

TRENDS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN NIGERIA: 1962 TO 2012.

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ABSTRACT

Development planning in Nigeria has suffered from lack of coordination and harmonization of programmes/policies both within the tenure of an administration and those succeeding it. In addition, experience show that this critical task which ought to draw input from critical sectors and be a bottom-up process operates in the reverse. These explain the very poor nature of plan articulation which also negatively affects implementation. The paper is subdivided into: Abstract; Introduction; Conceptual Discourse on Development Planning; History and Trend in Development Planning in Nigeria; Reasons for Development Planning failures in Nigeria; Conclusion and Recommendations. It concludes that the bad state of social and physical infrastructure, massive unemployment, widespread poverty and insecurity of lives among others, which successive development plans were targeted at, point to the dismal performance of development. planning initiatives in Nigeria. The paper recommends a multi-sector approach to planning and implementation of public sector programmes, and harmonization of planning initiatives in order to reduce the problems associated with plan implementation.

Keywords: Development, Planning, Infrastructure, Programmes, Implementation, Administration, Policies.

INTRODUCTION

Every responsible government is expected to draw comprehensive plans periodically through which the welfare of citizens can be enhanced socially, economically and politically among others. In developed countries, the goal of such plans could be to facilitate growth in the above mentioned spheres of life, while in developing countries; the plans are targeted at economic development.

Contemporary studies/findings seem to be broadening the meaning of the concepts of growth and development or doing a total overhaul and redefinition of these concepts. The definition of development tends to be moving away from economic indicators (of increase in GDP, GNP, per capita income and others) to non-economic indices such as the democratic imperatives of political governance and social indicators (Jhingan, 2007:5-12). This also explains why Sen (1999) visualized development from the ends and means of freedoms. Sen conceives freedom as a primary end and principal means of development. This, he referred to as the constitutive and instrumental roles of freedom. The next section discusses the concept and rationale for development planning in developing countries with Nigeria as the focus.

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE

Attempts at defining the concept of “development planning” have not been easy. This is due mainly to the problems of semantics as well as the divergent philosophical and ideological orientations of writers and scholars either as academics or practitioners. This view was corroborated by Jhingan (2007:488) who alluded to the very loose use of the term in economic literature. He averred further that “it is often confused with communism, socialism or economic development”. It has also been used synonymously with the term “national development master plan” which Daggash (2008) viewed as “a long term integrated comprehensive national plan of actions: that indicates the trajectory of national growth and development”. Dalton in Jhingan (2007:489) referred to the term in the widest sense as “the deliberate direction by persons in charge of large resources of economic activity towards chosen ends”. It has also been conceptualized as consisting “in the extension of the functions of public authorities to organization and utilization of economic resources...Planning implies and leads to centralization of the national economy” (Zweig in Jhingan, 2007:489). It is deductible from these that the responsibility for development planning rests squarely on the central government through its officials in order to achieve definite targets and objectives within a specific period of time. In like manner, Egonmwan and Ibodje (2001:52-53) posited that development planning entails “a consciously directed activity with pre-determined goals and predetermined means to achieve the set goals”. They averred further that “it provides the rallying point for social and political mobilization whereby the society is able to set development objectives and goals, map out strategies and programmes for the attainment of such goals and mobilize resources for their attainment”.

Why is development planning so important to every responsible government especially in the developing economies? Planning emanates from scarce resources in comparison to the demand for same. Planning is thus seen as a strategy for the allocation/utilization of resources to improve the standard of living of the citizens. Planning therefore entails the prioritization of resources in order to meet desired ends. Another objective of planning in the “foot hill countries” (Mckinsey’s ranking implying backward economies) is to increase the rate of economic development through capital

formation which results from raising income, saving and investment levels. The capacity and propensity to save in these poor economies has been identified as abysmally low leading to a vicious circle of poverty which can only be broken through planned development. Another rationale for planning includes strengthening market mechanism by removing market imperfections, determining the amount and composition of investment and overcoming structural rigidities in the economy. The phenomena of endemic unemployment and disguised unemployment characteristic of the poor economies are reversible through central development planning that releases surplus labour from agriculture to industry. With respect to Nigeria however, this view of surplus labour in agriculture is suspect and contestable in the light of massive graduate unemployment and the rapid urbanization of the country from the oil-boom years (of early 1970s). It is in the light of the foregoing that development planning entails “direction, regulations, controls on private activity and increasing the sphere of public activity” (Jhingan, 2007:492).

