

Challenges and Prospects of Nigeria's Development at 50

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by

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Abstract

This discussion which is structured in three parts: history, challenges and prospects, examines the dialectics of the development of Nigeria since 1914, the year of the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates of Nigeria into a British colony. The analysis, inadvertently, exhibits both negative and positive traits as they are highlighted. The failure of the Nigerian state to optimally develop its resources and the resultant manifestations of maldevelopment in the country in the new millennium are examined. Fifteen critical concerns of development need are presented with a corresponding ten point development plan to address them.

History

Several African countries are celebrating their 50 years of independence from colonial rule this year. We can count 16: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia and Togo (Chung, 2010). However, no other country may elicit the sort of interest that will be accorded to Nigeria, during what is termed the golden jubilee celebration. This is not because of the earlier squabbling over the cost of the ceremonies, but perhaps due to the sheer size of Nigeria in terms of population or human and material resources, as Africa's most populous country and containing many of the resources found in other African countries. At independence on the first of October in 1960, there was great expectation of the emergence of a great modern state in Africa called Nigeria.

It is therefore quite appropriate and even imperative to assess the journey of this country so far, as it celebrates 50 years of political independence and also look at the challenges and prospects of development after five decades.

A historical and political economy approach has been employed for this analysis, mainly because it helps in periodization of developments but perhaps more because it enhances a comparative approach that also enables bench-marking and performance evaluation concerning critical development indicators and possibilities.

The idea of assessment of success is very important, just as the comparative approach, within the African continent, among states in the developing countries and with the rest of the world. In the era of globalism, the interconnectedness of the world presupposes that if you are not looking at the corner of your world from the perspective of globalization, you can at least look at it from the framework of glocalization.

Also, in terms of political economy, there are those critical scholars who would even suggest that it does not need to be separated from history. In aligning with this epistemological tradition, therefore, this paper will discuss Nigeria's development challenges and prospects from a critical social analytical political economy approach.

This will also, hopefully, establish the imperialist and post-imperialist contexts (probably different phases of globalization) of understanding the issues. Based on oral tradition, written sources, archaeology, geographical materials, ethnographic materials or linguistic materials, it has been established that the earliest contacts between the present area of Nigeria and the rest of the world may have commenced around the seventh century.

This was due the trans-Saharan trade between the northern parts of Nigeria and the western Sudan, Sahara, North Africa, Europe, the Nile Valley including Egypt and the Middle East. This commercial intercourse was to later receive augmentation with the spread of Islam, especially in the Chad Basin. This would result in the conversion of Humai, the King of Kanem, herald the conscious development of Islam in the kingdoms in the region, including Hausa land right to the end of the 18th century. (Falola et al, 1999). The trans-Saharan trade fuelled by Islam became a prominent feature of the political economy of northern Nigeria, based also on some concomitant factors:

“The most important of these factors were the introduction of camel (sic) to North Africa, the increases in demand for gold in Muslim countries and Europe, the role of Islam, the emergence of centralized state systems in the Nigeria area and other parts of West Africa, the Islamization of their rulers and the performance of annual pilgrimages by, especially, the rulers and the subsequent diplomatic activities which issued from them.” (Falola et al, 1999 :58).

Along the coast, the Portuguese were the first international (European) visitors, having made contact with the Ijaws or Izon or Ijo as early as the 15th

century and initiated the procurement of slaves. Benin historians reported that one Joao Affonso d' Aviro, a Portuguese national, was the first European to visit a Nigerian town. His 1486 visit to Benin was a herald to what would come to significantly shape the future of what emerged as the modern state of Nigeria (Falola et al. , 1999).

With a combination of interests-mercantilist, colonial acquisition and missionary work, the Europeans would come to substantially determine the history of the peoples of present day Nigeria. According to some of the most authoritative historians on Nigeria, the country was a creation of European ambitions and rivalries in West Africa as part of the “scramble for Africa” leading to its partition. In the area of Nigeria, the contestants were mainly the British, French, German and Portuguese. And it was created within territory that once had great kingdoms and states like the Kanem–Borno, the Sokoto Caliphate, Ife, Benin, the Oyo Empire, city states of the Niger Delta and civilizations like those of Aro or the Igbo Ukwu and Nok (Falola et. al. , 1999; Crowder, 1965). The conquest of Nigeria, Crowder has added, was effected through three centres of British interest in the territory: one, trading in Lagos; two, competition for palm oil in the Niger Delta; and three, trade in the hinterland through the River Niger.

