

STATEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH THE RELEASE OF THE JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE GOOD GOVERNANCE, TRANSPARENCY & INTEGRITY WORKING GROUP

Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs Maria Otero

May 27, 2010

Abuja, Nigeria



Under Secretary Maria Otero (center) and Nigeria's Solicitor General Yola exchange signed copies of the joint communiqué in Abuja, Thursday May 27, 2010.

Today's Good Governance, Transparency, and Integrity Working Group Meeting reflects the commitment of the United States to an important and lasting partnership with Nigeria. This is the first of four working groups organized under the U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission Framework signed last month in Washington by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation Yayale Ahmed and the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

This Commission represents the valued and strategic relationship between our two countries. I am confident that the work we did together in today's working group sessions will strengthen and deepen the partnership between our two nations. In our discussion today we addressed a range of issues to strengthen the democratic institutions necessary to hold free, fair, and transparent elections in Nigeria in 2011 and combat the corruption plaguing Nigeria's progress. Our working group session began with a day of events with civil society, the private sector, and state governors who all have a stake and a role in Nigeria's future.

I am proud to announce, together with Solicitor-General Yola, that the United States and Nigeria have agreed on a joint communiqué outlining principles of Good Governance, Transparency and Integrity. I have discussed these today with President Goodluck Jonathan.

We agree that free, fair, and credible elections and the improvement of governance structures in Nigeria are vital to the overall progress and prosperity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. We have stressed the vitality of civil society's participation in Nigeria's elections and will jointly work to make their role in the democratic process most effective. Our election assistance program to support Nigeria's 2011 general elections will include support for a national information center, civic and voter education, support to the media and political parties, and voter registry technical assistance to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

We are committed to partnering on combating corruption and ending the culture of impunity. We will strengthen the capacity of Nigeria's anti-corruption agencies, including the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). To support Nigeria's anti-corruption efforts, we will build on existing training and technical assistance. However, based on what I heard today, a lot more needs to be done by the EFCC and the judicial system to prosecute high corruption cases.

The Good Governance, Transparency, and Integrity Working Group will meet in the coming months to review progress towards achieving free, fair, and credible elections in Nigeria next year.

I am also pleased to announce that the working group on Energy and Investment is scheduled for its first meeting in Washington on June 10-11 to discuss expanding power generation and investment in Nigeria.

I also want to note that while here in Abuja I am pleased to have met with the Executive Secretary of the African Ministers Council on Water and with officials from the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP).

Your Excellency, I want to thank you for your partnership and commitment to good governance, transparency, and integrity.