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MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs): A ROAD MAP TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria which is the sixth largest producer/exporter of crude oil was rated as one of the richest 50 countries in the 1970s. But at the threshold of the 21st century, it has become one of the 25 poorest countries of the world. The country is characterized by high rate of poverty, poor infrastructural development, poor standard of education, and high rate of social vices. In the wake of the Millennium Declaration which calls for proper implementation of the MDGs, this paper tries to establish the fact that Sustainable Development could be achieved in Nigeria through the proper implementation of the MDGs. The paper adopted the Descriptive Research Method. Data was collected inter alia from Nigeria's NEEDs, SEEDs, and LEEDs documents and some Nigeria MDGs report. The work found out that of the 8 (eight) MDGs, Nigeria has high potential for achieving 3 (three), there is likelihood to achieve one with strong political will, and there is need for more sustained effort to achieve the remaining 4 (four). The paper recommended among other things; land reform, public sector reform, improvement of basic infrastructure and employment generation at both the private and public sectors of the economy.

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Conference on Human Environment (UNCHE) held in 1972 at Stockholm was convened to evolve intensified action at National and International levels to limit and where possible eliminate the impairment of the human environment (Agukoronye, 1994). In the final documents of the conference, the interaction of environment and development was formally recognized, notably in several principles of the Stockholm Declaration (Ikwuegbu, 2002). In 1982, a special session of United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Governing Council was held to review the progress made since the Stockholm Conference ten years earlier. The conclusion of the council was that much greater long term and integrated environmental planning was needed. Subsequently, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) headed by Gro Harlem Brundtland, was established as an independent body to re-examine the critical issues of environment and development (WCED, 1987). The focus of the commission was the production of a report titled "Our Common Future is Sustainable Development and Environment Management".

What followed after 1987 was a series of environmental conferences at regional levels, which later culminated in the Earth Summit in Rio, Brazil in 1992. Since the Earth Summit in Brazil the seriousness of the term Sustainable Development has become pronounced in many countries of the world, Nigeria not being an exception (Aina and Salau, 1992). Infact (UN, 2001) reported as follows:

"Our biggest challenge in this new century is to take an idea that sounds abstract; SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, and turn it into a reality for all the world's people".

In her bid to tackle this big challenge head on, the UN held series of meetings and conferences and eventually the United Nations Millennium Summit was held in New York in September, 2000. The summit, which has been assessed as the largest ever gathering of heads of States, came up with the Millennium Declaration which included 8 (eight) goals to be achieved by 2015. These 8 (eight) goals are referred to as the "Millennium Development Goals" and they are targeted towards eradicating poverty, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality, empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.

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The Problem

According to Otiye (2006), Nigeria, which was one of the richest 50 countries in the early 1970's, has retrogressed to become one of the 25 poorest countries in the world at the threshold of the 21 century. It becomes very ironic, when one realizes that Nigeria is the sixth largest exporter of crude oil and at the same time hosts the third largest population of poor people after China and India. Otiye (2006) further stated that statistics show that the incidence of poverty using the rate of US\$1 per day increased from 28.1% in 1980 to 45.3% in 1985 and declined to 42.7% in 1992. It increased again to 65.6% in 1996 and 69.2% in 1997. However, the 2004 National Planning Commission report indicates that the poverty level in Nigeria is at 54.4%. This figure is not encouraging at all. Again, if we observe what is happening in the various sectors of the economy, we will realize that Nigeria may not even qualify to be a developing country. For instance, in the area of infrastructural development, we have failed woefully. Our roads are in a deplorable situation. Power supply is highly epileptic. Water supply in urban areas is almost extinct. You can go on and on. In terms of Agricultural Development, we are still at the subsistence level. Our hospitals are nothing to write home about, the security situation is horrible.

The restive situation in the Niger Delta continues unabated. Kidnapping, armed robbery and organized crime are the order of the day and the police are not well equipped to combat these crime. Sports/youth development is stunted. Nigeria could not grab the chanced of featuring in the first ever world cup to be played in African soil yet we claim to be the giant of Africa. In the area of transportation, only road transportation appears to be viable in Nigeria. Our railway lines are dead, air transportation is epileptic and only for the rich and our water transportation is grossly underdeveloped. The education sector is not left out. Incessant strike action and facilities below human standard exist in our schools. Otiye (2006) lamented that in all indices of development, Nigeria fares poorly. It is therefore necessary that Nigeria as a matter of urgency should pay serious attention to the issue of sustainable development. The aim of this paper is to establish the fact that sustainable development could be achieved in Nigeria through the proper implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