Tamuno (1984) has affirmed that from 1899, that is after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, the British sought to establish and control a colonial state by removing all African opposition to this project. By 1914, Britain had become the paramount ruler of most of Nigeria, with the exception of pockets of resistance from Egbaland, Igbo and Tiv areas.

This historical sketch cannot be complete without recognizing the role of explorers, traders, missionaries and colonial administrators. Of these, George Goldie and Frederick Lugard, stand out. The former for expediting trade in the area of Nigeria under the United Africa Company (UAC), later Royal Niger Company (RNC), and the latter for consolidating colonial conquest. The important explorers were Mungo Park, the trio of Walter Dudley, Dixon Denham and Hugh Clapperton. There was another trio of James Richardson,

Adolf Overweg and Heinrich Barth, and the Lander brothers, John and Richard. Much of the colonial history of Nigeria between 1914 to 1960 was social and political engineering to advance British interests, contain the “natives” and engage the nationalist movement which would compel independence in 1960.

British colonial administration was based mainly on indirect rule through African rulers, as distinct from the mainly French, assimilation policy of trying to make colonial subjects like French citizens and practised also by the Portuguese; and the German and Belgian paternalism which looked down on colonial subjects as if they were children. It could be suggested that the character of colonial socialization has left permanent imprints on former colonial communities as discussed by Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, Kwame Nkrumah, Walter Rodney, Eric Williams and others. The “authenticite” and African personality anti-colonial reactions were apparently targeted at these influences.

Prior to assessing the performance of Nigeria in terms of development since 1960, from the perspective of challenges and prospects, there are still some important historical milestones to note: Nigeria gained independence in 1960 and became a republic in 1963. At birth, Nigeria was imbued with certain structural imbalances. The first post- colonial general elections were organized in 1964 and due to the turbulence surrounding those elections, largely in the opposition Tiv area of central Nigeria and the Yoruba area in the west, the military intervened in a coup d'état in 1966 in which the Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa, from northern Nigeria, the northern premier Ahmadu Bello, the western premier, Samuel Ladoke Akintola, and several political leaders and military officers were killed.

The ethnically and regionally skewed killings by mainly Igbo-speaking officers, would attract a counter coup in the same year and the killing of the Igbo- speaking Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and Head of State, Aguiyi Ironsi, to be replaced by Yakubu Gowon, a minority, from central Nigeria. The social turmoil and violence accompanying all these

developments, led to the secessionist attempt by the eastern region to declare the state of Biafra and a resultant civil war of 30 months that claimed about one million lives. This development could be interpreted as a macabre culmination of ethnic and regional political rivalries, essentially driven by the elite, eager to manipulate social differences for personal gain.

Meanwhile, the largely agrarian and solid minerals economy of Nigeria (cocoa, groundnut, palm products, hides and skins, rubber, and various food products like cassava, yams, guinea corn, maize, and citrus fruits, as well as coal, tin and columbite, iron, limestone, among others) from the pre-colonial up to the colonial period, was to change into a gradually monocultural economy based on hydrocarbons, with the discovery of oil at Oloibiri in the Niger Delta in 1956. The events from the first military coup d'état, the earlier discovery of oil and the civil war, are very important aspects of Nigeria's history. For it is possible to suggest that these developments significantly and critically correlate with the challenges and prospects of Nigeria's development since independence as discussed in the edited volume by Panter-Brick (1978).

Out of Nigeria's 50 years of independence, the military would rule Nigeria for about 30 years and come to largely shape the socio-economy and politics of the country. Military rule would destroy democratic structures and processes and negate consensual or participatory development for a long period. For purposes of brevity, the highlights of Nigeria's national history from 1914 to 2010 are presented in Box 1:

