



# REPORT

## Nigeria's evolving foreign Policy and Global Aspirations

Chatham House & Online

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*Event chaired by Dr Alex Vines OBE - Research Director; Director, Africa Programme*

*Speaker : HE Ambassador Yusuf M. Tuggar - Minister of Foreign Affairs, Federal Republic of Nigeria*

### **Context**

Nigeria, as Africa's most populated country and a major economy, is redefining its foreign policy to adapt to shifting geopolitical dynamics. It seeks to strengthen international partnerships, expand its influence in multilateral institutions, and secure a key role in global governance, including aspirations for a UN Security Council seat and G20 membership. Balancing alliances with Western partners and emerging economies like BRICS, Nigeria also faces domestic and regional challenges, such as security concerns and economic volatility. Among evolving global alignments, it aims to position itself as a leader in international cooperation while safeguarding national interests. During the conference, HE Ambassador Yusuf M. Tuggar, outlined Nigeria's foreign policy priorities and the government's strategy for international engagement.

### **Nigeria's Positioning in the Evolving Global Order and Strategic Foreign Policy Priorities**

As Africa's most populous country and a leading economy, Nigeria is redefining its foreign policy approach in response to shifting geopolitical dynamics. Its foreign policy priorities are structured around several key principles:

- **Multilateralism and influence in global governance:** A greater participation in international institutions such as the United Nations and the G20, seeking a permanent seat on the Security Council.
- **Strategic balance between Western alliances and BRICS relations:** While maintaining strong ties with Western powers, Nigeria is also strengthening its relations with emerging economies.
- **African leadership and regional consolidation:** Nigeria places Africa at the core of its foreign policy, actively promoting regional stability and economic cooperation.

However, Nigeria must reconcile its global ambitions with pressing internal challenges, including security concerns, economic volatility, and governance issues, which significantly impact its diplomatic decisions.

### **Nigeria's Multilateral Influence and Its Alignment with National Development**

Nigeria's drive to expand its international influence aligns closely with its national development goals. This ambition is reflected in several strategic areas. **Developing proactive economic diplomacy** is a key priority, as Nigeria actively negotiates trade agreements and fosters strategic partnerships to diversify its economy beyond its traditional reliance on oil. The country also seeks to **attract foreign investment** and boost trade, **leveraging its diplomatic weight** to secure favorable international agreements while implementing reforms to improve the business climate by reducing administrative constraints and enhancing investment protection.



As the dominant player in ECOWAS and West Africa's economic hub, Nigeria strategically positions itself as a gateway for companies looking to access the regional market, **reinforcing its regional influence and strengthening security governance**<sup>1</sup>. Recognizing that stability is essential for economic growth, Nigeria actively participates in regional security initiatives, particularly within ECOWAS, to address transnational threats.

At a global level, Nigeria advocates for the **restructuring of the international financial system** to ensure fairer access to funding for developing economies, aligning with its support for reforms in the international financial architecture to create a more equitable system. Through these efforts, Nigeria aims to foster an environment conducive to national growth while influencing international policies to its advantage.

### **Nigeria's Role in Regional and International Institutions**

Nigeria plays a central role in regional and global governance through multiple engagements:

- **Within ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States):** Nigeria is a key player in peacekeeping, political mediation, and economic integration, advocating for free movement and intervening in regional crises.
- **In the African Union:** Nigeria is committed to peace initiatives across the continent and actively supports economic integration projects such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
- **At the United Nations:** Nigeria consistently advocates for reform of the Security Council, arguing that Africa, given its geopolitical significance, deserves a permanent seat.

Through these institutions, Nigeria aims to reinforce its position as a continental leader and influence major global decisions.<sup>2</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Nigeria's foreign policy is based on a balanced approach that integrates multilateral engagement, African leadership, and economic diplomacy. Its international ambitions are closely aligned with its national priorities, aiming to leverage its demographic and economic weight into political influence. Despite domestic challenges, Nigeria continues to adopt a proactive stance in shaping global governance and attracting opportunities that will drive its development.

<sup>1</sup> Shehu, D.M, "The fundamental principles of Nigerian Foreign policy in international relations", *International Journal of Humanities, Literature and Research*, 07, 2025, p.152.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.154.