Fighting Corruption

Fresh Perspectives On Nigeria’s Unending Problem
Fourty-three years after her last visit to Nigeria, Miriam Wolford, American environmental artist, returned to the country and conducted workshops with art students, teachers, and members of the Society of Nigerian Artists (SNA). While in Nigeria, June 17 through 28. Miriam Kennedy Wolford, who is popularly known as Mimi among professional artists, traveled to Abuja, Osogbo, and Lagos, where she reconnected and inspired upcoming creative artists across Nigeria.

Her trip to Nigeria was on the invitation of the U.S. Mission in Nigeria. Mimi is the founder and director of Mbari Institute for Contemporary African Art, based in Washington, DC.

In the 60s, Mimi’s parents Jean Kennedy and Richard Wolford lived in Lagos and worked for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). During their stay in Nigeria, they supported and promoted the art works of Osogbo artists. Over the years, Mimi through the Mbari Institute has continued to promote the works of several African artists from Morocco, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda, Nigeria, Togo, and Mozambique.

The Abuja workshops with students, teachers, and SNA members were coordinated by the FCT Social Development Secretariat with support from the Abuja branch of SNA. The three day workshops provided opportunities for students and their teachers to learn new techniques of paper folding, decoration, oil pastel drawings, linoleum block, and paper sculpture. According to Mimi, it was heart-warming for her to see a lot of smiles and excitement in the faces of over 80 students who attended and practiced the techniques she taught during the workshops. The Abuja workshops went so well because of the enthusiasms displayed by members of the FCT Arts and Culture and the Society of Nigeria Artists. It was the same story in Osogbo, Osun State, with Nike Okundaye and in Lagos, with Dr. Peju Layiwola of the Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos.

The Osogbo workshop participants included university and polytechnic...
Dear CROSSROADS readers, this will be my final opportunity to write on this platform as the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria. I arrived this great country on October 18, 2010 and I am leaving with fond and rewarding memories.

I have travelled across your nation, from Lagos to Kano, from Sokoto to Port Harcourt; I am inspired by you, the people of Nigeria. I am impressed by your intelligence, drive, ingenuity, and capability. I am encouraged by your powerful sense of nationhood. And I am uplifted by the pride you show in your religions, your culture, and your beliefs, drawing inspiration as you do from the uplifting words of your national anthem. There is indeed much to celebrate in Nigeria, and I am grateful to you and to the members of the U.S. Mission for making my three years as Ambassador to Nigeria truly rewarding, truly unforgettable.

I am convinced that America and Nigeria share common goals. And I am proud to say that we are friends whose relationship spans critical issues of global and regional import. And as friends, we have had some difficult conversations of late, about corruption, about human rights. But I wish emphasize to you that our strategic relationship remains as strong as ever, that the bonds that link our two nations remains solid, and Nigeria remains for America our indispensable ally in Africa.

This edition of CROSSROADS focuses on the fight against corruption, a subject which I am sure many of you feel strongly about because of its negative impact on Nigeria. Other stories in this edition include the newly remodelled American Corner Abuja with its enhanced resources. Every story is a must-read. Enjoy and I look forward to when we meet again.

Ambassador Terence McCulley
Over 10 years since my last visit, corruption has not gone away in Nigeria nor in the United States and it is not going to go away. But by strengthening and reforming institutions, statutes, and organizations that enforce laws in Nigeria, the country can deal with corruption. It is a long battle that Nigeria must wage and not lose hope.” Those were the opening remarks of Peter Ainsworth, Senior Deputy Chief at the U.S. Justice Department on June 10 in Abuja.

The career prosecutor spoke at a one day interactive session jointly organized by the U.S. Embassy Abuja, in collaboration with the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG). Ainsworth delivered lectures at the Nigerian Law School, Bwari, and conducted a workshop for secondary school prefects and guidance and counseling teachers on the role of youths in fighting corruption at the Government
According to the 2013 Global Corruption Barometer released recently by Transparency International, more than half of people polled believe the level of corruption in their countries has increased over the past years.

The Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) 2013 draws on a survey of more than 114,000 respondents in 107 countries and addresses people’s direct experiences with bribery and corruption in their countries. It also provides insights into people’s willingness to stop corruption.

In the GCB index, more than one in four respondents (27%) said they paid a bribe over the past 12 months when accessing key public institutions and services. Of those who reported paying a bribe, 40% said they did so “to speed things up”; 27% said “it was the only way to obtain a service”, while 21% said they paid a bribe “as a gift, or to express gratitude”. The remaining 12% of respondents said it was “to get a cheaper service”.