Highlights of Nigeria's National History, 1914 – 2010

Year	Event
1914-1960	British Governors-General rule Nigeria
1960	Nigeria gains independence
1963	First military coup by Maj Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu
1966	Counter coup by Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon
1967	Nigerian civil war starts
1967	Gowon divides four region into 12 states
1970	Nigerian civil war ends
1972	Nigeria changes currency from Pound to Naira, introduces metric system
1973	Nigeria switches from left to right-hand driving
1973	Nigeria hosts all Africa Games
1973	Nigeria inaugurates National Youth Service Corps
1974	Gowon reneges on planned handover in 1976
1975	Birth of Economic Community of West African States
1975	Murtala Muhammed topples Gowon in military coup
1976	Murtala Muhammed increases states to 19
1976	Murtala Muhammed killed in a failed military coup, Olusegun Obasanjo takes over
1977	Nigeria hosts 2nd Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture
1979	Obasanjo Hands over power to Shehu Shagari, Second Republic begins
1980	Nigeria hosts and wins African Nations Cup, 1st time
1983	Gen. Muhammadu Buhari topples Shagari in a coup
1985	Gen. Ibrahim Babangida ousts Buhari in military putsch
1985	Nigerian wins 1st global soccer title (U-16 FIF/KODAK)
1987	Failed military coup led by Maj. Gen Mamman Vatsa
1987	Gen Ibrahim Babangida increases states to 21
1990	Failed military coup led by Maj. Gideon Orkar
1990	Nigeria spearheads formation of ECOMOG
1991	Ibrahim Babangida creates 9 more states, totalling 30
1993	Babangida reneges on handover plan, cancels polls
1993	Ernest Shonekan assumes office as interim head of state
1993	Gen Sani Abacha seizes power from Shonekan
1995	Commonwealth sanctions Nigeria
1995	Government announces aborted 'coup' against Abacha
1996	Abacha increases states to 36
1996	Nigeria wins 1st Olympic gold in long jump soccer
1998	Abacha dies, Abdusalami Abubakar assumes office as head of state
1999	Abdusalami cedes power to Olusegun Obasanjo: elected
1999	Nigeria hosts world youth soccer championship
2000	Nigeria co-hosts African Nations Cup with Ghana
2001	Olusegun Obasanjo and other African leaders form NEPAD
2003	President Obasanjo's PDP wins parliamentary majority
2003	Nigeria's 1st satellite, NigeriaSat-1, launched by Russian rocket
2006	President Obasanjo pays off Nigeria's foreign debts

2007	Umaru Yar'Adua of the ruling PDP is elected
2010	Umaru Yar'Adua dies. His Vice President, Goodluck Jonathan becomes President

Source: The New Nigeria, 1960-2010, Golden Jubilee Edition, Nigeria High Commission, Ottawa, Canada

Challenges

In terms of general characterization, the parliamentary system of government inherited from the British was discarded for an American-style presidential system in 1979. In addition, the earlier military administration of Yakubu Gowon and Murtala Muhammad embraced nationalist policies and planned development through fairly well conceived national development plans. The later military rulers especially the Ibrahim Babangida period, opted for Bretton Woods institutions' (World Bank/International Monetary Fund) neo-classical economics or neo-liberal ideological paradigms, despite well meaning programs targeted at social engineering for development, moral development, poor people's empowerment and the likes.

Thus far, there has been an observation of Nigeria's domestic attributes. However, what has been the position of Nigeria in the global society? Emeka Anyaoku (2010), a Nigerian citizen and former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, recently provided a useful synopsis of this position as follows:

In anticipation of Nigeria emerging as a big African country and leader of the black race, the country was unanimously accepted as the 99th member of the United Nations (UN) in October 1960. An offer Nigeria reciprocated by offering the contribution of a military contingent to the UN peace mission in the Congo, further leading to the appointment of Nigeria's Brigadier Aguiyi Ironsi, as the first African commander of the force in Congo.

Nigeria would later lead the 22-member Monrovia Group of African countries to merge with the Casablanca Group of five to form the OAU.

Nigeria's support to the liberation movements in Africa in the late 1970s, including Murtala Muhammed's "Africa Has Come of Age" speech in Addis Ababa on 11th January, 1976 and its leading role in the formation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975. Other high points have been international peacekeeping roles including that of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and the Paris Club's debt forgiveness of 2005, among other actions, have helped Nigeria's international image. Mention must also be made of the appointment of a Nigerian as Secretary-General of the Commonwealth and Nigeria's role in initiating the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD). Another noteworthy positive aspect has been the success of a few Nigerians in the diaspora.

