MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS): A PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Summary

Since the launching of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) in September, 2000 in Nigeria, huge fmancial resources have been channelled towards meeting the 2015 deadline for the attainment of millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria has a considerable gap that needs to be bridged. To bridge this gap, a combination of targeted development aids is required in order to launch Nigerian State into the path of sustainable development. Therefore, the paper aims at examining the millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and how they can be achieved. Furthermore, it evaluates how this will help the Nigerian State in achieving sustainable Development.

Introduction

The Nigerian economy over the decades has remained afflicted with a catalogue of challenges over the decades. A critical review of the different reforms and programmes in the Nigerian State reveals a top-down approach to policy formulation and implementation. There are different elements to these policies – deregulations, privatisati6n, commercialization, cut-back in social sector expenditure, currency devaluation. The combination of all these effects on the masses has been disastrous while the gain enriches those who belong to the ruling class and their associates. (Onakuse and Eamon, 2007).

The livelihood insecurity and income inequality continue to be the most challenging economic problems facing, particularly the rural poor in the Nigerian state. The non-farm rural economy also remains under-developed, as do most essential services meant to facilitate growth and economic development. These include electricity, roads and educational institutions. About 65-70% of the population live below the poverty line (Moses, 2004). However, half of these live on less than half a dollar per day.

The development challenges confronting the Nigerian State are enormous. Central to these scores of challenges facing the Nigerian State are the inadequacy

of human and institutional capacity requirement to bridge the developmental gap. The above therefore presupposes the urgent need for a public sector that is efficient, empowered, controlled and constructively responsive and capable of collaborating with the private sector with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Millennium Development Goals are set of time bind measurable targets aimed at addressing developmental challenges in the Nigerian State which include, poor access to education, gender inequality, poverty through combating income inequality and hunger, children and maternal mortality, diseases, poor shelter and the promotion of environmental sustainability.

In order attain sustainable development, the Nigerian state keyed into the Mifleiiiiim Development Goals (MDGs), by formulating policies aimed at implementation of the framework of the goals through the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy. A policy targeted at bringing about sustainable development.

An assessment of the performance of the MDGs, particularly how they relate to achieving sustainable development, indicates that the MDGs have performed below expectations. It is therefore evident that the Nigerian State will not be able to meet the 2015 deadline for attaining the goals and therefore, cannot bridge the existing developmental gap let alone achieving sustainable development.

It is against this background that this paper is set to examine the MDG's as a means of helping to bridge the existing developmental gap and achieving sustainable development in the Nigerian State.

Conceptual Clarification

The MDG's came into existence at the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York in September, 2000. It is targeted at achieving development with eight major objectives:
• Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger
• Achieve Universal Primary Education
• Promote equality and empower women
• Reduce Child Mortality
• Improve Maternal Health
• Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases
• Ensure environmental sustainability
• Develop a global Partnership for development (FRN 2006)

Through the MDGs, the world has fashioned the basic tools with which Global development can be tackled as contained in the 8-point objectives. Furthermore it has also provided an entry point through which to engage government on sustainable development issues (Barnas, 2010).

Even with several years of implementing the Millennium Development Goal's (MDGs), it does not show that the Nigerian state is on course to meeting the MDG's target by 2015. Millions of children of primary school age are still not in

schools, several people have no safe drinking water, and more than half a million women still die yearly from treatable and preventable complications of pregnancy and childbirth. The same can also be said of poverty and hunger.

Development

Development means different things to different people. However, it can be described as a multidimensional process that improves the quality of life; measured with the realisation of higher levels of civilization; (Anikpo, 1984) reduction in the rates of poverty and unemployment. (Dudley, 1970); access to basic social amenities and institutionalization of a democratic process (the south commission report 1993) advanced infrastructural development, enhanced education and improved productivity (Onuoha, 1999). Rodney (1976), sees development as the ability of the state to harness its natural resources or endowment for the well being of the people. Sen, (1989), views development as encompassing the economic, political, social, cultural and environmental dimensions. While economic and social progress and the elimination of poverty are the objectives of development, it also includes freedom from fear and arbitrary arrest; free speech, free association and the right to vote and be voted for.

