

Q: My question is concerned with whether the colonial period created an atmosphere in which if you wanted something you had to pay for it. I can think of an example, you see I lived for some years in Nigeria, and I knew an English man who was working on building new roads. And he had a very large American car, brand new, and one day he did not have it any longer. And I discovered - because he told me quite freely - that he had sold it to a leading local politician for £10. So I wonder whether the roots of corruption, where perhaps not planted at that time, but definitely encouraged at that time?

Q: Yesterday, my friends and I, we just played around at the internet and we found the latest revenue allocation formula for Nigeria for the month of March, which was paid in April to all the local governments. One of the things we were doing was just getting information out on a spreadsheet. We got it here. Looking at it, you could see that, this is a prime example of corruption. This is what encourages corruption. Corruption feeds stuff like this. Looking at it you could see that, Bayelsa, an oil producing state, is lowest ranked on the list. Now you get Lagos, Kano and Katsina, the top three. The first oil producing state appears on number seven. So basically, the whole of Nigeria is a parasite on the Niger Delta, I mean that is where all the oil comes from. My point is this, is it the case that we can actually do a lot to change corruption? To change the attitude of corruption by doing very little things, right? For example, something like the way we allocate revenues.. Is it not the case that by doing little things right, you know, we can have a massive effect?

Q: My first question relates to your work as EFCC chairman. What was the relationship within the work you were doing because of value and reorientation in Nigeria [sic]?

A: Well, I am not into this business of blame game of colonialism. I think it has nothing to do with our misbehaviour now, basically, and also we are not the only country on the continent that was colonised. You did colonise the entire world and we did not see it happening in some other parts of the world. Even within the continent itself. Botswana is your own colony, and it is a good example of management. Tanzania to some degree did fairly well and you also played a role there. It is time for us to move on and move forward and it has nothing to do with that, I disagree completely. Sadly, terribly sadly, I feel pain, I feel the anger that somehow when we got to manage and run our own affairs, we did not do a good job. And I blame most of the problems that we are confronting today at the point of independence when those leaders who had a chance to really give us their issues, to lay a foundation for us, to really

create nations out of these various different countries, to combine the resources that we had into good use, promote justice and fairness to get peace and to help ourselves to address our own problems.

Instead, they did the opposite. They promoted selfish interest and the interest they represented. And corruption got in and became a way of life. And it is just not Nigeria. It happened in Ghana. It happened in Nigeria as the leaders did not understand what was needed to create a nation. It happened in almost all of these big totally failed states. They laid the foundation for this horrible experience we are going through today. That has nothing to do with colonialism, just like, India was colonised and they are doing extremely well. I mean they were not that different to us not long ago and so many others. I think I hate to listen to people blaming colonialism for everything. No, no, no, absolutely no.

A: I think what you have got is one part of the whole revenue sharing formula in whole Nigeria. What you have is about the population and size. There is another part. Before you even go to that, the oil states take. One oil state takes as much as six other states in the country. What you have is just one little part of the whole story. They have so much money that could make a difference there to the lives of the people. I have investigated them, I have seen it. James Ibori had about US\$ 17 million. Somebody as a governor! I do not know how much you can talk about Odili or the rest of them. So, let's stop. We should just get to a point where we should just stop talking about it.

Nigeria is Nigeria, they are your people. If you can come here and live comfortably with white people, why can you not leave comfortably with your own black people that you live with and that God created you within the same entity and the same environment? What is wrong not to see them as your own people? Time has come for us to build that country under the basis that we are one people. Build on it, not on what divides us. Leaders continue to use that to divide us and to continue to create problems for us. Times has come for us to do the right things, justice and fairness. It is not about basic things like sharing this and that. No, our own mindset must change and that goes to the point we are looking at things. We just have to change the way we look at things.

Nigeria is not the only country which is producing oil. Why is it only us who are fighting about it? What is the reason? You could see what has happened to Congo. They destroyed themselves out of these stupid things. The Katanga believing that it is their own resources and that they must continue to use and today they are one of the poorest people in the world. It is the same

thing that is going on with our own way of thinking. It is time for us to get out of this and start honestly looking at us as a country, as a nation, and building it, addressing those problems that divide us. And not allowing few people to continue to use our own poverty, our own difficulties to their own selfish interest and continue to take advantage of it.

