

The Politics of International Economic Relations in West African Sub-Region: A Study of Niger-Nigeria Bilateral Relations

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Abstract

This study examines the politics of international economic relations in West African sub region with particular emphases on Niger - Nigeria bilateral relations. This study specifically assesses the trade relations between Nigeria and Niger Republic; the level of integration between Nigeria and Niger; the bilateral relations between the two countries. The study also identifies the challenges confronting their bilateral relations. The source of data for this study was mainly from secondary source. The study was analysed using content analysis. From the result of the study reveals that the economic trade relations between Nigeria and Niger involve the exports and imports goods and services. On the bilateral relations between Nigeria and Niger the study reveals that territorial unity and cohesion beyond successive authorities under the old empires of the Songhrai, the Borno, and the Hausa city-states. Despite the modern state system thus were able to retain their territorial relations and a very strong cultural tie. Fundamental characteristics of Hausa territory and the Maradi micro-region the considerable interdependence between settlement dynamics, urban development, agricultural production and trade with all these factors, the area has greater potential for integration than most other West African areas in economic and social development. The findings reveal that the challenges confronting Nigeria and Niger economic relations include high rate of smuggling which has destroyed the local industrial growth. Several clashes also occurred between the smugglers and their cohorts. Also the informal trade has also created security challenges especially in Nigeria as most of the smugglers engage in arms trade in light weapons, which has led to insurgency in the two countries. The study recommended that Nigeria and Niger should intensify the joint border patrols to tackle smuggling and insurgency affecting the two countries. There should be reliable structures of security cooperation to prevent the spill-over of conflicts which Boko Haram has benefited from the Libya cum Mali conflicts.

Keywords: Politics, International and Economic Relations

Introduction

Nigeria keeps close relations with the Republic of Niger because they share a large Hausa population on each side of their 450-mile (1500 km) border. Hausa language and cultural ties are strong. Nigeria-Niger formed Joint Commission for Cooperation (NNJC) established in March, 1971 with its Permanent Secretariat in Niamey, Niger in order to avoid disputes that may result in the political instability. Nigeria and Niger have been concerned with clear demarcation of boundaries and other economic benefits, cultural and diplomatic initiatives aimed at ensuring, peaceful coexistence amongst them. Their relations are founded on a long shared border and common cultural and historical interactions (Abdoul, Dahou, and Marie, 2004).

French and British colonialism in the period 1890 – 1905 demarcated the line which would become the modern Niger – Nigeria border. The 1,500 kilometres (930ml) long border between

Niger and Nigeria cuts across the more densely populated areas of both nations. Culturally, the Hausa people in Nigeria-Niger shared historical tiers. Prior to the 20th century there was no formal border. Both areas were culturally Hausa in the centre and west and Kanuri in the east, in the east both sides of the present border had been part of the Bornu Empire (Ate 1992).

In the colonial era, the French and English languages were fixed on each side of the border, along with culture, education and political tradition. French and British interest meant that in the colonial period trade relations across the border was not encouraged. The land of Niger almost are completely landlocked and access to the sea are through fellow French West Africa states of Benin and Togo. Despite common Hausa language and cultural ties, the two colonial powers discouraged formal trade which led to informal trade. Trade between Niger and Nigeria is favoured by Niger's geographical

situation: Niger, a land-locked country dependent on neighbouring countries for food supplies, shares a long border with Nigeria, as well as complementary agro-pastoral activities and socio-cultural factors. The Hausa peoples on both sides of the border live in interdependent closeness by virtue of their shared culture, language, and social and religious values (Abdoul Dahou and Marie 2004). It is against this background that the study on the Politics of International Economic Relations in West African Sub-Region focusing on Niger - Nigeria bilateral relations needed to be studied.

Statement of the Problem

Apart from formal trade there is informal trade between Nigeria and Niger. The extent of this trade is hard to assess not only because of its nature, over the previous few years, a rich variety of more flexible and “people-centred” cross-border cooperation efforts have multiplied in West Africa. Towns have signed twinning agreements, civil society associations mediate in conflicts, medical centres coordinate resources, schools welcome cross-border students, stock breeders have set up transhumance corridors, traders engage in the setting up of cross-border markets (Abdoul, Dahou, & Marie, 2004). The dynamism of these “micro-initiatives” tends to cement peaceful relationships, develop social and economic interdependencies, and make up a base for “regional civil society”. They are not however, formal for the time being, form a pressure group capable of making their voices heard at the policy-making level.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the politics of international economics relations in West African sub region with emphases on Niger - Nigeria bilateral relation. The specific objectives are to:

