

Nigeria bans foreigners from advertisements

Nigeria has moved to ban foreign models and voiceover artists from advertisements in the country from 1 October.



Source © Zefart [123rf](#) Nigeria has moved to ban foreign models and voiceover artists from advertisements said to be in line with "new sense of pride" among young Nigerians

An article by [Aljazeera](#) says the measure, announced last week, makes Nigeria, home to 200 million people, the first country known to enact such a law, which seeks to foster more local involvement in the industry and elsewhere.

Observers are saying the ban is sure to represent a noticeable shift in a country where non-Nigerians have long been common on the air and radio waves.

About developing talent

The Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria announced the plan in a statement on 23 August, saying the move was in line with the government's policy of "developing local talent".

It said it was also motivated by "the need to take necessary steps and actions aimed at growing the Nigerian advertising industry".

A 2017 to 2021 analysis by PricewaterhouseCooper projected that Nigeria, Africa's largest economy, will be the world's fastest-growing revenue generator in the entertainment and media industry in the next five years.

The ban will pertain to “any advertisement targeted or exposed on the Nigerian advertising space”, referring to an industry estimated to be valued at about \$450m in 2021.

It added that while “ongoing campaigns” will be able to continue to run to the end of their current term “subsequent applications for re-validation for continued exposure of such material will not be granted”.

Is the plan likely to be effective?

Nigeria had already imposed a tariff of about \$240 for every foreign model used in an advertising spot, which has begun to transform how marketing campaigns in the country look, according to the UK’s *The Times* newspaper.

“Ten to 20 years ago if you checked the commercials, I would say they were almost 50-50 in terms of foreign faces and all the voiceovers were British accents,” Steve Babaeko, the president of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria, told the newspaper.

That would include Nigerian brands using foreigners and global companies distributing their advertisements in the former British colony, which gained independence in 1960.

Babaeko said the laws were in line with a “new sense of pride” among young Nigerians who wanted to see representation in the media.

“I think the law is just catching up with national sentiment. As long as maybe eight years ago, you would notice some kind of renaissance in Nigeria,” he told the Times.

“People will tell you, ‘There are about 200 million of us. Are you telling me you could not find Indigenous models for this commercial?’” Babaeko said.



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Reaction split

Segun Arinze, a veteran actor and president of the Association of Voice-Over Artistes (AVOA) commended the move saying it was “an enabling regulation that favours the local industry, especially at a time when Nigeria is in dire need of sufficient platforms for its teeming youth population.”

But social media users in Nigeria have been somewhat split on the move.

Nigerian voiceover actor Jamaldeen wrote on Twitter the move was a “dangerous, retaliatory step” that “would hurt us”.

Meanwhile, Lebanese-Nigerian entrepreneur Mohammed Jammal, called the measure a “good development”.

Others have pushed back on the characterisation that the ban specifically singles out white actors, noting the language only refers to “foreign” talent.

Source: Aljazeera

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