The preceding paragraph shows that there is no universally accepted definition for development. It is therefore a normative term which at different times means economic growth, structural growth, autonomous industrialization, self actualization as well as individual, national and cultural reliance. (Barnas, 2010).

The last two decades of the 20th century reveal the emergence of sustainability as a new development paradigm.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development put simply involves development that can be kept going or maintained. This should entail proper attention given to the transformation of productive forces and commensurate transformation in the social relation of production. The ability to maintain this would guarantee sustainable development. Barnas, (2010).

Bruntland Commission (1987) defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

An assessment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was adopted at the Millennium summit in September 2000. The Goals were not original in its form, rather they are an update of many unfulfilled goals for the year 2000 with deadline of 2015 for achieving them. Poverty, education, gender equality and empowerment of women, child mortality, maternal health, and disease and environment and sustainability. At the time of Millennium Summit, it was obvious that in many countries development process has slowed down. All member states of the UN and the Nigerian state in particular reaffirmed their commitment toward attaining a world in which sustainable development would be a priority and the MDG's were accepted as a framework for measuring progressive development. The millennium

Development Goals and targets are as follows: The goals & targets of the MDGs are summarized in table 1 below:

Table 1: The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their Targets

S/N	Millennium Development Goals	Targets
1	To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Target 1: To halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people whose incomes is less than 41 a day. Target 2: Proportion of people who suffer from hunger to be halved by 2015
2	To achieve universal primary education	Target 3: To ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of primary school.
3	To promote gender equality and empower woman	Target 4: To eliminate gender disparity to primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015
4	To reduce child mortality	Target 5: To reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under five mortality ratio
5	To improve maternal health	Target 6: To reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.
6	To combat H1V/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	Target 7: To halt by 2015 and to begin the reverse of the spread of HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases
7	To ensure environmental sustainability	Target 8: To integrate the principle of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse loss of environmental resources. Target 9: To halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water. Target 10: To achieve by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers
8	To develop a global partnership for development	Target 11-18: Entail reduction and cancellation of bilateral debt, among countries, address the special needs of landlocked countries, enhance the productivity of youth in developing countries, provides affordable essential drugs for developing countries and to make information and communication technologies available to developing countries.

Source: United Nations Development Report, 2005.

Goal 1: Eradicating of extreme poverty and Hunger:

This is regarded as the most important goal to human development. The target of this goal is to ensure that the number of people living with less than $1 US Dollar and those who suffer from hunger is reduced by half by the year 2015.

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education:

Education is a major corners stone for target of this goal is to ensure that by 2015 all children of primary school age would have completed primary school education.

Goal 3: Promoting Gender equality and Women Empowerment:

The target of this goal is aimed at eliminating gender disparity at all levels of education by the year 2015. There is an awareness of the large population of women in the population of the world who are illiterates. Therefore, there is the need to provide education for women to achieve meaningful level of educational advancement.

Goal 4: Reducing Child Mortality:

The target of this goal is to reduce by two thirds under five mortality rate before 2015.

Goal 5: Improving maternal health:

The target of this goal is aimed at reducing maternal mortality ratio by a quarter before the year 2015.

Goal 6: Combating HIV/AIDS Malaria and other Diseases:

The target here is to reduce by half the spread of HIV/AIDS and to begin a reversal of the spread of HIV/AIDs by the year 2015. It also targets the reduction by half and reversal of the incidence of malaria and other major diseases by 2015.

Goat 7: Ensuring Environmental Stability:

The aim here is integrating the principles of sustainable development into the country's policies and programmes and the reversal of loss of environment resources. It is also the aim, there to reduce by half by 2015 the number of persons living without access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Goal 8: Developing a global partnership for Development:

The aim here is to develop further an open, rule based, predictable, \ non-discriminatory trading and global financial system. This will also include commitment to good governance.

The Millennium Development Goals have attracted and received huge support from both local and international communities. The Nigerian state has put in place several programmes and strategies to ensure the attainment of the MDGs. From 2000 till date the federal Government of Nigeria has put in place a number

of programmes and strategies targeted at achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

In 2000, National Poverty Eradication Programme, (NAPEP), Universal Basic Education Programme (UBE) were set up and inaugurated with the aim of reducing poverty and enhancing the level of literacy of Nigerians.