Other key findings from the survey indicate that political parties are considered the most corrupt institution, followed by the police and the judiciary. Globally, religious institutions are seen as least corrupt. In countries like Israel, Japan, Sudan and South Sudan, however, religious bodies were seen to be highly corrupt.

Also, nearly two-thirds of respondents said they believe personal contacts and relationships help get things done in the public sector in their country. In 10 countries, including Israel, Italy, Malawi, Russia and Vanuatu, this figure was more than 80%.

In 2008, 31% of respondents said their government’s efforts to fight corruption were effective. This year that figure fell to 22%.

In Nigeria, the police and political parties were rated most corrupt and 81% of people surveyed reported paying a bribe. Meanwhile 56 percent of the survey population say they believe that ordinary people can make a difference in the fight against corruption.

Globally, 28% of men reported paying a bribe, compared with 25% of women. In some countries, such as Nepal and Pakistan, many more men reported paying bribes than women.

Transparency International argues that corruption not only increases the cost of essential services borne by individuals and the public purse, but that perceptions of widespread graft erode essential trust and faith in any democratic and legal process.
the court of Judge Henry Lackey, and in his attempt to win a favorable decision, Dickie tried to bribe the Judge. One of the first things Judge Lackey did was to report the matter to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). After months of investigation, Mr. Scruggs was charged to court, tried, found guilty and is currently serving a seven-year jail term for bribery.

What were the lessons Nigeria can learn from this celebrated case Ainsworth asked his audience? Opinions were varied but there was a consensus that in the fight against corruption in Nigeria, whistle blowers must be protected by the law. Secondly, transparency, confidentiality, and complete trust must exist between law enforcement agencies and members of the public. And finally, others also noted that the fight against corruption is a long battle, and if Nigeria is to win the war, all hands must be on deck and every Nigerian must be ready to make that “call” that will bring corrupt officials to book.

Beyond the calls, Ainsworth noted that the anti-corruption law might need some amendment to enable judges accept recorded conversations between the bribe taker and the giver, or statements of witnesses as evidence without appearing in court to protect the identity of the whistle-blower. This might encourage more people to come forward and report corruption or bribery cases to relevant agencies.

In closing, Ainsworth reminded the audience that there are several powerful “Dickie Scruggs” and “little Judge Henry Lackeys” in Nigeria and there is a moral burden on every Nigerian to bring the “Dickie Scruggs” of Nigeria to justice.

The interactive session ended with remarks from the Chairman TMG Comrade Ibrahim M. Zikirullah, and representatives from the National Security Adviser, and the Nigeria Security And Civil Defence Corp.

**Social Media in Fighting Corruption**

Peter Ainsworth also spent a couple of hours at the American Corner in Abuja discussing with a small group of civil society members on how to use social media to fight corruption. A major component of the discussion was a live tweet that allowed the outside audience to join in the conversation and ask questions.

Mr. Ainsworth began by asking the civil society members present about the perception among Nigerians about corruption. Joseph Amenaghawon of the Open Society Initiative West Africa, OSIWA, cited the instance of the former PDP chieftain who was received with pomp and ceremony by his people when released from prison, as an example of the general sense of apathy in dealing with issues of corruption.

There was a general consensus that if the government does not have the political power to tackle corruption, corruption will continue to thrive in Nigeria. Omojuwa, a renowned blogger, recalled when the Lagos State Government began the enforcement of mandatory use of seat belt by all road users. Prior to that, Omojuwasa said “car seat belts didn’t exist even though the cars had seat belts”. But wearing seat belts became the norm because the Lagos State government “created a disincentive for not wearing it.”

The role of citizens, civil society and religious groups in fighting corruption and holding the government accountable was also discussed. The participants highlighted the need to especially use the pulpit to condemn corruption and social vices, especially because Nigeria is a religious country. The representative from Enough is Enough (EIE), a youth advocacy group for good governance, tasked the youths to re-strategize by engaging the public...
office holders who can implement laws.

One tweet during the program said it was important for citizens to question the source of funds acquired by public office holders.

The civil society representatives shared how their organizations were building the capacity of citizens in the fight against corruption. According to Joseph Amenaghawon, OSIWA is currently supporting a few online platforms to use online technology, infotech and social media more actively to check corruption.

**Corruption and Students**

At Government Secondary School Wuse, Abuja, Peter Ainsworth also interacted with students from public schools in Abuja on corruption, particularly how it affects them.