Aboyade (1983) in Onah (2006:51) argued that for development planning to be a meaningful and serious-minded exercise, “it must contain an analysis of the economy’s recent development past, an evaluation of its probable development trend over the future years to be spanned by the plan, and some indication of the nation’s natural, physical, human and financial resources”. He posited further that development planning construed as continuous (on going) process, must be seen as “a means to an end and not an end in itself”. It needs to be noted that the formulation and execution of a successful development plan require these factors: Efficient and well manned planning commission; Adequate and reliable statistical data for analysis and projections; Clearly articulated and realistic objectives indicating targets and priorities; Effective mobilization of resources for plan implementation; Plan balancing achievable through input –output technique and cost-benefit/result analysis; Transparent, incorruptible and efficient administration (competent public bureaucracy) in formulating and executing plans; A proper development policy covering the entire gamut of the plan in order to avert pitfalls in the development process; Economy in administration aimed at curtailing duplication in bureaucratic settings/activities and to derive maximum benefits in public or government budget and expenditure; An education base that produces an efficient and effective human capital for development purposes; A theory of consumption that is democratic and emphasizes consumption patterns commensurate with income and not copying developed or Western countries consumption patterns; and public cooperation/support for the plan.

To what extent has the Nigerian development planning efforts embraced or incorporated the aforementioned factors? The next section of this paper on the History and trend in development planning in Nigeria will attempt to answer the question.

HISTORY AND TREND IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN NIGERIA

PREAMBLE

There is unanimity in documentation among writers and scholars that the first attempt at development planning in Nigeria started in 1946 with a ten year plan of Development and Welfare (Okoli, 2004:160; Obikeze and Obi, 2004:232; Ugwu, 2009:201). It is also on record that this plan which was expected to run till 1956 came to an abrupt end in 1951 due to the constitutional changes that introduced federalism, thus the plan ran concomitantly with “other plans for each of the then four regions of the federation viz: the West, East, North and the Southern Cameroons” (Okoli, 2004:161). The plan was stymied

due to limited financial resources; serious weaknesses in the public policy making process and non-consultation with Nigerians as beneficiaries of the plan.

The 1951-56 plan which followed was meant to last for five years, however the 1954 Lyttleton Constitution made Nigeria “a real federal system” and the bitter struggles for dominance among nationalist leaders which resulted in the 1953 Kano riots led to the scrapping of the plan that year. Obikeze and Obi (2004:232) reported that this plan was not particularly different from the original one. In view of the above developments, the 1956-62 plan was introduced. However, political events unfolded dramatically, rapid reversals of earlier political stand led to the Northern members of parliament demanding self-government “as soon as practicable”. This was an aftermath of the Action Group (AG) sponsored motion seeking self-government for Nigeria in 1956; hence independence came (earlier than expected) in 1960. There was a compelling need to draw a Development Plan reflecting the independent status of Nigeria. And as Okoli (2004:162) recorded, “the new status made the 1956-62 Development plan anachronistic”.

FIRST NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The First National Development Plan (1962-68) aimed at, and required cooperation between public and private sectors, and as expected between federal and regional governments. It also aimed at high level or rate of development which was expected to supersede the colonial plans before it, hence it required a realistic study of the financial stands of both public and private sectors. It aimed at avoiding any Balance of Payments (BOP) crises; thus past plans were studied in order to project for the future. This plan equally emphasized agricultural; industrial; transport and manpower development. Other objectives of the first National Development Plan included the achievement and maintenance of the highest possible rate of increase in the standard of living of the populace. It also aimed at a target saving of about 15 percent of the GDP by 1975; an annual investment of 15% of the GDP during the plan period; a GDP minimum growth rate of 4% for the economy. And as reported by Obiekeze and Obi (2004:234), the plan which was expected to last for six years had a proposed total investment expenditure of about **N2, 132** million. The public sector investment expenditure was put at **N1, 352.3** million and the remaining investment expenditure of **N780** million was to be made by the private sector. However, the subsequent crises culminating in the thirty-month Nigerian Civil War (1967-70) punctuated the implementation of this plan.

