



# THE ADVOCACY BULLETIN

The Nigerian Physicians Advocacy Group



## CLEAN WATER COMES TO ALIADE: UPDATE

By Dr. Susan Edionwe

NPAG is pleased to share that the borehole installation is underway in the Aliade community. Together with SHIFT Nigeria, over \$10,000 dollars has been raised to sustain the build of this project thus far. *NPAG would like to give a special thanks to the Emeruwa foundation for its generous contribution.*



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*Photos above (page 1): Land surveying and planning of first borehole placement in Aliade.*

As stated before, we are meeting the community's need for water with more than one goal in mind. This is our way of engaging the community where they are at. Right now, they are focused on the desperate need of clean water. We have partnered with them to meet this need. We are earning their trust in doing so. This is just the beginning. We will use this relationship to improve their sociopolitical intelligence and help create transformative leaders within the community.

*Photo to left: Drilling begins for first borehole in Aliade, Benue State.*

***Want to get involved?*** It's not too late to give! Click <https://www.npagroup.org/our-initiatives/clean-water-initiative/> to donate now.

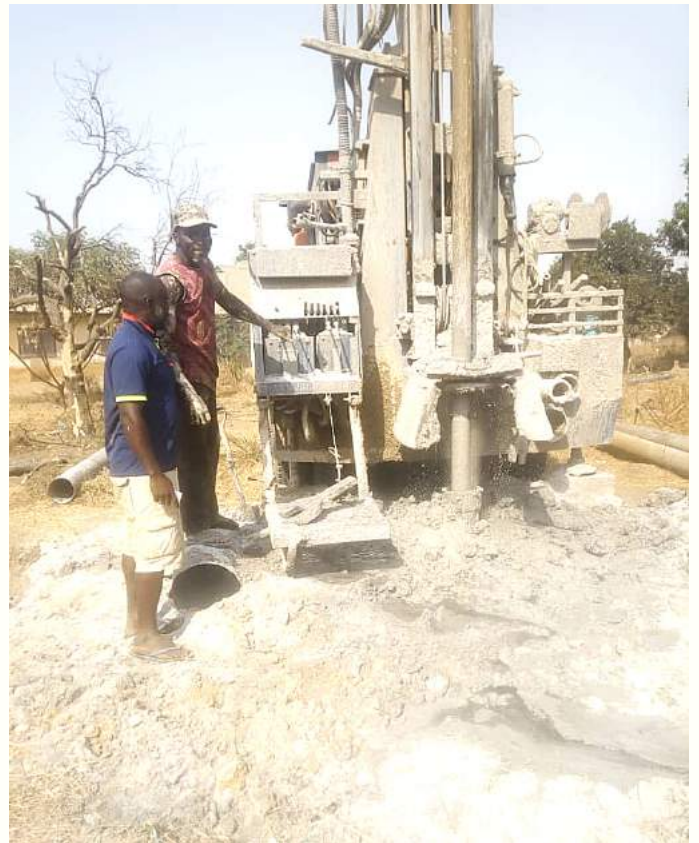
## NEW PARTNERSHIP LOADING: NPAG MEETS READY TO LEAD AFRICA

*By Dr. Susan Edionwe*

Since inception, NPAG has realized the importance of cultivating partnerships to advance our agenda. In previous issues, we have shared information on such partnerships and the value we have gained from them. We are pleased to share that history is set to repeat itself. On February 20, 2021, NPAG hosted an introductory meeting with Ready to Lead Africa (RTLA).

RTLA is a "non-profit ecosystem of emerging civic leaders dedicated to the promotion of constitutional democracy, civic pride engagements, human rights and the increment of young but competent leaders across the African continent".

RTLA has championed a number of successful campaigns including successful lobbying for the passing of the "Not Too Young To Run" bill which



is a constitutional amendment movement led by young Nigerians. Conceived May 2016 and pushed by several non-profit groups including RTLA & YIAGA Africa, the bill called for alterations to sections 65, 106, 131, 177 of the Constitution of Nigeria and effectively reduced the age of running for elective positions for House of Assembly and House of Representatives from 30 year old to 25 year old, Senate and Governorship from 35 year old to 30 year old and office of the president from 40 to 30 and allowed for independent candidature in Nigeria.

