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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Besides the 2030 Agenda, African countries have committed to implement the African Union Agenda 2063, which is both a vision and a plan to build a more prosperous Africa in 50 years. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the importance of the AU Agenda 2063 and considers it an integral part of it.

Africa has made significant progress on the Millennium Development Goals, including enrolling more children in primary school, particularly girls, increasing the representation of women in national parliaments, and reducing child and maternal deaths and the proportion of people infected with HIV. Building on this progress, several countries are already taking steps to translate the ambitions articulated in the 2030 Agenda into tangible outcomes for their people; they are beginning with integrating the SDGs into their national visions and plans.

Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Nigeria has continued to demonstrate its commitment to the SDGs promise through leadership and ownership of the implementation process. At UNDP, we are building on our support through provision of technical support to the Office of the Senior Special Advisor to the President on SDGs (OSSAP) and line ministries in an effort to ensure that planning and budgeting for development activities in the country are done within the framework of the SDGs. Using lessons learnt from the MDGs era, we are working closely with the Government of Nigeria and other partners in ensuring that the SDGs are efficient and effective implemented and that resources are allocated to sectors of the economy that will yield highest dividend for the poor and vulnerable millions across the country.

Sustainable development requires meeting the pressing needs of all people and extending opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life. It ensures a developed world with secured and healthy environment for all; human beings, animals and plants alike. Development is needed to enhance the quality of the lives of citizens in a country. In view of this, Poverty alleviation, youth empowerment, entrepreneurship development, self-reliance and effective leadership are perceived as key strategies for actualizing the four key components of sustainable development (environment, economic, social and political) in Nigeria. A critical look at the population explosion in the country vitiates the vision of achieving sustainable development in Nigeria.

Nigeria was prompted to fulfill the mission of the MDGs via the development of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). The major goal of these policies was to eradicate poverty and bring about sustainable development. Specifically, NEEDS has the following actionable goal: Wealth creation, Employment generation, Poverty reduction and Value re-orientation. The NEEDS as a national policy was designed in 2004 to uphold some of the goals of the MDGs, especially poverty reduction. In evaluating the performance of MDGs and NEEDS in Nigeria in sync with 'poverty eradication' one can boldly and confidently declare that MDGs have performed below the expectations of Nigerians. These two agencies proved abortive since they couldn't reduce the scourge of poverty among the citizenry of Nigeria.

The issues bordering on sustainable development are unending owing to heart-felt yearnings for ages to acquaint ourselves with the goal of sustainable economy. Sustainable development requires shifts from mundane ways of doing things to a modern ways of executing activities ranging from low to high productivity, the creation and adoption of new strategies, novel skills and knowledge. It requires entrepreneurship education, youth empowerment, effective leadership and self-reliance. These shifts are made possible by government at all levels, individuals, corporate bodies and entrepreneurs who are the architects of "capacity creation" for sustainable development which leads to growth and development that manifest in high productivity and satisfaction of the inhabitants of the nation.

This great vision has been hampered by incessant political unrest, political instability, abject poverty, poor socio-economic development, teeming population of qualified unemployed youths, lack of entrepreneurial skills, bribery and corruption and numerous other challenges besetting the achievement of sustainable development. This implies that Sustainability is a continuous target which demands urgent attention despite the incessant challenges enumerated above from the leaders and the led.

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