



## **POLICY BRIEF**

### **CREATING TRACTION FOR SCALING UP THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria was a member of the global community that subscribed to the setting of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 to reduce extreme poverty worldwide by 2015 using 1990 as the baseline. We are today less than two years to the deadline and it is imperative that we accelerate momentum towards achieving the targets at the same time as we plan for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Since 2000, Nigeria's poverty reduction strategies have entailed significant investments in MDGs-related sectors at all levels.

The eight time-bound MDGs are aimed at:

- 1) Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger;
- 2) Achieving universal primary education;
- 3) Promoting gender equality;
- 4) Reducing child mortality;
- 5) Improving maternal health;
- 6) Combating HIV&AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- 7) Ensuring environmental sustainability; and
- 8) Developing a global partnership for development.

This Policy Brief draws from an extensive review conducted by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) with support from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). The review provides an assessment of the factors that have shaped MDGs progress in the country since 2000; identifies the bottlenecks and constraints that have slowed down progress; and proposes how existing policies should be changed or modified to make the achievement of the MDGs at all levels a reality.

#### **SITUATION ANALYSIS ON THE MDGs**

Nigeria is a country of paradox with widespread poverty in the midst of plenty. Long years of military rule, a rent-seeking culture and inadequate policies have combined to leave the country with high levels of poverty affecting over one hundred million Nigerians and low access

to social services. Nigeria is the largest oil producer in Africa and the seventh largest in the world, and yet the country has the third largest number of poor people in the world after China and India. While China and India have taken giant steps to tackle poverty and promote inclusive growth leading to a reduction in the number and proportion of poor people in the last decade. Nigeria however has seen over the last decade a significant rise of the absolute number of poor people in spite of impressive economic growth rates. Economic growth has not been impacting on our drive to reduce poverty as shown by statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). We must therefore develop policy measures that create both economic growth and employment generation.

The Millennium Declaration provided the opportunity for Nigeria to re-focus on the MDGs as a major policy thrust through the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and its State and Local Government equivalents and subsequently through the Vision 20:2020 and President Goodluck Jonathan's Transformation Agenda. The Debt Relief Gains (DRGs) negotiated with the Paris Club in 2005 provided additional resources, which were specifically targeted at the MDGs.

## **THE MDGs: HOW IS NIGERIA DOING?**

### **MDG 1 Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger**

The achievement of this MDGs calls for the poverty level in the country to be reduced from 42 per cent in 1990 to 21 per cent by 2015. The records, however, show that by 2010 the poverty level had instead increased from 54 to 69 per cent. All official reports indicate that if present trends continue, Nigeria is unlikely to meet this goal. Although economic growth has been robust, apparently, the growth does not translate into poverty reduction, reduce gross inequality and create sustainable jobs. This has reflected negatively on the quality of lives and livelihoods of Nigerians. This model ought to be replaced with a new development paradigm that approaches development holistically other than the present jobless economic growth.

Taken together, the poverty level in Northern Nigeria is probably the highest in the world only comparable to war torn areas. The reason for the situation is not farfetched: corruption, lack of investment in poverty reduction programmes, illiteracy and insecurity and lack of programming by Northern governments to support the poor.

The challenges facing the achievement of MDG-1 include:

- Lack of consistency and effective coordination in pursuing poverty reduction policies and programmes that affect the most vulnerable groups.
- Unequal access to resources, especially land and capital.
- Difficulties in integrating poverty reduction interventions seamlessly into government development programmes and projects.
- Ineffective results-based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems for tracking implementation and taking corrective actions.

- Absence of a conducive atmosphere for conducting business in Nigeria; exacerbated by corruption, bureaucracy and weak regulatory systems
- Lack of purposeful involvement by important external stakeholders such as the private sector and Civil Society in the design and implementation of MDGs investments and interventions.

Moving forward, policies for eradicating poverty must carry along the very poor for whom they were designed by allowing them to participate in the design and implementation of the associated programmes and projects and the tracking of these initiatives. The increasing integration of the international economy manifested in increased trade, increased capital and labour mobility, and increased flows of technology, offers substantial opportunities for national income growth.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) Efforts aimed at eradicating poverty and hunger in the country must be holistic and capable of alleviating the negative effects of the galloping free market economy;
- 2) There has been insufficient investment in poverty eradication programmes. In addition, there are wide regional variations in the incidence of poverty in the country and states with higher poverty rates must commit significantly more resources to the struggle against poverty.
- 3) All levels of government must commit themselves in their policies, programmes and levels of social investments to the promotion of the directive principles of state policy in our Constitution which emphasizes state responsibility in the provision of social services;
- 4) The participation of the poor in designing poverty reduction programmes is important and local ownership in programme design and implementation should be emphasized.