Apart from this, Osifo-Whiskey (1987) quoted Okigbo thus: “In it (1962-68 plan) each region’s list of programmes is like the others. There was no attempt, at the centre, to plan the development centrally so that each region could optimise...in a truly national economy”. The plan was not national, it rested disproportionately on public sector contributions, it conceived the role of the private sector as marginal, thus it failed to harness the private sector’s contribution to national development. However, many industries were established and the contribution of industrial sector to GDP rose from 5% in 1960 to 8% in 1970.

SECOND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Second National Plan (1970-74) can be referred to as “Oil-boom development plan” because it coincided with the period that Nigeria made high earnings from the sale of crude oil and allied products. Having emerged from a devastating civil war and with lessons to learn, the plan had the following objectives as captured by Ujo in Ugwu (2009:201-202):

- The reconstruction of facilities damaged by the war or fallen in despair.
- The rehabilitation and resettlement of persons displaced by the war.
- The rehabilitation and resettlement of demobilized armed forces personnel
- The establishment of an efficient administrative service, and an appropriate economic infrastructure, especially in the new states.
- The achievement of a rate of growth of per capita output sufficiently high to bring about a doubling of real income per head before 1985.
- Creation of job opportunities
- The production of high level of intermediate manpower
- The promotion of balanced development between the urban and rural areas
- The rapid improvement in the level and quality of social services provided for the welfare of the people.

The plan also had some lofty heights to attain such as building a united, strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy; a just and egalitarian society; a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and a free and democratic society.

Egonmwan and Ibodje (2001:54) reported that this plan “involved a capital expenditure of N3.2 billion and an anticipated overall growth rate of 7% per annum”. Resulting from the profligacy that characterized the oil-boom period, the initial plan budget of N3.2 billion was revised upwards to N5.3 billion which as Osifo Whiskey (1987) posited”... was little compared to third...” It can therefore be persuasively argued that the Nigerian governing elite started the march towards economic regression from this period as a result of fiscal and financial indiscipline. Again, during this (1970-74) plan period, Nigerians were expected to fully participate in private sector which witnessed the enactment in 1972 of the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree (which was to Nigerianise certain companies and increase Nigerian participation from 40% to 60% ownership). Full foreign investments were discouraged as the central government bought shares in major commercial houses like the banks and insurance companies. However, Ezekiel (1987:39, 41) adds that a comprehensive review of the 1972 Indigenisation Decree took place, its provisions and others were consolidated into Decree No. 3 of 1977 which came up with three schedules, instead of the two under the 1972 decree. Ezekiel (1987) averred further that “it was discovered that the decree, rather than transfer ownership and control to Nigerians, succeeded in subjugating them”.

On thorough analysis and scrutiny, Nigeria’s economic governance requires complete diagnosis and surgery. Financial indiscipline, sundry mismanagement of resources and planning inadequacies made a country that embarked on indigenizing enterprises in 1972 through 1977 to commence privatization and commercialization of those enterprises in less than twenty years as a result of conditionalities from the Bretton Wood institutions. The country seems to have remained a pawn in the

chess game of these capitalist nations and their institutions. Notwithstanding that the Second National Development plan had to be extended by one year to end in 1975 due to “its implementation which proved cumbersome for the bureaucrats”, Okoli (2004:163) affirmed that “this plan very nearly succeeded where others failed in running its full course under one regime”. He therefore canvassed for short-term (duration) plans.