At the meeting, we met with the president of the organization, Godbless Otubure, an impressive young leader in his own right. Not only the founder of RTLA, but Otubure is also an alumni of the Mandela Washington Fellowship, a flagship program of the U.S. Government's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) created under the Obama administration; plus, he is the current Lagos State Coordinator of the NotTooYoungToRun Movement.

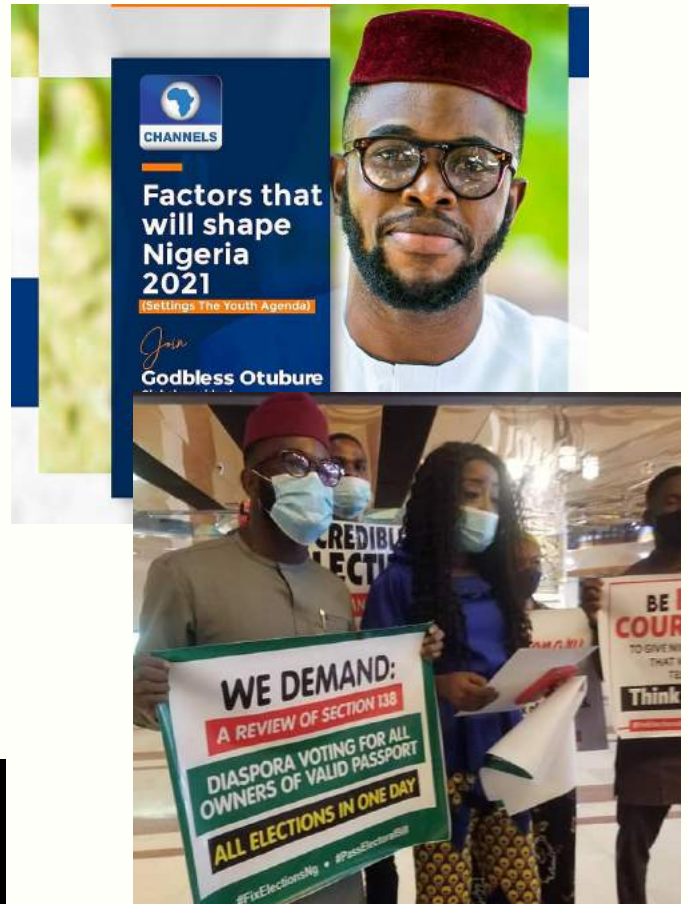
**IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO DONATE TO THE ALIADE COMMUNITY**  
<https://www.npagroup.org/our-initiatives/clean-water-initiative/>



As we have seen with the End SARS movement, young Nigerians are truly the future. A lot rests on the shoulders of the younger generation, including the hope of a better Nigeria.

NPAG believes it is important to partner with RTLA as they have their finger on the pulse of young Nigerians who are demanding electoral and political change in Nigeria. As it stands, RTLA is driven to create more opportunities for younger politicians as a way to rid Nigeria of "the old guards that have plundered it" say Otubure.

This introduction meeting marks the beginning of what NPAG believes will be a fruitful partnership. At our conclusion, NPAG and RTLA have decided to figure out how we can create a platform where both our expertise is utilized.



Above: CEO/Founder RTLA, Godbless Otubure

**HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?** 

[www.NPAGroup.org](http://www.NPAGroup.org)

## NPAG ASKS MEMBERS TO SUPPORT RTLA'S "YOUTH MARCH FORTH"

RTLA is hosting its second annual youth march called "Youth March Forth" on March 4th, 2021 for electoral reform. We are asking our members to show support on social media. Images of the diaspora showing support will be shared on mainstream media and social media in Nigeria.

We are asking members to take a picture of themselves holding up signs saying "I Support Youth March Forth" and include your city.

*We ask that these photos be submitted to [info@npagroup.org](mailto:info@npagroup.org) by March 3rd, 2021.*



# THE DECEIT OF DOING BUSINESS IN NIGERIA

by Dr. Biodun Ogungbo, Neurosurgeon.  
Abuja, Nigeria

There are times like this that I wonder how we will ever get back to an honest society. Two stories told below highlight just how low our dear society has sunken.