Nigeria's low points have included a high crime rate in the same diaspora like various forms of fraud and drug trade, a faulty electoral process, and corruption. Another source of Nigeria's bad image has been communal conflicts, militancy in the Niger Delta, religious riots and the Christmas 2009 incident of a Nigerian arrested for allegedly attempting to bomb an American airline. The country's main weakness, however seems to be its underperformance despite bounteous resources, leading to the appellation of "resource curse" particularly for hydrocarbons, but which could also apply to other resources.

On the basis of the domestic and international perceptions of Nigeria as a country which is generally poorly compared with other major African countries or developing countries like Singapore, Indonesia or Malaysia, but should actually be aspiring to be like China or India, there are 15 critical areas of concern:

One, basic infrastructure and social services which are taken for granted in many countries are pitifully bad or weak in Nigeria.

Two, the factors and conditions of production, particularly land, capital, infrastructure and services are very difficult to access thus leading to de-

industrialization and the failure of manufacturing. This means that economic facilities are weak.

Three, the educational system apart from being a poor social service, lacks quality, proper orientation and quantity.

Four, the healthcare delivery system at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels destroys rather than saves lives. The phenomenon of bourgeois medicine has substantially commodified healthcare.

Five, agriculture, the highest contributor to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at 40 percent and the highest employer of labour at 60 percent is underdeveloped through neglect and poor policy administration.

Six, the extraction, production and sale of the hydrocarbons of oil and gas, the highest foreign exchange earners, have been mismanaged, negatively politicized and corrupted. Much of gas is wasted through flaring.

Seven, there is phenomenal corruption at the level of politics and governance. The political class is unimaginably corrupt as well as the public bureaucracy which is also corrupt and ineffective in service delivery. The electoral process is an embarrassment and a threat to national survival. This negatively affects political freedom, transparency, guarantees and social opportunities. There is an additional challenge of making the federal system work for national unity rather than promote irredentism. In other words, there is a national question to be addressed, which has recently visibly manifested as the debate on rotation and zoning of political offices.

Eight, solid minerals which exist in abundance have been neglected or abandoned. Prior to the discovery of hydrocarbons, agriculture and solid minerals sustained the Nigerian economy.

Nine, ethics and values which are the moral guides and glue of society have crashed to a level of negative transcendentalism, normlessness and criminality. The reward-punishment system is weak and there is high moral decadence.

Ten, peace, social and protective security are perennially threatened at the societal and individual levels, due to a combination of identifiable social, economic, and political factors, one of which is elite manipulation of socio-cultural differences or violence induced by politicians. Another is poor policing.

Eleven, foreign policy lacks clarity and Nigeria has a very bad international image, often reflecting the failures at home.

Twelve, the mass media have enjoyed a boom due to liberalization and advances in technology and a large audience, but this has been accompanied by poor standards and quality, and low ethics. This includes the much celebrated and reportedly globally third ranked Nollywood movie industry.

Fourteen, women are badly excluded from the mainstream of society, politics and economics. They are also oppressed and exploited, both in the workplace and domestically.

Fifteen, important social and economic activities like sports and tourism are badly mismanaged and underdeveloped.

Graphic, empirical or quantitative evidence strongly supports all of the above assertions. Nigeria's nearly one million square kilometers of land has more than 60 percent of it cultivable for a variety of soil and vegetation determined crop as well as livestock production. Nigeria's coastal and inland water bodies are an additional asset. In addition to being the eighth producer of oil and containing the sixth deposits of gas worldwide, Nigeria has 44 exportable commodities and 34 solid minerals. The country's estimated 150 people (from about 400 ethnic nationalities and mainly Christian or Muslim or traditional African religions) potentially make it the largest market in Africa. (Northern Union, 2007).

Despite these tremendous resources, Nigeria's development has been negated by poor leadership, corruption and attendant poverty incidence (that is number of those spending less than one United States dollar a day) which

has risen from 27 percent in 1980 to 65 percent in 1996. This has become the subject of contention between international data sources (70 percent) and local Nigerian estimates (56 percent) more recently. Poverty incidence is also assessed on the basis of educational performance and literacy, general health indicators and services, food security and safety as well as safe drinking water, and life expectancy. Viewed as a whole, therefore on the basis of those indicators that determine whether states succeed or fail, Nigeria has fared badly (Northern Union, 2007).