THIRD NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Third (1975-80) National development plan also fell within the ‘oil-boom’ years, and in that era was seen as the largest and the most ambitious ever launched (compared to the ones that preceded it). The national purposes stated in the Second National Development plan were reaffirmed as they can be said to be long term in nature. The objectives include: Increase in per capita income; even distribution of income; reduction in the level of unemployment; increasing the supply of high level manpower, diversification of the economy; balanced development and indigenization of economic activities. The “initial total expenditure for this plan was put at N30 billion over five years. Further adjustments put the total at N60 billion in 1980” (Osifo-Whiskey, 1987:33).

The above stated objectives therefore enlisted the following:

- Research in agriculture on both food and cash crops for domestic feeding and export, and raw materials for local industries;
- Research and development on livestock and veterinary;
- Special agricultural development schemes;
- Reviewing the credit requirement of Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB);
- Installation and building of terminal plants and stations;
- Rural electrification
- Development of some inland waterways on river Niger and Benue;
- Universal free primary education;
- Construction of 60,000 dwelling units in various locations in the country.

Inherent in the objectives of this plan was its incremental posture or seeming similarity with the preceding plan. The intention of this plan was to curb inflationary trends and it suggested the country’s attainment of a high development level. The search for a wider market which might be incidental to this plan witnessed the formation of ECOWAS as a sure strategy. Nigeria spearheaded the building of the \$27 million secretariat at Abuja, in addition to other contributions and activities in ECOWAS. As part of the convergence criteria to accelerating a durable monetary union and ultimately regional integration, Nigeria is expected to harmonize its fiscal, economic and legal policies (among others) with those of other member states (for details, see Onah and Ibieta, 2009:17-32).

In a review of the Third National Development Plan, Onah (2006:57) building on Okigbo (1989) submitted that “agriculture and social development schemes (education, housing, health, welfare etc) that have direct bearing on the living conditions of the rural population (constituting about 70% of Nigerian population) received only 5 percent and 11.5 percent respectively of

the financial allocations contained in the plan”. These lean financial allocation to priority areas of the plan reflected “lack of focus of the planners”.

The Third National Development Plan however achieved the following: GDP grew at an average rate of 5% per annum; the manufacturing sector recorded the fastest growth with an average of 18.1% per annum; building and construction grew at 13.9%; Government services leaped at 17.7% and other services grew at 15.7%. However, the agricultural sector recorded a negative growth of 2.1% per annum (Egonmwan and Ibodje, 2001:58). These authors noted that “most of the key projects that were anticipated as foundation for self sustaining and dynamic growth were either not completed or could not take off”. Examples of the projects included Ajaokuta Iron and Steel Complex; Aladja Direct Steel Reduction Plant; The Eleme Petrochemical Complex; Oku-Iboku Newsprint Paper Mill; and the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) plant at Bonny.

FOURTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Fourth (1981-85) National Development Plan like the ones before it reaffirmed the long term national objectives of the preceding plan. Ijaiya and Usman (2000:2) corroborated that this “was also launched simply to consolidate the Third National Development Plan... with much more commitment to petroleum resources”. The industrial policy objectives of this plan were: promotion of export oriented industries; enhancement of local value-added through the development of small and medium scale industries; local sourcing of inputs; improving the efficiency of government owned enterprises and acquisition of technological skills. Other broad objectives included: increasing real income for all Nigerians; reduction in unemployment; power generation and supply; refinancing and rescheduling the trade debts to pave way for international transactions for only selected import; increasing food production and raw material to meet the needs of the growing population; increasing the production of livestock and fish to meet domestic need and to make surplus for export; development of technology for greater self reliance; and to increase or strengthen the country’s foreign exchange earnings.

The total investment envisaged under this plan was N82 billion. Out of this amount, the public sector was to account for N70.5 billion, while the share of the private sector stood at N11.5 billion. The planned investment was expected to generate an annual GDP growth of 7.2%. The manufacturing sector had a projected average growth rate of 15% for the plan period. The rate of growth was supposed to make a significant increase in the standard of living of the average citizen at the end of the plan period. Egonmwan and Ibodje (2001:58) emphasized that “out of all the plans that had been launched since independence, the Fourth plan which was the most ambitious in terms of size of the anticipated investment programme turned out to be the least successful in terms of achievement”.

