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Following the successful Public Presentation of the Second Edition of the book authored by my humble-self titled “Handbook of Skill Acquisition Training and Empowerment Programmes (2nd Ed.)” on Wednesday, 17th July, 2019, I wish to make public the true version of the Declaration I read in full titled “THE SAMBISA DECLARATION” for the sake of Public Records:

THE SAMBISA DECLARATION

1. **Having** followed with keen interest, and indeed great concern, series of occurrences in the Niger Delta region, occasioned by strident agitations aimed at attracting the attention of the Federal Authorities to the plight of the region that culminated in the promulgation of the Presidential Amnesty for Niger Delta Militants on 25th June, 2009 by the late Head of State, Commander-in-Chief, His Excellency, **President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua, GCFR;**
2. **Having** been one of the key pioneer stakeholders that contributed to the emergence of the institutional framework which metamorphosed into the subsisting Niger Delta Presidential Amnesty Programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria;
3. **Having** anchored the first production and publication of a mentoring manual as part of a security management intervention strategy now in public domain titled ***“Handbook of Skill Acquisition Training and Empowerment Programmes;”***
4. **Having** realised the need to develop an all-inclusive roadmap and implementation guidelines for operationalising collaboration amongst critical stakeholders as well as development partners of goodwill to complement the current efforts of the Federal and State Governments of Nigeria in finding a lasting solution to the recalcitrant security situation and promote sustainable development of the North East of our great country, Nigeria;
5. **Acknowledging** the enormous contributions and unprecedented human and material sacrifices made by the Military, Intelligence and Security Forces to tackle as well as contain the scourge of pervasive insecurity in the North East of Nigeria, with its corresponding inimical spillover consequences across Nigeria’s northern border up to the Lake Tchad Basin countries;
6. **Recognising** that tackling the menace of insecurity in the North East of Nigeria requires collaborative efforts amongst all development partners, and critical stakeholders, therefore, demands a rebuild and re-invention of the will for the Military, Security and Intelligence Agencies and relevant bodies beyond Nigerian borders;
7. **Recognising** that continuing insecurity in the North East is gradually institutionalising ubiquitous poverty, burgeoning unemployment and hopelessness

in the area and the manifest potency of the scourge is gravely distressing other regions of the country;

8. **Noting** that the North East Region holds copious economic and investment potentials which will remain unharnessed in the atmosphere of continuing insecurity;
9. **Recognising** that the growing army of unemployed persons, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) pose both real and potent danger not only to the North East Region but the whole country;
10. **Recognising** that the new political dispensation heralds a new dawn and offers a destiny turn-around opportunity for our elected and appointed Government officials both at the Federal, State and down to the Local Government levels in the spirit of unity and patriotism to re-jig the country's security management architecture to make Nigeria a safe place to live and work;
11. **Recognising** the several commendable and laudable intervention-efforts of the Federal Government in the Region, especially the bold steps and giant strides in establishing the Victims Support Programme and the recently inaugurated North East Development Commission;
12. **Recognising** that the need for all and sundry to have all hands on deck at promoting peace, unity and safety of lives and property in Nigeria cannot be reemphasised. I, therefore, urge Nigerians to look at the brighter side of life, adopting the "never-say-die" spirit, the "can-do" spirit inherent in the Nigerian citizen and our resilience at overcoming all odds is what we should all bring to bear in discharging our duties and responsibilities for the good of our fatherland;
13. **Maintaining** that where the Sambisa Forest and its associated swathes of territories in parts of Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano and Katsina States are not put to optimum economic use, it has the attendant consequence of continually stagnating development as well as serve as staging platforms to the promotion and propagation of insecurity within and outside the area, thereby constituting a great threat to our democracy, National Security and Sub-Regional Stability;
14. **Appreciating** the commendable efforts, sustained commitments and demonstrable political will of the three tiers of Government on the one side and Development Partners/Donor Agencies on the other, to ensure in a sustained manner the creation of a tenable enabling environment to achieve lasting peace and development in the North East region, and Nigeria generally;
15. **Noting** further, the manifestation of Government resilience in this commitment to secure the Sambisa Forest and the associated swathes of territories from the insurgents who have now been flushed out of their erstwhile occupied Local Governments Areas in Borno and Yobe States;

