

**THE EMERGENCE OF PAPO-NEHA: OUR MISSION AND OUR VISION**  
**A Paper Delivered on the Occasion of the Official Inauguration of Peace**  
**Advocates and Practitioners Organisation Nigeria European Headquarters Austria**  
**(PAPONEHA) on Saturday, 19.10.2024 in Vienna Austria**  
**By Uni.- Professor Dr. Paul Uche Mbakwe**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The genesis of the Peace Advocates and Practitioners Organization (PAPO-NEHA) is traceable to one of the days of lectures/ interactions of Prof. Paul Uche Mbakwe with the 2020/2021, 200-level law students of Abia State University, Umuahia campus. In the course of delivering his lectures, precisely on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October, 2020, one of the students who attended the interactive lecture session became so fascinated that he suggested to him that he find a way by which we could put into practice what we were discussing, teaching, and learning that very day. Professor Mbakwe quickly gave this suggestion a thought and the result of this is the INGO we are about to inaugurate here in the city of Vienna, Austria on Saturday, 19.10.2024. At the Afro Asian Institute, Türkenstrasse 3, 1090 Vienna.

PAPO-NEHA as a peace advocacy group must foster a culture of peace, addressing systemic issues that could lead to conflict, thus promoting nonviolent solutions. The role of PAPO-NEHA is therefore to develop effective strategies to address and resolve conflicts anytime and anywhere in the world. The world urgently needs our input and contribution especially in our global environment today that has been overwhelmed by series and varieties of conflicts. PAPO-NEHA and her members are ready to make an impact... Remember, 'peace begins with me, peace begins with you'.

## **Aims, Objectives and Missions Statements**

1. To engage individuals, institutions, communities, and governments, locally, and internationally in efforts aimed at building and resolving conflicts.
2. To provide a platform for peace education, peace promotion, sustenance, and conflict resolution.
3. To collaborate with state and non-state actors at all levels in maintaining world peace and resolving conflicts.
4. To assist the vulnerable and displaced persons in times of war and violent conflicts as part of the organization's operational strategies, Etc.

## **An Elaboration of the aims and Objectives**

The key objectives of our INGO are to educate, advocate, and mobilize individuals and communities to transform systems and public policies towards a culture of peace. These objectives outline the primary activities of education, advocacy and mobilization. These elements are essential for any peace advocacy organisation as they address both the root causes of conflict and the means to resolve them. By emphasizing individuals and communities, the mission statement ensures inclusivity recognizing that peacebuilding requires a collective effort from all societal levels and forces.

The focus on transforming systems and public policies indicates a long-term sustainable approach to peacebuilding. This is crucial as it moves beyond immediate conflict resolution to address underlying systemic issues.

The vision of PAPO is to cultivate peacebuilding, to create a world where everyone and everything thrive. This vision is highly inspirational, aiming for a world where all human beings thrive. This broad vision can inspire and motivate stakeholders to work towards a common goal.

By using the term, 'peace-building, the vision encompasses various aspects of peace, including personal, community and international peace. This holistic approach is essential for addressing the multifaceted nature of conflict.

By educating the public about peacebuilding, the organization can raise awareness and understanding of peace issues, fostering a culture of empathy and compassion.

Through advocacy, the organization can influence public policy and systems, promoting legislative changes that support peace-building initiatives.

Mobilization of communities can lead to grassroots movements that drive social change, creating a ripple effect that extends beyond local contexts.

As part of the research strategy, our INGO will from time to time, conduct structured, semi-structured, or unstructured interviews with individuals involved in or affected by conflicts. We shall be facilitating group discussions to gather diverse perspectives on conflict-related issues. PAPO-NEHA will, from time to time, carry out in-depth analysis of specific situations to understand the underlying causes and dynamics. Participant observation to gather data on behaviours and interactions will be carried out by our expert- members. Analyzing communication materials (examples. Speeches, media articles) to identify patterns and themes related to conflict and peace is necessary.

The above qualitative approaches will be complemented with some quantitative methods like surveys and questionnaires, statistical analysis, as well as experimental methods.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, GOVERNMENTS, AND INTERNATIONAL BODIES.**

Collaboration can strengthen the impact of our organization and this can lead to shared resources, knowledge and strategies, amplifying the reach and effectiveness of peace-building efforts. PAPO is committed in its effort to collaborate with various successful peace advocacy organizations especially those that have made significant impacts globally.