Value orientation as EFCC did, but my own believe is that, with EFCC, we concentrated on building an agency as a model of government, an agency that could deliver results. And we concentrated on the implementation of the laws that are there and bringing people to justice as one arm of the whole process of change. Value orientation must be the responsibility of all, especially in political leadership. Nigeria's requirement, Nigeria's challenge today is a leadership that understand the needs for us to change. Leadership that can capture the vision of all of us, the young ones, those of us who have been deprived and those who have been cheated, those who have been forced to leave their own country and to come and work in other places. Understand that time has come for us to pull out all together and fight the causes and change. Change comes from the top, it can not come from any other way. That value orientation has to start from our political leadership that the country desperately needs.

Q: You are right to point out the excellent work the MET did in getting some of Nigeria's money back to Nigeria where it should be. What do you think about the work that our financial regulators are doing in preventing our banks having the money here in the first place?

Q: First of all, Nuhu, thank you for your service to Nigeria. It seems to me that without political reform Nigeria will not produce leaders that are reflective of the values of the people, which are by large decent like most people of the rest of the world. And you mentioned just a minute ago that the change must come from the top, so could you touch on some of the key political reforms that you think we need. I mean immunity clause, independence of the EFCC, and the critical ones you think we need. When we are looking forward we should know the things we should agitate for to change the system.

Q: I have attended programmes like this in the UK and the last one was the one organised by the LSE where Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala gave a speech about Africa – The land of Opportunities. I just want to ask you because you said before the change can happen. You need people with the right thinking to go there and make the change. But one question is, do you have any intention tomorrow to hold any political office?

A: Let me thank you so much our lady from the NGO society. There are so many good people in this world that are doing an incredible good work; working quietly and silently for the most deprived people in the world. They go out of their way and sacrifice so much of their own. I think we just have to stand up and salute those individuals who are doing an extremely good work. I have seen the work that they did on Gabon, Omar Bongo, and so on and it is making an incredible, incredible difference. It is making for example the US wake up and understand what is going on, France and so on. I just want to take that opportunity to say a big thank you to those guys like you, who are doing an unbelievable good work.

On the issue of the financial regulators, I think fundamentally the problems lies with them. It is failure of regulation that allows systems to go the wrong way and continue to support horrible bad things. If they do their work, I believe that most of things that we have seen happening in the last couple of years, including of course the crash, will not have happened. It is a failure of regulation. And it is also a failure of regulation that allows companies and individuals to continue to steal from the poor and bring it into the system.

The case of Abacha is one for example. Abacha laundered billions through the UK authorities, I mean institutions, banks. They made money out of it, they benefited from it and they are still out there, nobody is bringing them to say: Yes, you benefited from the criminal activities, you actually participated in it, you supported it, you made it possible and therefore it is right for you to pay for it. That action could help them not to do it again. And that not only the banks here in the UK but all others. They are all over.

Financial service authorities have done extremely well. In 2003, when I got in here, I had a very good interaction with them. And it took steps to address some of these problems. It was the police that worked it out for me to do that and since then lot of things changed. At the end of the day, it brought the changes we are witnessing today. Of course September 11th and other things that happened to Nigeria made them to change.

I believe still action has to be taken to improve on that and make them to realize that bad behaviour in the past requires sort of penalties and sanctions. And that is the best way you can stop it from happening again. Still, after the work that we did with the Metropolitan Police between 2004-07, when the government – the Umaru Yar'Adua administration – got into Nigeria, they deliberately reversed everything and even stopped the authorities here from doing the right things for our own people. We saw the bad behaviour coming back and unless something is done and unless it is the authorities here that

take actions, maybe it will continue. And therefore I agree completely with you. I do not have the details of what to be done or what should be done but sadly there is need for something to be done about regulatory agencies and authorities. It may help to stop most of those bad things that happened including also what you people have suffered, including the existence of tax heavens. Sadly there is need. I mean I am not to be able to tell exactly what is needed to be done but of course something has to be done about it.