### **MDG 2 Achieve universal primary education**

The consensus is that Nigeria is way off-track in meeting the MDG of universal primary education and gender parity in education. While primary school enrolment did increase following the commencement of MDG related interventions, there is growing concern about the poor quality of the education being received by pupils in primary schools. There is a preponderance of evidence to suggest that meeting the country's primary school targets in terms of primary school enrolment and/or completion have not equated to children leaving school, equipped with the skills and capabilities they need for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This has in essence affected the progress of the other goals especially Goal 1 as education is key to

tackling poverty. These shortcomings are the result of corruption, poor governance, lack of an effective and accountable system for monitoring the activities of teachers in primary schools, and the nonexistence of robust and conscious planning and budgeting to support the essential services needed for effective teaching and learning. Consequently, the education sector is bedevilled with problems relating to poor quality of primary education on offer, poorly trained teachers, inadequate funding, overcrowded classrooms, insufficiency of textbooks and

UNESCO / EFA report for 2012 states that 10.5 million Nigerian children do not have access to education; the insecurity in the northern part of Nigeria has significantly worsened the situation over the past two years.

instructional materials, negative influence of socio-cultural beliefs, significant geographical

differences in enrolment, obsolete teaching methods, etc., all of which have made the learning accomplishments of children, especially with respect to literacy and numeracy, very low even by local standards.

In order to tackle the inconsistency involving the quantity and quality of the education received by primary school pupils in Nigeria, policies targeted at increasing the number of pupils in schools should provide that the education received by such school pupils must go beyond mere numbers and ensure quality alongside quantity. What is more, the country's educational policies should be reviewed periodically, especially with regards the content of the universal basic education, so as to ensure that priority is given to core subjects such as mathematics, science, language and reading. The monitoring of the activities of teachers in primary schools has to also be made more effective by both the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and State Universal Basic Education Commissions (SUBEBs). In addition, a teaching style that is more structured and combines direct instruction, guided practice and independent learning in a child-friendly environment should be promoted. Similarly, there is need to standardize the system for acquiring education across the different geo-political zones irrespective of the socio-cultural affiliation prevailing in the zone so that the education acquired by children throughout the country would be standardized and be beneficial not only to the pupils but also to the country at large.

There has been a steady rise in private primary school education in Nigeria. According to the Nigeria Digest of Education Statistics, a total of 6,202,754 pupils were enrolled in these schools between 2006 and 2010. In this period as well, there has been a steady increase in the number of illegal schools in various states and the FCT. In Delta State recently about 662 were shut down, while in Kaduna State, the government closed down over 400 of such schools. It is important going forward for the government to enhance regulations guiding the establishment of these schools, while also putting in place stringent monitoring policies to make sure that they provide not just quantity in enrolment but quality in the type of education provided.

## **Recommendations**

- 1) A state of emergency on education should be declared in the North East and North West. These zones are far behind the rest of the country and their state governments must strive to catch up. Affected states should as a matter of urgency, increase budgetary allocations to education with a focus on the development of infrastructure, provision of school amenities, improved remuneration, training and re-training of teachers to enhance their capacity to adequately provide quality teaching to the pupils.
- 2) Measures should be put in place to ensure efficient resource utilization and the availability of more funds for activities such as the recruitment of teachers to improve teacher-pupil ratios.
- 3) Training should be provided for teachers to enhance the quality of teaching through the use of modern teaching techniques and tools.
- 4) The teaching environment should be improved with better remuneration and continuous training and re-training to improve the capacity to of achieving quality universal basic education.
- 5) Community and religious leaders, civil society and other stakeholders outside of government should be encouraged to play a greater role in monitoring the educational

institutions in their areas and in promoting in better accountability in the use of allocated educational resources.

### **MDG 3 Promote gender equality and empower women**

Although there have been pockets of progress, Nigerian women continue to face significant hurdles with regards to access to education, participation in politics, and engaging in business compared to their male counterparts. In terms of gender parity in education, Nigeria was ranked 120<sup>th</sup> in 2011 in the Global Gender Gap Index, (out of 135 countries), with a score of 0.6011. The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Education, Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs have implemented various programmes to improve access to education for girls especially in disadvantaged areas. The results have however been insufficient especially at the level of girls being allowed to complete their primary or secondary education.