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its Human Development Report for 2009, Human Development Index (HDI) scores have increased in all regions in the world progressively. HDI provides a more complete picture of a country's development than other indicators like GDP, according to UNDP. HDI looks mainly at human development from life expectancy, adult literacy, purchasing power parity (PPP) and mainly human development indicators. And these have been Nigeria's scores in recent years, according to the report: Life expectancy – 47.7 percent; adult literacy rate (percentage of age 15 and above)- 72 percent; and GDP per capital, that is PPP US\$ 1, 969, all for the year 2007.

Additional worrisome data include the possible loss of about US\$ 500 billion from Nigeria's wealth due to corruption, from 1960 to date, based on analysis and estimates by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Other data are that out of 100 universities in Africa, only seven Nigerian universities are included as among the best 100 in Africa, with the best, University of Ilorin, ranked at 55. The same seven universities make the global list at the ranking of University of Ilorin -5484; Obafemi Awolowo University – 5,756; University of Jos; 5,882; University of Lagos- 5,936; University of Benin- 6,324; University of Ibadan – 6,425; and University of Nigeria – 7,170 (Eze, 2010).

Also Nigeria's HDI rating of 157 out of 177 countries for 2007/2008 and its position on the failed state index of 15 out of 177 states likely to fail by the Fund for Peace in 2009 are not encouraging of its progress towards a

successful state that can guarantee the well being of its citizens. Then most recently, out of 100 “best” countries in the world, as determined by Newsweek magazine, in its August 23 and 30, 2010 edition and based on certain criteria, Nigeria is placed 99th just before Burkina Faso at 100. This is a poor showing for the “Giant of Africa”, which is beaten by the following African countries in a descending order: Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Botswana, South Africa, Algeria, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia and Cameroon.

A critical presentation of the state of Nigeria at 50 as done here is not a damning or pessimistic attack on a hated social formation. The reality is that patriotic Nigerians and friends of Nigeria must first of all accept that there is a problem with Nigeria before devising ways of helping the country.

In this presentation, the point being made is that Nigeria is a country of great potentials, but Nigeria also has serious problems which can be effectively addressed. It is like the rebranding project of Nigeria’s Federal Ministry of Information and Communication. That project must accept that rebranding has to address negative aspects of Nigeria and Nigerians as the basis for correctional action leading logically to rebranding.

Nigeria should not be underperforming or failing the way it is doing right now. Certain general principles are applicable to failing of failed states. According to Ghani and Lockhart (2009):

“Forty to sixty states, home to nearly two billion people, are either sliding backward and teetering on the brink of implosion or have already collapsed. While one half of the globe has created an almost seamless web of political, financial and technological connections that underpin democratic states and market-based economies, the other half is blocked from political stability and participation in global wealth. Within these countries, vicious networks of criminality, violence and drugs feed on disenfranchised populations and uncontrolled territory. In a period of unprecedented wealth and invention, people throughout

Africa, Central Asia, Latin America and the Middle East are locked into lives of misery without a stake in their countries or any certainty about or control over their futures.”(Ghani and Lockhart, 2009: 3).

They conclude that the world today is an open moment with new possibilities of interpreting and doing things, and this opportunity has been provided by the era of globalization. And this era is built on the following characteristics:

“The emergence of world religions, the nation-state, the industrial revolution, the Great Depression, the end of World War II, the end of Communism, and the emergence of the Internet all marked a rupture between one era and the next.” (Ghani and Lockhart, 2009:231)

To be able to become one of the top 20 economies in the world, Nigeria has to be seen to be making progress in that direction. However let us consider , for example, progress towards realizing the MDGs, as captured in their 2005 report and as more or less confirmed by more recent tracking of MDGs performance in Nigeria. It is that instead of achieving 21.4 percent poverty reduction by 2015, it would be 43 percent . Within the 15-24 years age bracket, literacy rate has been declining rather than increasing. Gender equality in terms of primary school enrolment has been consistently higher for boys. Infant mortality rate has been increasing, and there is no indication of significant improvement in the maternal mortality rate.