The Fourth national development plan was characterized by huge debt servicing which resulted from various foreign loans obtained in the previous years; increased import bills amidst a drastic fall in crude oil export revenue. These factors no doubt limited the scope of the objectives. This plan being the first to be drawn under presidential democracy appeared unique in the sense that it elicited the participation of local governments.

The performance of this plan as economic indicators/indices showed, revealed negative growth in major sectors of the economy in 1985 and other dismal results, however its achievements included the commissioning of the Oku Iboku Newsprint paper project; Egbin Power station; Akure Airport; 87 telephone exchanges all over Nigeria, and an increase in subscriber base from 188,000 in 1981 to 297,000 in 1985; increase in educational enrolment at all levels; improvement in health care delivery; construction of thousands of kilometers of federal highways and rehabilitation/reconstruction of state roads; implementation of Agricultural Development Programme (ADPs) in seventeen out of the nineteen states in the federation; and others captured by Onah (2006:58-60) and Egonmwan and Ibodje (2001:58-60). Conclusively on this note, the full expectations of the citizenry were far from being met.

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES: STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMME

Obikeze and Obi (2004:242) attempted to articulate their discourse on Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) under the caption of “Fifth National Development Plan”; Onah (2006:44) submitted with finality that “the idea of a Fifth National Development Plan, mooted in the late 1980, never materialized”. The launch of the purported plan was postponed twice in a row in 1987 and 1988. Instead of the plan were series of Integrated Development Initiatives which Okoli and Onah (2002:163) referred to as rural development strategies such as Agricultural Development Scheme; National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP); and Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI).

The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced on 26 September 1986 with the following objectives: To restructure and diversify the productive base of the economy in order to reduce dependence on the oil sector and on imports; to achieve fiscal and balance of payments viability over the period; to lay the basis for a sustainable non-inflationary growth; and to reduce the dominance of unproductive investments in the public sector by improving public sector efficiency and enhancing the growth potential of the private sector.

Osifo-Whiskey (1993:15) affirmed that SAP rested on a number of pillars namely: deregulation of the value of the naira which was said to be over-valued; deregulation of interest rate which at SAP’s inception was below 10 percent; removal of subsidies on government-provided goods and services. A corollary of the last pillar is the policy of privatization and commercialization which was considered necessary on the dual account that government was already over-bloated and unwieldy, and that by extension, its public enterprises and agencies were wasteful and inefficient.

A review of SAP showed that initially, it appeared that the programme was achieving its goals as it seemed to have eliminated the corrupt import license system which crippled the manufacturing sector to a reduced performance of 25 percent; stimulated an initial rise in industrial production; and led to minimal starts in the exportation of agricultural produce. With survey research tool of interview and secondary sources of data, Osifo-Whiskey (1993:15) reported that from a parity of one dollar to one naira in early 1986, the naira crashed at N9.50k to a dollar on March 5, 1992 and succumbed (almost by another 100 percent) to the dollar at N18.60k at the commencement of trading that same day. By early 1993, a dollar traded for N43.00 in the black market and since then, nothing had remained the same again in the economy, with the dollar trading for almost N150.00 today. With the deregulation of interest rates, a regime of interest rates as high as 45 to 50 percent was

ushered in, this grossly affected sourcing loans and doing business with financial institutions, the manufacturing and other sectors could not survive, the economy was wobbling, unemployment and poverty rates increased as a result of this policy option.

ROLLING PLANS (1990-1999) AND VISION 2010

After SAP, Nigeria resorted to the use of (ad-hoc) short-term instruments for economic management and as Daggash (2008:35) asserted, the era of Rolling Plans (1990-1999) which he derisively tagged an era of “the Rolling stones that gathered no moss”. He added that in a bid “to have a long term National Vision on which development could be anchored, a bold attempt was made in 1996 to articulate a National vision document, the Nigeria Vision 2010”. This development effort had the vision of transforming the Nigerian Nation by 2010 into “ a united, industrious, caring and God-fearing democratic society, committed to making the basic needs of life affordable for everyone, and creating Africa’s leading economy” (Ugwu, 2009:203). The vision was to be achieved using a multi-tier medium term plans that are anchored on a fifteen year perspective plan. The Rolling plans and Vision 2010 became unfortunately stillborn arising from what Egonmwan and Ibodje (2001:64) captured as “the linkage between Vision 2010, the national Rolling plan and the annual budget seems not clear”.

