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Review Article

Nigeria's Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

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The Sustainable Development Goals are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed as a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable life for all. The United Nations member states have committed to work towards achieving the goals by the year 2030. Despite Nigeria's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, also known as the Global Goals, there are troubling twists and turns in the country's implementation of the goals. It is on record that the country failed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, which had similar development aspirations and a similar 15-year implementation period. The typical twists and turns are further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, terrorist activities, extended periods of strike in the universities, and instability in oil prices, for an economy that derives 86% of public revenue from oil and gas. This paper is therefore designed to present to the reading community the local obstacles in the implementation of all the Sustainable Development Goals and to highlight the strong and weak points with a view to refocusing our efforts. The paper adopted a systematic review approach, drawing from such studies as the National Voluntary Review reports and relevant literature. The paper concludes with relevant recommendations.

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1. Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a compendium of interlinked, interrelated global goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 to serve as a blueprint for all United Nations Member States to achieve a better and more sustainable future by 2030. They are also referred to as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity. In a nutshell, the SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, safeguard the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by the year 2030.

The SDGs are made up of 17 goals, 169 targets, and 230 indicators. They are implemented within each Member State of the United Nations and at the regional and global levels, taking into account national realities, capacities, and levels of development, and respecting national priorities. As a Member State of the United Nations, Nigeria adopted the UN SDGs as a vehicle for freeing humanity from poverty, securing a healthy planet for future generations, and building a peaceful, inclusive society as a foundation for ensuring a life of dignity for all (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2017a). The implementation process of the SDGs is guided by the commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social, and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner. The SDGs will stimulate action over the 15-year period of 2015-2030 in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet.

Despite Nigeria's commitment to the SDGs, the country continues to lag behind in socio-economic development that targets the goals (Ajala 2022). For instance, in the 2021 SDG index, Nigeria ranked 160th among 165 countries compared in terms of their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (Sachs et al. 2021). Nigeria's performance score of 48.9 is just a little above the score for the Central African Republic (38.3), a country occupying the lowest rung of the index.

The time-bound nature of the goals, therefore, makes it imperative to refocus on the implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria with a view to keeping the dream of success on track. It is against this background that this chapter is written. The paper is basically a review of reviews, drawing from such studies as the National Voluntary Review reports, the Nigeria SDGs Indicators Baseline Report 2016, and other relevant literature. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: the methodology; review of the reports under the SDGs goals; and looking back and thinking forward to 2030. The paper is summarized with a conclusion and recommendations.

2. Methodology

This work adopted the systematic review approach. Empirical evidence on the implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria was collected. This approach involved a comprehensive and systematic search to identify and obtain relevant published documents that addressed the implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria. Unpublished documents and those not borne out of empirical reviews of the implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria were excluded from the search. The published documents included the Nigeria SDGs Indicators Baseline Report 2016, National Voluntary Review reports, and other relevant literature. The relevant published documents are briefly described in the next section.

2.1. SDG Indicators Report

The National Bureau of Statistics and the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs (OSSAP-SDGs), in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders, established a baseline for the SDG indicators that are domesticated in Nigeria (Federal

Republic of Nigeria 2017a). The report tracked and examined the baseline status of the SDG indicators before the commencement of full implementation of the SDGs in 2016. The report covered the 17 Goals of the SDGs and captured 126 out of the 230 indicators. The indicators not captured were simply not available (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2017). The report provided an understanding of where Nigeria stood on each of the goals at the beginning of the implementation of the SDGs.

The report was designed to guide the tracking of the implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria and also to show what results are being achieved over time. The report further provided that for effective implementation such that 'no one is left behind', efforts should be made to domesticate the goals, targets, and indicators through the annual budgets and development agenda of the governments at the federal and state levels. The SDG Baseline Study is used as a benchmark in this study.

2.2. National Reviews of the SDGs

In paragraph 79 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development document, member states are requested to 'conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and subnational levels, which are country-led and country-driven' (UN GA, 2015). Preparation of Voluntary National Reviews, VNRs, is led by country governments and typically involves ministerial and other relevant high-level participants, with variability in the role that civil society can and has been able to play in each country. The VNRs are presented at a High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) annually, enabling countries to report their progress on the SDGs and share information with other countries.

The Agenda2030 document does not stipulate periodicity for the reviews. However, regular annual reviews are the norm, and United Nations member countries are expected to consider carrying out up to two voluntary national reviews during the period of implementation of the 2015-2030 Agenda.

This study mainly relied on the 2017 National Voluntary Review (NVR), which incidentally was the first for the country, the 2020 NVR, which was the second for the country, and the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021, which is global in coverage, to present the strong and weak points in the SDGs implementation in Nigeria. Note that while some literature refers to the reviews as Voluntary National Reviews, others refer to it as National Voluntary Review (NVR). Both expressions mean the same thing and will be used in line with the literature under reference.

The findings of the search are presented in a systematic manner to aid in drawing robust and broad conclusions. This paper presents an unbiased account of what the cumulative evidence says about the successes and setbacks in Nigeria's implementation of the SDGs. This paper relies on the work of Siddaway et al. (2019) for conducting systematic reviews: to critique and synthesize relevant literature by identifying relations, contradictions, gaps, and inconsistencies and exploring reasons for these; to provide implications for practice and policy in the implementation of the SDGs; and to highlight important directions for future effective implementations of the SDGs in Nigeria.

The reviews are presented under the headings of the different SDG goals. The relevant review reports are analytically and comparatively presented in relation to the baseline report.

3. Review Reports of SDGs in Nigeria

The reports of the reviews as they relate to the SDG goals are presented in this section.

3.1. End Poverty in all its Forms Everywhere (Goal 1)

Nigeria is implementing a national Social Investment Programme that focuses on providing Social Safety Nets for the poor, welfare for the unemployed, and job creation

and skills enhancement, with a target of creating about 3 million jobs.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017b) reports that the Government of Nigeria established institutional frameworks at the national and sub-national levels to support effective implementation of the SDGs as a direct response to address the state of endemic poverty. For instance, the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme provides targeted cash transfers to poor and vulnerable households with the final aim of lifting them out of poverty. The CCT programme targets a total of 765,760 beneficiaries to be selected (80 beneficiaries from each political ward across the 774 Local Government Areas) and expects 30% in the first year, 50% in the second year, and 20% in the third year.