Objectives of This Paper

In order to address the problem stated above, this paper intends to pursue the following objectives:

- To explain the meaning of sustainable development and millennium development goals.
- To establish the strategies for achieving both sustainable development and millennium development goals,
- To show how the MDGs could help achieve sustainable development in Nigeria,

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper adopted the Descriptive Research Method. Osuala (2007) opined that descriptive research is that research which specifies the nature of a given phenomenon. It gives a picture of a situation at hand and it begins with an understanding (description) of the problem at hand. Hence the major sources

of data used in this paper are United Nations publications on sustainable development, Nigerian Environmental Study Action Team (NEST) report on the challenges of sustainable development in Nigeria, Nigeria Millennium Development Goals reports of 2004 and 2005 and other published materials. Also data were collected from National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) Document which was translated into SEEDS at state and LEEDS at the local government level.

Understanding the terms sustainable development (SD) and millennium development goals (MDGs)

Sustainable Development (SD)

Definition of Sustainable Development (SD)

The Brundtland report defined sustainable development as "Development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Sarrie *et al* (1991) while commenting on the above definition opined that it contains within it four serious implications namely:

- The concern for the relationship between resource use, population growth and technological development.
- Concern for the production and distribution of resources of food, energy and industry amongst the more developed and less developed nations of the world.
- Concern for "uneven development" and "underdevelopment" for the gross imbalance between rich and poor nations for equity and
- Concern for environmental degradation and potential ecological disaster.

Again, NEST (1991) while analyzing the importance of Brundtland's report modified the definition as follows:

"Sustainable Development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future. It is a process in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investment, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potentials to meet human needs and aspirations".

Commenting on the above definition Aina and Salau (1992) opined that "Sustainable Development" is a notion, a movement and an approach, which has developed, into a global wave of concern, study, political mobilization and organization around the twin issues of environmental protection and economic development. The approach embodies the notion and ideals of a development process that is equitable and socially responsive, recognizing the extensive nature of poverty, deprivation and inequality between nations, classes and communities. The Brundtland report concludes by stating that sustainable development focuses on human needs not wants, hence SD is achieving a quality of life (standard of living) that can be maintained for many generations because it

Table 1. Time line of sustainable development from 1991 – 2007

YEAR	EVENT	TOWN/ COUNTRY
1971	Green Peace starts up	Canada
	Polluter must pay principle came into being	US
1972	UN Conference on Human Environment/UNEP	Stockholm
1973	US enacts Endangered Species Act	US
	OPEC Oil crisis (Fuels limits to growth debate)	N/A
1974	Rowland and Monila release their work on CFCS	N/A
	Convention on International trade in	
1975	Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna comes into force	N/A
1976	HABITAT First Global meeting to link environment and human settlement	N/A
1977	Green Belt Movement starts in Kenya	Kenya
1978	Amoco Cadiz Oil Spill of the Coast of Brittany	Brittany
	OECD Directorate of the Environment established	N/A
1979	Convention of Long-Range Trans-boundary Air Pollution	
	Three Mile Island Nuclear Accident occurs in USA	Pennsylvania
1980	World Conservation Strategy (Towards SD)	N/A
1982	World Resources Institute established	US
1984	Toxic Chemical Leak in Bhopal India	India
	International Conference on Environment and Economics	US
1985	Climate Change Meeting	Austria
	Antarctic Ozone hole discovered by Scientists	N/A
1986	Accident at Nuclear Station at Chernobyl	Chernobyl
1987	Our common future (Brundtland Report)	N/A
	Popularizes the term Sustainable Development	
1988	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change established	N/A
1989	Stockholm Environment Institute established	Stockholm
1990	International Institute for Sustainable Development Established	Canada
1992	Earth Summit UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) Agenda 21	Rio de Janeiro
1993	World Conference on Human Rights	N/A
	First meeting of UN Commission on Sustainable Development	N/A
1995	Execution of Ken-Saro Wiwa in Nigeria	Nigeria
	World Trade Organization (WTO) established	USA
	World Summit for Social Development held	Copenhagen
	Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing Conference)	Beijing
1997	UN General Assembly reviews the Earth Summit	
1999	Launch of the First Global Sustainability Index	
	Third World Trade Organization Conference	Seattle USA
2000	UN Millennium Summit and MDGs	New York, USA
2001	Fourth Ministerial Conference of WTO	Doha Qatar
2002	World Summit on Sustainable Development	Johannesburg
2004	HIV/AIDS Pandemic in Sub Saharan Africa	
2005	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Summit	N/A
2007	Public Attention to Climate Change Increases after Al Gores Documentary	USA

Source: Adapted from International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) (2007)

is socially desirable, economically viable and economically replenishing.