Happily, HIV/AIDS prevalence has been decreasing. Environmental challenges persist, causing social conflicts. Global partnerships need to be enhanced, especially against the confessions by John Perkins (2005), the economic hitman. There is also the Goldman Sachs’ growth environment score based on macroeconomic stability and conditions, technology, human well-being, and political conditions to make the 20 largest economies in 2025 in descending order: US, China, Japan, Germany, India, UK, France, Russia, Korea, Italy, Mexico, Brazil, Canada, Indonesia, Turkey, Iran, Vietnam, Pakistan, Philippines, Nigeria, Egypt, and Bangladesh, or in 2050: China, US, India, Japan, Brazil, Mexico, Russia, Germany, UK, France, Indonesia,

Nigeria. Korea, Italy, Canada, Vietnam, Turkey, Philippines, Egypt, Pakistan, Iran and Bangladesh

On the basis of the foregoing it is useful to examine the broad global regional and national policy frameworks within which Nigeria's development can be restored and enhanced. To be sure, the problems of national development in Nigeria have not been due to the lack of or absence of policy but more from poor implementation and inconsistency. For example, the approaches of the earlier planned development years were jettisoned for free market policies like the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which tremendously confused the system for which a lesson could have been learned from planned marketization in China.

Conceptually, in addition to infrastructure and services, Dudley Seers' explanation of the meaning of development which must address, food, employment, equality and implicitly democracy (Seers, 1969) and Amartya Sen's idea of development as freedom, with the five areas of: economic facilities, transparency guarantees, social opportunities, political freedom and protective security (Sen, 2004) in addition to established policy positions, provide the philosophies that can help refashion the progress of Nigeria. In ideological terms, neo-liberal or conservative policies cannot save Nigeria because of their narrowly growth-oriented focus.

To understand this, we need to go back to the general divide in conceptualizing development since the 20th century, between socialism (communism) and capitalism and the development pathways adopted by different countries.

Denis Goulet identified four major historical pathways: one, the growth approach as in capitalist Asia and Brazil; two, the redistribution with growth as in the case of Algeria; three, the basic human needs approach as in Maoist China; and four, the development from tradition approach as in Sri Lanka (Ceylon) (Sen, 2008).

The concept of “another development” became popular at some point because of its attributes, summarized as follows: one, orientation towards basic and human needs; two, development from below; three, self-reliance; and four, appropriate technology (Sen, 2008).

The hegemony of corruption has too completely enveloped Nigeria, for salvation from right wing policies. The apparently inevitable solution could be a revolutionary socialist reconstruction of the society.

However, within the possibilities that liberal democracy has to offer, and based on the principles of “another development”, it would be a strong social democratic direction that could introduce capital punishment for corruption, for example, and set about to legislate against the vices that are distorting the country’s development. The perennial concerns about the interplay of the state, the market and society, discussed by Lindblom (1977) continues and every country must find the correct mix that works for it, recalling, of course, the contest between the pro-market Washington Consensus and the market-critical Santiago Consensus.

Before looking at Nigeria's development prospects, Box 2 provides some basic indicators of selected African countries, including Nigeria.

Box 2: Some Basic Indicators of Selected African Countries, 2010

Country	Population in millions	Life Expectancy	GNI Per Capita	
Congo DRC	66	46 (m) 49 (w)	US 1500	
Egypt	83	68 (m) 72 (w)	US1800	
Ghana	24	56 (m) 57 (w)	US 670	
Kenya	40	54 (m) 55 (w)	US1770	
Nigeria	155	47 (m) 48 (w)	US 1160	
Senegal	12.5	54 (m) 57 (w)	US 970	
South Africa	50	50 (m) 53 (w)	US 5820	

Source: United Nations/ World Bank

Prospects

In terms of policy, therefore, the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 of the OAU had produced pan- and pro- African measures for Africa's development and the United Nation's development system had promised so many things for all by the year 2000 before dumping the unfulfilled promises for the Millemium Development Goals (MDGs).

Just to refresh, the MDGs are a commitment by UN member states since the year 2000 to achieve the underlisted development targets globally, by the year 2015:

1. Eradicate poverty and hunger. Halve the population of those living on less than one United States dollar a day.
2. Achieve universal basic education.
3. Achieve gender equality in primary and secondary school enrolment.
4. Reduce child mortality rate by two –thirds.
5. Improve maternal health by reducing by three-quarters the proportion of women dying during child birth.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, by halting and reversing the incidence of HIV/AIDS, and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability by integrating the principle of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reversing loss of environmental resources. In addition, halve the proportion of people without access to clean water and basic sanitation. By 2002, improve the lives of at least 100 milliomm slum dwellers.
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

The post- OAU African Union (AU) initiative, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in 2001, developed about the same time

Nigeria was developing the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), provide positions for dialectical implementation and improvement. NEPAD's aims are to essentially eradicate poverty, promote sustainable growth and development, integrate Africa into the global economy, and accelerate the empowerment of women. All of the above show the domestic and international policy instruments available to Nigeria. NEEDS would promote wealth creation, facilitate employment generation, pursue poverty eradication and address value reorientation.