In spite of the institutional frameworks, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) reported that the GDP growth rate declined dramatically from an annual average of 7.2 per cent between 2000 and 2014 to 2.8 per cent in 2015 and -1.6 per cent in 2016; in 2017, it was 2.1 per cent and dropped to 1.8 per cent in 2018, showing underlying weaknesses in the macroeconomic fundamentals. These growth rates are far below the projections of the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan, which had aimed at 2.2 per cent in 2017, 4.8 per cent in 2018, 4.5 per cent in 2019, and 7.0 per cent in 2020. From 2016 to early 2017, the standard of living of the average Nigerian nosedived; on average, Nigerians are getting poorer.

Under the SDG 1 target, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) reported that 40.1 per cent of Nigerians (about 83 million people) live in poverty and growth per capita has been negative. With respect to the baseline data, the proportion of men, women, and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions was 42.2 per cent (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2017a).

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) further reported that poverty has been rising in rural areas and the northern zones, while the situation in the southern zones has generally been improving. The federal government's significant efforts to extend social welfare to the growing numbers of poor households are not reaching far enough, deep enough, or fast enough. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) opined that key to Nigeria's efforts at addressing poverty is to recognize the centrality of women in producing healthy children if they can do so when they choose, contributing to productive households if they have access to essential services, such as water and sanitation, and agricultural support.

Macroeconomic growth is fragile and not as fast as Nigeria's population growth, keeping large numbers of people in poverty. There are deep structural flaws that have constrained inclusive economic growth, some of which are outlined in the World Bank's 2019 report. First, measured according to the US\$1.90-a-day per capita purchasing power parity, the poverty line, it is estimated that 42.8 per cent of Nigeria's population was living in extreme poverty in 2016. The high demographic growth of 5.5 people per household creates a poverty trap for household members who are unable to find employment, access healthcare facilities, or keep their children in school to acquire the educational and social skills to earn a livelihood in the next generation. Second, the nature of economic growth in the country has been increasingly unbalanced, with overall improvements in the south of the country and declining human development in rural areas and the north. This is directly traceable to the nation's internal conflicts, which create violence, insecurity, and fragile situations that make progress in SDG 16 critical for priority actions moving forward. A third constraint is the vicious cycle of growing levels of corruption through challenged federal-state coordination. These result in a poor quality of public service delivery, deepening transparency and accountability issues in the country (World Bank 2019). Finally, the business environment is not conducive enough to create jobs that can sustain livelihoods or address the myriad of challenges facing the country.

In the views of the United Nations (2021), the effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic have reversed much of the progress made in reducing poverty, with global extreme poverty rising in 2020 for the first time since the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s. The United Nations (2021) further stated that before COVID-19, the world was not on track to achieve the goal of ending poverty by 2030, and that without immediate and significant action, it will remain beyond reach.

3.2. End Hunger, Achieve Food Security, Improve Nutrition, and Promote Sustainable Agriculture (Goal 2)

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017a) reported that the prevalence of undernourishment was reflected in the fact that some 25.5% of the population was lacking adequate and improved nutrition. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017a) further stated that severe food insecurity within the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale, stood at 26.4%. However, the report was of the view that the trajectory to end hunger was on course, particularly given the strong collaboration among different stakeholders with the aim of improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agricultural development programmes. The second NVR report had no entry under Goal 2.

In the context of the baseline scenario, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017b) reported that some 25.5% of the population lacked adequate and improved nutrition; severe food insecurity within the population stood at 26.4%; there was a stunting or delayed growth prevalence of 37.45% among children of kindergarten age; 37.4% for school age; and 15% severe cases of malnutrition for children under 5. In the views of the United Nations (2021), COVID-19 has had a profound impact on hunger and food

security, triggered by disruptions in food supply chains, income losses, widening social inequities, an altered food environment, and price hikes. The United Nations (2021) further reports that small-scale food producers constitute the majority of food producers and that strengthening the resilience and adaptability of these small farmers is critical to reversing the trend towards rising hunger and reducing the share of people living in extreme poverty.

3.3. Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-being for All at All Ages (Goal 3)

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017a) reported that Nigeria's human development indices in the health sector remained abysmally low. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) reported that a little progress was made in reducing the maternal mortality ratio between 2016 and 2018. In the year 2016, 576 maternal deaths per 100,000 were recorded, dropping to 512 deaths per 100,000 in 2018. The report argued that if this reduction rate was maintained, then Nigeria would definitely achieve its target of 288 maternal deaths by 2022.

The highest maternal mortality rates (MMR) in Nigeria are in the North West region. It is also in the North West that up to 90 per cent of pregnant women deliver at home (Sloan et al. 2018), contributing to the risk of mortality.

The United Nations (2021), reporting under SDG 3, stated that many health indicators were moving in the right direction before the threat of COVID-19 emerged. In the views of the United Nations (2021), maternal and child health had improved, immunization coverage had increased, and communicable diseases had been reduced, although not fast enough to meet those 2030 targets. Because the virus is disproportionately affecting disadvantaged groups, the United Nations (2021) argues that the pandemic has demonstrated the importance of universal health coverage and multisectoral coordination for health emergency preparedness.

3.4. Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All (Goal 4)

According to Nyorekwa et al. (2019), there are tremendous gains to be made in primary school enrollment as no African country has achieved universal primary education. In effect, there is no African country where all children have completed a full course of primary schooling. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) reported that while primary school attendance was essential (about 60 per cent), there was a need for the government to do more to increase the low levels of secondary school attendance (49 per cent). The reduced attendance rate partially explains the low literacy and numeracy rates among youths.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017a) reported that there were huge improvements in access for the girl-child to formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, with 51% of females having access compared to 49% of males. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) reported that there was a positive increase in participation in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age) by girls in both private and public schools, and that since 2015, the figure had more than doubled in private schools and tripled in public schools. If this trend continues, the country will achieve its 2030 targets.