The first question Mr. Ainsworth asked the students was their definition of corruption. Answers included the following:

- Illegal acts by leaders in power to people they serve.
- Act of doing wrong for money or giving someone money to do wrong.
- Act of embezzlement of money which is not your own; and
- Any act of indiscipline in any organization and it could be in the church or mosque.

The discussion became more specific as they talked about corruption in the education system. The students were quite honest and listed ‘giraffing’ and ‘expo’ which are all nicknames for exam malpractice. They also mentioned the fact that some parents also contribute to exam malpractice as they purchase question papers for their children. Plagiarism was another practice they mentioned especially with information sourced from the internet.

On the role of politicians in the education sector the students noted that they are supposed to construct schools and provide needed infrastructure like laboratories and books. In addition, they are the legislators that should make laws which would improve the standard of education.

Finally, the students were asked to suggest how corruption can be checked in the running of their schools. To fight corruption, participating students made the following suggestions:

- The process of issuing contracts for projects in schools be made open and transparent.
- Accountability by auditing how funds allocated to the school are spent needs to be quickly put in place.
- Improved salaries for teachers so they can do their jobs better.
- Students should have access to information about how their schools are managed, in addition to having meetings with the school management.

Mr. Ainsworth emphasized to the students that they can make a difference and it’s up to them as the future of Nigeria to push for positive change instead of relying on politicians to do the right thing because they may not.

**The Law and Corruption**

At the Nigerian Law School, Abuja, senior members of the law faculty led by Head of Academics, Bob Osamor...
deliberated on how to fight corruption in Nigeria. Just as in his interaction with civil society, Ainsworth emphasized that fighting corruption should be a continuous process and hope must never be lost. He said, although systems and approaches in the U.S. and Nigeria may differ, the goal is still the same which is to successfully enforce anti-corruption laws to serve as deterrence for future behavior. As simple as this goal seems, achieving it is not simple at all and the U.S., after working on this for two hundred years still makes mistakes, Ainsworth pointed out to his audience.

He recounted U.S. history to indicate how his office was formed as a result of the Watergate scandal. The Watergate scandal happened during the Presidency of Richard Nixon. It started with the arrest of some men who tried to burgle the offices of the Democratic Party situated at the Watergate Hotel complex in Washington D.C. It turned out that they were not regular burglars but were hired to install listening devices at the offices of the opposing party to that of the President. Investigations by the Federal Bureau of Investigation led to the President’s office. A court case to get recordings of the Presidents meetings ended at the U.S. Supreme Court with a judgment against the President and he was forced to resign ultimately.

An interesting interaction followed as the law professors shared their concerns about the difficulties in prosecuting corruption cases. Participants highlighted problems like restraining orders that public officers accused of corruption obtain from courts that impedes prosecution of culprits. They also expressed concerns about the effect on their students and the attendant pessimism that some have shown about fighting corruption. Mr. Ainsworth again noted that the process of evolving and learning from your mistakes is needed to fight corruption and no country is perfect.

At the end of the interaction the law professors were positive that despite the enormity of the challenges in fighting corruption in Nigeria, it could be done. They expressed hope because corrupt public officials are getting named and shamed today and because of the use of plea bargain, although it still needs improvement. They also concluded that strong institutions are not only needed but should be allowed to grow in order to successfully tackle the problem.

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A participant at the NLS session
At the Young African Leaders Initiative Town hall meeting in the University of Johannesburg-Soweto Johannesburg, South Africa on June 30, President Obama said history has shown that open and responsive governments are “more effective in delivering basic services” and “more successful in attracting the trade and investment that creates jobs and lifts people out of poverty.” The President also took questions from Nigerian youths who were stationed at the Channels TV studio in Lagos. Here are excerpts of that interaction with President Obama.

Maupe Ogun (Nigeria Moderator): Well, welcome, Mr. President, to Lagos, Nigeria, home to perhaps Africa’s biggest youth population. I’m Maupe Ogun for Channels Television here. And here with me in the studio are a select group of some of Nigeria’s brightest and best. And I must tell you, Mr. President, they’re mostly women, so you better be careful around them. And they say they’re on the march and they have their question ready. Over now to Aisha.

Q: Good afternoon, Mr. President. My name is Aisha Myna, and I represent seven other people here. In acknowledging our challenges and our responsibility as the young leaders of Nigeria to accept our challenges and make the difference, we would like to thank you for your support to Nigeria and Africa as a whole. The largest resource in Nigeria is our human capital, and we would like to ask a two-pronged question.

