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COMMUNIQUE OF THE MAIDEN GLOBAL DISCOURSE

The Monthly Global Discourse is ValidViewNetwork's signature global conversation platform conceived to bridge the gap between knowledge and action by creating a forum where global perspectives meet local realities. Through robust discussions and evidence-based engagements, the initiative seeks to promote informed decision making, public awareness, policy innovation, and sustainable development.

The maiden edition of the ValidViewNetwork Global Discourse, themed "Nigeria's Forests Under Siege: Charting a Path to Safety, Stability, and Sustainable Development," was held on Sunday, June 28, 2026, featuring renowned forestry expert, Professor Labode Popoola FFAN, Executive Secretary/CEO of the African Forest Forum, as the Distinguished Discussant, while the session was formally declared opened by Mr. Olanrewaju S. Ogundipe, former NUJ President, former AUJ President and Chairman of the Advisory Board of ValidViewNetwork Media.

The Discourse had the following fundamental takeaways among others.

1. Forest reserves originally contained enclaves and the settlers served as de facto watchdogs, raising alarms during fire outbreaks and monitoring negative activities. Over time, however, enclave settlers began inviting strangers, granting them access to land, while corrupt forestry officials colluded in the degradation of forest estates. This systematic erosion of oversight created the ungoverned spaces that criminals now occupy.

2. No forest reserve in the country has a Management Plan in the last 15-20 years. Having a forest without a Management Plan is like having a Church without a Bible or a Mosque without a Quran.

3. State Forestry Directors cannot manage what they do not know. Some Directors have never visited the forests under their jurisdiction, governing entirely from city offices.

4. The forestry curriculum requires an urgent review to accommodate the realities of the moment including collaboration with engineering and mechatronics disciplines.

5. State Governors must imbibe a paradigm shift from treating forests purely as revenue sources, with some selling off gazette-protected forest lands.

6. The Nigerian Air Force and other security agencies appear to be aware of the locations of abductors in Old Oyo National Park but exercising restraint to avoid collateral damage. Affirmed strong faith that the victims will be rescued.

7. The siege on the forests is not peculiar to Nigeria and is linked to powerful external interests exploiting security vacuums to gain access to Nigeria's abundant solid mineral deposits.

8. Africa should ideally be a borderless entity while immigration and customs authorities should step up their activities to wade off the influx of criminal elements exploiting porous borders.

9. Technology can only be deployed effectively after the criminal elements occupying the forests now are cleared from forest areas. cited Turkey as a leading example of technology-driven forest management.

10. Partial privatisation of forest estates may be exigent as criminals have notably not invaded privately managed plantations such as cocoa and cashew farms, or the large coffee and tea states.

11. Large-scale recruitment of forest guards by the federal government is commendable but

proper training should be provided as forest guards cannot be trained within a week or a month. They must understand the peculiarities of the terrain, forest ecology, and undergo paramilitary training citing armed and well-trained Gendarmeries in Togo and Benin as a model. Forest guards must be deployed in close collaboration with state forestry apparatus and trained scientists.

12. Security outfits going to the forests for rescue operations without background support from the scientists and professionals may be exposing themselves to unnecessary danger while calling for a synergy among all outfits and not rivalry.

13. Forest governance must be treated as a national emergency. All tiers of government, federal, state, and local governments must bear responsibility. State governors, as constitutional owners of forest reserves, must be held accountable and must speak up and seek help where they cannot govern their forest estates.

14. Ethnic and religious profiling of criminals must stop. Criminals are to be treated as criminals, irrespective of ethnicity or religion. Division serves the interests of criminal networks and foreign actors seeking to exploit Nigeria's natural resources.

15. Media practitioners must exercise responsibility in reporting on kidnapping and forest security, verifying information before publication and avoiding content that plants fear or assists criminal objectives.

ValidViewNetwork Limited, founded by Kayode Ogunjobi, stands firmly on three strategic legs—ValidViewNetwork Media, ValidViewNetwork Consultancy, and ValidViewNetwork Advocacy working together to deliver credible news reporting, expert environmental and academic consultancy services, and strong public-interest advocacy. Through this integrated structure, the organisation advances evidence-based communication, sustainable development solutions, institutional strengthening, and community-focused interventions that support environmental protection, academic excellence, and societal well-being.



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