Overall, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) argued that with the high youth unemployment rate in Nigeria, and with only 1.6 per cent of GDP devoted to education, the country needs to increase resources to provide quality education.

Despite almost 20 years of the UBE programme and 15 years of implementing the UBE Act (2004), myriad challenges continue to plague the education system in Nigeria, including 13.2 million out-of-school children and gender disparities that continue in the basic education system. Furthermore, there remain challenges regarding the quality of education, demonstrated in very unsatisfactory pupil learning outcomes, such as average scores in literacy, numeracy, and life skills, ranging from 30 per cent to 52 per cent.

In 2016 and 2017, nearly half the children of the right age were attending secondary school; this number rose slightly to 49 per cent in 2018. The primary school attendance rate was 60.9 per cent in 2016 through 2017, showing that 14 per cent of Nigerian children dropped out of the school system after their primary education during that period. Furthermore, primary school attendance was 61 per cent in 2018 (NPC 2019). In effect, 12 per cent of the children dropped out and therefore did not attend secondary school in 2018. More effort is required to ensure that 100 per cent of children of both sexes attend both primary and secondary school by 2030. According to the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (2018), attendance at secondary school is much lower in rural areas (37 per cent) than in urban areas (65 per cent). The attendance rate was 47 per cent among girls and slightly higher at 52 per cent among boys (NPC, 2019). In 2017, in three states in northeast Nigeria, 54 per cent of primary and secondary school children who were internally displaced were out of school (UNICEF, 2019). On average, children in Nigeria only attend school for 6.5 years against the expected 10 years of schooling, suggesting high dropout rates (UNDP, 2020).

According to the World Bank (2018), with approximately 9 million children out of school, Nigeria has one of the highest numbers of out-of-school children of primary age in the world; over 90 per cent of these are in the North. Access is also highly unequal across states and among the poorest (72 percent for the poorest quintile vs. 3 percent for the wealthiest).

In the North, out-of-school rates among girls are highest (1 girl to 3–4 boys in school). Children of nomadic pastoralists throughout the country are less likely to be in school, as are children in the North East whose families were displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency.

World Bank (2018) further reports that being in school alone is not enough; increasing access to education without ensuring its good quality will not improve learning. Only 20 per cent of Nigerian adults between 18–37 years who completed primary school can read, compared to 80 per cent in Tanzania. High-quality school inputs, including adequate infrastructure and teaching and learning materials, are important but in short supply all over the country. No single factor is as critical for learning as the quality of teachers. Many teachers do not have adequate content and pedagogy knowledge.

United Nations (2021) reports that COVID-19 wreaked havoc worldwide on children's learning and well-being and adds that before the pandemic, progress in education was already too slow to achieve Goal 4 by 2030. The poorest and most vulnerable children bear the brunt of the crisis, exacerbating longstanding inequalities.

3.5. Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls (Goal 5)

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017a) reported that there were challenges as cases of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse against women still persisted: about 33.5 per cent of women and girls 15 years and older still confronted cases of violence and emotional abuse; it was 34.9 per cent in the baseline report. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017a) reported that 24.8 per cent of girls and women aged 15 to 49 were reported to have undergone genital mutilation or cutting; while 33.5 per cent of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older were subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by either a current or former intimate partner. These scenarios are as in the baseline report.

Furthermore, 34.9 per cent of women and girls aged 15 years and older were subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner. The proportion of women aged 15–49 who made their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use, and reproductive health care was 24.8 per cent. The issue of early marriage among girls still posed a challenge to education and decent jobs for women in some parts of the country. The girl-child is exposed to VVF and HIV and AIDS through early marriage, which impedes her growth and development. The percentage of girls and women who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting remains as high as 39.9 per cent. Access to ownership and rights to agricultural land is improving. On a positive note, the population of women who own mobile phones in rural communities is on the increase. Overall, mainstreaming of gender in the NERGP remains a top priority as part of inclusive policy formulation.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) reported that there have been improvements in the two indicators of gender-based violence (GBV) and child and early forced marriage (CEFM) before age 15. However, CEFM before age 18 has somewhat worsened. There is insufficient data to assess progress on women in elective/appointive as well as managerial positions. The report stated that little progress has been made on gender inclusiveness and that the possibility of achieving the SDG targets by 2030 remains very low as long as deeply rooted values and social norms are not met by strong political will and serious commitment.

United Nations (2021) reports that the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have adversely affected progress towards gender equality. Violence against women and girls has intensified; child marriage, on the decline in recent years, is expected to increase; and women have suffered a disproportionate share of job losses and increased care work at home. United Nations (2021) argues that the pandemic has highlighted the need to act swiftly to address pervasive global gender inequalities and stated that there is a need to re-shape and rebuild systems, laws, policies, and institutions to advance gender equality.

3.6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation (Goal 6)

As of 2017, access to improved water sources by the population stood at 60 per cent and was expected to increase to 73.6 per cent by 2020 (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2017b). However, the World Bank Group (2019) reported that States in Nigeria experienced low levels of access to improved water on premises across the board. Nearly all States—with the exception of Lagos—had rates of access to improved water on premises that were below 60 per cent. Approximately 5.6 million people still lacked access in Lagos State. Kano State, while not exhibiting the absolute lowest rate of access, had approximately 9.1 million people who lacked access to improved water on premises. Piped water on premises was scarcely available throughout the country, except for a few minor pockets in Taraba, Jigawa, and Yobe States.

United Nations (2021) posited that billions of people around the globe (including Nigeria) live without safely managed drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene services and added that the world was not on track to achieve Goal 6. A dramatic acceleration in current rates of progress and integrated and holistic approaches to water management are badly needed (United Nations 2021).