- i. assess the trade relations between Nigeria and Niger Republics;
- ii. examine the level of integration between Nigeria and Niger;
- iii. assess the bilateral relations between the two countries; and
- iv. examine the challenges confronting the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Literature Review

Nature of Trade Relations between Nigeria and Niger Republics Some of the items involved in

the Nigeria and Niger trade are food and textile; food items include maize, rice, millet and corn while textile include blankets, clothes and plastics. Other, goods imported from Niger are livestock and vegetable oil, while goods exported to Niger republic include petroleum and textile materials. Rice is smuggled to Niger through the borders of Mali, Benin and Togo. The types of vehicles used in transportation are Volkswagen Golf, and Peugeot. The vehicles moved easily on the bush trail, while other smugglers used motor cycles and bicycles to transport their goods across the border. The products are usually carried in sacks and in most cases unpackaged. On reaching destination, the goods were exchange and re-distributed through complex distribution networks to all parts of the state (Jamilu: 2006:55). That is why rice is cheaper in Katsina than anywhere in Northern Nigeria. It was estimated that over 50 tons of rice is smuggled daily from Maradi to Katsina (Abdullahi 2013).

Petroleum is Nigeria's common exports product to countries like Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. In Katsina-Maradi border, it was estimated that over 50-100 tankers loaded with petroleum daily entered Maradi through the bush trails (Mamman, 2013). The reason behind this is partly because the petroleum is relatively cheaper in Nigeria than in the neighbouring countries of Niger, Chad and Cameroon. So, people used 50 litre Jerry cans to transport the products across the border (Muhammadu, 2009). Even though, one could not doubt the discovery of petroleum in Niger republic in the early 2010, this notwithstanding, Nigeria's petrol is cheaper than that of Niger this attract Nigeriens prefer to buy petrol from Nigeria. In fact, it has been estimated that Niger petrol is sold at the rate of N700 per litre (\$2 dollar). While Nigerian petrol is sold at the rate of N145 per litre this simply means it is not up to a dollar. Therefore because of the disparity in the prices, smuggling of petroleum products from Nigeria to Niger continue to increase over a period of time (Sani 2004: 4).

Similarly, textile materials are exported to Maradi through informal cross – border trade, which include wax prints (both Nigeria and imported Wax). The imported wax include Dutch, English and Japanese wax which are cotton and mixture of cotton and other materials that come in rolls. The materials are bought from

Kano, Funtua and Kaduna textile companies. (Balami 1999. Hashim 2009: 90).

Effects of Informal Trade between Nigeria and Niger

Unrecorded cross – border trade is an unofficially recognized by governments but it is understood that the trade has the potentials of facilitating regional integration between Nigeria and Niger. Therefore the trade has the following impacts.

Economic Impact of Informal Trade

Informal cross – border trade fulfils consumer needs and provides means of livelihood to thousands of small scale traders in market places across the border. Some of the goods consumers obtained are indispensable and contribute to the economic development of the two countries (Usman 2004: 9). For example, trade in petroleum across Katsina-Maradi border brings together significant large number of mediators, all of whom attempt to take advantage of their position in the business (Urwatu 2009).

The informal trade also contributed toward economic integration between Nigeria and Niger. This is because goods of different varieties were transported across the border which aimed at satisfying consumer needs. The reason behind this according to Usman was that the formal process of promoting regional integration had so far recorded limited results over the years (Usman 2004: 10).

Furthermore, on agriculture, Maradi benefits from informal cross -border trade from imports of subsidized agricultural inputs from Katsina especially fertilizer (Hashim and Meagher 1999: 82). Therefore inflows of grains from Katsina have undermined the intensification of Maradi's grain production, but the Katsina's market has provided a significant stimulus to the production of cash crops such as cowpeas and groundnuts (Meagher 1996: 5). Also, the export of grains (maize guinea corn millet cowpea) to Maradi have contributed to rising grain price with a positive effect on surplus producers, but with a negative effect on small scale farmers and consumers (Meagher 1993: 7).

Social Impact

Nigeria and Niger along Katsina-Maradi border trade led to the emergence of towns and villages along the border. A clear example is the emergence of Jibia as a border town in Katsina State. It was based on this that Jibia town earned the epithet of Aljannar Yan Sumogal (the paradise of smugglers) (Lawal, 2013). However

proximity to the border line made villages like Dankama, Gurbi, Madarumfa and Maimujiya in Niger republic to witness urban growth. Despite being border towns, they were also strong agricultural and commercial nerve centres in the border. This no doubt attracted many people from Nigeria and Niger. This indeed, contributed immensely to their development.