Historical Trends in the Concept

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) (2007) published the time line of sustainable development from the first environmental movement in 1962 (the Silent Spring) to the current attention on climate change as championed by the former Vice President of USA, Al Gore.

For purposes of convenience this paper will adapt the time line of SD from 1991 – 2007 as presented in table 1. It could be seen from table 1 that the killing of Chief Ken Saro Wiwa of Nigeria in 1995 established the relationship between environment and politics.

Dimensions of Sustainable Development

Ikwuegbu (2007) pointed out that sustainable development is a multidimensional concept. Hence she reported that the Brundtland Commission proposed three main dimensions of sustainable development as follows: Environmental (physical), Economic and Social dimensions. Ikwuegbu (2007) commented on these and went further to include the institutional dimension as follows:

Environmental (physical) Dimension

The natural environmental constraint to (human) development is the main reason for any concern about sustainability. Infact, the economic processes of production and consumption draw to a greater or lesser extent on services provided by resources of the natural physical environment. These resources are of two broad types: natural and environmental resources. The former sustains the biological basis of human life and wellbeing as well as provides for enjoyment of natural resources by people while the later derives mainly from the absorptive capacities of the physical environment and as such contribute to human wellbeing. Details will be seen under sustainability indicators.

Economic Dimension

The growth of economics and their structural transformation have always been recognized as being at the core of development. These are conditions that are prerequisite for the satisfaction of human needs and improvement of standard of living. Such economic parameters as income level, status, consumption rates, production rates, wastages and waste management, resource conservation, level of trade, energy use, transportation systems, etc. determine the standard of living of people, hence is an indispensable part of development.

Social Dimension

According to Adinna (1994) social development implies access to factors and sources of happiness and satisfaction similar to what happens in comparable places. In this sense, development encompasses not only the strengthening of material income base but also the enlargement of choices. Ikwuegbu (2007) supporting Adinna went further to state that inter-generational equity, covering the whole gamut of social issues in development such as regional and gender distribution is rightly considered as an integral part of sustainable development.

Brundtland Strategic Imperatives

Sarie *et al* (1991) quoting the Brundtland report enumerated the strategic imperatives that must be in place before sustainable development could be achieved. They include the following:

Reviving Growth: - SD must address the issue of poverty because poverty increases pressure on the environment.

Changing the quality of growth: - This means making 'growth' less materialistic, less energy intensive and more equitable in its impact.

Meeting Essential Human Needs: - This is especially important in terms of food, energy, basic housing, fresh water and health.

Ensuring Sustainable population levels: - The challenge is to tackle the highest rates of population growth, especially Africa.

Conserving/Enhancing the resource base: - This involves a moral argument as well as an economic one. It includes Agricultural resources, forestry, fisheries and energy.

Reorienting technology and managing risk: - The capacity for innovation needs to be greatly enhanced in developing countries and technological development generally must pay greater attention to environmental factors.

Merging environment and economics in decision making: - Economics and ecology should not be seen in opposition but as interlocking, in effect treated as a single science.

Brundtland Institutional Imperatives

Saire *et al* (1991) further enumerated the institutional imperatives as follows:

- a. A political system that secures effective citizen participation in decision-making.
- b. An economic system that is able to generate surpluses and technical knowledge on a self-reliant and sustained basis.
- c. A health system that ensures easy access to medical treatment and medical facilities.
- d. A social system that provides solution for the tensions arising from disharmonious development.
- e. A production system that respects the obligations to preserve the ecological base for development.
- f. A technological system that can search continuously for new solutions.
- g. An international system that fosters sustainable patterns of trade and finance.
- h. An administrative system that is flexible and has the capacity for self-correction.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The lead paper of this workshop certainly dwelt more on the MDGs. It will not therefore be necessary repeating ourselves. But it is important to summarise what the MDGs are: Ibrahim (2007) declared that the MDGs are series of 8 (eight) time-bound development goals (that seek to address issues of poverty, education, equality, health and environment) to be achieved by the year 2015. They were agreed upon by the international community at the United Nations Millennium Summit, held in New York in September, 2000. 189 (One Hundred and Eighty-Nine) heads of states and governments unanimously adopted a comprehensive Millennium

Declaration committing their nations to a partnership for a "peaceful, prosperous and just world". The driving force of the partnership lies in combating the causes and effects of poverty. Table 2 shows the MDGs and their targets by year 2015.