3.7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all (Goal 7)

The first and second NVR on the SDGs have no data on Goal 7. Reports under this goal are based on literature that focused on global trends. United Nations (2021) reported that although over the last decade access to electricity has expanded, the use of renewable energy in the electricity sector has increased, and energy efficiency has improved, millions of people are without electricity, and one third of the global population lacks clean cooking fuels and technologies. Progress in ensuring energy access has been uneven across regions, leaving the most vulnerable even further behind. Nigeria is richly endowed with large oil, gas, hydro, and solar resources; it has the potential to generate 12,522 MW of electric power from existing plants (<https://www.usaid.gov/powerafrica/nigeria>). However, Nigeria only manages to generate about 4,000 MW, which is sufficiently deficient for a country of over 200 million people.

United Nations (2021) reports that 759 million people lack access to electricity; 3 out of 4 of them live in sub-Saharan Africa. United Nations (2021) suggested that accelerated action on modern renewable energy is needed, especially in the heating and transport sectors. The issues for the suboptimal supply of electricity should be duly looked into by the different levels of government and relevant stakeholders with 2030 in view.

3.8. Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all (Goal 8)

The first NVR on the SDGs has no data on Goal 8. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) reports that youths have a combined unemployment and under-employment rate of 55.4 per cent; with 38 per cent of the 15 to 24-year-olds not in education, employment, or training, these young adults are not gaining the skills to enter the labour market or to become self-employed.

Real GDP growth has been positive since 2017 but has remained lower than the rate of population growth, so people are becoming poorer. While most Nigerians work in the informal sector, there is very little job and income security in this sector, and the likelihood of transitioning out of poverty is low. Ensuring that youths are well-educated and able to transition to productive employment through the digital economy can reduce poverty (SDG-1) significantly.

The aim of SDG 8 is to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. The goal of the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), Nigeria's Medium-Term Plan for 2017 to 2020, was to restore and sustain growth, build a competitive economy, and invest in its people. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) argues that the institutional mechanisms for overseeing the SDGs are integral to the achievement of the ERGP.

The Federal Government envisioned that with effective implementation of the ERGP, unemployment would drop from 16.2 per cent in 2017 to 11.2 per cent in 2020, and that net job creation would grow from 1.5 million in 2017 to 5.1 million in 2020 (Ministry of Budget and National Planning 2017). This did not come about as envisioned. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is a significant drawback, the ERGP also encountered some bottlenecks that impeded smooth implementation and effectively detracted from achieving the set objectives. For instance, the ERGP had no clear exchange rate policy. Adeniran et al. (2017) argued that a credible, flexible exchange rate policy strategy needed to be specified to improve foreign investors' confidence. Adeniran et al. (2017) further argued that the ERGP had too many goals, making the realization of the plan over-ambitious.

United Nations (2021) reports that for Least Developed Countries (low-income countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development), real GDP increased by 4.8 per cent in 2019 and is expected to in 2021 and 2022, reaching 4.0 and 5.0 per cent, respectively. However, it is expected to remain below the 7 per cent target envisioned by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3.9. Building Resilient Infrastructure, Promoting Sustainable Industrialization and Fostering Innovation (Goal 9)

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017b) reported that the Nigerian government has prioritised infrastructure development in its development agenda, as is evident in the 2016 and 2017 Appropriation laws. For instance, infrastructure development constituted 41 per cent of the total capital allocation in the 2016 budget, and the 2017 budget was declared the budget of infrastructure development.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017b) stated that among the priority projects in the 2016 budget were investments in such critical infrastructure as Power, Roads, Rail, and Housing. Other related commitments in the 2016 budget included the implementation of measures to achieve self-sufficiency and become net exporters of some agricultural commodities, namely: rice-2018, tomato paste-2016, and wheat-2019. It also aimed to increase local production of maize, soya, poultry, and livestock to achieve self-sufficiency. Today, Nigeria is rather a net importer of these agricultural commodities.

Nigeria's Electric Power Sector had about 12.5MW installed capacity as of November 2016, with about 15 per cent of installed capacity distributed to end users. In terms of industrialization, Nigeria has so far established 34 free zones aimed at promoting the industrial and economic growth of the nation.

The second NVR on the SDGs has no data on Goal 9. However, the United Nations (2021) stated that small-scale industries in the poorest countries still struggled with access to credit. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) further reported that access to credit remains uneven across countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and LDCs. In a post-pandemic world, access to finance will play an essential role in economic recovery.

In terms of connectivity, the United Nations (2021) reported that the majority of the global population is still unable to connect, either through rural roads or cyberspace. It should be noted that rural road connectivity provides farmers and their families easy access to markets, along with health and education facilities. This helps reduce poverty by elevating agricultural productivity, business profitability, and employment. With regard to internet connectivity, the United Nations (2021) reported that between 2015 and 2020, global 4G coverage doubled. However, "coverage" does not necessarily mean "usage," as only 51 per cent of the global population used the Internet in 2019, leaving 3.7 billion people without Internet access. In LDCs, only one in five people were online in 2020, failing to achieve the target of universal and affordable Internet access (United Nations 2021).

3.10. Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development (Goal 14)

SDG 14 focuses on the sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems and covers the conservation and protection of ocean and aquatic life. Through the Nigeria Economic Recovery and Growth Plan, the government committed to implementing environmental programmes that are geared towards a sustainable environment, including the ocean and marine. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2107), the commitments include the implementation of projects under the Great Green Wall initiative to address land degradation and desertification, and the implementation of environmental initiatives in the Niger Delta region, among others.

In terms of the global scenario on SDG 14, the United Nations (2021) stated that the implementation of international instruments to conserve and responsibly use ocean resources remained uneven and highlighted the need for increased support. For instance, the Voluntary Guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication are an internationally agreed instrument that promotes improved governance of small-scale fisheries, including in value chains, post-harvest operations, and trade (United Nations 2021). The United Nations (2021) argued that such fishers contribute about half of the global fish catches in developing countries and employ more than 90 per cent of the world's capture fishers and fish workers, about half of whom are women. However, these small-scale fishing communities are largely marginalized and tend to have limited or disadvantaged access to resources and markets.