The first is, how can the United States deepen its investment in deploying technology that will develop our vast human capital as well as the education of her youth? My second question -- it’s two-pronged, sorry, Mr. President -- considering how long the war on terror has been on for, would you say that we’re winning the war on terror, seeing that there are new terrorist groups developing in Africa, one of which is in Nigeria? Thank you.

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Well, those are both great questions. Thank you.

And before I answer the question, I just want to be clear: I am surrounded by opinionated women in my house all day long -- (laughter) -- so I’ve got good practice dealing with strong women. You guys haven’t met Michelle, but you’ve probably seen her on TV. She’s not shy. And Malia and Sasha, they’re just taking right up after her. So every night at dinner I’m surrounded.

In terms of human capital and young people, I think there is no doubt that the most important investment any country can make -- not just an African country -- any country can make is educating its youth and providing them the skills they need to compete in a highly technological advanced world economy -- countries that do
not do that well will not succeed. Countries that excel at training their young people are going to succeed, because these days businesses can go anywhere. And one of the key criteria for any business is, where can I find outstanding workers? Where can I find outstanding people to manage a plant or manage my sales force? And if you have countries with high illiteracy rates or limited skills, you’re going to have problems.

And I want to be clear that this is a problem in the United States, not just a problem in Africa. One of the main things that I’m spending a lot of time on is trying to push Congress to improve our early childhood education, because it turns out that children are most susceptible to learning between the ages of zero and three. And so working with parents, particularly mothers, around reading to their children, proper nutrition, stimulating activities. Then, when they get to school, making sure that our schools are prepared and redesigned for today -- because a lot of the schools in the United States were first created during the agricultural era and aren’t always appropriate for what’s required today. And then on into what we call community colleges, which are two-year colleges or four-year colleges and universities.

Somebody should have told my helicopter to quiet down while I’m talking.

So across the board, we’re having to rethink education and workforce training. And one of the things that we want to do is to partner with a country like Nigeria and identify ways that we can provide direct value added -- whether it’s in helping to train teachers, helping to incorporate technologies into the education process.

So, for example, one of the things that you hear across the continent is, because a lot of Africans still live in rural areas, it may be difficult for them to access education and schooling once they get beyond a certain level. Well, are there ways in which we can pipe in, essentially, a university into a rural community? And suddenly, you’ve got the lecturer right there, without the same costs or obligation for a young person to take on when they go to travel far away from home in order to study.

And so I think that there are some excellent ideas that sometimes we’re doing country by country, depending on the country. But this is an area where I would love to get more input from young people in terms of what they think would work. And so part of the Young African Leaders Initiative may be to elicit additional ideas from those -- particularly those who may be working in education and have a sense of what are the barriers right now for young people in order to succeed.

Now, with respect to the so-called war on terror, there’s no doubt that we’ve made some progress in dealing with some extremist groups -- for example, core al Qaeda and bin Laden, that was based in the FATA area between Pakistan and Afghanistan -- that they have been greatly diminished. But what is also true is that in some ways, the problem has metastasized. You have more regional terrorist organizations, like a Boko Haram in Nigeria, espousing an extremist ideology, showing no regard for human life. And although they may not have the same transnational capacity that some of the earlier organizations did, they’re doing great harm in Africa and in the Middle East and in South Asia.

People always talk about the terrorist threat to the United States or the West, but the truth of the matter is, that the number of people who are killed by terrorist attacks in African countries, or in Muslim countries, or in South Asia, far outstrips any deaths that are experienced by Westerners. It’s typically people rights there, where these organizations are based, that are most likely to be killed. When the Kenya Embassy bombing happened, the overwhelming majority of people
who were killed were Kenyans, not Americans. And so this is not just a problem for us. This is a problem for everybody.

Now, the question is, how do we address this problem? It is my strong belief that terrorism is more likely to emerge and take root where countries are not delivering for their people and where there are sources of conflict and underlying frustrations that have not been adequately dealt with. The danger we have right now, for example, in a place like Somalia is that it’s been two generations, maybe three since there was a functioning government inside of Somalia. Now, we’ve started to see actually some progress, in part because of intervention by African nations in Somalia to clear the space, to create the space for governance.

But you look at what’s happening in Mali, for example, right now. Part of the problem is, that you had a weak central government and democratic institutions that weren’t reaching out as far into the country as were necessary, and we’ve got to build those institutions. A lot of what we talked about in terms of responsiveness and governance and democracy, those things become defense mechanisms against terrorism. They’re the most important defense against terrorism.