The trade also promote cooperation and friendship among nationalist on both sides of the border. The impact of this was intermarriage among people living in the border towns (Usman 2004: 9). In fact, majority of the people interviewed testified that traders, drivers, guides, usually mar from Niger republic (Ma'aruf J 2013). According to them marriage in Maradi is cheaper.

Level of Integration between Nigeria and Niger

Before colonialism the Northern States of Nigeria were linked to the rest of the African countries, as well as to the outside Africa, by a range of inter-regional trading circuits. Trade was based largely on ecological and specialization, although routes were also influenced by levels of tolls and taxation, and a significant proportion of European manufactured goods had been introduced into these circuits in the centuries before the beginning of the colonial period (Lovejoy 1980:40). To the north, the Trans-saharan trade routes linked centres in the desert and savannah areas of West Africa to Tripoli. In the context of the eclipse of empires further west, the Tran Saharan routes terminating at Katsina, Kano and Kukawa (now Maiduguri) became important trading cities from the 17th century, and the Kano terminus gained particular prominence following the Fulani jihad in the early 19th century (Mahdi 1978:25). Exports from the Hausa areas of the central Sudan included slaves, hides and skins, local textiles, leather works, small quantities of condiments and, in the 19th century, ostrich feathers. Imports from Tripoli consisted of a range of North African and European made goods, principally textiles, small quantities of arms, and miscellaneous manufactured goods (Hopkins 1973:30).

Therefore, before colonial period there had been socio-economic interaction between Katsina and Maradi. Ever since, the two cities have maintained these excellent relations. This is because Maradi was an extension of Katsina kingdom as such they share the same norms and

values since time immemorial (Onoja 1993:306). As noted, before colonial period there were interactions between Katsina and Maradi. Katsina tobacco farmers and merchants grew tobacco and travelled to Maradi. They returned with livestock to Katsina and fattened the livestock, and set off again to Niger (Sani 2004:55).

Similarly, it is reiterated that there were trade relations between Katsina and Maradi since precolonial period. This type of relations according to him was based on the exchange of goods like iron implements, cloth and leather goods, all of which occupied an important position in the pre-colonial economy of Katsina and Maradi (Usman, 1981:126).

However, the imposition of colonial rule in many parts of West Africa led to the creation of artificial boundaries. The boundaries divided people with the same cultural background. This transformation no doubt affected Katsina-Maradi border which for long had been together. The first step took by the colonial governments was the restriction of the movement of goods and persons across the border (Anene 1970:281-282). As noted by Kassim, the restriction of the movement of people and goods along Katsina-Maradi border was a clear indication that the British and French colonial governments were aimed at creating a demarcation between the borders of the two cities. In fact they went ahead to established customs and immigration stations on the major roads into Maradi. Such as Jibia Maradi border, Kongolam Maimourjiya, and Zango Matamaya border (Kassim 1992:58-60). Indeed institutional frameworks like the Customs services and their strict border patrols seriously obstructed regional integration and commercial transactions along Katsina-Maradi border (Usman 2005: 5). Therefore, with the establishment of these border controls, traders and merchants from both sides of the border towns feared to cross with their merchandize and therefore evaded the stations in order to avoid apprehension from security agents (Anene 1970:58). This is because the creation of the border was not based on any clear socio-cultural reason rather was arbitrary; hence kinsmen were divided by border and yoked into different countries. Even though the division was not recognized by the families so affected, thus they continue with their economic interaction along the border (Ogunkola 1998:6).

Informal cross border trade along Katsina-Maradi border continued despite the custom stations established along the border. The impact of this was the decline in government revenue due to wide spread of the trade across the border. To prevent this, colonial government in Nigeria passed a law titled "Nigeria Defence Regulation". The regulation was aimed at creating a frontier area six miles deep within which it was an offence to move any controlled goods at night, and goods in transit on the day time could be stooped and detained pending proof by their owners that they were not intended for export" (Ogunkola, 2005:26).

