



# Science Diplomacy: A Driving Force of the Pro-active Nigerian Foreign Policy



**Adeola Aminat Lawal\***

## Introduction

After World War II, the scientific world emerged in a fashion that made the world smaller with its impact visible across every aspect of human life. Science Technology Innovation (STI) has contributed largely to behavior of state in the international system where science policy legislations have implication far and wide not only within their own borders but also across different countries (Schweitzer,2018). Though advancements and applications of technology have achieved a number of success in furthering peace, security and prosperity. Such a development in STI in the field of world politics is acknowledged.

The birth or emergence of Science Diplomacy could be trace to 18th century, during cold war era between the East (USSR) and West (US) science interface with foreign policy and the diplomatic relation of state. States have long practiced but was coloured with today's vocabulary. The first effort of analysis and conceptualisation came to limelight in the 21st century (Ruffini,2017)

To start with, one has to give meaning each of the word, 'science' which simply means a systematic study of the structure and behaviour of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment. It also means an acquisition of knowledge; while 'Diplomacy' on the other hand is defined according to Ernest Satow, as the application of intelligence and tact in the conduct of official relations between governments of independent state. Its mean to achieve an end, a non-violent means characterized with negotiation, mediation, arbitration, conciliation and adjudication (Ranjbar and Elyasi 2019).

Therefore, 'Science Diplomacy', is the use of scientific collaborations among nations to address common problem facing humanity. It also means harnessing of science and scientists to the practice and art of Diplomacy. It was introduced as referring to new foreign policy activities that serve 'humanity' as well as 'build constructive international partnerships' (Fedoroff, 2009). Also, it is seen as 'fluid concept' that articulates the 'role of science, technology and innovation in three dimensions of policy':

---

\* Third Secretary, Training & Staff Welfare Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigeria.

- Informing foreign policy objectives with scientific advice (science in diplomacy);
- Facilitating international science cooperation (diplomacy for science); and
- Using science cooperation to improve international relations between countries (science for diplomacy).

### Science in diplomacy

Some areas of foreign policy need to be enlightened by science, which leads diplomats to seek input from the research community. The most obvious examples are found in international negotiations on global issues: scientific expertise and advice are essential to diplomats and policy-makers to address issues such as climate change, food security or energy. Science and scientific expertise are an aid to decision-making in foreign policy: to achieve its purposes, diplomacy must make effective use of science.

*Diplomacy for science* Each country seeks to promote the national scientific community on the international stage and to facilitate cooperation with other countries: diplomatic and consular networks abroad are traditionally in charge of supporting the mobility of researchers (financial aid, visas) and assisting them in some negotiations (regarding intellectual property rights, for example). If it is decided to build major research infrastructures, this must be done by agreement of states through diplomatic dialogue, with shared costs and risks but also shared benefits through the participation of their researchers in multinational programs.

*Science for diplomacy* When political tensions between countries do not allow for traditional diplomacy to express itself, scientific relations can be used to maintain or restore links. The role of science as a substitute for and vanguard of diplomacy is probably, among the three stated areas connecting science and diplomacy, the most original one, even if during some periods of international relations more so than others. (Pierre-Bruno Ruffini, 2017)

### Objectives

The focus of this paper is to understand the fact that STI is a sincere effort towards achieving national security of a state, region and International sphere which operationalises in form of collaboration, cooperation and partnership with states as well as

design to meet up with rapid growth of Science and Technology of the global phenomenon. This paper is aimed at exploring the application of Scientific Technology Innovations (STI) to achieve a dynamic and a proactive foreign policy in Nigeria.

### Nigeria Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is a country's response to the world outside or beyond its own frontiers or boundaries, it is an objective that guide the affairs of state with another state. It is influence by the domestic policy and considerations. Joseph Frankel defined Foreign policy as a dynamic process of interaction between the changing domestic demands and supports and the changing external circumstances.

