



Nigeria

Introduction

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Introduction

Chart 1: Political map for Nigeria



Located in West Africa with a population of over 200 million in 2020, Nigeria is by far the most populous country in Africa and a key regional player in West Africa. The country is a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse federation made up of 36 states and the Abuja Federal Capital Territory (FCT) grouped into six geopolitical zones (north-west, north-central, north-east, south-west, south-east and south-south). Recognised as Africa's largest economy, well ahead of South Africa and Egypt, Nigeria is also the largest crude oil exporter and has the largest natural gas reserve on the continent.

While some progress has been made in socio-economic terms in recent years, Nigeria faces serious social, economic and security challenges. Indeed, the country has one of the highest numbers of people living in extreme poverty in the world and high youth unemployment. More than 80 million^[1] people survive on less than US\$1.90 a day, the international measure for extreme poverty. An overdependence on oil exports, deplorable infrastructure, human capital bottlenecks, low tax revenue mobilisation, deeply embedded corruption and decades of mismanagement have stymied investment, growth and the diversification of the economy.

In addition, the chaos caused by rising banditry-related attacks, kidnapping and communal clashes in the country threaten food security as it hinders access to farms and food production. Furthermore, Nigeria has been facing terrorism threats from the Islamist group Boko Haram since 2009.

Violence perpetrated by this armed group is estimated to have resulted in the deaths of 350 000 people, with 314 000 of

these attributable to indirect physical and economic causes.[2] Also, criminal gangs and farmer–herder violence, most notably in the states of Zamfara, Katsina and Kaduna, have killed more than 8 000 people since 2011 and forced more than 200 000 people to flee their homes, according to a report by the International Crisis Group (ICG).[3] Consequently, a severe humanitarian crisis persists in north-east, north-west and north-central regions of Nigeria.

These challenges, in addition to poor governance and massive income and wealth inequality, have manifested in many people having poor health, nutrition and education, and the country fares badly on socio-economic indicators. Nigeria finds itself at the lower end of the United Nations (UN) Human Development Index (HDI). According to the 2020 Human Development Report, the country ranks 161 out of 189 countries. As Africa’s largest economy and most populous country, a stable and prosperous Nigeria is crucial for regional stability and faster poverty reduction in West Africa. Concrete steps therefore need to be taken to overcome Nigeria’s monumental developmental challenges.

Chart 2: National development plan of Nigeria



NIGERIA **AGENDA** **2050**

This report looks at the recent history and the likely human and economic development trajectory in Nigeria (referred to as the Current Path). The report explores a series of policy interventions aimed at laying the foundations for long-term inclusive growth and development. We use the International Futures (IFs) modelling platform (see the [About](#) section) hosted and developed by the Frederick S Pardee Center for International Futures at the University of Denver for much of the analysis and forecast.

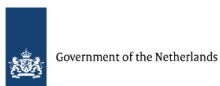
Two country groups, low-middle-income Africa and low-middle-income countries globally are used as benchmarks for gauging Nigeria's historical and future progress. Both draw on the World Bank's 2021/22 country income-grouping classifications. Nigeria is excluded from the groups for comparative purposes.

Nigeria's long term development plan, *Nigeria Agenda 2050*, is available [here](#) and the associated first five year National Development Plan 2021-2025 is available [here](#). In addition, the 2022 report *Imagine Nigeria – Exploring the Future of Nigeria* that includes various long-term scenarios on the future of the country is shown in Chart 3 and is available [here](#).

Endnotes

1. IFs database.
2. UNDP, *Assessing the impact of conflict on development in north-east Nigeria*, 2021
3. International Crisis Group, *Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem*, Report No. 288 / Africa, May 2020

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About the authors

Dr Kouassi Yeboua is a senior researcher in African Futures and Innovation programme in Pretoria. He recently served as lead author on ISS studies on the long-term development prospects of the DR Congo, the Horn of Africa, Nigeria and Malawi. Kouassi has published on various issues relating to foreign direct investment in Africa and is interested in development economics, macroeconomics, international economics, and economic modelling. He has a PhD in Economics.

Dr Jakkie Cilliers is the ISS's founder and former executive director of the ISS. He currently serves as chair of the ISS Board of Trustees and head of the African Futures and Innovation (AFI) programme at the Pretoria office of the ISS. His 2017 best-seller *Fate of the Nation* addresses South Africa's futures from political, economic and social perspectives. His three most recent books, *Africa First! Igniting a Growth Revolution* (March 2020), *The Future of Africa: Challenges and Opportunities* (April 2021), and *Africa Tomorrow: Pathways to Prosperity* (June 2022) take a rigorous look at the continent as a whole.

Ms Alize le Roux joined the AFI in May 2021 as a senior researcher. Before joining the ISS, she worked as a principal geo-informatics researcher at the CSIR, supporting various local and national policy- and decision-makers with long-term planning support. Alize has 14 years of experience in spatial data analysis, disaster risk reduction and urban and regional modelling. She has a master's degree in geographical sciences from the University of Utrecht, specialising in multi-hazard risk assessments and spatial decision support systems.

About African Futures & Innovation

Scenarios and forecasting can help Africa identify and respond to opportunities and threats. The work of the African Futures & Innovation (AFI) program at the Institute for Security Studies aims to understand and address a widening gap between indices of wellbeing in Africa and elsewhere in the world. The AFI helps stakeholders understand likely future developments. Research findings and their policy implications are widely disseminated, often in collaboration with in-country partners. Forecasting tools inspire debate and provide insights into possible trajectories that inform planning, prioritisation and effective resource allocation. Africa's future depends on today's choices and actions by governments and their non-governmental and international partners. The AFI provides empirical data that informs short- and medium-term decisions with long-term implications. The AFI enhances Africa's capacity to prepare for and respond to future challenges. The program is headed by Dr Jakkie Cilliers.