And the political reforms we are talking in Nigeria. Yes, it is fundamental! Unless we get ourselves together and organise a fair and free election as a starting point, as a foundation, maybe it will be difficult to achieve all the other things that we want and we need desperately. And how do I see it? We have a window today, we have a new government in Nigeria and it looks like – I am not sure – but from the look of it, maybe the possibility that that happening is there. Even though already we have lost time because we are talking about elections at the end of this year. The basic things that ought to have happened by now, I have not seen it happening. We need to see for example the beginning of voter registration; that is going to be good and could give us encouragement. We need to see e.g. an attempt to do something about law and order. The Nigerian Police Forces, they are so central if you are going to have free and fair elections. With the mood and the mindset, the way the police is, it is almost impossible for you to have a free and fair election or any other thing. Something has to be done about it and it must be immediately if we are going to have a different election in the next coming eight months. We need to see, e.g. beginning of change of the behaviour of politicians starting from the top. Hopefully Goodluck Jonathan is going to do that or has started doing it, sending a message that this type of behaviour will not be tolerated again.

We also need the interest of the world, a very clear and strong position. We have a new government in the UK. The UK is such an important country to Nigeria. The moment it sends a dissent [sic] the others will follow. I hope this new set of people coming into administration in London will take it as priority to see that we have free and fair elections in Nigeria. We need to see one thing I forgot, re-integration of the fight against corruption because if you have corruption you are not going to have free and fair elections. That fight against corruption went down considerably. Something has to be done. UK authorities will also be helping in that. By the time the election is coming, it is important to have internally readiness and preparedness and the support that will come from outside. The world is not ready to do much about Nigeria unless they see the UK will start. It is time and I hope UK will realize it because Nigeria is

such an important country, not just to them but also to the continent. If you free Nigeria and make Nigeria to work, you are indirectly going to solve a lot of other problems in the rest of the region or the subcontinent.

Q: And will it be you who is helping out that effort is the third question?

A: Well, that question about me as an individual [unintel]. For me, you know, sadly I chose out of my own to be a police officer. Honestly, I graduated as a law graduate but I decided to become a police officer because I thought that was the best thing I could do for my own people. The challenge was huge and I know law and order was the biggest issue and I saw the job of the police and it probably was one of the least respected professions in Nigeria then. But I really wanted to do my own thing. One of the things that made me join the Nigerian Police Force was when I was in law school in 1983 in Lagos. There was a dead body outside, somebody was killed by run-over by a car, and I was passing every day to go to school and that body was there for 2-3 days. And nobody did anything. I felt so sad. And one morning I woke up I was going to school and I saw one policeman putting the body together. I said I am going to be a policeman. That was one of the strongest reasons why I joined the police. I felt this is an incredible individual with incredible work and incredible responsibility taking those tasks that nobody else could do.

I remained in the police but Umaru Yar'Adua and his group [unintel] when I attempted to do what was right for my country, it terminated my career and destroyed that thing that I wanted to be all my life. It changed me. Today I am a different person. But what I told someone yesterday, I said that my life is one, one direction. I fought corruption, I paid bitterly for it. I survived assassination attempts, I was dismissed from the police, terminated my own career I chose, threw me out of my country from my family with nothing. But there is a little bug in my own part of Nigeria and somebody told me the story yesterday. There is a bug that eats pepper, red pepper. It will eat it and afterwards it will just complain: 'Horrible! I can never eat that pepper'. But after a while he will get hungry and he will say: 'if I do not eat pepper, what will I eat? What else can I eat in my life? I must eat pepper'. And he will go back and eat pepper. That's my life, I will go back. I will go back because that is my life. I have no other thing to do apart from that. And I pray to God - I have always been lucky - that the good Lord will continue that luck and I probably will survive it.

I will go back. I do not know in which capacity but I will go back.