At every educational level, women earn less than their male counterparts and sometimes, men with less education earn more than their better educated female peers. Nigeria has one of the lowest rates of female entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa. On the political front, although some progress has been made in terms of government appointments at the federal level, there appears to be reversals in a number of other areas. For example, there are currently only 7 female senators out of 109 and 19 female members of the House of Representatives out of 360 in the country's National Assembly. The situation is much worse at the state and LGA levels. In the April 2011 elections, women lost the ground they had been gaining since 1999.

Progress in meeting MDG-3 is being stymied by:

- Lack of the political will to implement programmes contained in government development policies that will lead to inclusive growth and address inequality.
- Lack of coordination and absence of credible data for results-based planning.
- Poor governance, corruption, and insecurity with its attendant impact on poor and vulnerable women Falling quality of education and poor health system.
- Dysfunctional traditional and socio-cultural practices.
- Weak M&E systems.
- Absence of legal remedies to tackle violence against women in private and public life.
- Obstacles and barriers to entry by women into the political process at all levels.

Gender equality and women's empowerment is a cross cutting issue and their intended impact can only be achieved when the other seven MDGs succeed in integrating gender awareness and gender responsiveness into their efforts. In other word, women's empowerment and gender equality are essential for the achievement of all the other MDGs. To achieve the holistic empowerment which the targets of MDG-3 seek to accomplish, there would be need to develop the abilities of women to collectively and individually take control of their own lives, identify their needs, set their own agenda and demand support from their communities and the state, to meet those needs. Policies are needed that would ensure a long-term steady drive towards women empowerment based on holistic strategy that understands the political, economic and social-cultural dynamics surrounding women and

gender issues and seek to address them through policies, investments and re-orientation. Women and their advocates must also take advantage of all opportunities on offer, plan strategically and consistently stay the course. An essential aspect of MDG-3 related policies is to build an effective women's agenda for change.

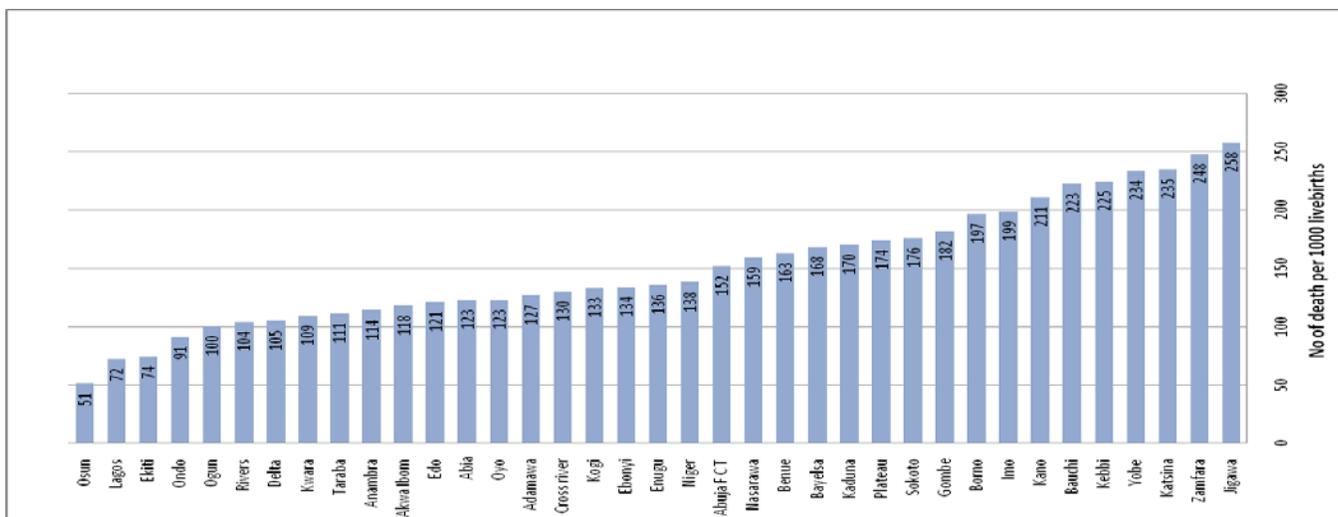
### **Recommendations**

The federal and state governments need to implement special measures to tackle the problems of gender inequality and women empowerment in addition to the following policy recommendations:

- 1) Provide in the constitution, a clause requiring that the state shall at every level implement the 35% affirmative action to ensure that women, minorities, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups participate and are represented in governance and other spheres of life;
- 2) Set 18 years as the minimum age for marriage in line with the Child Rights Act, 2003.
- 3) Amend the Land Use Act to guarantee equal access to land.
- 4) Allocate more resources to uphold the educational accomplishments so far and introduce a robust monitoring and evaluation system to enhance accountability in social sector spending.
- 5) Promote better synergy between the activities and interventions of the country's development partners and those of the federal, state, and local development authorities to obtain maximum benefits from available resources.
- 6) Expand the Girl Child Education acceleration programme and promote ownership by all stakeholders especially the private school owners, development partners and communities.

### **MDG 4 Reduce child mortality**

The two key targets for MDG-4 are to reduce under-five mortality which was 191 per 1,000 in 1990 to approximately 64 per 1,000 live births and infant mortality from 91 to approximately 31 per 1,000 live births by 2015; and to increase the proportion of one-year-old children who are fully immunized against measles from 46 per cent in 1990 to 100 per cent by 2015. Progress towards these targets has been mixed. While under-five mortality has declined in some parts of the country, there have been significant reversals in other parts.



If Nigeria is to succeed in achieving Goal 4 by 2015 a concerted effort is required to mitigate this growing in-country divergence. In comparison to progress in other Goal areas, progress in Goal 4 is around 13% reduction per year, better than progress in Goal 5 which is only a 4% reduction per year". Given these erratic movements towards the two targets, the country does not appear to be on track to meet the MDG to reduce child mortality by two-thirds by 2015. Key factors still hampering the attainment of the target to reduce infant mortality in Nigeria include:

- Low budgetary allocation, low budget release and utilization
- Lack of political will to implement policies and inadequate budgetary allocations.
- Absence of skilled personnel and equipment in health centers.
- Dysfunctional cultural and traditional practices.
- Illiteracy and ignorance especially among rural dwellers.
- Neglect of grassroots and traditional health care systems

Pro-active policies that foster closer collaboration between the government, donor agencies, CSOs and the targeted communities are needed. Encouraging facility-based delivery where available is an important approach for increasing uptake of skilled care. In like manner, poverty is clearly linked to both maternal and infant mortality just as maternal survival is closely linked to child survival. Health services need to develop strategies that target poorer women and their children in rural communities because, saving the lives of mothers is in itself an asset in the health of babies. These strategies and policies should aim at institutionalizing routine immunization for major childhood diseases and should also give appropriate attention to other 'non-health sector' interventions such as the provision of safe water and sanitation. This is critical for reducing both maternal and neonatal mortality.

## Recommendations

1. Prioritise the passage into law of the Health Bill, which has been on the waiting list.
2. Harmonize and rationalize MDG-4 related support on offer from the country's development partners;
3. Enhance planning and implementation mechanisms through regular monitoring and evaluation and focused operational research initiatives are indispensable for planning;

4. Since the state and local governments are closer to the grassroots in delivering basic services, efforts to provide improved management of healthcare systems, strengthen human capacities, and provide the needed health infrastructure, should be focused in these two levels.
5. States and local governments need to advance their development planning, budgeting and implementation in a practical, synchronized, efficient and continuous way to ensure accessibility and affordability of services. Citizen participation in budget processes should be employed as accountability channels to achieve this
6. Considering the fact that maternal and under-five mortality are interrelated, efforts should be made to ensure that skilled birth attendants deliver a combined package of essential obstetric and new born care at birth in order to tackle some of the common complications that occur during and after delivery.

## MDG 5 Improve Maternal Health

The good news is that maternal mortality is reducing in the country. Maternal Mortality (MM) declined dramatically by 47% between 1990 and 2010. Ministry of Health statistics show that *the MM ratio has decreased from 704 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 487 per 100,000 live*

“...most women, as high as 92% in the north-east region of the country, deliver at home, an African’ women’s lifetime risk of dying from pregnancy-related causes is 100 times higher than of a woman in developed countries. In Nigeria the risk is 1 in 29. Certainly, it is a risky proposition to be pregnant in Nigeria.”

*births in 2011.* The challenges to further improving maternal health include: lack of political will, inadequate budgetary allocations, poor budget implementation, contextual differences across the different regions of the country, corruption and lack of accountability and transparency, poor health infrastructure, dearth of qualified personnel, harmful cultural practices, and lack of reliable data for effective

planning.