3.11. Promotion of Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development (Goal 16)

The targets and indicators for SDG Goal 16 address the problems of access to justice, crime and crises, violence including those of a domestic nature; trafficking, corruption, and illegitimate possession of public goods and services that violate the principles of peaceful coexistence between and across the citizenry.

In this regard, Nigeria has also been confronted with the challenge of the Boko Haram Insurgency in the Northeast; the Militancy in the Niger Delta; the Fulani Herdsmen and farmers' crisis; as well as the kidnapping of persons for money and perceptions of corruption by public servants. The 2016 budget identified improved security and reduced corruption as among the priority areas for attention.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2107a), under the NERGP, articulated some intervention policies and strategies for addressing the issues related to this goal. As earlier discussed under SDG Goal 8, the ERGP had encountered some bottlenecks that impeded its own objectives and, by extension, the SDG objectives it was meant to achieve.

The following objectives under the NERGP, aimed at the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, have not been met:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive action plan for the North East, including emergency humanitarian assistance, relocation, rehabilitation, and resettlement, and building peace, security, infrastructure, agriculture, health, education, and governance.
2. Develop and implement a sustainable action plan to stabilize and develop the Niger Delta.
3. Sustain and re-invigorate the Amnesty Plan.
4. Ensure environmental sustainability within the Niger Delta Region.
5. Strengthen the capacity of the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigeria Prisons Service, Federal Fire Service, and the Nigeria Immigration Service, e.g., by establishing a national criminal records registry.
6. Develop and strengthen the capacity of the Armed Forces of Nigeria and the Military Industrial Complex to ensure strategic deterrence and defence, exercise forward presence in vital areas, respond effectively to crises, and retain the national capacity to reconstitute forces.

7. Establish at least one Brigade in every State capital in Nigeria to fulfil the fundamental demands of the National Security Strategy.
8. Promote the adoption of community policing strategies.
9. Equip and provide the manpower required for military and paramilitary services.
10. Establish enduring partnerships with security agencies in allied countries to build local capacity and curb cross-border crimes such as terrorism, cyber-crimes, and others.

It is therefore debatable whether the existing structures are strong and effective in the discharge of the onerous responsibility.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) explicitly stated that Nigeria is facing moral dilemmas in relation to ethics and a prominent culture of bribery, corruption, and collusion. The levels of state corruption are demonstrated in the total value of inward and outward movement of illicit financial flows (IFFs) (Indicator 16.4.1) and the proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months (Indicator 16.5.1).

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) reported that IFFs (illegal and secretive transfer of capital outside the country to evade tax) were directly related to bribery, and they both related to the broader issue of corruption. As of 2018, oil- and gas-related products accounted for approximately 92 per cent of Nigeria's total merchandise exports (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2020); oil-exporting countries such as Nigeria are particularly vulnerable to IFFs. While Africa loses about US\$50 to US\$60 billion every year to IFFs, Nigeria's contribution is estimated at 30 per cent of that loss.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020), however, reported that Nigeria had in some cases successfully repatriated funds from IFFs, the most notorious example being the relocation and repatriation of US\$504 million of the US\$3 billion stolen by former Head of State, General Sani Abacha. The five-year-long judicial and diplomatic process it took to achieve this shows the difficulties associated with the repatriation of looted funds. These results remain minimal in comparison to the estimated value of assets illegally outgoing from Nigeria every year.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) reported that the proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months slightly decreased between 2016 and 2019, dropping from 32.3 per cent to 30.2 per cent. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) still posited that bribery was frequent among all types of public officials in Nigeria and was combined with preferential treatment based on ethnic group and religion. Bribery is accompanied by high levels of collusion as well as opaque contract allocation and hiring processes. Although the fight against corruption had gained some momentum since Muhammadu Buhari's election as President of Nigeria in 2015 and his re-election in 2019, the progress has been insufficient (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2020). According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020), there are no signs that SDG-16 will be achieved, even with optimized policies and an unlimited budget.

3.12. Revitalize Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (Goal 17)

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017a) reported that the Nigerian Government had been seeking collaboration and partnerships with local and international organizations, development partners, as well as with CSOs and the private sector in its developmental pursuit. It also reported that the Ministry of Budget and National Planning has a department of International Cooperation that is in charge of donor coordination and programme planning. As part of the global initiative, Nigeria belongs to the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and is a member of ECOWAS, African Union (AU), etc.

In the OGP, Nigeria made commitments in 14 areas which are categorized into four thematic areas: 1. Promoting fiscal transparency; 2. Access to information; 3. Anti-corruption and asset disclosure; and 4. Citizen Engagement and Empowerment. The National Action Plan articulated strategies to promote fiscal transparency through more citizen participation in the budget-making process, implementation of open contracting in the public sector, enhancing disclosure in the extractive industries, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the tax system, and improving the ease of doing business in Nigeria. Also, the action plan has strategies crafted to ensure that corruption is rooted out through the establishment of a public beneficial ownership register, the development of a platform for sharing information between government MDAs to detect and prevent corrupt practices, the strengthening of asset recovery legislation, and taking appropriate actions to coordinate anti-corruption activities.

The Government of Nigeria has been seeking collaboration and partnerships with local and international organizations, development partners, as well as with CSOs and the private sector in its developmental pursuit. The Ministry of Budget and National Planning has a department of International Cooperation that is in charge of donor coordination and programme planning. The Bureau of Public Enterprise is in charge of coordinating public-private sector initiatives, while the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment is responsible for investment and export promotion, business, etc. Nigeria is also a member of ECOWAS, African Union (AU), etc.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) reported that Nigeria only raises around 8.5 per cent of GDP in revenue, and debt service is only around 8 per cent of GDP. Government revenue needs to increase if it is to invest in education and health, among other

things. This requires not only more reliable administrative capacity to collect taxes but also more robust social contracts between the people and the government. The great hope for strengthening Nigeria's economic growth is by making it globally competitive through the digitization of its economy. The indicators used in SDG 17 are essential contributors to being able to assess the degree to which Nigerian participation can access broadband and the proportion of the population that can access and use the internet.

