

Obasanjo's Visit Gives Impetus to Ethio-Nigeria Relations

The existing bilateral relation between Ethiopia and Nigeria since the independence of the latter has shown, in recent years, remarkable progress.



Ethiopia and Nigeria are partners for peace and security as well as for economic development. The two countries now enjoy more than ever a strengthened cooperation characterized by brotherhood and peaceful relations.

The first Ethiopia-Nigeria Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting was held from April 26 - 29, 2006 in Addis Ababa, where areas of cooperation for the mutual benefits of the two countries were identified.

Brief the press

With a view to further strengthen the existing cooperation, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo paid a three day state visit to Ethiopia from 8 to 10 October, 2006.

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi welcomed the Nigerian delegation and stated, during the bilateral talks, that the visit would bring to a new high the existing bilateral relationship of the two countries.

Prime Minister Meles visited Nigeria from 28 - 29 October, 1996 where agreements were signed relating to economic, scientific and technical cooperations.

Nigeria, through its technical cooperation, has been sending teachers to Ethiopia to make their contributions in higher learning institutions. Hence Ethiopia has become the largest recipient of Nigerian volunteers, in the area of Technical Aid Corps (TAC).

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The engagement of Nigerian teachers in Ethiopia is a reflection of the government's good will to foster their relationship to which Ethiopia is committed.

With regard to their amicable relations Meles commended the excellent political ties between the two countries while underlining the need to further strengthening economic cooperation and trade partnership.

President Obasanjo on his part noted the cooperation of the two countries in the areas of education, training, culture, trade and investment.

He expressed satisfaction with the strong transport links between the two countries and underlined that this would benefit the people-to-people relationships and cultural exchanges as well as the trade and tourism sectors.

The Nigerian delegation headed by President Obasanjo visited flower farms in the Debre Zeit area. The delegation showed interest to learn from Ethiopia's experience in the flower sector and indicated the need for expertise support.

Obasanjo also met and discussed with high officials of the Ministry of Education, the Addis Ababa University staff and Nigerians in Ethiopia.

In his address to the diplomatic corps and dignitaries in the AAU, Obasanjo recognized the importance of universities in bringing together African nations and contributing to the enhancement of economic and political relations.

Speaking to the joint session of the Ethiopian and Nigerian business communities he stressed that they should, in addition to activities by their respective governments, be actively involved to bolster the trade and investment relations of the two sisterly countries to a higher level.

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He also urged African leaders to exert maximum efforts towards sustainable socio-economic development of the continent and commended the non-indifference policy on conflicts in Africa.

During the state visit agreements were signed between the two sides to foster ties in the sectors of trade, culture and tourism, as well as mutual recognition agreement on standardization with a view to enhancing their cooperation in those fields.

The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria expressed their willingness "to develop and expand trade relations and to create favorable conditions for substantial and harmonious diversification of trade between the two countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefits."

The two sides have, in this regard, agreed to provide the maximum facilities possible for the purpose of increasing the volume of trade between the two countries.

Regarding the promotion of cooperation on culture and tourism, they have agreed to expand mutual knowledge and understanding of their respective cultures.

The state visit was of a paramount importance to the efforts of the two sisterly countries to work together in bilateral, regional as well as international issues.

Ethiopia has a great conviction for close cooperation and mutual development with other countries. That is why it attaches a particular importance to the official visit of President Obasanjo and its relations with Nigeria.