So I don’t start with the attitude of a military solution to these problems. I think the more that we’re giving people opportunity, the more that we’re giving people education, the more that we’re helping resolve conflicts through regular democratic processes, the less likely they are to take root. Now, having said that, there are some extremist groups that will not compromise or work through a democratic process, and we have to also be realistic about that. And what we want to do is partner with African countries to figure out how we can help.

But I promise, this notion somehow that we want to somehow expand our military reach -- I was elected to end a war. I’ve ended one. I’m now in the process of ending another one. Every few weeks, I go and visit soldiers who are your age, who have had their legs blown off in Afghanistan, or worse. Every week, I’m writing letters to the families of fallen soldiers.

Sometimes I go to Arlington National Cemetery, where our heroes are buried, and I hug those families and I feel their sobs on my shoulder.

This idea somehow that we want to get more involved militarily around the world is simply not true. First of all, it costs a lot of money, and the United States, just like every country around the world, has to think about its budget. And where we intervene oftentimes it’s not very effective because unless you’ve got a local population that is standing up against terrorism, we end up being viewed as interlopers and intruders.

So within the Africa context, what we want to do is to build African capacity. We want the African Union and other regional organizations to build up the capacity to send in peacekeepers, to be able to nip terrorist cells that may be forming before they start and gain strength. And we can provide advice and training and in some cases equipment, but we would love nothing more than for Africa, collectively, to say no to extremism, say no to terrorism, to say no to sectarianism -- which in the case of Boko Haram, for example, is an example of essentially a religious rationale for this kind of violence -- and the United States to be able to step back and worry about selling iPads and planes. That’s what we would like to do.

But what we won’t do is just stand by if our embassy is being attacked or our people are in vulnerable situations. And we expect countries to work with us to try to deal with some of these threats. And this is a global issue; it’s not just one related to the United States. Okay. All right.

Nigerian participants at the Young African Leaders forum watch proceedings through a digital Video Conference with President Obama.
U.S. Consul General Jeffrey Hawkins hosted a dinner reception to give public recognition to nominees of the 2013 edition of the Future Awards Africa on July 11, 2013. The Consul General’s very upscale residence in Ikoyi, Lagos provided the perfect setting for this high profile event that brought U.S. diplomats together with over 200 civically-engaged youth, made up of nominees of the 2013 Future Awards Africa, youth from diverse fields of endeavor and professions, executives and members of the Future Awards Africa, volunteers, media, celebrities such as the renowned Nigerian actress Omotola Jolade-Kehinde, past winners of the award and alumni of US Government sponsored programs.

This dinner was the Consulate’s first involvement with nominees of the Future Awards Africa, described as the Nobel Prize for youth in Africa. The event, organized by the Public Affairs Section, included a replay of President Obama’s recent South Africa TownHall speech to youth, a red carpet photo opportunity gallery, music, and food and drinks. The glamorous event showcased the U.S. Government’s support for youth initiatives and youth empowerment programs and its consideration of youths as the power engine for growth for any nation.

The Future Awards Africa is an annual award program directed towards Nigerian youth who have worked doggedly, through various initiatives in the sciences, art, literature, entertainment, social media and entrepreneurship, governance, economics and finance, to make a difference and who are considered as catalysts for change. They have been recognized by Forbes, the World...
Bank and most recently the African Union. The Selection Panel for the 2013 Future Awards Africa chose these nominees for performing dynamic and outstanding work in entrepreneurship, business, advocacy, environment governance, new social media arts and culture.

In his remarks, the Consul General Jeffrey Hawkins expressed delight for the opportunity to meet with this diverse group of youth doing extraordinary work in their various fields of endeavor. He commended the nominees and noted that their work has made an impact in the Nigerian community and the society at large. He said people were watching, following their breakthroughs and that the nominees are considered an asset to Nigeria, to Africa, and the world at large.

The Consul General noted that no nation can survive if it neglects to include its youth in governance, political and economic platforms, wealth creation and poverty alleviation. He said the goal of the United States is to empower young people to solve their own problems by empowering them to create enterprises, find jobs, and have a voice in the future of their countries.

The Department of State has supported several initiatives for youth through a series of high-profile forums with youth leaders including the President’s most recent Town Hall meeting with African youth, his Young African Leaders Forum in August 2010, the First Lady’s Young African Women Leaders Forum in June 2011, in which Nigeria’s Toyosi Akerele was specifically invited to attend, and the 2012 Young African Leaders Innovation Summit and Mentoring Partnership, in addition to more than 2,000 subsequent youth programs in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Consul General noted that each forum provided an opportunity to showcase the new generation of young African leaders and reinforce the U.S. commitment to a two-way dialogue with African youth. The intent of these initiatives is to advance U.S. understanding of and access to Africa’s youth population to enrich their potential to contribute to economic, political, and social development in Africa.