## The first story

I was at a shopping center in Abuja where I saw the staff well represented in Covid-19 preventive face shields. I thought it was a great idea and decided to buy some for the hospital. At least the security boys who interact with the public closely can have some measure of protection. Well, it turns out that the pharmacy sells the face masks. So, a few steps and I was in the pharmacy to inquire about it. Of course, they have and so I bought some. Each was sold for N3000.

But get this! The face masks are made in Lagos, Nigeria and are sold for N700 each. Shipping to Abuja might add a little more to the cost of a box of 15 but not that much. So, why has the pharmacy inflated the price to such an astronomical level for a piece of plastic made in someone's living room?

## The second story

We ordered drugs from a pharmacy. The pharmacist asked my nurse how much they should add to the bill for her, personally. This way, the bill to the hospital is inflated and the balance will be given to her as rebate or commission for buying from them. She refused and said we do not practice like that.

They were shocked because apparently, that is the first time anyone has refused. Many of the nurses, pharmacists who buy drugs from them ask for and insist on having some money added to the bill. So, for those private practitioners out there who rely on their staff to purchase drugs and materials on behalf of the hospital, welcome to Nigeria.



You are truly being scammed by your “reliable” staff. It is truly terrible that the people who are supposed to protect the business, who are being paid a salary from the business are the ones sabotaging it.

Why are we so cruel and still ‘doing business’ when there is death all around us? And if doctors turn round and increase the cost of care, the same Nigerians will be shouting that it’s inhuman. Then, it’s no longer business as usual! Actually, I don’t have any advice for us and I am just so saddened by all I see around me in Nigeria. It’s enough to drive my blood pressure up.

It seems easy to blame the government for corrupt practices but we the citizens, are no better. And the people get the government they deserve.

# The LOBBY(IST)



by Dr. Victor Okeh

## *Biden- Harris Victory- Result Of Effective Lobbying*

In a historic election in every right, one of the youngest congress members in history became the oldest person to become a United States President. Joe Biden was elected the 46th President of the United States. Kamala Harris became the first woman, the first African-American and the first person of South Asian descent to become the Vice President of the United States of America.

In the Nigerian-American healthcare space, another big story was brewing. Healthcare professionals of Nigerian descent, comprising of Doctors, Pharmacists, Nurses, and others proved that there is strength in numbers when we come together. We understood the African proverb that says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together".

An impressive union fostered despite differing political views and together, political candidates with an interest in the healthcare and welfare of Nigeria and African Americans in general, were identified. Identifying as a Non-partisan group, we offered an open invitation for dialogue about these issues to all political candidates.

The Democratic National Congress (DNC) welcomed the initiative with open arms and accepted our invitation, giving audience to the group and participating in multiple fundraising events attended by a high profile team in the Biden-Harris campaign team. This was also duplicated in the fight for the Georgia Senatorial seats which saw Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock secure historic wins.

While this was historic in all fronts, we cannot rest on this initial win. We must continue together to hold these officials we helped elect accountable. We also must continue this newfound unity which has earned us recognition in the political sphere of American politics.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Have you ever wondered why peaceful cohabitation turns violent? Or, how easy it becomes to justify terrorizing and murdering a group of people we consider different?

Humans have always turned on one another especially in the setting of perceived scarce resources or threats. The 20th century alone witnessed the holocaust, the India-Pakistan conflict and split, Apartheid in South Africa, Hutu-Tutsi genocide, Sudanese conflict and split, the rise of white supremacy movement in the USA, the radicalization of religion for violence as seen with ISIS, Boko Haram and other fundamentalist groups and, the weaponization of nomads in Nigeria.

Forgive me for omitting other major events but, all these conflicts bear a common theme which is a complete loss of empathy and compromise by one or more parties engaged in the conflict. This leads to the creation of a narrative that justifies a drastic response such as the elimination of the perceived threat i.e., violence. In most cases, disinformation becomes the norm.

As I peruse through current events, I am afraid that in the age of social media, disinformation has become an imminent threat to any conflict resolution. What exactly is Nigeria's problem? Is it the Fulani's, the quest for power by the 3 major ethnic tribes (Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo), tyranny or a complete loss of empathy?

Iyore James MD/MALD, FACS