Under normal planning circumstances, the annual budget as the annual operational plan is expected to be linked with the rolling plan, because the annual plan is the controlling plan which matches resources with possible achievements. A rolling plan on a continuous basis takes into account new information, improved data and analysis, and incorporates periodic revision into the planning machinery. Each revision takes a look at the future which is determined by the nature of factual circumstances. Expectedly, a rolling plan contains a plan for the current year which includes the annual budget and foreign exchange budget; a medium term plan (for 3 to 5 years) which can be changed yearly in line with the requirements of the economy; and a perspective plan (for between 10-20 years) which presents yearly (broad) goals and an outline of forecasts for future development. In essence, the annual plan is fitted into the same year’s medium term plan, and both are framed in light of the perspective plan. Rolling plans help overcome the rigidities of the fixed five year plans.

The vision 2010 called for an urgent developmental paradigm shift and placed a duty on Nigerians attitudinally in order to realize the targets/goals. It is doubtful if conscious efforts were made to disseminate these requirements to a wide spectrum of the populace, and this has continued to be a noticeable snag in policy formulation with its attendant effects on implementation and development initiatives.

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) offered Nigeria an opportunity to experiment with medium-term economic development plan from 2004 to 2007. Onah (2006:46) posited that NEEDS focused “on wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and re-orientating values”. These goals, he corroborated can be realized “by creating an environment in which business can thrive, government is redirected to providing basic services, and people are empowered to take advantage of the opportunities which the plan will usher”. The strategies that will drive the above

goals are: reforming government and its institutions; growing the private sector; implementing a social character and value; reorientation. The federal government had in turn encouraged States and Local Governments to adopt and adapt the NEEDS document to suit its peculiar purposes, accordingly the equivalent of NEEDS in the states are called SEEDS, while in the local governments, they go by the acronym LEEDS. In giving practical expression to the NEEDS programme, the federal government was reported to have allocated large percentage of capital expenditure to healthcare, education, agriculture, roads, water resources, power and security in the 2004 and 2005 annual budgets. With the usual allegation of unspent funds being returned at the end of the year by Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government coupled with the monster of pervasive corruption, allocating large percentage in budgets does not translate to faithful execution of programmes capable of delivering services to the citizenry.

VISION 2020 AS DEVELOPMENT PLANNING INITIATIVE

As a development planning initiative, Vision 2020 aims at growing the size of Nigeria's economy from its current position of the 41st to the 20th best economy in the world by the year 2020, and to be the African financial centre of choice by that same year (Ugwu, 2009:204). This programme is a carry over by the Yar'adua administration from the Obasanjo civilian administration. It is said to be based on a proactive reaction to a 2001 Jim 'O' Neil thesis predicting "that if Nigeria and some other developing countries, can mobilize their resources very well, it is expected that by the year 2025, Nigeria and countries like Egypt would have joined the biggest twenty economies in the world". (Ugwu, 2009:205).

It is expected that with positive economic management in countries like Nigeria, GDP growth for Nigeria will be larger than that of Italy by 2015 and by this same Jim Neil's (2007) calculation, Nigeria's economy would have been equal to the present first 20 economies of the world namely: Canada, Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Denmark, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Australia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brazil (Ugwu, 2009:205). Building on Oyeboode (2007) and Iluyomade (2008), Ugwu (2009) noted that some the benchmarks used in this statistics are the economic indices of growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross National Product (GNP). Curiously, Ugwu (2009) reported that Vision 2020 lacks properly outlined objectives, except for policy statements coming from some federal government officials. Daggash (2008) who incidentally was Minister/Deputy Chairman of Nigeria's National Planning Commission averred that Vision 2020 has clear goals "which...include engendering peaceful, harmonious and a stable democracy by FY 2020; sustenance of a sound, stable and globally competitive economy with a GDP of not less than \$900 billion and per capita GDP of over \$4000". Other goals include provision of infrastructure services; a modern and vibrant education system; health sector that supports and sustains a life expectancy of not less than 70 years; modern technologically enabled agricultural sector; vibrant and globally competitive manufacturing sector with contribution to GDP of not less than 40%. Conclusively, Daggash said that the goals are achievable through the Cooperation and collaboration of all stakeholders. The stakeholders including the Nigerian masses may not have been carried along in the planning process, yet their collaboration/cooperation are required, what a joke?