In concluding his remarks, the Consul General suggested that the youth present at this event should consider forming a Youth Council to interface with the U.S. Embassy as a coordinated group. He encouraged them to share their ideas with the Consulate and to fully exploit their creative abilities, dream big and forge ahead with their dreams for a better and brighter future.

The Executive Committee of the Future Award Africa, represented by Mr. Adebola Williams, commended the Consul General and the U.S. Government for believing in Nigerian youth and for the different platforms in which it has engaged the Nigerian youths over the years. Mr. Williams highlighted the fact that a number of the Future Award Africa awardees had benefited from the International Visitor Leadership Program.
James McAnulty, U.S. Embassy Chargé D’Affaires, says the renovation and unveiling of the Abuja American Corner underscores U.S. continued commitment “to promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States of America and our Nigerian friends.”

He spoke at a well-attended ribbon-cutting ceremony in Abuja on June 17, with the representative of the Director-General of the National Women Development Center Princess Jummai Idonije, school children, the media and fans of the Corner in attendance.

American Corner Abuja is one of eleven American Corners located in Nigeria. It is a partnership that the United States entered into in 2009 with the host institution, the National Center for Women’s Development to provide current and reliable information about the United States through books and magazine collections, poster exhibitions, and guides for research on the United States. At the same time, the Corner has a full programming agenda and organizes presentations, workshops, and dialogue with U.S. experts in areas that include educational opportunities in the U.S., foreign relations, literature, English, and a wide array of other topics.

McAnulty said since its opening in 2009, the American Corner in Abuja has served as a hub of learning for Nigerians from all walks of life. “Last year, I fondly recall reading to school children and handing out certificates to them and their parents at the ‘graduation ceremony’ of a wonderful reading program,” McAnulty said.

The Corner also serves as a meeting place for U.S. Alumni and other study groups for book discussions and leadership workshops on topical issues for visitors of all ages. While urging the public to take good advantage of the Corner, McAnulty said the Corner remains free and open to everyone – ordinary citizens, students, non-governmental organization representatives, entrepreneurs, artisans, and government officials.

Speaking on the concept of the renovated Center, Architect Matthew Onoba, Group Head of Onoba Associated, said the renovated Corner now offers ample learning and additional study space for users. The revamped Corner also has new titles that range from children’s literature to books on American history and politics; digital video disks with programs on everything from teen entrepreneurship to the U.S. Government; and Play-Away videos for younger audience members.

The concept of America Corners originated in Russia in October 2000 and today there are over 400 American Corners worldwide.
In the 2013 TIP Report, Nigeria remained in Tier 2 status because the Government of Nigeria does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, but is making significant efforts to do so. The Government of Nigeria slightly increased its efforts to protect trafficking victims during the year. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP) received a slight increase in funding in 2012. NAPTIP made improvements in its anti-TIP efforts over the last reporting period, including a modest increase in anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts and the provision of specialized anti-trafficking training for its officials. NAPTIP’s Public Enlightenment Unit continued to conduct national and local programming through radio and print media in all regions of the country to raise awareness about trafficking, including warning about fraudulent recruitment for jobs abroad.

It is important to note, however, that the TIP Report does not simply measure the efforts of NAPTIP as an agency, but rather the Government of Nigeria as a whole. Despite the notable efforts of NAPTIP, the government has not yet satisfied all the minimum standards set forth in the 2000 Trafficking Victims Protection Act, as amended (TVPA) to justify an upgrade to Tier 1. For example, the government has yet to pass draft legislation that would restrict the ability of judges to offer fines in lieu of prison time during sentencing, and the Nigerian Police Force continues to experience difficulty identifying trafficking victims. Additionally, the Ministry of Labor did not make any new efforts to address labor trafficking during the reporting period, despite the identification of a significant number of labor trafficking victims.

The Nigerian government has been urged, among other remedial measures, to ensure NAPTIP receives sufficient funding; to take proactive measures to investigate and prosecute government officials suspected of trafficking-related corruption and complicity in trafficking offenses; and to train police and immigration officials to identify trafficking victims.