Nigeria Foreign Policy from inception was coined by the ideas of her first Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (TFB), he set the standard for Nigeria's foreign policy in 1960 when she gained independence from the colonial master. The central focus of the Foreign policy was enshrined in the chapter II, Section of 19 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). The foreign policy is identified with the major components as summarised by the former permanent secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Enikanolaiye. They are (in no particular order): Respect for territorial integrity; Good neighborliness; Sovereign equality of states; Commitment to decolonization and eradication of racist minority rule from Africa; Promotion of the rights of the black man under colonial rule, Promotion of Pan-Africanism and African Unity; Respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter; and Non-alignment. (Ujara E.C and Ibietan, J. 2018)

However, this foreign policy orientation was criticised as being conservative and pro-West by academia. The policies were not consistent despite the laid down foundation of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa which were based on the aforementioned principles. Changes were also caused by Military Incursion of democracy and policy maneuvers by different Government under various leadership (Ujara E.C and Ibietan, J. 2018).

The end result has been that Nigeria foreign policy has not been able to sustain the daunting change in global international system. It has not

been able to provide solution and respond to current domestic challenges, the neighboring countries, region, Africa at large as well as the International System.

## Towards A Proactive Policy

It's important to note that technology evolves as a result of the need in the society. For instance, Nigeria like some other countries has been suffering from emerging neo threat in the world such as Terrorism, climate change, illegal Migration, Cyber security, etc. The need to mitigate and combat the neo- threat, there is need to introduce the Science, Technological Innovation (STI) to Foreign Policy formulation, implementation and articulation. This will be done with the aim to meet up with global standard, to achieve dynamic and proactive foreign policy. To achieve this pro-active and dynamic foreign policy, Nigeria needs to follow:

Firstly, there is need for policy makers, think tanks in Nigeria to involve scientists and technology experts to provide knowledge to guide policy formulation and signing of scientific/ technical agreements with other countries. This is with aim of this is to put the country in a collective advantage (win-win).

Secondly, scientists and experts use scientific method to gather information (data), observations of their day to day analysis, to develop and test hypothesis (Trekian and Kishi, 2017). The implication of this is that, policy makers will be able to predict an unseen occurrence and provide solution in the areas and come up with better strategies to achieve its goals that will have positive impact in the nation rather than reacting to it when it actually happens.

Furthermore, Science Diplomacy will serve as a veritable tool to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) in the next decade. Considering, the fact that most of the countries which belongs to United Nation Organization (UNO) are striving to achieve this by year 2030. It may interest you to know that Nigeria is one of the 189 countries in the world that adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which was meant to be achieving in year 2015 and was able to record a success of MDGs in Nigeria, though at slow pace. Involving this Scientists and Technological Experts, inform of partners will help to gathering the required and

necessary data which will facilitate the SDGs in 2030.

It is good that Nigeria, have a policy (UNDP 2015) to achieve the SDG by 2030, there is need for the country to interject Science Technology and Innovations to achieve this goals. Scientists and Technology experts together with policy makers can redesign this policy, align to the country challenges and structure, proitize the goals, as well as pattern with countries that have adopted STI to achieve their SDGs. For instance, India, Japan, Ethiopia, Serbia etc.

According to Magazine African report, published on 25th April 2019, where the former Commonwealth Secretary-General Emeka Anyaoku commented on Africa Check magazine revealed that the United Kingdom (UK) had 5,250 Nigerian-trained doctors on its books in April 2018, a rise of 10% on the previous year. That is an average of 12 doctors a week fleeing to the UK. A recent NOI poll showed that 88% of Nigerian doctors are considering working abroad and other countries such as the US, Canada, Australia is also attracting Nigerian doctors in droves, with Saudi Arabia aggressively recruiting in the country (Egbejule 2019).

It's about time that Nigeria foreign policy channeled towards attracting Nigeria scientists and technology experts into the country. The implication of this is that, they will contribute the knowledge into the society which bring about "Brain Circulation" as well as serve as advisory body to the policy makers such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Aside from circulating knowledge, they will aid and facilitate the building of more scientific research centers and also connect with other the researchers from the global developing countries most especially the BRICS with the aim to make global effort in combating the global challenges.

of note, the rapid change in the world has brought the need of policy maker, diplomat of the world to be faced with different challenges. There is a great need of Nigeria policy makers rather Foreign Service Officers (FSO) to be properly trained on Science Diplomacy(imperative), this will help broaden their horizon as well as compete favourably with their counterpart across the world, also negotiate and deal from a well informed perspective since the new innovations are coming up daily, and there is a great new for diplomat to be equipped with knowledge.