The discussions under Goal 17 conclude the reviews of the status of the implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria. In the next section, we bring out, also based on literature, what Nigeria should do as they look backwards and think about 2030.

4. Looking Back and Thinking Forward to 2030

This section focuses on specific issues to be addressed to ensure that the identified weaknesses in the implementation process specifically serve as a stepping stone in Nigeria's march towards the 2030 Agenda.

4.1. End Poverty in all its Forms Everywhere (Goal 1)

It has been stated that the federal government's significant efforts to extend social welfare to the growing numbers of poor households are not reaching far enough, deep enough, or fast enough. As a result, this strategy should be critically examined by the government and thereby deemphasize giving fish as opposed to teaching poor households how to fish. Furthermore, it should be recognized that the key to Nigeria's efforts at addressing poverty is to recognize the centrality of women in producing healthy children if they can do so when they choose, contributing to productive households if they have access to essential services, such as water and sanitation, and agricultural support.

The deep structural flaws that have constrained inclusive economic growth should be critically examined with a view to addressing them. Firstly, the 42.8 per cent of Nigeria's population living in extreme poverty and the high demographic growth of 5.5 people per household create a poverty trap for household members. Under the poverty trap, the households are unable to find employment, access healthcare facilities, or keep their children in school to acquire the educational and social skills to earn a livelihood in the next generation. Secondly, the nation's internal conflicts, which create violence, insecurity, and fragile situations, make progress in SDG 16 constrained. As a result, priority actions moving forward are required. Thirdly, the vicious cycle of growing levels of corruption through challenged federal-state coordination should be addressed through the establishment of strong, viable, and effective institutions.

4.2. End Hunger, Achieve Food Security, Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture (Goal 2)

Realizing that small-scale food producers constitute the majority of food producers and that strengthening the resilience and adaptability of these small farmers is critical to reversing the trend towards rising hunger and reducing the share of people living in extreme poverty, it is our view that Nigeria should, to all intents and purposes, devise workable, sustainable, and inclusive policies and programmes to reach and effectively empower the small-scale food producers in Nigeria.

4.3. Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote the Well-being for all at all Ages (Goal 3)

The importance of universal health coverage and multisectoral coordination for health emergency preparedness in ensuring healthy lives and in promoting the well-being for all at all ages is evident. The improvements in maternal and child health, the increases in immunization coverage, and the reduction in communicable diseases have all been described as not fast enough to meet the 2030 Agenda. As a result, more efforts should be made to improve on the gains made so far. The health sector at all levels should be prepared all year round to handle the outbreak of such pandemics as COVID-19.

4.4. Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for all (Goal 4)

There is a need for the government to consciously increase the low levels of secondary school attendance. This will eventually increase the literacy and numeracy rates among youths. With only 1.6 per cent of GDP devoted to education, Nigeria needs to increase resources to provide quality education.

Increasing access to education without ensuring its high quality and standards will not improve learning. High-quality school inputs, including adequate infrastructure and teaching and learning materials, are important but in short supply all over the country. No single factor is as critical for learning as the quality of teachers. Many teachers do not have adequate content and pedagogy knowledge. Efforts should, therefore, be made by the different tiers of government in Nigeria, in partnership with the organized private sector, to improve the quality and quantity of teachers and infrastructure in the education sector.

It cannot be overemphasized that the key for both health and education is increased government funding. This increase can come about through the introduction of a

more effective taxation system.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020) observed that the government only spent approximately 12 per cent of its fiscal budget on education, while at least 20 per cent expenditure is required for it to meet its SDG targets in education, and well below the 26 per cent of the government budget recommended by UNESCO. A priority in scaling up inclusive physical and e-libraries in schools is advocated against the obvious challenges of infrastructure limitations for face-to-face participation in schools.

4.5. Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls (Goal 5)

The percentage of girls and women who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting remains high. Hence, at all levels of government, the mainstreaming of gender considerations as part of inclusive policy formulation and programme implementation should be a top priority.

4.6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation (Goal 6)

States in Nigeria experienced low levels of access to improved water on premises across the board. The Federal and State governments in Nigeria should fashion out sustainable, effective, integrated, and holistic approaches to water management in Nigeria.

4.7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all (Goal 7)

The first and second NVR on the SDGs had no data on Goal 7, and reports under this goal are based on literature that focused on global trends. This is a dramatic pointer to the need for complete and accurate data on the implementation of all the SDG goals.

Nigeria only manages to generate about 4,000 MW, which is sufficiently deficient for a country of over 200 million people. The issues for the suboptimal supply of electricity should be effectively addressed by the different levels of government and relevant stakeholders with 2030 in view.

4.8. Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all (Goal 8)

The Federal Government erroneously envisioned that with effective implementation of the ERGP, unemployment would drop and that net job creation would grow. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is a significant drawback, the ERGP encountered some bottlenecks that impeded smooth implementation and effectively detracted it from achieving the set objectives. The ERGP had too many goals, making the realization of the plan over-ambitious. For instance, the Government has prioritised social inclusion within the NERGP with such specific objectives as to sustain the Conditional Cash Transfer programme to reach 1 million of the poorest and most vulnerable households, as captured in the Social Register. The government also aims to upscale the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme to provide a meal a day to at least 6 million primary school children; expand the Market Money programme for women to strengthen the financial inclusion scheme and access to microfinance for market women. These programmes tended to be more of palliatives, remedial measures, and handouts than sustainable livelihood-enhancing and employment generation strategies. The programmes tend to encourage rent-seeking behaviour, including reduced economic efficiency, misallocation of resources, reduced wealth creation, and loss of government revenue. In effect, these programmes should be reviewed for effectiveness.

4.9. Building Resilient Infrastructure, Promoting Sustainable Industrialization, and Fostering Innovation (Goal 9)

Nigeria is still a net importer of the agricultural commodities it set out in the 2016 budget to achieve self-sufficiency in and become a net exporter of in the succeeding years, rather a net importer of these agricultural commodities. The electric power sector is operating below installed capacity.