Q: I am Conservative Party activist and policy writer. I did some work on globalisation, global policy for the Conservative Party and my focus was on

corruption and I actually just fought a seat at this election in an area that has a significant number of Nigerians, about 2,000-3,000. So, I think I can understand your fears regarding our interest in fighting corruption. It something I personally worked on and there is still a lot more than can be done but my question to you is basically sort of following up my work that a lot of Nigerians even the ones who live in London who I spoke to while I was doing this, seem to believe – and I do not share this view – that you are somebody who was used by Obasanjo to chase after his enemies and this kind of conspiracy theories and rumours. Given the problems you just talked about and that you faced lately and what we saw is happening to the EFCC, what would you do differently if you had to do it all over again? What things would you do differently perhaps to avoid the problems that came in the future and what advice would you give to Farida Waziri who is heading it now?

Q: My question is do you not think that the system of Nigeria where the federal government gives money every single month to each state causes corruption? People who are corrupt are the same in every country - I feel that Nigeria is no exception – do you not feel that specific system where the government is giving money to every state every single month is the result of corruption.

Q: I am running a big project and am flying to Lagos on Sunday. I am also the daughter of the former commander of the Met, so your words have encouraged me enough to go and do my job. I am working with journalists in Nigeria ahead of the election and what is the one message you want me and my team to communicate ahead of the election to the Nigerian public about what needs to be changed in this next election. What is your key message?

A: The first question is one which has continued to re-emerge wherever I go and it is a very difficult one to really answer but I have always said if you fight corruption, it will fight you back. I mean these are very powerful people, these are very powerful individuals that you have to confront. These are people who own almost everything. At one point I brought to justice close to about 70% of owners of the newspapers and media houses in Nigeria. Almost 70%, and I can list them if you want. I can tell you who owns what and I brought them to justice. Whether it is James Ibori or other, all of them I can tell you. So it is understandable that they can not just leave you. You deny them everything, you take millions and millions of money from them, you disrupt their own continuous grasp onto public money and offices that they use selfishly and they will not leave you alone. These people tried to give me money. Indeed they gave me money but I refused to take it.

The same people are saying that it is a selective thing. These people are tempted to even kill me and I survived it. One more important thing to tell you that is that it is impossible for you to have success in fighting corruption if you are involved in two things. Either you are corrupt [or not] – and this is the message I will tell you - because you can not fight corruption with corruption. Two, if you are selective you can never get results. All the places I go and advise anti-corruption agencies, I say the moment you are selective you never get results. We got results in Nigeria, Kenya did not get results, Zambia did not get results, South Africa did not get results. The reason is because somehow we were able to overcome that. Forget about this thing about Obasanjo, it is the politicians. Tell me one single case where I was selective. Tell me one single case and I challenge everywhere wherever I go.

If e.g. you take the case of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar who was the Vice President of Obasanjo. This is somebody from my own village and you know what that means in Africa. Obasanjo is 2,000 kilometres away from my village, I do not know him. I have nothing to do with him. I did not know him when I got that job. Obasanjo can not give me anything; certainly he can not give me US\$ 15 million. What is it for God's sake that I can please Obasanjo for whatever reason? Why? But Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, the guy from my own village that we attempted to bring to justice. But it is not only me. The sad thing is that nobody even took time to look at it. If I have been selective you are also accusing the FBI of being selective because it was the FBI that investigate against Atiku Abubakar and sent a request for me to investigate him. If you have been accusing me of being selective than you must accuse Metropolitan Police of being selective because they were the ones who arrested DSP with US\$ 1 million in their own country and he could not explain the source of that money. And so many others. Are you also saying that they are selective? Do you mean that law enforcements are doing their own [unintel]? And all of us have to be given that interpretation?