There is need for Nigeria Foreign Ministry, to create a structure or cabinet for Science and technology advisor for Diplomacy. This ST advisor will work closely with the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, which help to harness decision, promote foreign policy priority in areas where politics intersect science and technology as well as leveraging on international alliances which can add value to national interest, programs and missions. For instance, US has created and launched Science and Technology Advisor in 2015 and in Japan, an Advisory Panel on Science and Technology Diplomacy was established by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in July 2014 to consider ways to utilize science and technology in diplomacy (Trekian and Kishi 2017).

The accelerating pace of technological change, with its substantial impact on economic development, has underscored how countries must prioritize science and technology so as to strengthen their security and stay competitive in the twenty-first century global economy (Trekian and Kishi. 2017). No state can be in isolation, there is need for state to relate with each other to achieve their goal. Science Diplomacy via STI has provided a medium to facilitate international cooperation in area such as international partnership, synergy, development and acquisition. There is a great need for Nigeria to partner and work together with the country of the south such as India, China that technology inclined to acquire new technology, work with them closely (synergy), to know the one that will fulfill the needs of the nation.

Lastly, with the new spread of technology from IT revolution and the massive growth of mobile phones, people connect quickly and this has made the world borderless and seamless. Nigeria needs to leverage telecommunication market for national benefit and its shift its focus from the oil sector. There is need to have diversification in prioritizing sectors for STI advancements. Technologies experts need to work with policy makers to formulate policy for the regulation and work towards building internal STI capacity in the country. India can be a good model to replicate in Nigerian context. The 'Digital India' Policy can be adopted for giving boost to ICT development in Nigeria.

## Conclusion

It is important to note that STI is imperative for Nigerian Foreign policy. It is used as soft power to promote geo-political relationship. This soft prowess does not only mean giving out money, but also giving intellectual resources from the donor and the recipient country. It's doesn't work in vacuum rather through collaboration, partnership and cooperation. Nigeria need to be more technological capable; adopt STI into foreign policy through Science Diplomacy and work with other countries of the world most especially (Global south-south), paving ways for Best practices of Science Diplomacy adoption.

## References

- Balakrishnan, B. 2019. 'Changing Dynamics of Indian Foreign Policy' - the Science and Technology Dimension. *Distinguished lectures*. Retrieved from January 7, 2020 from <https://mea.gov.in/distinguished-lectures-detail.htm?846>
- Enuka, C and Ojwuku. E. 2016. "Challenges of Nigeria's foreign policy". *International Journal of Arts and Humanities (IJAH) Bahir Dar- Ethiopia*, Vol.5 (2). Retrieved on January 9, 2020 from <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ijah/article/view/137056>
- Egbejule, E. 2019. 'Nigeria must tackle its doctor brain drain'. Retrieved on January 7, 2020 from <https://www.theafricareport.com/12252/nigeria-must-tackle-its-doctor-brain-drain/z>, C. and Acuto, M., 2018. Science Diplomacy: Introduction to a Boundary Problem. *Global Policy*, 9, pp.8-14
- Ranjbar, M.S. and Elyasi, M. 2019; Science Diplomacy in Iran: Strategies and Policy Alternatives in the Making. *Science Diplomacy Review*, Vol.1 No.3. FISD: New Delhi
- Ruffini, PB. 2017. *Science and Diplomacy: A New Dimension of International Relations*. Springer: US; P.11
- Trekian, V and Kishi. T., 2017. "Science and Technology Advising in Today's Foreign Policy". Retrieved on January 10, 2020 from <http://www.sciencediplomacy.org/perspective/2017/science-and-technology-advising-in-todays-foreign-policy>
- Ujara E.C and Ibietan, J. 2018. "Foreign Policy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A Critical Analysis of Some Unresolved Issues". *Journal of International & Global Studies*, vol. 10 (1)
- UNDP. 2015. "Nigeria's Road to SDGs: Country Transition Strategy", Retrieved on January 7, 2020 from <https://www.ng.undp.org/content/nigeria/en/home/library/poverty/country-transition-strategy-to-sdgs.html>