It is evident that Nigeria's infrastructure is less than resilient; the policies and programmes to promote sustainable industrialization do not meet stipulated targets. With Agenda 2030 in view, these observed lapses should be addressed by the Federal Government in partnership with the other tiers of government and other relevant stakeholders.

4.10. Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Oceans, Seas, and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development (Goal 14)

This goal addresses the sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems and covers the conservation and protection of ocean and aquatic life. Because marine activities constitute a significant revenue source for Nigeria and efforts have been made over time in developing and managing the sector to ensure continuous benefits to the people, the Federal government and the other two tiers of governments in tow should now focus on assessing the effectiveness of the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.

4.11. Promotion of Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development (Goal 16)

Nigeria is facing moral dilemmas in relation to ethics and a prominent culture of bribery, corruption, and collusion. The view that there are no signs that SDG-16 will be achieved, even with optimized policies and an unlimited budget, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020), is quite instructive.

Ibaba (2021) stated that with the exception of the indicator for failed state, which measures the massive movement of refugees and IDPs, Nigeria has performed poorly and dangerously with regards to the other 11 indicators (Mounting Demographic Pressures; Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance; Chronic and Sustained Human Flight; Uneven Economic Development; Poverty, Sharp or Severe Economic Decline; Legitimacy of the State; Progressive Deterioration of Public Services; Violation of Human Rights With the exception of the indicator for failed state, which measures the massive movement of refugees and IDPs, Nigeria has performed poorly and dangerously with regards to the other 11 indicators (Mounting Demographic Pressures; Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance; Chronic and Sustained Human Flight; Uneven Economic Development; Poverty, Sharp or Severe Economic Decline; Legitimacy of the State; Progressive Deterioration of Public Services; Violation of Human Rights and Rule of Law; Security Apparatus; Rise of Factionalized Elites; and Intervention of International Actors). These call for policy interventions to steer the state away from failure.

Another critical issue that requires attention as part of efforts to rescue the state from failure to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development is corruption. According to Ibaba (2021), anti-corruption and ethical orientation are central to good governance for the promotion of the public good.

In proffering an answer to the question: Are the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) approach to fighting corruption adequate? Ibaba (2021) answered in the negative, adding that the EFCC and the ICPC place emphasis on the punishment of corrupt individuals as against mitigating the causes of the phenomenon.

The fight against corruption should adopt strategies similar to those used in the fight against COVID-19. Against the notion of corruption as a viral disease such as COVID-19, the fight should similarly adopt both preventive and control approaches. In the views of Ibaba (2021), efforts should be made to identify the modes of transmission and the mitigating factors.

4.12. Revitalize Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (Goal 17)

The great hope for strengthening Nigeria's economic growth is by making it globally competitive through an economy based on digital technologies. However, not all are able to access and use the internet. The cost of Internet access and Internet-connected devices, and the lack of related skills, are the highest barriers to access. To ensure no one is left behind, continued collective efforts are needed to connect the remaining 49 per cent of the world's population. A close collaboration among governments, policymakers, and network operators is required to bring them fully online.

4.13. Availability of Data in Tracking the Implementation of the SDGs

From the baseline report to the two Voluntary National Reports, data could not be captured for several indicators under some of the Goals. Furthermore, there were no reports under some goals in the two VNRs. As reported in relevant sections of this chapter, no narrative was entered under SDG 7 in the VNRs, the first VNR had no entries on Goal 8, and the second VNR had no information on Goals 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 15.

The tracking of the implementation of the SDGs is to all intents and purposes data-driven. It should be stated that Nigeria still faces the challenge of a weak data production and management system across the three tiers of government. In Nigeria's implementation of Agenda 2030, the three tiers of government should pay attention to the gathering of all data for effective implementation.

5. Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This section provides a summary of the discussion in the chapter and concludes with recommendations.

5.1. Summary

In spite of Nigeria's commitment to the SDGs, the country continues to lag behind in socio-economic development that targets the goals. The time-bound nature of the SDG goals therefore makes it imperative to refocus on the implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria with a view to keeping the dream of success on track. It is against this background that this chapter is written.

The paper, which is basically a review of reviews, draws from existing literature. The paper mainly relied on the 2017 National Voluntary Review (NVR), which incidentally was the first for the country, the 2020 NVR, which was the second for the country, and the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021, which is global in coverage, to present the strong and weak points in the SDGs implementation in Nigeria.

5.1.1. End Poverty in all its Forms Everywhere (Goal 1)

The Government of Nigeria has established institutional frameworks at the national and sub-national levels to support effective implementation of the SDGs as a direct response to address the state of endemic poverty. For instance, the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme provides targeted cash transfers to poor and vulnerable households with the final aim of lifting them out of poverty. In spite of the institutional frameworks, the GDP growth rate declined dramatically from an annual average of 7.2 per cent between 2000 and 2014 to 2.8 per cent in 2015 and -1.6 per cent in 2016; in 2017, it was 2.1 per cent and dropped to 1.8 percent in 2018, showing underlying weaknesses in the macroeconomic fundamentals. On average, Nigerians are getting poorer.

5.1.2. End Hunger, Achieve Food Security; Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture (Goal 2)

The prevalence of undernourishment was reflected in the fact that some 25.5 per cent of the population was lacking adequate and improved nutrition. Severe food insecurity within the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale, stood at 26.4 per cent.

5.1.3. Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote the Well-being for all at all Ages (Goal 3)

Nigeria's human development indices in the health sector remained abysmally low. A little progress was made in reducing the maternal mortality ratio between 2016 and 2018. If the progress is improved, then Nigeria will definitely achieve its target of 288 maternal deaths by 2022.

Many health indicators were moving in the right direction before the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. However, the pandemic has demonstrated the importance of universal health coverage and multisectoral coordination for health emergency preparedness.

5.1.4. Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for all (Goal 4)

There are tremendous gains to be made in primary school enrollment, as no African country has achieved universal primary education.