Another reason for the increase in the trade was the emergence of Maradi as a commercial nerve centre in Niger republic. Coupled with the fact that, Niger is a land locked country solely depends on transit goods. As such the trade is profitable to all those concerned in the business; the smugglers, security agents etc. The trade brought about collaboration between smugglers and law enforcement agents. As such contrabands were smuggled through the border. The trucks usually arrived at the day time and cleared at midnight for onward crossing the border (Utomwen, 2009: 2). In fact, it has been revealed that smugglers paid a colossal amount of money before crossing the border. In other instances, negotiations were carried out, concluded according to the size and the type of items in the trucks (Ibrahim and Shehu, 2001). To this end, border of Nigeria, Niger Republic is also a point of unrecorded cross border trade in Manufacture and petroleum. It is by the border that operators establish trade link with the central areas of the Sahel in some parts of Mali and Burkina Fasso (Usman, 2004: 8-9).

Bilateral Relations between Niger and Nigeria

The territorial unity between Nigeria, Niger is beyond successive authorities under the authority of the Songhai and the Borno, the Hausa city states, despite their political instability, were able to retain their territorial integrity and cultural unity. However, their structural stability was put to test by a series of harsh droughts in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. The length of the famines and the social crises that followed created a feeling of discontent among the people, who made the most of the Muslim reformists under the guidance of Usman Dan Fodio. The Jihad or holy war that he initiated from 1804-08 led to

the compliance of the Hausa cities: Alkalawa, Birnin Kebbi, Katsina, Kano, Gazargamu (Former Borno, now in Yobe State), Zamfara, and Zaria. This led to the emergence of Sokoto Caliphate, in the form of a confederation of several Emirates (Borno Emirate), which agreed to place themselves under the suzerainty of the Caliph – the Commander of the Believers (Meagher, 1993).

The fundamental characteristics of Hausa territory and the Maradi micro region based on historical background will help in understanding one of the considerable interdependence between urban development, settlement dynamics, trade, and agricultural production. The simultaneous presence of all these factors, are the reasons for the greater potential for integration than most other West African areas witnessing economic and social development. The contradiction is that, these very same factors also relatively lead to the instability of the socio economic balance of power and instability, due to droughts, bad harvests, competitions on land resources, and political disagreements between major Nigerian and Nigerien traders (Last, 1997).

South Niger has a total population of 75 percent, along the Niamey–Zinder route, which represents just 12 per cent of the national territory. This makes Maradi the administrative department (most populated in Niger) which is closely linked to the development of the Kano, Katsina and Sokoto. With high population densities over a long period of time, the Kano region has witnessed a further population growth in the 1990 to 2000, including Katsina region. During this period, the occupation of the population depended on food security criteria. The Maradi has witnessed rapid population growth, as the population has risen from 1.2 million inhabitants in 1987 to 1.6 million in 1990, 2.3 million in 2000 and 3.2 million in 2015 (Grégoire, 2015).

Most high density villages are located along the borders with Nigeria. The high population concentration can be explained by several factors: the long years of population concentration inherited from Hausa history, the fertility of the land and the proximity of the markets (UNDP, 1997). As a result, the urban population has grown rapidly and constantly. Maradi city's annual population growth rate has in the past been around 8 per cent, mostly due to a massive rural exodus following a series of

groundnut production and marketing crises. From 12,500 inhabitants in 1959, the city's population rose to almost 200,000 in 1995, 300,000 in 2000 and Kano city has 1.4 million in the year 2000. These high densities have led to a situation where the Hausa-Fulani has been subject to strong population pressures within a limited agro-pastoral area (Kassim, 1992).

The relatively dense secondary cities are distinguished by the linkage of Maradi Katsina Kano route. Their population growth rates are high enough to stimulate agricultural production in the rural areas. The urban rural channel operates under the regulation of coordinated links of economic players, from producers to wholesalers, retailers and consumers and this has enabled cross-border trade to develop beyond its limits, making the micro region in to an international framework based on ancient, organised trade routes (Kassim, 1992).

The concentration of trade around a mesh of markets goes back to the era of trans-Saharan trade in certain trading such as Zinder in Niger and Illéla in Nigeria. These significant markets attracted traders from great distances as well as the areas. The entire Hausa territory is interwoven by a road network linking the main market and warehousing in the cities with trans-shipment places such as villages where weekly markets are held. Markets were established, based on the specific functions of each market in the system as a whole. These include: pick-up markets located in the northern Nigerian production zones, i.e.: Bakori in Katsina State; Makarfi in Kaduna State; Dawanu in Kano State. Border markets, such as Illela and Baga which are the main markets of northeast. End consumer markets such as Niamey, Maradi and Zinder.

Over a hundred border markets can be found along the entire 1,500 Sq km long border between Niger and Nigeria (Jamilu, 2006).

