



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja

Press Release

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DICAN CONFERENCE CALLS FOR COLLABORATIVE ACTION AGAINST INFORMATION WARFARE AND DISINFORMATION

The Diplomatic Correspondents' Association of Nigeria (DICAN), the umbrella body of journalists accredited to cover programmes and events in the Ministry, in collaboration with the Centre for Communication Development and Diplomacy in Africa (CCDDA) and other partners, convened the 2nd DICAN Diplomatic/Security, Trade and Investment International Conference on 20 May 2026 at the Rotunda, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja.

The Conference, themed *“Information Warfare: Strengthening Global Security, Trade and Investment through Collaborative Truth – The Role of Diplomacy, Intelligence and the Media,”* brought together representatives of diplomatic missions, government agencies, security institutions, the media, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector to deliberate on the growing threat posed by foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), misinformation and disinformation, and their implications for democracy, peace, security, trade and investment.

In his opening remarks, the President of DICAN, Mr. Frederick Idehai, described information warfare as an emerging global threat capable of undermining democratic institutions, weakening public trust and destabilizing societies through the use of generative artificial intelligence, deepfakes and coordinated disinformation campaigns. He disclosed that DICAN, in partnership with CCDDA and PR Nigeria, had established collaborative structures, including regional situational rooms and the Nigerian Fact Check and Information Integrity Network (NFIIN), to monitor and counter fake news and manipulated content nationwide.

Delivering goodwill messages at the event, the representative of the Chinese Embassy in Nigeria, Mr. Zhao Hongyu, described the gathering as “an important conference” aimed at reinforcing the long-standing friendship between Nigeria and China, while extending appreciation to Nigerian media organizations and professionals who have consistently reported and shared stories of bilateral cooperation. According to the Embassy, the year 2026 marks the 55th

anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Nigeria, as well as the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges, noting that the relationship between both countries has remained strong for over five decades. The Embassy stated that China and Nigeria have continued to build ties based on “mutual respect, win-win cooperation, and close people-to-people bonds,” describing the partnership as a shining example of China-Africa relations. Highlighting areas of cooperation, the Embassy noted that both countries have collaborated extensively in trade, infrastructure, finance, industry, education, peace and security, as well as talent development. He further disclosed that China recently introduced a zero-tariff policy for all 53 African countries with diplomatic relations with Beijing, including Nigeria, in a move aimed at opening the Chinese market to more African products.

Reacting to the comments by the representative of the Embassy of China, the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kimiebi Imomotimi Ebiefa, emphasized the Federal Government’s recognition and commitment to the One-China policy and commended the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Abuja for the very cordial relations with the Ministry and other Government Agencies.

Similarly, the Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC), Mrs. Nonye Ayeni, highlighted the importance of non-oil exports to Nigeria’s economic diversification agenda. She disclosed that Nigeria recorded over US\$6 billion in non-oil export value in 2025 and called for enhanced diplomatic collaboration and trade facilitation to improve market access for Nigerian products globally.

The Chargé d’Affaires of the European Union Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Mr. Zissimos Vergos, described disinformation and foreign information manipulation as major threats to democracy, electoral integrity and social cohesion. He emphasised the need for informed citizenry, responsible journalism and the protection of freedom of expression while combating misinformation.

Also speaking, the Director-General/Chief Executive Officer of the Voice of Nigeria (VON), Mallam Jibrin Baba Ndace, stressed the responsibility of journalists to uphold professionalism, accuracy and contextual reporting in an era increasingly characterized by misinformation and unregulated digital content.

Representing former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the Executive Director of the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, Mrs. Ann Lyonu, observed that fake news and disinformation had become major drivers of conflict and instability across

Africa. She called for stronger democratic institutions, responsible journalism and collaborative truth-telling to safeguard peace and democratic governance.

In his remarks, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Ambassador Dunoma Umar Ahmed, PhD, commended DICAN for providing a strategic platform for dialogue on diplomacy, media and international relations. He reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to promoting constructive diplomacy, regional cooperation and informed public discourse, while recognising the critical role of diplomatic correspondents in projecting Nigeria positively internationally.

The Permanent Secretary emphasized the critical role of diplomatic journalism in shaping public understanding of foreign policy in an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world. According to him, the media remains a vital partner in promoting constructive dialogue, mutual understanding, transparency, accountability, and international cooperation among nations. He noted that diplomatic journalism serves as a bridge between governments and citizens, while also fostering informed public discourse on global affairs. He reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to strengthening strategic partnerships with the media in advancing the country's foreign policy objectives anchored on national interest, economic diplomacy, regional stability, and the protection of Nigerians abroad.

The Permanent Secretary also acknowledged the role of the media in projecting Nigeria's image positively on the global stage and increasing awareness of the nation's diplomatic engagements and achievements, and urged participants at the conference to use the opportunity to exchange ideas, deepen professional collaboration, and explore innovative approaches to diplomatic reporting in the digital age.

The Conference featured technical presentations and panel discussions on the implications of FIMI for democratic governance, elections, regional security, digital sovereignty, grassroots resilience and media literacy. Participants highlighted the increasing exploitation of digital platforms, local language content and social media operations by insurgent groups, secessionist movements and external actors to influence public perception and destabilise societies.

A major highlight of the Conference was the formal launch of the Nigerian Fact Check and Information Integrity Network (NFIIN), alongside public awareness campaigns with the slogans: *"Verify Before You Share," "Truth Matters: Build a Stronger, Safer Society,"* and *"Think Before You Share."* The initiative seeks to

promote responsible information sharing, combat fake news and strengthen national cohesion.

The event also featured the presentation of awards to distinguished individuals and institutions in recognition of their contributions to democracy, diplomacy, peacebuilding, strategic communication and information integrity. Among the award recipients were former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the European Union Delegation to Nigeria, the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC), the National Security Adviser, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, and the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR).

At the conclusion of the Conference, participants called for sustained collaboration among governments, diplomatic missions, media organisations, civil society groups and security institutions to counter disinformation, strengthen democratic resilience and promote truthful and responsible communication.

Signed:

**Kimiebi Imomotimi Ebienfa, anipr
Spokesperson
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Abuja**

Thursday, 21st May 2026