

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ABUJA

PRESS RELEASE

NO: MFA/PR/2026/294

NIGERIA REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE, CALLS FOR GREATER SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL LEGAL ORDER

Nigeria has reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), underscoring the importance of peaceful settlement of international disputes, respect for international law and compliance with the Court's judgments and orders.

This position was conveyed in Nigeria's Statement delivered by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Dunoma Umar Ahmed PhD., during the plenary debate on the Report of the International Court of Justice at the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly, held in New York on 29 October 2026.

Acknowledging the extensive work undertaken by the Court, as reflected in its 16 orders, one judgment, two advisory opinions and a total of 24 cases on its General List, Nigeria commended the Court for its contributions to the peaceful settlement of international disputes in accordance with the United Nations (UN) Charter.

Nigeria also welcomed the amendment to Article 78 of the Rules of Court, which entered into force on 2 February 2026, providing for the public disclosure of reports on compliance with provisional measures. It described the development as an important step towards enhancing transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Court's orders.

Reflecting on its longstanding engagement with the ICJ, Nigeria recalled the Court's judgment of 10 October 2002 in the Land and Maritime Boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria, which was subsequently implemented peacefully through the 2006 Greentree Agreement. Nigeria noted that this experience demonstrated how international adjudication, when complemented with political will and constructive engagement, could facilitate the peaceful resolution of complex and sensitive territorial disputes.

Nigeria further recalled its acceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court under Article 36, paragraph 2, of its Statute, while highlighting the significant contributions of Nigerian jurists to the development of international jurisprudence, particularly the late Judge Taslim Olawale Elias, who served as President of the Court.

Nigeria also welcomed the Court's continued engagement with the Nigerian Judiciary, including its reception of a delegation of Justices of the Supreme Court of Nigeria on 13 August 2025, and a delegation of the Nigerian Judiciary on 16 July 2026. It underscored the importance of such exchanges in strengthening national judicial capacity, deepening knowledge of international law and promoting coherence between international legal principles and domestic judicial practice.

To enhance the Court's capacity to discharge its mandate, Nigeria advanced three recommendations.

First, it called on the United Nations General Assembly to ensure that the Court's resources matched its caseload and supported initiatives such as the case management system in the Court's 2027 budget, including electronic filing, processing and management of case materials.

Second, Nigeria encouraged States that had not yet accepted the Court's compulsory jurisdiction to consider doing so through declarations under Article 36, paragraph 2, of its Statute. It also urged Member States to contribute to the Secretary-General's Trust Fund to Assist States in the Settlement of Disputes through the ICJ. It further noted that adequate funding would enable developing countries to access the Court and pursue or defend their legal claims irrespective of their financial circumstances.

Third, Nigeria called for stronger engagement between the Court and national judiciaries, particularly in Africa, to deepen understanding of international law and the Court's jurisprudence. It encouraged Member States to support the Judicial Fellowship Programme to provide more young lawyers, especially those from developing countries, with practical experience at the Court, while exposing them to opportunities to contribute to the development of international law.

In conclusion, Nigeria underscored the importance of respecting and complying with the judgments and orders of the ICJ to preserve the Court's authority, uphold the rule of law and strengthen confidence in the international legal order. It reaffirmed its commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter and the peaceful settlement of international disputes in accordance with international law.

Signed:
Oluwafemi Adeniyi
Spokesperson
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja

Wednesday, 11 November 2026