Table 2. MGDs and Their Targets by 2015

S/N	Goals	Target
1	Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty	Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day
2	Achieve universal primary education	Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling
3	Promote gender equality and empower women	Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015
4	Reduce child mortality	Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five
5	Improve maternal health	Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio
6	Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases	Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
7	Ensure environmental stability	Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water Achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources
8	Develop a global partnership for development	Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule based, predictable and non-discriminatory and that includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction nationally and internationally Address the least developed countries special needs, and the special needs of landlocked and small Island Developing States Deal comprehensively with developing countries debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term In cooperation with the developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies especially information and communications technologies.

Source: Adapted from United Nations' Millennium Declaration, 2000.

Indicators of sustainable development and millennium development goals

Indicators of Sustainable Development: IISD (2000) stated that "An indicator quantifies and simplifies phenomena and helps us understand complex realities". It is something that

helps you understand where you are, which way you are going and how far you are from where you want to be. A good indicator alerts you to problem before it gets too bad and helps you recognize what needs to be done to fix a problem.

According to Ikwuegbu (2007), there are three basic functions that indicators play namely: simplification, quantification and communication. Hence, the 1992 summit recognized the important role that indicators can play measuring progress towards sustainable development.

Table 3. CSD Sustainable Development Indicators Framework

SOCIAL			
Theme	Sub-Theme	Indicator	
Equity	Poverty	Percentage of population living below poverty line	
		Gini Index of Income Inequality	
Health	Gender Equality	Unemployment rate	
		Ratio of average female wage to male wage	
	Nutritional status	Nutritional status of children	
		Mortality rate under 5 years old	
	Mortality	Life expectancy at birth	
		Sanitation	Percent of population with adequate sewage disposal facilities
	Drinking water	Population with access to safe drinking water	
		Healthcare delivery	Percent of population with access to primary health care facilities
	Education		Education level
		Contraceptive prevalence rate	
Literacy		Children reaching grade 5 of primary education	
		Adult secondary education achievement level	
Housing Security Population	Living conditions	Adult literacy rate	
		Floor area per person	
	Crime	Number of recorded crimes per 100,000 population	
Population change	Population change	Population growth rate	
		Population of urban formal and informal settlements	
ENVIRONMENTAL			
Theme	Sub-Theme	Indicator	
Atmosphere	Climate change	Emissions of greenhouse gases	
		Consumption of Ozone Depleting Substances	
	Ozone layer depletion	Ambient concentration of air pollutants in urban areas	
Land	Air quality	Arable and permanent crop land area	
		Agriculture	Use of fertilizers
	Forests	Use of agricultural pesticides	
		Forest area as a percent of land area	
		Wood harvesting intensity	
Oceans, Seas and Coasts	Desertification	Land affected by desertification	
	Urbanization	Area of urban formal and informal settlements	
	Coastal Zone	Algae concentration in coastal area	
Fresh water	Fisheries	Annual catch by major species	
	Water quantity	Annual withdrawal of ground and surface water as a percent of total available water	
Biodiversity	Water quality	BOD in water bodies	
		Ecosystem	Area of selected key Ecosystems
	Species	Abundance of selected key species	
ECONOMIC			
Theme	Sub-Theme	Indicator	
Economic Structure	Economic performance	GDP per capita	
		Investment share in GDP	
		Balance of trade in goods and services	
	Trade	Debt to GNP ratio	
		Financial status	Total ODA given or received as a percent of GNP
Consumption and production patterns	Materials consumption	Intensity of material use	
		Energy use	Annual energy consumption per capita
	Waste generation and management	Share of consumption of renewable energy resources	
		Generation of industrial and municipal solid waste	
		Generation of hazardous waste	
Transportation	Transportation	Generation of radioactive waste	
		Waste recycling and reuse	
Distance traveled per capita by mode of transport			
INSTITUTIONAL			
Theme	Sub-Theme	Indicator	
Institutional Framework Institutional capacity	Strategic implementation of SD	National sustainable development strategy	
		International cooperation information access	Implementation of ratified global agreements number of internet subscribers per 1,000 inhabitants
	Communication infrastructure	Main telephone lines per 1,000 inhabitants	
	Science and technology	Expenditure on research and development as a percent of GDP	
	Disaster preparedness and response	Economic and human loss due to natural disasters.	