It is important that efforts to achieve MDG-5 be connected with those of other programmes aimed at other broader interrelated goals, especially MDG-4 whose linkages with maternal, neo-natal and child health targets are obvious. Such a broader approach would lead to a general improvement in the quality of life of women which will, in turn, translate into reduction of maternal mortality. Furthermore, as the country gradually approaches the 2015 MDGs deadline, an approach to programming which takes into account the contextual differences across the country will be more cost effective. Government policy interventions should also focus more on states that are acknowledged to be the most affected by incidences of high maternal mortality.

## Recommendations

- 1) Given the geographical disparities in the status of maternal health in the country, contextual interventions would be necessary to level out improvements in maternal health in terms of geographical spread.
- 2) Passing of the National Health Bill will go a long way in fast tracking the development of the health sector, thereby reducing maternal mortality. Also the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) should be made to cover more states and should include coverage for maternal health.

- 3) In promoting family planning as a means of preventing maternal mortality, emphasis should be placed on where it is likely to make the most impact, especially in the rural areas. Similarly, States with lower numbers of higher cadre of health workers should focus their training programmes on producing new cadres of workers with skills specific to their contexts.

## **MDG 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases**

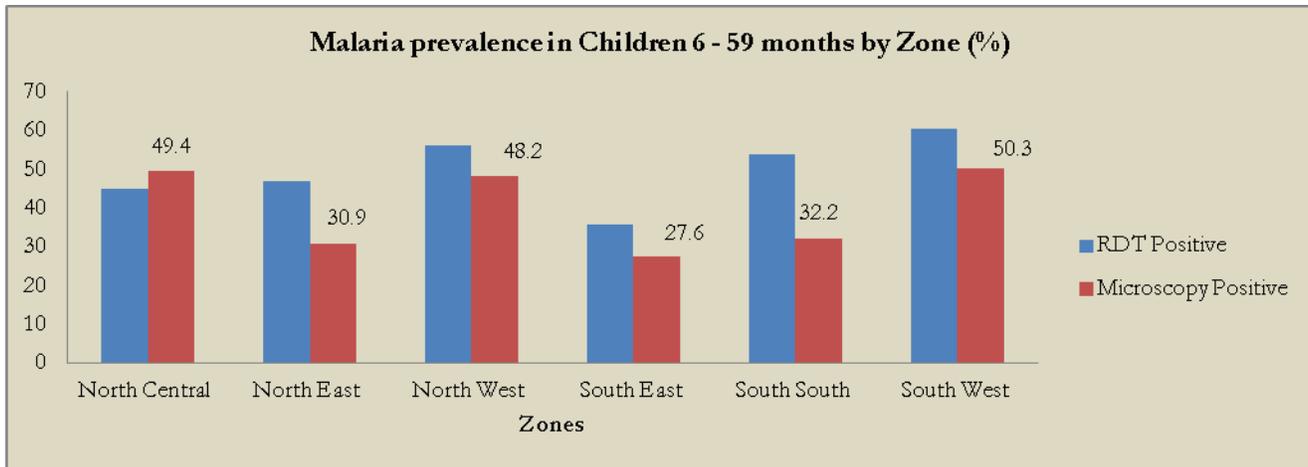
Despite considerable efforts at a sustained response, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has remained a major challenge. Currently, there are 3.4 million people living with the infection in Nigeria, which put the country as the second largest in the world, after South Africa. The estimated prevalence of HIV amongst 15-49 year olds in 2009 was 3.6%. While most-at-risk populations contribute to the spread of HIV, heterosexual sex, particularly of the low-risk type, still makes up the bulk of infections (about 80 per cent). Mother-to-child transmission and transfusion of infected blood and blood products are generally estimated as ranking next as common routes of infection. These two means of transmission are believed to account for about ten per cent of all infections.

“the amount coming in as intervention fund for this into Nigeria is about N10bn. It is coming in as donor funds for ARVs alone. Unfortunately, none of us (local drug manufacturers) can't access it because we do not have the WHO pre-qualification” M.D. May and Baker

The factors contributing to the continuing spread of HIV/AIDS infection in the country include: multiple concurrent sexual partnerships; ineffective and inefficient prevention services for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs); inadequate access to and poor quality of healthcare services; gender inequality and inequities;

poverty; persistence of HIV/AIDS-related stigmatization and discrimination; religion and cultural practices; inadequate data for proper policy action and responses; unavailability and inaccessibility of Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART); and low grassroots knowledge and awareness of the dangers of the disease and methods of prevention. Other factors include: poor governance and corruption; duplication and wastage of resources; inadequate results based management and gender-based approaches; insufficient funds and limited ability to monitor the use of funds; unstable political and economic environment; lack of transparency and accountability; overdependence on donor support; centralized procurement and ineffective distribution systems for HIV/AIDS drugs and materials. Low detection rate, lack of proper coordination, and inadequate capacity building and technical support for implementation of the operational plans for HIV & AIDS.