In a similar vein 2001 witnessed the Roll Back Malaria, the National Action Committee on HIV/AIDS (NACA), Primary Health Care Scheme aimed at reducing the death rate and reducing prevalence of the diseases in Nigeria.

In 2002, the Expanded Programme on Immunization and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) were inaugurated in 2002 to care for children, broaden and promote partnership among public, private and among other African countries.

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS), which is the core vehicle for the achieving the MDG's, this was introduced in 2004 with the aim of providing credit facilities and the promotion of small scale enterprises and skill acquisition. NEEDs covered all segments of human endeavour. The Nigerian state also witnessed a major financial service sector reformation which led to the repackaging of community Bank to microfinance. These are all aimed at meeting the credit needs of the lower segment of the Nigerian economy.

Table 2: Nigeria's Progress on the MDG Template

Eradication of Extreme Poverty on the MDG Template	1990	1995	2001	2006	2015 (Projection)	Progress Towards Target
Population below $1 a day (%)	-	70.2	-	50.2	21.3	Good
Population below $2 a day (%)	-	90.9	-	70.3	41.3	Fair
Percentage share of consumption in income	-	4.4	-	80.8	15.4	Worsening
Prevalence of child malnutrition (% of children under age 5)	35.3	39.1	30.7	-	31.6	Fair
Population below minimum dietary energy	13.0	8.0	8.0	6.9	5.2	Good
Achieve Universal Primary Education						
Youth literacy rate (% ages 15-24)	73.6	81.1	87.8	88.6	89.2	Improving
Promotion of Gender Equality and Empower Women						
Ratio of female to male enrolments in primary and secondary schools	75.8	80.0	-	92	100	Very Good
Ratio of young literary females to male (% age 15-24)	82.3	89.2	94.7	95.3	100	Very Good

Reduce Child Mortality						
Under five mortality rate per 1,000 live births	235.0	238.0	205.0	201.0	102.3	Improving
Infant mortality rate (per 1000, live births)	115	120	102	90	60	Improving
Immunization, measles (% children under 12 months)	54.0	53.2	51.6	60.2	80.2	Good
Improve Maternal Health						
Maternal mortality rate per 1,000 live births	103	112	109	87	51	Good
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	30.8	-	41.6	50.3	63.5	Improving

Combat HIV/AIDS and other Diseases						
HIV prevalence female % of ages 15-24	-	-	5.8	6.8		Worsening
Incidence of Tuberculoses per 100,000 people	-	-	235	304.2	211.3	Reducing
Contraceptive prevalence rate (%women 15-49)	6.0	-	15.3	20.3	32.5	Fair
Number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS	-	-	1,000	1100	1211	Worsening
Tuberculosis cases detected under DOTS (%)	-	9.0	16.0	12.3	5.2	Improving
Environment Sustainability						
Carbon dioxide emission per capita metric tones	0.9	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.9	Worsening
Access to improved water source (% of population)	53.0	-	62.0	60.1	40.2	Fair
Other Human Development Indicators						"
Adult literacy rate (birth per women)	48.7	56.4	65.4	66.8	80.2	Good
Total fertility rate (birth per woman)	6.0	5.7	5.3	5.1	3.0	Good
Life expectancy at birth (years)	49.1	49.9	46.8	45.3	51.0	Improving
Partnership with Developed Countries and Others						
Cooperation and integration among Africa countries	40.2	41.3	51.3	60.8	70.2	Good
Cooperation and integration among developed countries	0.3	0.4	10.2	15.6	20.2	Improving
Formation of local and international group like NEPAD, MAP, APRM	0.5	0.8	32.6	43.9	60.2	Increasing

Source; Zenith Quarterly, 2008

Table 2 above shows the Nigeria's progress report on MDGs published by the
Zenith Quarterly, 2008. The table gives a picture of no remarkable progress in terms of meeting the 2015 target of achieving the Millennium Development Goals in
Nigeria. Given the huge financial resources and programmes that have been put in place by the Nigerian state, it is expected that we should be moving close to achieving the MGD' s by 2015. However, there is nothing to show that the Nigerian state will ever get to the target date.