Permit me to mention organisations like Non-violent Peace Force, Seeds of Peace, Peace Brigades International, Safer World, Mercy Corps, Alliance for Peace-building, Building Blocks for Peace Foundation, The Women for Peace and Gender Equality Initiative, Galaxy4 Peace, a woman-led NGO, etc. These and other related organisations exemplify various approaches to peace advocacy, from grassroots mobilization to international policy influence. PAPO tends to join these organisations to contribute substantially to global peace and conflict resolution initiatives.

As an international NGO, apart from our peace-focused objectives, PAPO-NEHA will play several other key roles on the global stage. The roles are not limited to the following:

1. humanitarian aid and relief
2. advocacy and policy influence
3. development projects
4. capacity building
5. monitoring and evaluation
6. research and information dissemination
7. partnership and collaboration

These roles and more will enable our NGO to take part in addressing complex global challenges and contribute to sustainable development and peace in the world.

## **OUR ORGANIZATION WILL REMAIN ADAPTABLE TO CHANGING CONTEXTS AND EMERGING CHALLENGES.**

We hope to regularly review and update our aims and objectives to remain relevant and responsive to new ideas and challenges to peace-building anytime and anywhere in the world. We believe that our objectives are foundational to the success of the organization. These statements provide direction, inspire stakeholders, and can set the stage for impactful peace-building and conflict-resolution initiatives. By maintaining clarity, inclusivity and a transformative approach, and by continuously seeking areas of improvement, PAPO can effectively contribute to a more peaceful and thriving world. But we must start somewhere in this effort. We started with Nigeria and today, we have extended to Austria under the umbrella of PAPO-NEHA.

## **PEACE BUILDING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS EFFORTS: NIGERIA AND AUSTRIA EXPERIENCE**

Nigeria has seen various initiatives aimed at addressing long-standing conflicts, particularly in the middle belt and northeast regions of Nigeria. States like Plateau, Kaduna, and Adamawa have already established peace institutions in recent years to mediate conflicts and build early warning systems. These efforts while promising face challenges such as funding and structural issues. These institutions have no doubt made strides toward organizing improved initiatives to quell religious, ethnic and farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria.

How to improve the financial stability of the young institutions and helping them to stand independent are the challenges that should be confronted to enable them to build peace and serve as a model to other states to launch their peace institutions. At this juncture, we wish to appeal to the Austrian government, the good-spirited individuals and organizations; public and private, to assist in establishing peace institutions, especially in conflict-prone areas in Nigeria.

Regarding Nigeria-Austria relations, Austria has been involved in supporting peace-building and development initiatives in Nigeria. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) has funded projects focused on conflict resolution, human rights, and sustainable development in Nigeria. These collaborations aim to foster peace and stability in Nigeria through various programs and partnerships. PAPO decided to plant its European headquarters in Vienna –Austria since the country and the city of Vienna, Austria is widely acclaimed as one of the safest and most peaceful cities in the universe. We therefore have a lot to copy and emulate from this peace-loving country.

Our NGO is ever ready to provide the much-needed link and vehicle to facilitate this partnership and cooperation. Ladies and gentlemen, let's assist in whatever way we can to ensure the success and growth of PAPO in Vienna, Austria in particular and Europe in general.

## **CONCLUSION**

May I thank our able coordinator, Dr Samuel Ogbonna, PhD, and his hard-working team for their untiring commitment and dedication that have resulted today in the successful inauguration of the European headquarters of PAPO here in the beautiful city of Vienna, Austria. I'm very much aware of many other members who are even more committed than Dr. Ogbonna to getting our organization to the level it is today in this great country. Such dedicated peace-builders and advocates should be assured of our encouragement and support in whatever way we can.

As a humanitarian, rights, and peace organization, we must bear in mind at all times the imperative to make necessary sacrifices when any of our duties and roles to society calls for action. As we dedicate ourselves to serving humanity in the area of peace-building and conflict resolution, please join hands with PAPO-NEHA to help build sustainable peace. But the effort must begin with me and then continue with you.

The ripple effects of establishing a positive, lasting, and sustainable peace at all levels of human society are unquantifiable. The world today, no doubt, is in dire need of PEACE, and our contributions as peace advocates are necessary.

Kindly accept the assurances of our best regards as we inaugurate The European Headquarters of PAPO-NEHA in this great city of Vienna, Austria, on this day, 19<sup>th</sup> of October, 2024.

Good luck and God bless.

Thank you very much.

Professor Paul U. Mbakwe, Ph.D

Founder/ Director General/ Chairperson BOT

PAPO/ PAPO-NEHA

19<sup>th</sup> October, 2024