**Trafficking in Persons in Nigeria**

On June 19, 2013 U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry released the Department of State’s annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report in a public event in Washington, D.C. Nigeria remained in Tier 2 position due mainly to what the report attributed to falling below the minimum standards. Below are excerpts of the report.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that there are 2.4 million people throughout the world who are lured into forced labour and 43% of all victims of forced labour worldwide are trafficked for sexual exploitation.
Music lovers on July 26, at the U.S. Ambassador’s residence in Abuja were thrilled with a full dose of gypsy jazz music coming from Parisian-born guitarist Stephane Wrembel and his group. Wrembel and his band were on a performance tour of Nigeria as part of the U.S. Embassy Jazz Envoy program. The night’s open concert began a series of live shows and performances in schools, civic centers and in Jos, Plateau State. The Jazz Envoy program supports outstanding musicians who perform quintessentially American genre with profound African roots.

Born in Paris and raised in Fontainbleau, Wrembel can be classified as a nomad, a Gypsy, and a world traveller. His music and lifestyle are unique and very expressive of the Gypsy way of life. His early childhood was influenced by Django Rinehardt’s music and, with training and hard work, he has perfected his art and has produced classical movie sound tracks such as Vicki Cristian Barcelona and Midnight in Paris.

Taking the Abuja audience through a night, most said they would never forget, the band played from some of its classical songs like Voyager, Tsunami, Carbon 14, and Water is Life. The soulful rhythm of “Water is Life” demonstrates the vibrant nature of Africa, Wrembel told his audience.

The trip was Wrembel’s first time coming to Africa and Nigeria. “I am brand new to Africa,” he announced to his Abuja audience. “I see Nigeria as a beautiful country and as you already know, it is the home of the Super Eagles.” In his welcome remarks, Ambassador McCulley said music concerts that bring people like Wrembel and his band to Nigeria, are clear reminders of the strategic friendship between Nigeria and the United States.

The five-man band consists of Dave Speranza on bass; Roy Williams on 2nd guitar, Nick Anderson on drums and Terry Lapointe on sound, and lighting. Stephane Wrembel is band leader and key guitarist and Cam Morin, is the band manager.

Dignitaries at the open Jazz concert included members of the diplomatic community, the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mohammed Bello Adoke and Senator Ben Obi, Special Adviser to the President on Inter-Party Affairs. Others were the Ambassador of France, Jacques Champagne de Labriolle, the Ambassador of Italy, Dr. Roberto Colamine, and the Ambassador of Japan, Ryuichi Shoji and his wife Mrs. Mai Anh Le.

Within one week, Wrembel and his band also performed at selected venues including the Film Institute, and the Jos Business School. Other venues were the Abuja Jazz Festival and a grand performance on July 4th as part of celebrations marking America’s 237th Independence anniversary celebration in Abuja.
students from across the country who were on industrial work experience program at the Nike Art and Culture Foundation. The participants were taught techniques of bracelet making. Others worked on linoleum block, carving, and printing. In addition, there were sessions on leather and paper bead construction. The bracelet making techniques resonated so well among participants and they successfully produced new inventions for making bracelets on their own.

Mr. Alessandro Iwunze, a 300 level student from the Department of Fine and Applied Art, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, was very appreciative of the opportunity to participate in the workshops. He said that he learned new techniques of making bracelets and promised to share the idea with students at the University of Nigeria.

In Osogbo, Mimi received typical Nigerian hospitality hosted by Nike Okundaye. "I feel so honored and was humbled by this reception," said Mimi to her host. Mimi was also the special guest to the traditional ruler of Ido Osun Land, Oba Aderemi Adedapo who graciously welcomed her to his palace. Oba Adedapo lived and worked in New York for 25 years.

The U.S. cultural ambassador also conducted workshops at the University of Lagos’ Creative Arts Department, from June 25 to 27, 2013. Working with an audience of 130, Mimi taught bracelet and bead making to school children from the University of Lagos Staff Primary and Secondary School and students from the Department of Early Childhood Education. She used slide shows to demonstrate several of this processes. Mbari Institute for Contemporary African Art, in Washington DC was set up to assist African artists to showcase their art works. Several prominent works of Nigerians, Kenyans, Ghanaians and works of other African artists are on display at the Center. Mini also taught students and artists how to use recycled materials and clay to form and mold objects and art works.

U.S. Consul General Jeff Hawkins also hosted a reception in honor of the visiting artist where he encouraged Nigerian youths to engage in the arts and culture business.
We welcome all students to the visa line, but tell the truth and show that you are credible,” U.S. Embassy, Abuja Consular Officer, Ryan Feeback, counseled Nigerian students at an EducationUSA visa orientation session held at the Cyprian Ekwensi Center for Arts and Culture, Abuja, on Wednesday, June 12.