When Umaru Yar'Adua became President in 2007, he introduced a seven point agenda to tackle the following: Power and Energy; Food Security and Agriculture; Wealth Creation and Employment; Mass Transportation; Land Reform; Security; and Qualitative and Functional Education. Other critical concerns would be the Niger Delta and disadvantaged groups.

He also hoped to push Nigeria towards becoming one of the twenty top economies of the world by 2020, through an inherited programme called Vision 20:2020, President Olusegun Obasanjo's apparent response to the promise of the Goldman Sachs predictions for 2025 and 2050.

On the basis of the foregoing and by way of conclusion, the following ten point development plan for Nigeria from 2010 to 2020, is proposed, based on national priorities and the global open moment.

As a preface to the prescription of solutions to Nigeria's problems, it is pertinent to recall the exhortation by the UN's Human Development Report of 2005 on page 5:

“Human development gaps within countries are as stark as the gaps between countries. These gaps reflect unequal opportunity – people held back because of their gender, group identity, wealth or location. Such inequalities are unjust. They are also economically wasteful and socially destabilizing. Overcoming the structural forces that create and perpetrate extreme inequality is one of the most efficient routes for overcoming extreme poverty,

enhancing the welfare of society and accelerating progress towards the MDGs.”

So, for Nigeria to arrest festering atavistic sentiments and combat underdevelopment, the ten clusters which are subject to further elaboration are:

One, **Consolidation of Energy**: This entails improvement of the supply of electricity to domestic, commercial and industrial users. Currently, the main source of the 5,000 to 6,000 megawatts of power Nigeria is using are more than 60 percent from thermal, or gas and more than 30 per cent from hydro. The needed intervention is to completely rehabilitate and modernize existing facilities, and diversify and decentralize sources and distribution. Strong consideration should be given to coal, wind, solar and use of the flared gas. The nuclear option should be merely exploratory and preparatory, given obvious challenges of managing such expensive and delicate technology. The target should be 50,000 megawatts of installed capacity by 2020.

There is a need to conduct an audit of national oil and gas reserves and re-focus on their better management to also better domesticate and appropriate the benefits from hydrocarbons. All existing refineries should be repaired and new ones built, at least one in each state. There should be more Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) mega- stations in the country. Alternatives of the bio-fuels from cassava and jathropha should be promoted.

Two, **Food and Water Security** based on the fact that agriculture is basic to the present structure of the Nigerian economy, as it employs 60 percent of the labour force and contributes at least 40 percent to the country's GDP . There is a need to define the responsibilities of the different tiers of government towards agriculture. The specific inputs required are higher quality of breeds and seedlings, increased mechanization, better food storage, processing and marketing, enhanced research and development and use of new technologies.

Other needed inputs are increased use of irrigation, better management of environmental challenges like desertification, erosion soil and land degradation, and better selection and production of fertilizer types. Water access and quality can be improved by paying more attention to water bodies and supply sources, improving harvesting, and paying more attention to sanitation and waste management, enhancing water demand management, and water awareness and education.

Three, **Poverty Eradication and Empowerment.** Poverty can be eradicated, not just reduced or alleviated. The poverty level must be reduced to less than 20 percent by 2020, against the present level of 56 percent by enhanced productive capacity and actual production in the economy. If combined with special interventions targeted at women and youth, it would be a good start. The public sector alone cannot reduce or eliminate poverty, neither can big business. Emphasis must be on self-empowerment and small and medium enterprises. Microfinance institutions, community banks and low-income banks or lending systems must assist. Poverty is in the mind as well so anti-poverty education must be carried out, alongside the regular educational processes. National economic management must also ensure that the Naira is revalued.

Four, **Total Education and Human Development.** Human or social capital is indispensable to development. Nigeria has this in abundance but it can become a problem if not well developed. Nigeria's educational and human capital development has collapsed in quality and quantity at all levels. The educational system is weak, while the private educational system provides an alternative but is sometimes extortionist. Expansion together with quality control, increased monitoring and regulation must be applied. The Universal Basic Education Act which compels free and compulsory primary education must be enforced.