The Nigerian government had proceeded to create National Council on Vision 2020 (NCV 2020) to provide leadership and direction towards the attainment of the goals. The President is the chairman of this organ. National Steering Committee

(NSC) made up of seventy persons drawn from the public and private sectors to develop implementation guidelines, monitoring and evaluation strategy; and developing a template for preparing the Vision 2020 strategic plan among others. National Technical Working Group (NTWG) comprising a group of about 25 experts to undertake specific studies or research data. Stakeholders Development Committee (SDC) made up essentially of government related institutions and agencies to assist in mobilizing bottom-up strategic plans and ideas, based on guidelines approved by the National Council, to be fed into the NV2020 plan.

The foundation upon which this plan was based portrays our planners as a group without direction. How can a National Development Master Plan be based on an “untested thesis” or at best a hypothesis of a foreign economist? Out of the twenty countries listed that Nigeria would purportedly compete with, which among them appear planless and unserious to enable Nigeria displace her by 2020? In addition, the age-old and contested economic indices/indicators of development fabricated/crafted by the Bretton Woods are thrown up as parameters. The Vision 2020 also follow the path of other plans by presenting areas/issues to be covered in an omnibus manner without breaking it down into phases. The thesis or hypothesis of Neil is also based on the assumption of prudent economic management which has been lacking in Nigeria for a long time.

OTHER PROGRAMMES

The Yar’adua administration had presented a Seven-Point Agenda to include tackling the problems of: Power and Energy; Food Security and Agriculture; Wealth Creation and Employment; Transport Sector; Land Reforms; Security; Education. These are supposed to be running alongside with the Nigerian version of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by 2015; achieving universal primary Education by 2015; reducing child mortality by two-third by 2015; improving maternal health by 2015; combating HIV/AIDs, malaria and other preventable diseases by 2015; ensuring environmental sustainability between 2015 and 2020; and developing a global partnership for development by 2015.

The Yar’adua Seven-Point agenda does not look coordinated and appear more of an administration’s mantra with more talk and less action, and on virtually all points of the agenda cannot deliver qualitative services to Nigeria with a minimum of one year to the terminal date of the administration. The MDGs are more like “goals from outside”, even though some of them are achievable, the programme does not deserve any rigorous discourse under Nigeria’s development planning initiative.

REASONS FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FAILURES IN NIGERIA

Various arguments have been adduced for the failure of development planning in Nigeria from 1962 to date. One of such arguments is that development plans appear compatible with Western notion of development. Ake (1981) in Onah (2006:60) averred that “development plans and development initiatives did not encourage the disengagement of Nigerian economy from the exploitative structural links with Western capitalist economies”. This argument of disengaging from Western notion of development was corroborated by Munroe (1992:148) thus: “this standard of measuring success is the source of much Third World frustration as nations... This success trap will not bring true fulfillment or freedom, but greater bondage”.

As a corollary of the above, it has also been argued that the pattern of development in Nigeria creates social problems of hunger, mass unemployment and social inequalities. Another factor is the idea of conceiving development planning as a “big push strategy” which attempts to do everything in one plan. This hampers development efforts as resources are overstretched and little or nothing is achieved in the process. Furthermore, Institutional/structural inconsistencies and discontinuity have been adduced as explanatory factors in plan failures. Governments are scored high on promises, but lacking in delivery and succeeding governments are not committed enough in continuing and completing plans/programmes of their predecessors. This explains what Okoli and Onah (2002) referred to as the high turnover of development plans and littering the nation with uncompleted projects.

