

**STATE VISIT TO NIGERIA  
(Abuja, 3 - 4 May 2016)**

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**STATE DINNER**

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**TOAST BY H.E. PAUL BIYA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON,  
IN RESPONSE TO THAT OF PRESIDENT BUHARI**

Abuja, 3 May 2016

**Mr President, Dear Brother,  
Mrs AISHA BUHARI,  
Mr Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,  
Mr Speaker of the Senate,  
Mr Speaker of the House of Representatives,  
Mr President of the Supreme Court,  
Distinguished Members of Government,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to be in your capital city Abuja, whose charm and beauty always strike a visitor. And I have personally noticed on every visit, that the city is in a state of flux.

Also, I would like to thank you for the exceptional welcome accorded me, my wife and my delegation upon my arrival in your great country. I do appreciate it.

I would be tempted to say it bears the hallmarks of the legendary hospitality of the Nigerian people.

**Mr President, Dear Brother,**

My visit follows that which you made to Yaounde last year, a visit which definitely marked a turning point in our relations. Henceforth, there will be a pre- and a post-July 2015 in the history of Nigeria - Cameroon relations.

We have observed that we have a lot in common and that there is a wide array of cooperation opportunities between our two countries. But above all, we have noted that we have a common enemy. Of course, I am referring to Boko Haram, whose obscurantist goals and barbaric methods run counter to the aspirations of our peoples.

What our peoples really desire is development which will bring about an improvement in their living conditions and a society of peace, prosperity and fraternity. Having to face a common threat has undoubtedly been a driving force behind the rapprochement and understanding between Nigeria and Cameroon, such as the brotherly cooperation between our armies.

In the meantime, the offensives launched by the Nigerian Army against Boko Haram positions have, as you said, “technically” neutralized the terrorist organization, while the forces of the other countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (including Cameroon) have been harassing the terrorist groups that have retreated to the border areas. I wish at this point to congratulate the defence and security forces of all our countries and the Multinational Joint Task Force on their vigilance and efficiency.

There is now reason to hope that very soon, Boko Haram which has been severely weakened, will no longer have its disruptive capacity.

Also, I would like to express my sympathy for the numerous victims of the suicide attacks perpetrated by the terrorist organization in Nigeria, as well as my wish to see the young Chibok girls freed soon.

Right away, I would like to hail the measures thus far taken, on your initiative, to restore public authority in the areas that have been seized back, and to ease the resettlement of displaced persons. Rest assured, Mr President and Dear Brother, that Cameroon will continue to provide all the necessary assistance to your compatriots who were compelled to flee combat zones. Incidentally, that is just another good turn for your country’s hospitality to Cameroonians who have chosen to live in Nigeria.

In due time, we should, each country on its own and collectively, draw the lessons learnt from the Boko Haram episode.

I believe once the terrorist phenomenon is eradicated, it will be in the interest of Lake Chad area countries, notably Nigeria and Cameroon, to consult with one another to prevent its resurgence. Of course, the idea will be to come up with common military and security measures, but also other measures likely to accelerate development in the regions concerned. We are indeed aware that under-development, poverty and ignorance, are fertile ground for activities of terrorist movements such as Boko Haram.

That is why, Mr President, Dear Brother, I believe it would be worthwhile, for starters, to design joint development projects in our border areas which are sometimes neglected. Using the resources they have, agricultural and infrastructure projects could be considered jointly. To that end, we need to link our road networks (that is ongoing), provide electricity (which Cameroon will be able to do in the medium term) and provide social facilities in those areas.

I am referring particularly to areas that have been devastated by Boko Haram and where displaced people will have to be resettled.

Pending that, I believe we should do all we can to strengthen and diversify our cooperation ties. In this regard, between us there are various agreements whose implementation would yield positive outcomes for our two countries.

The next session of our Joint Commission could afford us the opportunity of reinvigorating our cooperation ties in some areas.

Similarly, it would be necessary for the Mixed Commission tasked with demarcating our common border to complete its work, and for the framework agreement on crossborder cooperation on hydrocarbons to be finalized.

But I am convinced that we need to aim higher and see farther.

Overall, I believe the economic relations between our two countries are far from having reached their full potential. There will be a need for consultations in this regard between us at the level of government bodies and professional associations. Business forums could also be held in each of our countries to showcase available opportunities to investors.

**Mr President, Dear Brother,**

We are at the beginning of a new era in the relations between our two countries. This to me is confirmed by our discussions of today and the signing of agreements that ensued. I feel elated. I sincerely believe that this development does not only serve the interests of both governments, but also fulfils the wishes of the Nigerian and Cameroonian peoples. Hence, I have no doubt that this road which we will be travelling together will lead to success.

Thank you Ladies and Gentlemen and I wish that solidarity and fraternity between Cameroon and Nigeria will continue to go from strength to strength.