Five, **People-focused Land and Housing Policy.** The state must intervene to ensure that Nigerians have adequate access to land, the first factor of production, for agriculture, housing and industry. Housing itself must be

provided in qualitative and quantitative modes. While small farmers, who form the bulk of agricultural producers need secure tenure and bankable title deeds, Nigerians just must be housed. Today land and housing racketeering, extortion and profiteering are prevalent, especially in the urban areas, fuelled by corruption and the greed of estate and land agents. Some people are able to pay outrageously and at once for properties worth US\$ 5 million or above and land worth about US\$ 3 million in Abuja and Lagos, from unaccounted for sources.

Six, **Efficient and Effective Transportation and Communication.** Safe, affordable, qualitative and reliable road, rail, air, and water transportation must be made available. The advances in communication globally have also affected Nigeria, not due to any politician's ingenuity or patriotism. Presently, the tariffs for cell phone calls are too high. Nigerian roads are unacceptably bad and Nigeria needs a modern wide-gauge rail system complete with speed trains in addition to better air and water transportation services.

Seven, **Holistic Security and Healthcare.** This is in three parts: Social security has to do with incomes, well-being and self-maintenance. The second has to do with protective security and law and order administration, and requires strengthening the judiciary including its impartiality, and reorganization of the police. The third is about good primary, secondary and tertiary health. These are essentially about healthy, safe and minimally content livelihoods. They also include the proper management of potential hotspots like the Niger Delta, Plateau and some volatile Muslim communities.

Eight, **Manufacturing, Industry and Solid Minerals** A non-manufacturing and non – industrial economy is an anathema in the 21st century world, and while manufacturing is very weak, the economy instead of accelerating industrialization is actually de-industrializing. This problem of a country which has resources but hardly produces requires critical attention. Solid minerals development requires more inputs than currently done. In the

general direction of improving production in the economy, there is a need for a published audit of Nigeria's national resources.

Nine, **Good Governance and Genuine Democracy**. The rule of law, transparency guarantees, credible elections, good service delivery, power to the people (socially, economically and politically), responsiveness and responsibility of political leaders, and the national question, seem to be questions of good governance and genuine democracy. Nigeria lacks all of the above now. Nigeria probably has the worst political leaders governing a modern state today. The public bureaucracy is so inefficient and corrupt, it is a surprise the country has not collapsed completely by now. This has to change for the country not to fail.

Ten, **New National Orientation, Sports, Tourism and Global Engagement**: These issues are interrelated as they incorporate redefining ethics and values in all spheres of Nigerian life, and paying critical attention to culture, as well as building inter-cultural linkages and religious tolerance, the anti-corruption revolution, local and international sports and tourism, and foreign policy.

Rebranding must start from changing the ethical and value systems of Nigeria. Religious tolerance, respect for different cultures, a fight against xenophobia are critical in Nigeria's multi-cultural setting. Materialism and the criminal mind set of many Nigerians, young or old, poor or rich and their internationalization of bad conduct, criminality and corruption must be tackled very seriously. Nigeria's rich potentials, especially of cultural tourism, must be developed, and this includes sports administration. Nigeria's women must be integrated into power and reckoning on the basis of the post-Beijing demand of 35 percent, or better. Foreign policy should focus on African unity, learning from global best practices, leveraging global partnerships and monitoring the conduct of Nigerians in the diaspora.

These are the feasible focal areas of action that a committed leadership could introduce in Nigeria to turn the country around within the next ten years. And

beyond that, with these measures, Nigeria should, be able to surpass Canada in the year 2050. It could well join the category of emerging economic powers, the BRICS- Brazil, Russia, India and China , whereby it would have been irreversibly set on the path of development, thereby fulfilling the hope at independence, 50 years ago, of a great black African modern nation-state.

For the whole of Africa, it is time to move away from what Congolese writer Sony Labon Tansi has described as self-serving politicians: “We have been ruled by lazy kings with flabby paunches, empty heads, long arms latched to their states’ tills and endowed with a gargantuan ability to cause maximum harm to their people”. (Chung, 2010). This more or less supports the thesis by Chinua Achebe (1983) that the problem with Nigeria (and perhaps Africa) is that of leadership.

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