

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of Nigeria in socio-economic and political development of Africa. It began with a premise that post-independent Nigeria has always sees itself as an important player in African affairs. This was evident in the country's pursuit of Africa as its centerpiece in its foreign policy principles and objectives. In this regard, the country has over time considered Africa as its priority in its engagements both within the continent and at the global level. With the aid of qualitative instruments, the paper revealed that Nigeria played and has been playing a key role in conflict resolutions in countries such as Liberia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Libya, Somalia, and Mali. The country is also at the forefront in championing African agenda at the United Nations, the formation of Organization of African Unity (OAU) and now African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) that has helped in regional integration and economic development of the continent. Nigeria is a strategic player in the restoration of democratic governance in countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia and recently in the Gambia. These and many more point to the place of Nigeria in strengthening Africa's economic and political development.

Keywords: *Nigeria's foreign policy, regional development, integration, leadership, peace keeping and peace building, democratization*