The report from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) shows that the following: \

- 3 out of the 6 geo-political regions of Nigeria still have about 70% level of poverty on the average. Though there is a rise in the per capital income, poverty is still on the high side.
- There is observed failure rate in net enrolment in primary school. Youth literary rate also increased.
- There is still a high incidence of gender inequality
- Infant mortality rate is relatively high
- Gas flaring which is major factor and cause of climate change in sub-Saharan Africa is still high.
- NEPAD is a good road map to sustainable development, but the impact of NEPAD is minimal.

Estimate indicates that attaining the MDGs by 2015 is a mirage. However this can only be possible if the Nigerian state can improve its ability to effectively manage its resources through sustainable growth, improved policies, increase trade and investment; improvement in Human capital development and capacity building and good governance based on transparency and accountability.

Attaining sustainable development within the MDG's Framework
A major programme for the implementation of the MDGs in Nigeria is the NEEDS. The idea is for all ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of the Federal government to key into NEEDS priorities. The target is to achieve the goals by 2015. Given the beauty of the Millennium Development Goals and the huge financial resources that have been put into implementation with the intention of achieving the goals, there would have been evidence to show that the Nigerian state is close to meeting the 2015 targeted date rather, what is ground only shows that the Nigerian state is far from meeting the deadline of 2015 of achieving the MDG's. Achieving the goals will help in bridging the development gap and pilot the Nigerian state towards achieving sustainable development. The prospects of achieving sustainable growth and development will depend on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) the attainment of sustainable development though

achieving the goals of the Millennium Development Goals in the Nigerian State is still challenged by poor leadership, corruption, lack of transparency and accountability, lack of good governance, insecurity, policy inconsistency, lack of adequate data base and poor development policy assistance focus. Some of the growth indices are often paraded by the Nigerian state, but there is a mismatch between it and existing realities as the Nigerian state still exhibits large symptoms of underdevelopment as reflected in the socio-economic lives of Nigerians. Nigeria is ranked as one of the twenty five poorest countries in the world (World Bank,2012). This further intensifies youth employment (Atoyebi and Mobolaji, 2004; Sampson, 2007).

With about three years to the 2015 dead line for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, a large proportion of urban dwellers still live in slums in Nigeria (UN-Habitat, 2007); inequality is still high, the quality of urban housing is costly, while the urban poor often resort to livingtheir lives in slum where water sanitation and other facilities are inadequate. The living conditions are crowded and usually unhealthy. The UNDP (2008) report in Nigeria showed that the Human Development Index for Nigeria is 0.470 which gives the country a rank of 158 out of 177 countries. Life expectancy was *46.5* percent ranking, Nigeria as 165th and adult literacy rate at 69.1 ranking Niger as 104th out of 177. The report indicated that the Human poverty index value of 37.3 percent for Nigeria, ranking Nigeria as 80th among 108 developing countries UNDP, 2008. Achieving sustainable development through the Millennium Development Goals will be an Herculean task.

Bridging the Sustainable development gap in Nigeria needs the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

There are existing challenge on the part of attaining the Millennium Development Goals, such as abandoned projects, lack of coordination and communication with implementing agencies, high level of cooperation and the lack of political will on the part of government.

An urgent strategy need to be put in place for achieving sustainable development through the Millennium Development Goals.

Conclusion

The adoption of the Millennium Development Goals is a response by world leaders to curb the tide of underdevelopment and entrenched by a catalogue of factors which include good governance, while focusing on achieving sustainable development. The paper has shown how Nigeria has invested huge financial resources into the MDGs. The aim of doing this is to achieve sustainable development in Nigerian state. Evidently, the efforts by the Nigerian state had failed to yield the expected results of meeting the 2015 deadline of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The programmes and policies will not meet the 2015 deadline due to a number of factors which include high level of corruption and the lack of political will on the part of government and its officials.

Recommendations
1. The need to formulate and implement programmes and policies that will promote accountability and transparency.
2. There is also the need to put in place mechanisms that will help overcome institutional constraints.
3. The need for good governance to ensure the implementation of programmes and policies.
4. The need to eradicate high level corruption is highly recommended.
5. Finally, there is the need for the right political will on the part of government and its officials.

The above recommendations will help in bridging the development gap and achieving a reasonable level of sustainable development.

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