At times [unintel] and I have learnt to really take it because I think it is the greatest insult with all that what I went through. I have lost boys; my own boys were killed in the course of what we did. I denied myself money, I denied myself social life. I got myself out of my own country. I did everything what I thought would be the right thing to do for my own country, for my own people. And there are still people saying that I am a criminal because if I am selective I am a criminal. And that is not fair. That is not me. All my life I have tried to do what is right. I swear to God. No way could I be selective. And there is not one single case that we took, that we can not justify. And anybody that we did not take...when I left EFCC for two years, what happened to them? Why did

they not bring them to justice, what happened? But those people who have done so much bad things to our own people, will continue to manipulate and deceive and confuse good people. How else do you want us to fight corruption if the attempt that we did we are still being condemned for? How else? How? So it is business as usual that you are telling me?

Give money...what do you talk about? It is a constitutional thing. Nigeria is a federation that has its own rules and regulations that we must share money within the states and there is nothing you can do about it. It is not a corruption thing because it is money that the country earns. What matters is that it be used properly. Let that money not go into private pockets and be used negatively. I think that is the challenge. There is no way for you to stop that share of money because it is all over the world, it is not just only in Nigeria. They do it everywhere including of course here. I believe the money that the country earns goes to various different departments and governments. There is no difference with that.

What do we need to say about what could the world do? BBC has been wonderful, it has done extremely well because part of our own problems is lack of knowledge and education. We are yet to get to a point where people are going to get up and say: no, no, no, we are not going to tolerate that bad thing. Corruption is all over, it is everywhere. You have corruption here, you have it in America, but the level of sophistication and knowledge and so on differs. Our level of tolerance is a little bit higher. Until when we get to a point where we say, well, that this is not a behaviour we can take and maybe say 'enough is enough'. And that we are not going to allow it to continue. Probably that might be the best message. I do not know how that can be done but BBC did an incredible good job. BBC is the strongest, most credible voice today in Nigeria, especially for example [inaudible], which I know, whatever they say is like the God spelled truth. I think that thing helps indeed. If someone is also going to do something direct, if you have influence, if you have authority, please, talk to our leadership and engage with our leadership in Nigeria and tell them that time has come that you must have free and fair elections in Nigeria.

Q: The peace process in the Niger Delta is now reaching a critical stage that involves development issues and the reintegration of militants. Are you satisfied that sufficient anti-corruption mechanisms are in place to make sure that that programme is implemented or what would you suggest to be done to ensure that the funds and the will is not drifting away?

A: Thank you. Well, my starting point would have been different but whatever it is that happened as long as we are looking at some plans for peace, it is ok. It will continue. But what the former leadership did was just to bribe them, basically, it was corruption. That is the sad story about Nigeria. That a huge problem like this is due to nothing else than corruption. The Niger Delta has reasons and has genuine reasons to really disagree with how things are and I would like to see serious work of promotion of justice and fairness, ensuring that the resources which go in there are put into good use, change the behaviour of the big players of the oil companies and so on and so forth in a very fundamental way; and not allow the lawless, these boys, the so-called militants, to continue to benefit from it. Today they are the beneficiaries, they are the ones who are going to take the money and it is not going to go into any development. But, well, it does happen, and sadly that is what Umaru Yar'Adua did. It is amazing but he is dead, so let it just go like that.

The challenge for this administration is to see how you can now take the opportunity of the moment. Since they have money in their own pockets but it is not possible to sustain it because the moment they stop giving it, they will go back. How do you now convert that into a meaningful thing that can bring a permanent solution? How do you do that? How do you stop local government officials from stealing? They take most of the money and misuse it. How do you stop their governors to mismanage the money that goes to them? How do you now bring the Niger Delta ministers or however you call them to make good use of what they have? How do you just start that immediately? How do you promote law and order? The people of the Niger Delta are entitled to law and order. The majority not the few thousands, the so-called militants, maybe they are not as much as up to 3,000, I saw a thorough study of it. They are not the Niger Delta. Niger Delta is far, far more than that. But there is need for serious work of bringing change in attitude, in behaviour of the officials across from local governments to state government to federal governments. And then also the oil companies, getting back to reality, also stopping the corruption they are involved in, they are also buying peace and continuously doing this is also promoting the entire thing. This so-called peace is just very fragile. The moment that money is starting to get into their own pockets, we are going back to square one. I do not see that as a permanent solution to the problem. It all comes back to the need for a leadership that understands that.