16. **Realising** that these positive efforts by Government have helped to create both conducive atmospheres for peace, security and greater opportunity for intervention by other critical stakeholders both within and outside Nigeria who have relevant approved developmental and peacebuilding models, to bring them to bear in complementing Government efforts;
17. **Informed** by my continuous interest and commitment towards the progress and corporate unity of Nigeria as a nation;
18. **Guided** by my wealth of research and experience in the Re-settlement, Re-construction and Rehabilitation of Insurgents and Militants—as an authority on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Re-integration (DDR) of Ex-Combatants/Agitators; with entrepreneurship and training programmes, as well as a Former Member of the Presidential Panel on National Security in 2001/2002;
19. **Informed by** recognition of similar contributions leading to my appointment in 1997, as the Regional Coordinator for Niger Delta by African Environmental Action Network, and my pioneering stakeholder role and contributions in designing the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme of 2009 and the privilege to work with the Defunct Presidential Committee on Amnesty in 2010;
20. **Given**, the unabating cloud of insecurity prevalent in the Sambisa Forest and its associated swathes of territories, and how it remains a threat to our democracy and National Security particularly with the ardent support of the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP);
21. **Given** also that this unacceptable state of affairs has continued to attract more national and international concern, evokes sympathy and obtains global commitment to support the deployment of all feasible options and relevant initiatives in containing the menace in the area;
22. **Whereas**, the level of insecurity-increase imposes on all critical stakeholders greater sense of urgency toward drastic measures, reconstruction of the Sambisa Forest and peacebuilding and developmental initiatives;
23. **Whereas**, the sustained support/intervention of local and international Agencies, particularly the Development Partners and Donor Agencies are always acknowledged and appreciated;

The Sambisa Declaration:

24. **I, therefore**, as a person who is in the vanguard of peace and sustainable development initiatives, and in the light of the foregoing and desirous to offer my contribution, I authored the mentoring manual titled **“Handbook of Skill Acquisition Training and Empowerment Programmes,”** considered complementary to current Government efforts, using my wealth of experiences and knowledge, resolved to anchor the process of creating this enabling platform to crop the sincerity of purpose and commitment of critical stakeholders including Development Partners, Donor Agencies, government agencies, relevant corporate

citizens and well-meaning individuals toward bringing about peace, security and sustainable development of the region; make the following declaration herein called “**The Sambisa Declaration**” with the overall end-goal of promoting peace, security and stability to the North East region and adjoining swathes of territories, by proactive development of the Sambisa Forest and associated belts of lands through the following focused areas/activities: resulting in the following:

25. Creation of the **Sambisa Joint Development Territory (SJDT)**; to be administered by the **Sambisa Territory Development Authority (STDA)**;
26. The **Territory** shall have the following under-listed civil-military/security facilities including but not limited to the following:
 - (a) Inland Port;
 - (b) Cargo Airport;
 - (c) Commercial Livestock/Cattle Ranches;
 - (d) Game Reserves;
 - (e) Export Processing Zone;
 - (f) Commercial Farm Estates;
 - (g) Amusement Parks and Recreational Centres;
 - (h) Permanent Joint Security Forces (JSF) Bases;
 - (i) Educational Institutions;
 - (j) Well-developed Road Networks;
 - (k) Well-developed Water Resources Facilities;
 - (l) Relevant Industries;
 - (m) Sustained Peacebuilding Programmes including Skill Acquisition Training and Empowerment, General Human Resource Development, Resettlement of IDPs, Refugees, Development of Border Communities and Facilities, De-radicalisation, Reconstruction, Rehabilitation of IDPs and repentant insurgents, possible disarmament and reintegration programmes.
27. **That;** the geographical demarcation of the **Sambisa Joint Development Territory** is earmarked to stretch across the North East from Borno, Yobe, Gombe and Bauchi States along the Darazo Corridor, Jigawa State, and right up to some parts of North-East of Kano and Katsina States in the North West as contained in the Map exhibited;
28. **That;** Nigerians living in this geopolitical area have the right to enjoy peace, security and development in line with prescribed national and international human rights instruments;
29. **That;** the development of Sambisa Forest being contained in this Declaration will help transform the forest into a security fortress and economic powerhouse for Nigeria and the Lake T Chad Basin countries using Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Business Models. This is because it has untapped treasures if its potentials are exploited. Indeed, if properly developed, the Sambisa Forest and associated territories have the potentials of having twice the economic riches of Dubai and Singapore combined;
30. **That;** converting this area to a “**development epicentre**” shall go a long way in addressing the problem of growing unemployment, and by the participation of the

people in development, they will have a greater sense of belonging with built confidence and more trust in Government;

31. **That;** the “new Sambisa Forest” and its associated territories can be used as an effective border management instrument particularly using technological facilities in monitoring illegal migrants and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), will go a long way in securing the country.
32. **That;** planned development of the forest and the associated belt of territories will equally lead to better conservation, and use of the biodiversity of the region for better future development, given the unpredictable influence of climate change forces and conflict on the environment;
33. **That;** a peaceful region in this regard shall attract foreign investors to Nigeria, which by implication, will higher raise, our profile index of "countries to do business;" and therefore I call on all my compatriots and Nigeria’s friends around the world, as well as, those in the Diaspora, to consider this initiative as a responsibility to fellow humans and support it in all positive ways possible as, a complement to Government efforts;
34. **That;** the **Territory** shall lie and remain within the sovereignty of the Nigerian State, whilst its administrative control shall be within the Federating States of Borno, Yobe, Gombe, Bauchi, Jigawa, Kano and Katsina States;
35. **That;** this Document should henceforward be cited as “**The Sambisa Declaration.**”

Dated this 17th Day of July, 2019 at the Transcorp Hilton, Abuja, Nigeria.


Dr. Benjamin Onoriode Irikeré,
Declarant.