Source: United Nations Division for Sustainable Development (2000)

Table 4. MDGs and Their Indicators

GOALS	S/N	INDICATORS
Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	1a	Proportion of population below \$1 (Ppp) per day
	1b	Poverty headcount ratio (% of population below the national poverty line)
	2	Poverty gap ratio (incidence x depth of poverty)
	3	Share of poorest quintile in national consumption
	4	Prevalence of underweight children under-five years age
Achieve universal primary education	5	Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
	6	Net enrolment ratio in primary education
	7a	Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5
	7b	Primary completion rate
Promote gender equality and empower women	8	Literacy rate of 15 – 24 years old
	9	Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
	10	Ratio of literate women to men 15 – 24 years old
Reduce child mortality	11	Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
	12	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament
	13	Under-five mortality rate
Improve maternal health	14	Infant mortality rate
	15	Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles
Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases	16	Maternal mortality ratio
	17	Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
	18	HIV prevalence among 15 – 24 year old pregnant women
	19	Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate
	19a	Condom use at last high risk sex
	19b	Percentage of population aged 15 – 24 with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS
	20	Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10 – 14
	21	Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria
	22	Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures
	23	Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis
Ensure environmental sustainability	24	Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course (DOTS)
	25	Proportion of land area covered by forest
	26	Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area
	27	Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP)
	28	Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) and consumption Ozone-depleting CFCs (ODP tons)
	29	Proportion of population using solid fuels
	30	Proportion of urban and rural population with access to improved water source, urban and rural
Develop a global partnership for development	31	Proportion of urban and rural population with access to improved sanitation
	32	Proportion of households with access to secure tenure
		Official development assistance
	33	Net ODA, total and to LDCs, as percentage of OECD/DAC donors gross national income
	34	Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)
	35	Proportion of bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors that is untied
	36	ODA received in landlocked countries as proportion of their GNIs
		Market access
	38	Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and LDCs admitted free of duties
	39	Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries
	40	Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as percentage of their GDP
	41	Proportion of DOA provided to help build trade capacity
	42	Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)
43	43 debt relief committed under HIPC initiative, USS	
44	Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services	
45	Unemployment rate of 15-24 year olds, each sex and total	
46	Proportion of population with access to affordable, essential drugs on a sustainable basis	
47	Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population	
48a	Personal computers in use per 100 population and internet users per 100 population	
48b	Internet users per 100 population	

Source: Millennium Project (2002).

The agenda 21 specifically calls for the harmonization of efforts to develop sustainable development indicators at local, national, regional and global levels, including the incorporation of a sustainable set of these indicators in common, regularly updated and widely accessible reports and databases. Thus, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in 1995 set up a work programme on indicators of sustainable development. They worked from 1995 to 2000 and came up with a framework and core set of indicators to assist countries in their effort to measure progress towards sustainable development. Table 3 shows the CSD sustainable development indicators.

Millennium development goals indicators

Similarly, the Millennium Declaration was adopted by 189 Nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September, 2000. The 8 (eight) MDGs were broken down into targets and indicators. Table 2 had earlier presented the MDGs and their targets by year 2015. Table 4 however presents the MDGs and their indicators.

Achieving sustainable development in Nigeria through the proper implementation of MDGs

It will be ascertained from the Brundtland definition that SD addresses the needs of the present and future generations. When compared with the Maslow's theory of needs, the needs addressed by SD falls within the basic/psychological needs. These include needs for food, shelter, clothing, good health, transportation, education and equality. Hence, SD seeks to improve the standard of living of the people. Consequently the SD indicators as presented in table 4 address these basic needs in order to improve on the standard of living of the people. Similarly, the MDGs as contained in the Millennium Declaration addresses issues of poverty, education, equality, health, environment and global partnership for development. However, while the achievement of SD is infinite, MDGs are time bound and are infact expected to be achieved by the year 2015. Nigeria should therefore work hard towards achieving the MDGs by the year 2015 as a bold step towards achieving SD in our country.