The development of trade relations between southern Niger and northern Nigeria stems from two major activities: trade in local products and transit. The flow of goods from Niger to Nigeria includes a type of string beans (niébé), Zulu nuts (chufu), gum arabic, cattle, hide and skins. Goods flowing in the other direction include cereals, other food products, hydrocarbons, building materials and plastic products, both from Nigerian as well as international sources (Jamilu, 2006).

Traditionally, livestock trade covers a very important position in trade relations between Niger and Nigeria. The livestock sold in Nigeria is highly taxed, with animals taxed at 40 per cent of their market value, which tends to encourage the parallel market. Statistics refer to exports of 1,000,000 cattle, a figure that appears to be far below the actual numbers which are, in fact, traded (Jamilu, 2006).

The system of transportation operations is the major activity between Niger and Nigeria characterised by a combination of formal and informal trade mechanisms. The most part of these activities follow a transportation routes starting from the ports of Lomé and Cotonou and passing through the Malanville market and customs in Gaya before crossing through the cities of Maradi or Zinder and ending in northern Niger (Mahamane, 1993).

Indeed, cross border trade is characterised by both horizontal and vertical routes. The porosity of customs posts stems from cultural solidarity and agreement between Hausa inhabitants on both sides of the border. Several traders intervene at different decision-making levels in the states, as well as in different segments of the marketing channels, which converge in Nigeria. At the other end of the marketing circuit, semi-wholesalers or retailers based in the Nigerian market, particularly in Kano (Mahdi, 1978).

The goods are registered in Gaya border at Kano State Nigeria for export before transported to Maradi in Niger Republic. The transit help verify that the goods are really meant for export. Weapons are systematically sought out (Ibrahim, and Shehu, 2009).

Related development to control trans-border crimes, Nigeria and Niger Republic signed an agreement for the immediate commencement of joint border patrols along the borders between the two neighbouring countries to control the activities of insurgency. The agreement was signed in Niamey the capital of Niger Republic.

Challenges Confronting the International Economic Relations between Niger and Nigeria

The trade between Nigeria and Niger led to the destruction of local industries due to high rate of smuggling. This manifested heavily when the trade sustained and develop other sectors of activity, which would be unable if the traders were to buy goods from the national industry or import them legally at high cost (Stary, 1999: 176). As noted by Desmond (2009:2-3) the

worrisome rate of smuggling activity along Katsina, Maradi border is detrimental to the country's economy the smuggling activities are one major reason industries in the Northern region are collapsing because it is easier to smuggle goods through Katsina border than through Lagos Badagry border.

The trade also led to loss of lives and property worth millions of naira due to clashes between security agents and smugglers. A clear example was the 2, 2009 clash between customs and smugglers in jibia (Katsina) border. Similarly, in both Jibia and Maradi border villages; there had been tension ... after a custom patrol team arrested a bus loaded with rice belonging to some of the area. The items were being smuggled into Katsina state through the border (Garba, 1982).

Lawal, (2001) further maintained that: two custom officers were killed and another one injured by smugglers at the Jibia border, Katsina state, while five of the smugglers died while pursuing their impounded vehicle (Lawal, (2001). Several clashes also occurred between the smugglers and their cohorts. These occur in their efforts to either become lords or mafias in the smuggling business. This act did not go down well with others, as such they protested against who ever attempted to do so. Thus, Mangal, who craved to be the lord of the smuggling mafia in Katsina state had attempted to force this unwritten code down the throats of other petty smugglers backed by some youth in Jibia Local government, the people revolted, threatening to disrupt the entrance or exit of all his smuggled products along Katsina, Maradi border (Desmond, 2009:3). Katsina, Maradi cross border trade has the potential of employment generation and provides opportunities for income generation and even accumulation for a large number of people. This is because many have entered the trade in response to the context of unemployment as in the case of Nigeria (Hashim and Meagher, 1999: 82).

Research Methodology

This study adopted quantitative research method which utilized descriptive research design to analyse the politics of international relations in West African sub-region focusing on Niger-Nigeria bilateral relations. This help us the researcher to use content analysis method to examine the implication on bases of their

bilateral relation and then come with a good finding and proffer recommendation where necessary.

The source of data for this study was secondary sources, which involves the use of document from text books, Journals report, newspapers and internet materials. Additionally, the researcher visited offices and related agencies such as Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) office in Abuja, Niger Embassy office in Kano and Abuja and Ministry of information where relevant documents were collected for the study.

