MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ABUJA

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NIGERIA, INDIA STRENGTHEN HUMAN RIGHTS COOPERATION THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Nigeria and India have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Nigeria and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India.

The development was highlighted during a courtesy visit to the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, by a joint high-level delegation of the National Human Rights Commissions of both countries on Tuesday, 10 November, 2026 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja. The delegation was jointly led by the Executive Secretary of Nigeria's NHRC, Chief (Dr.) Anthony Ojukwu, OFR, SAN, and the Chairperson of India's National Human Rights Commission, Hon'ble Justice V. Ramasubramanian.

In her remarks, the Honourable Minister described the MoU on Cooperation between the NHRCs as a timely initiative for the translation of the longstanding Nigeria-India relations into practical institutional cooperation on the promotion of human rights. She emphasised the need to strengthen access to justice, improve complaint-handling mechanisms and protect the rights of persons in vulnerable circumstances, ensuring equitable access to essential support and services for them. She noted that Nigeria and India had an opportunity to contribute constructively to a more inclusive international human rights architecture, as members of the Global South, and expressed Nigeria's readiness to deepen engagement with India and other international partners in advancing human rights diplomacy and strengthening the effectiveness of national and international human rights institutions.

Ambassador Odumegwu-Ojukwu expressed appreciation to Member States of the United Nations for their support towards Nigeria's election to the Human Rights Council for the 2027–2028 term. She reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to discharging its obligations in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, guided by the principles of objectivity, non-selectivity and constructive international engagement. She also drew attention to concerns regarding the treatment of Nigerian citizens serving in custodial centres in India, and called for appropriate attention to their welfare, dignity and fundamental human rights.

Earlier, the Executive Secretary of Nigeria's NHRC, Chief (Dr.) Ojukwu, described the new MoU between Nigeria and India's NHRCs as an important framework for strengthening institutional cooperation and technical exchanges between the two national institutions. He explained that the partnership engendered by the MOU would focus on improving complaint-management mechanisms, strengthening human rights compliance in security sector governance and promoting joint research on international law, human rights implementation and emerging issues. He further underscored the importance of collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in integrating international human rights standards into Nigeria's treaty obligations and diplomatic frameworks.

In his remarks, the Chairperson of India's National Human Rights Commission, Hon'ble Justice Ramasubramanian, highlighted the longstanding historical and diplomatic ties between Nigeria and India. He noted the similarities between the two countries in terms of population size, ethnic and religious diversity, cultural heritage and democratic aspirations. He described the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the National Human Rights Commissions (NHRCs) of Nigeria and India as an important step towards facilitating practical cooperation, institutional learning and capacity development through the exchange of experiences and best practices between the two human rights institutions.

The engagement provided an opportunity for both sides to reaffirm the importance of Nigeria–India cooperation and their shared commitment to advancing fundamental freedoms, human rights diplomacy and international cooperation.

Signed:
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