There were huge improvements in the access of the girl-child to formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, with 51% of females having access as compared to 49% of males. There was a positive increase in participation in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age) by girls in both private and public schools, and since 2015, the figure has more than doubled in private schools and tripled in public schools.

On account of the high youth unemployment rate in Nigeria, and with only 1.6 per cent of GDP devoted to education, the country needs to increase resources to provide quality education.

5.1.5. Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls (Goal 5)

Little progress has been made on gender inclusiveness, and the possibility of achieving the SDG targets by 2030 remains very low as long as deeply rooted values and social norms are not met by strong political will and serious commitment. The social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected progress towards gender equality. There is a need to re-shape and rebuild systems, laws, policies, and institutions to advance gender equality.

5.1.6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation (Goal 6)

States in Nigeria experience low levels of access to improved water on premises across the board. Piped water on premises was scarcely available throughout the country, except for a few minor pockets in Taraba, Jigawa, and Yobe States. A dramatic acceleration in current rates of progress and integrated and holistic approaches to water management are badly needed.

5.1.7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all (Goal 7)

Nigeria has the potential to generate 12,522 MW of electric power from existing plants but only manages to generate about 4,000 MW, which is sufficiently deficient for a country of over 200 million people. Accelerated action on modern renewable energy is needed, especially in the heating and transport sectors. The issues causing the suboptimal supply of electricity should be duly looked into by the different levels of government and relevant stakeholders with 2030 in view.

5.1.8. Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all (Goal 8)

Youths have a combined unemployment and under-employment rate of 55.4 per cent; with 38 per cent of the 15 to 24-year-olds not in education, employment, or training,

these young adults are not gaining the skills to enter the labour market or to become self-employed.

While most Nigerians work in the informal sector, there is very little job and income security in this sector, and the likelihood of transitioning out of poverty is low. Ensuring that youths are well-educated and able to transition to productive employment through the digital economy can reduce poverty (SDG-1) significantly.

5.1.9. Building Resilient Infrastructure, Promoting Sustainable Industrialization, and Fostering Innovation (Goal 9)

The Nigerian government has prioritised infrastructure development in its development agenda, as is evident in the 2016 and 2017 Appropriation laws. Small-scale enterprises still struggle with access to credit. In a post-pandemic world, access to finance will play an essential role in economic recovery. In terms of connectivity, the majority of the population is still unable to connect, either through rural roads or cyberspace.

5.1.10. Conservation and Sustainable use of the Oceans, Seas, and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development (Goal 14)

In terms of the global scenario on SDG 14, the United Nations (2021) stated that the implementation of international instruments to conserve and responsibly use ocean resources remained uneven and highlighted the need for increased support.

5.1.11. Promotion of Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development (Goal 16)

Nigeria has also been confronted with the challenge of the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast; the militancy in the Niger Delta; the Fulani herdsmen and farmers' crisis; as well as the kidnapping of persons for money and perceptions of corruption by public servants. The 2016 budget identified improved security and reduced corruption as among the priority areas for attention.

Illegal and secretive transfer of capital outside the country to evade tax (IFFs) were directly related to bribery, and they both related to the broader issue of corruption. While Africa loses about US\$50 to US\$60 billion every year to IFFs, Nigeria's contribution is estimated at 30 per cent of that loss. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2020), there are no signs that SDG-16 will be achieved, even with optimized policies and an unlimited budget.

5.1.12. Revitalize Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (Goal 17)

Nigeria only raises around 8.5 per cent of GDP in revenue, and debt service is only around 8 per cent of GDP. Government revenue needs to increase if it is to invest in education and health, among other things.

5.2. Conclusion

The Government of Nigeria has established institutional frameworks at the national and sub-national levels to support the effective implementation of the SDGs. In spite of these institutional frameworks, the GDP growth rate has exhibited a dramatic decline over the years on account of underlying weaknesses not only in the macroeconomic fundamentals but also in the inherent fragility of the institutions themselves. In effect, the average Nigerian is getting poorer by the minute.

None of the SDG goals can conveniently be described as firmly on track in Nigeria's march to the target 2030 date. Granted that the COVID-19 pandemic was a clog in the wheel of progress, most SDG indicators were on a reverse trajectory before the pandemic. On the basis of Nigeria's uneven implementation of the SDG agenda (recall that the country failed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, which had similar development aspirations), the expectation of hitting the SDG targets by 2030 will regrettably not materialise.

5.3. Recommendation

The following recommendations are made on the basis of the foregoing discussions:

Accurate data, citizen engagement, and rigorous monitoring and evaluation are identified as critical to setting Nigeria on the path to achieving the SDGs. This fact should not be lost on the three tiers of government and other relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation process of the SDGs.

The key to Nigeria's efforts at addressing poverty is to recognize the centrality of women in producing healthy children if they can do so when they choose, contributing to productive households if they have access to essential services, such as water and sanitation, and agricultural support. Overall, mainstreaming gender considerations in Nigeria's policy formulation should be a top priority.

The small-scale food producers constitute the majority of food producers in Nigeria; strengthening the resilience and adaptability of these small farmers is critical to reversing the trend towards rising hunger and reducing the share of people living in extreme poverty.

Because COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting disadvantaged groups, the pandemic has demonstrated the importance of universal health coverage and

multisectoral coordination for health emergency preparedness. This fact too should not be lost on the three tiers of government and other relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation process of the SDGs.

It should be noted that rural road connectivity provides farmers and their families easy access to markets, along with health and education facilities. This helps reduce poverty by elevating agricultural productivity, business profitability, and employment. This point speaks to the need for the provision of basic infrastructure to the populace.

Achieving the SDGs target by 2030 requires that concerted and prioritised efforts be made at creating the necessary enabling environment for domesticating the SDG goals, targets, and indicators through the annual budgets and development plans and programmes of the governments at the federal, state, and local levels. There is also the need to develop an SDGs information management system and an SDGs implementation and performance monitoring system.

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