MDGs: The Nigeria Situation

President Olusegun Obasanjo demonstrating Nigeria's commitment to MDGs, launched the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) which were also launched at state and local government levels as State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS) respectively. He equally created a presidential committee on the MDGs to guide the nation towards their achievements. However, Otive (2006) pointed out that the situation of MDGs in Nigeria could be seen from two sources namely: Nigeria MDGs Report 2004 & 2005. The 2004 report concluded that "based on available information, it is unlikely that the country will be able to meet most of the goals by 2015 especially the goals related to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, reducing child and maternal mortality, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other

diseases". It further stated that "for most of the other goals, up-to-date data exist which shows that if the current trends continue, it will be difficult for the country to achieve the MDGs target by 2015". However, 2005 MDGs report addressed the eight MDGs by highlighting the current status and trends of each of the MDGs, the challenges and opportunities in attaining the goal, the promising initiatives that are creating a supportive environment and priorities for development assistance. Table 5 gives a summary of the report. The 2005 report concluded that there is a high potential to attain some of the millennium development targets namely:

- a. Achieving universal primary education
- b. Ensuring environmental stability
- c. Developing a global partnership for development.

The report also stated that given the current policy environment and the strong political will, there is also a likelihood of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. However, based on available information, there is need for sustained effort to ensure that the country meets the following goals by the 2015:

- a. Achieving gender equality and women empowerment
- b. Reducing child mortality
- c. Improving maternal health and
- d. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

Given the scenario of the 2004 report, one would be tempted to question the basis and reason for this dramatic change in about one year.

The Way Forward

From the conclusion of Nigeria's MDGs report 2005, there is hope. Out of the 8 (eight) goals there is a high potential for achieving 3 (three) of the goals (namely, goals 2, 7 and 8), there is likelihood to achieve one with strong political will (goal 1) and there is the need for more sustained efforts to ensure that Nigeria meets the remaining four goals (goals 3, 4, 5 and 6). Hence Nigeria needs a strong political will and more sustained efforts towards achieving MDGs and achieving sustainable development. Little wonder then that the Brundtland report discussed the strategic and institutional imperatives for achieving sustainable development as stated in sections 5.1.3 and 5.1.4 of this work respectively.

Recommendations

There is the popular saying that Nigeria is very good at policy formulation but the problem area is in the implementation of the policies. The MDGs strategic framework for poverty reduction as contained in the NEEDS, SEEDS and LEEDS documents summarized the recommendation for improving standard of living in Nigeria. Their recommendations include *interalia*:

Employment Generation: This is by far, one of the best ways of reducing poverty and increasing the standard of living of the people.

8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development						
- Per capita official development assistance to Nigeria (in US\$)	3.0	2.0	2.3	40		Slow
- Debt services as a percentage of exports of goods and services	22.3	8.9	7.4	3.4		Good
- Private sector investment (US\$ million)	-	50 ¹⁹⁹⁹	-	6080		Slow
- Tele-density (per 1000 people)	0.45	-	-	15,72		Insufficient data
- Personal computer (per 1000 people)	-	-	30	30 ²⁰⁰⁴		Insufficient data
- Internet access (%)	7	0.1 ²⁰⁰³	-	1.9		Insufficient data

Source: Ibrahim (2007)

Public Sector Reform: Computerization of activities in the public sector, following due process, in awarding of contracts, improving in service delivery, elimination of fraud in our system through transparency and accountability.

Structural Change in Economy: Nigeria's economy is over dependent on the oil sector other viable sectors such as agriculture, industries, tourism, etc. should be explored.

Political Transformation: Our political system should uphold transparency, accountability, communication, patriotism and participatory governance.

Optimal Use of Existing Institutions: Adequate funding, upgrading of facilities, removal of unnecessary political interference, maintenance culture, and sustenance of these institutions.

Supporting Entrepreneurship and Self Help Project: Provision of credit facilities, monitoring and evaluation, creating enabling environment.

Improve on Basic Infrastructure: Electricity, water, roads, health facilities, education, security, etc. are areas where serious effort should be channeled.

Income Redistribution: Reducing the gap between the rich and the poor by creating a middle class in Nigeria.

Human Development: Encouraging professionalism, insisting that professionals should stick to their code of conduct, adequate reward for excellence, providing grants for research and providing the enabling environment for intellectual work.

Addressing Gender Equality and Securing Human Rights: Discouraging discrimination against women, abolishing religious and cultural practices that tend to relegate women to the background and improving on human right situation in Nigeria through education and public awareness.

Land Reform: Review of the Land Use Act, which is the highest law that tackles land matters in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The problem of Sustainable Development is a global problem, but the MDGs have been handed over to us by world leaders as a road map to sustainable development. The Nigeria

MDGs 2005 report gives us hope that the MDGs could be achieved, given a strong political will and a more sustained effort toward facing the developmental challenges of our country. Therefore, if Nigeria will meet the MDGs, the recommendations made in this paper should be pursued vigorously. If Nigeria achieves the MDGs then we are only steps away from achieving sustainable development.

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