

**Obilo Obumneke**  
**MBA student,**  
**International Institute of Paris, France,**  
**Nigeria**  
[obilobum@yahoo.com](mailto:obilobum@yahoo.com)

## **THE FUTURE OF NIGERIAN SPORTS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

*This article highlights some of the problems with the Nigerian sporting system within sustainable development and is focusing on football and also points out some possible solutions.*

Football is one of the world's largest sports, being the number one sport in most countries in the world it is also turning into one of the most lucrative businesses, it has been a source for many talented youth especially the less fortunate in various parts of the world to come into spotlight.

In this article, we focus on the Nigerian football level, seeing as it has refused to grow and not many people are keen on aiding the growth of the sport. Nigeria had in the past one of the most popular national teams but over the years the level has depreciated vastly leaving only very few prominent names in the squad.

Now focusing on grass root football in the country, there are no standard facilities where the Nigerian youth are trained, no proper fields or proper clubs that recruit young players to give them a chance for a professional future this has now created a huge problem with the consistency in growth of Nigerian football. Nigeria recently claimed the U17 world cup but because of the problem with the consistency of growth many of these players tend to have difficulty progressing to the next level as has happened to many other youths in the past, many just fade away after claiming such major tournaments because of this issue. This has been an ongoing issue in the Nigerian system and still nothing has been done to better the situation, even the selection process of the youth teams has no standard criteria, a huge number of youth have not been given a fair trial seeing as corruption is quickly taking over the sport, so many talented Nigerian youth have been forced into many other alternatives, even going as far as saving up an amount of money, leaving the country and then applying for citizenship in many other countries where they feel they will get a fair chance to showcase their talents.

If this continues the way it's going in a couple years the country will have no prominent names to present on the world stage. I can speak of this having personally faced the situation being discussed, after playing for 10 years in Nigeria without getting a fair chance at any of the national squads, simply because the football authorities are not doing enough to reach all parts of the country to see the talent it possesses.

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

A lot can be done to better this situation but there are no immediate solutions, these possible solutions have to be implemented and then worked on continuously for it to continue to grow and help the standard of football in the nation to grow. Firstly affordable football schools with high standard facilities can be built in various states in the country and open to many youths to be trained and developed. This will be the first step of a very huge development.

The standard of the Nigerian league can also be increased by gradually reducing the level of corruption in the sport, which would allow more and more investors to come back into the game in Nigeria and the teams in the different leagues in Nigeria can then gradually increase their standards as well and go out to scout youths and introduce them into the professional system.

If steps like these can be taken regularly, over the next few years, the standard of Nigerian football will increase reasonably and in more years to come the country will be a force to be reckoned with.