Yet another factor is financial constraints: Although development plans are generally financed through multiple sources like domestic taxation; other sources of internally generated revenue; external reserves; private (domestic) sources and loans, it has been argued that these are not always adequate to fund plans. And to that extent, finance is a major explanatory factor in the failure of development planning initiatives and efforts. Other factors include: Inadequacy of professional planners due to institutionalized framework for planning; Plan indiscipline and unnecessary partisanship; poor or inadequate feasibility studies in planning; lack of comprehensive statistics; Erratic and conflicting government policies manifesting in contradictions in areas of planning; lack of essential inter-ministerial and inter disciplinary coordinating machinery; lack of proper project monitoring and revision of plans; Abuse of office/corruption by public officials; High inflationary rate and geometric growth in population defeating the essence of economic forecasting in plan formulation and implementation; and political instability during military regimes created uncertainty and retarded various projects articulated in development plans.

CONCLUSION

The quest for development in most countries characterized as least developed countries, Nigeria inclusive has occupied the front burner in most national discourses. Successive governments have indicated desire to transform the country be it in terms of provision of infrastructure, human capacity development and even in the realm of social cum political development. In this wise, Nigeria has experimented with several development plans from pre-independence era till date, yet the needed Transformation has continued to elude its citizenry inspite of the robust plans. It is with a view to putting issues in perspective, that the present paper succinctly attempts a conceptual discourse of Nigeria’s development planning experience cum development initiatives from 1962 till date.

In this wise, the efforts at implementation of development by various administrations were analysed and can be generally rated as fair when results are compared with plan goals and objectives. Support for this assertion lies in the fact that the Nigerian state is characterized by widespread poverty; massive unemployment; social and physical infrastructural decay; hunger/food insecurity; illiteracy; low-capacity utilization; neglect of rural areas; insecurity of lives; Urban Congestion and other problems that several development plans were targeted at. Yet the problems remain unabated. Also glaring, is the dependent character (consciously or otherwise) of the Nigerian state and successive governing elites who constitute appendages of Western countries and international finance institutions. As a corollary, the poor quality of leadership has

manifested in very tragic results for development planning initiatives in Nigeria. Given this situation, development in Nigeria has become somewhat elusive inspite of the fact that the country is blessed with abundant material and human resources. In order to reverse, the trend, it is the contention of these writers, that development policy somersault and proliferation of development plans will do the country no good. It is further opined that a conscious and disciplined approach to plan implementation protected from political manipulation and undue interference is the desired antidote that could bring about the much needed quest for a people-oriented development agenda. that will meet the needs and aspirations of Nigeria in tune with the millennium development goals. In this respect, certain specific recommendations are proffered if the expected development desires of the citizenry are to be met within the shortest time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper strongly recommends a multi-sector approach to planning and implementation of public sector programmes and policies. Through this, the disconnection between planners and plan beneficiaries can be bridged. Harmonization of development programmes and initiatives is also seriously advocated to enable plans operate as a whole rather than isolated and scattered ideas which make implementation a herculean task.

The paper canvasses massive re-training and attitudinal re-orientation for the leadership and governing elites of the country. This will make them imbibe the requisite skills and traits in effective governance, and it has the potential of arresting the phenomenon of poor leadership that has been confronting the country. The necessary political will required of the leadership to enable them galvanize plan implementation and actualise set goals is also recommended.

The machineries/institutions for gathering data for planning require strengthening or total overhaul. A weak data base presents an unrealistic plan, therefore efforts should be made to enhance data accuracy and reliability through effective instruments and personnel. Also, membership of the Joint Planning Board needs to be broadened to include civil society groups and other sectors in order to widen representation and obtain comprehensive input for plan formulation and implementation.

Further more, this paper advocates that the requisite Inter-ministerial/departmental and agencies coordinating machinery be strengthened for effective plan monitoring, evaluation of policies and implementation of programmes. In addition the Anti-graft war should be pursued with vigour and without selection. This has the potency of exposing corrupt public office holders and ensuring that justice is not only done, but seen to be upheld, thus serving as deterrent to potential offenders. This can assist in redressing the elite role or complicity in resource mismanagement and corruption in the country.

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