He also cautioned the students: “You cannot come to a visa interview without your approved Form I-20, all about your admission status and funding sources; Secondly, make sure to pay your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SERVIS) fee and get the proper documentation (I-901 receipt) for the payment; and most importantly, Do not ever pay someboby (touts, agents or criminals out there), to make your application, or obtain fake documents for you because they will ruin your future.”

He said consular officers will detect fake documents, and they are not impressed when a student is unable to follow basic instructions, and then goes out to pay somebody for fake documents, or to write the application for them.

Ryan Feeback explaining the visa process to students at the EducationUSA orientation session. Embassy photo by Sani Mohammed

He also cautioned the students: “You cannot come to a visa interview without your approved Form I-20, which will tell the Consular Officer all about your admission status and funding sources; Secondly, make sure to pay your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SERVIS) fee and get the proper documentation (I-901 receipt) for the payment; and most importantly, Do not ever pay someboby (touts, agents or criminals application for them.

Ryan explained that the Embassy does not employ agents to intercede on its behalf for student visas or SERVIS fees, and warned that if students come in with fake documents, their credibility will be tarnished and they would deny themselves the opportunity to study, or to ever travel to the United States.

Both students and parents listened with rapt attention as the Consular officer rolled out the magic words for getting a visa – “Tell the Truth!” he said. He further advised students to do everything on their own, to protect their credibility.

Cultural Affairs Officer William Strassberger and Education Advisor Jennifer Onyukwu said the visa orientation session is part of the services offered to students by the Embassy’s EducationUSA Advising Center (EAC), to guide them for study in the U.S.

Participants, including parents, were given the opportunity to ask questions and receive information about how to study in the U.S. and how to apply for membership of the EAC.
As Americans across the world gathered Thursday for 4th of July festivities, Nigerians were not left out as U.S. Ambassador Terence McCulley celebrated what he described as his last Fourth of July in Nigeria. The Consul General Jeffrey Hawkins hosted Lagosians to an out-door American-style reception. From the parade of colors by the U.S. Marines Security Guards, to the scintillating Jazz music from Stephane Wrembel and his jazz group, to the delicious American foods in Abuja, there was plenty of pomp and circumstance.

“Thank you for honoring us with your presence to help us celebrate the 237th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America,” Ambassador McCulley told his audience.

He said Nigerians, like Americans, are committed to democracy, and with it the pursuit and safeguarding of human rights. Both Nigeria and the United States have a lot of shared values rich with different cultures, races, ethnicities, and viewpoints—a diversity that Ambassador McCulley said must be cherished, protected and embraced.

On security, Ambassador McCulley said Nigeria carries aloft a precious torch, and with it the weighty responsibility to demonstrate that the country’s democratic experiment – like our American project – can find strength in its diversity of language, ethnicity, religious and cultural traditions. He advised that for Nigerian democracy to continue to prosper, conflict must be addressed, differences must be embraced, and unity must be promoted as a core value.

His parting words were full of promise and optimism that Nigeria will continue to make progress despite its challenges. “I, for one, am optimistic. I am confident that Nigerians – despite the challenges – will find a way forward, as Nigerians have always done. There is indeed much to celebrate in Nigeria, and I am grateful to you and to the members of this Mission for making my three years as Ambassador to Nigeria truly rewarding, truly unforgettable.” said McCulley.
The EducationUSA Advising Centers in Abuja and Lagos provide quality, timely, accurate, unbiased information about all accredited U.S. higher education institutions for persons wishing to study in the U.S.

For more information about EducationUSA and study opportunities in the United States, please visit: http://www.educationusa.state.gov

The resources highlighted below are available at the Information Resource Centers in Abuja and Lagos. To Register as a member, please visit: http://tinyurl.com/ircregistration and for all enquiries, please write to: ircabuja@state.gov (North) and wyllagos@state.gov (South).

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The EducationUSA/Information Resources Abuja -- Lagos

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**Lagos:**
U.S. Consulate General, Public Affairs Section, 2 Walter Carrington Crescent; Victoria Island-Lagos. Telephone: 01-460-3400/2724/2725/3801/3802 E-mail: Lagos@educationusa.info

Scholarships and Fellowship at MIT
From July 10-11, 2013, EducationUSA Abuja and Will Guyster from Massachusetts Institute of Technology engaged more than 300 current and emerging Nigerian entrepreneurs and graduate students at five different locations in Abuja—Central Bank of Nigeria, National Space Agency, Energy Commission, U.S. Embassy EducationUSA Center and the Cyprian Ekwensi Center for Arts & Culture.

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