Result and Discussions

From the result of the study, the findings reveal that the economic trade relations between Nigeria and Niger involve the exports and imports of goods. The exports from Nigeria to Niger Republic include petroleum products, textile materials, cereals, other food products (pasta, corn meal, sugar, salt, yams, fruits, etc.), hydrocarbons, building materials and plastic products, both from Nigerian as well as international sources and the import include Rice, gum Arabic, cattle, leather, skins and milk which constitute the major items imported. The trade contributed toward economic integration between Nigeria and Niger. The development of trade relations between Southern Niger and Northern Nigeria stems from two major activities: trade in local products and transit.

On the regional integration, the findings revealed that, Nigeria and Niger are intimate because of the historic and economic ties existing between the two nations which include the socio-economic interaction between Katsina and Maradi. Ever since, the two cities have maintained these excellent relations, this is because Maradi was an extension of Katsina kingdom as such they share the same norms and values since ancient time. Before colonial period there were interactions between Katsina and Maradi. Katsina tobacco farmers and merchants grew tobacco and travelled to Maradi. They returned with livestock to Katsina and fattened the livestock, and set off again to Niger. This type of relation was based on the exchange of goods like iron implements, cloth and leather goods, all of which occupied an important position in the pre-colonial economy of Katsina and Maradi.

On the bilateral relations between Nigeria and Niger the study reveals that territorial unity

beyond successive authorities under the authority of the Songhai and the Borno, the Hausa city-states, despite their political instability, were able to retain their territorial integrity and a very strong cultural unity. Fundamental characteristics of Daura and Maradi are considerable interdependence between settlement dynamics in urban development mainly agricultural production and trade. Due to the simultaneous presence of all these factors, the area has greater potential integration than most other West African areas witnessing economic and social development.

On the challenges confronting Nigeria and Niger economic relation, these include the destruction of local industries due to high rate of smuggling. This manifested heavily when the trade sustained and develop other from the national industries. Several clashes also occurred between the smugglers and their partners.

Conclusions

This study examined the politics of international economic relations in West African sub region with particular emphases on Niger and Nigeria bilateral relations. The study specifically assessed the economic relations between Nigeria and Niger Republics, the level of integration between Nigeria and Niger; the bilateral relations between the two countries and examines the challenges confronting the international economic relations between the two countries.

The study concluded that despite the problems associated with informal cross – border trade, the trade has the potential of facilitating economic integration between Nigeria and Niger. This led to the development of trade relations between Southern Niger and Northern Nigeria stems from two major activities: trade in local products and transit. Therefore, informal cross – border trade is not officially recognized by governments but it is understood that the trade has the potentials of facilitating regional integration between Nigeria and Niger. The trade also contributed toward economic bilateral relations between Nigeria and Niger. This is because goods of different varieties were transported across the border which aimed at satisfying consumer needs. This equally strengthens Nigeria and Niger territorial unity successive authorities under the authority of the Songhai and the Borno, the Hausa city-states, despite their political instability, were able to

retain their territorial integrity and a very strong cultural unity.

The two nations formed the Nigeria, Niger Joint Commission for Cooperation (NNJC) established in March, 1971 with its Permanent Secretariat in Niamey, Niger in order to avoid disputes that may result in the breach of peace and political instability. Nigeria and Niger have been concerned with clear delimitation of boundaries and other mutually benefiting economic, cultural and diplomatic initiatives aimed at ensuring, peaceful coexistence amongst them.

In order to control trans-border crimes, Nigeria and Niger Republic signed an agreement for the immediate commencement of joint border patrols along the borders between the two countries to control the activities of the insurgency. The agreement was signed in Niamey the capital of Niger Republic. This implies that the bilateral relations between Nigeria and Niger become intimate in trying to resolve the trans-border crimes between Nigeria and Niger to establish legitimate trade relations.

Recommendations

To solve the problems of informal trade relations between Niger – Nigeria the following recommendations are made:

- i. Nigeria and Niger should intensify the joint border patrols to tackle smuggling and insurgency affecting the two countries. The emphasis should be on reliable security cooperation, ones that can stabilize their relationship, prevent the spill-over of conflicts, secure emerging common values and perhaps, lay the foundation for nascent security regimes that will help to grow their economy.
- ii. International organisations such as ECOWAS and NEPAD should be involved in encouraging regional integration between Nigeria and Niger and other neighbouring countries.
- iii. The Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission for Cooperation (NNJC) established in March, 1971 in order to avoid disputes that may result in the breach of peace and political instability should be reviewed in the area of bilateral relations.

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