Impediments to combating Tuberculosis include: heavy dependence on external funding and poor coordination of the activities of partners supporting TB programmes; poor management supervision; limited coverage and poor community participation in community TB care and DOTS; poorly motivated staff; limited diagnosis of multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB); low access to quality DOTS; stock-outs of drugs and reagents; low case detection rate; and weak Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system.



Combating malaria is constrained by weak case management; restricted acceptability and use of bed nets, inadequate focus of Roll-Back Malaria (RBM) programme on vector control and environmental health; absence of diagnostics; weak supply chain system; poor drainage systems; poor sanitation habits; and poor delivery of services at the health facility level.

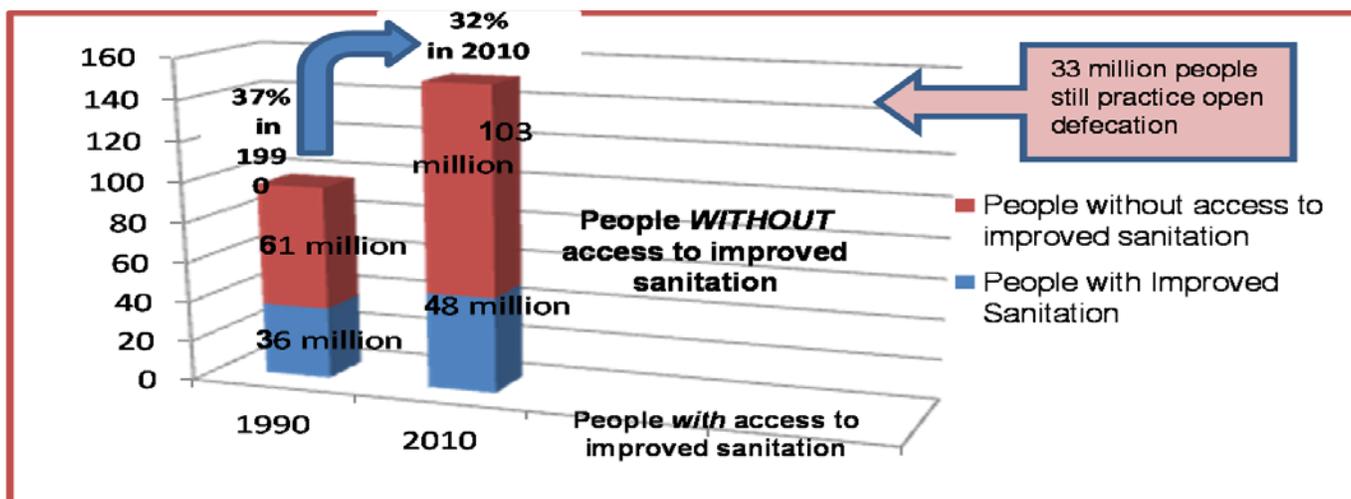
In moving forward to reduce the burden of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases in Nigeria, there is need to improve knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS and access to anti-retroviral therapies and to effectively implement existing national strategic frameworks for HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis control. There is also need to ratify the anti-stigmatization bill to help tackle problems facing HIV-infected persons. These will also need strong political will, increased transparency and accountable management of financial resources. The capacity of the agencies responsible for implementing HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB programs would also need to be strengthened.

### Recommendations

- 1) Intensify local production of consumables so as to reduce the cost of procurement from abroad while increasing availability, affordability and accessibility of ART.
- 2) Intensify awareness raising campaigns about HIV/AIDS.
- 3) Implement the up-dated National HIV/AIDS policy and the National Framework for HIV Prevention in the Sex Work Setting.
- 4) Mainstream HIV/AIDS into different public and for-profit private health sector plans to improve access to care and increase involvement of different providers.
- 5) Explore additional sources of funding for HIV and AIDS control and counteracting erratic and declining international donor support in the face of increasing resource needs.
- 6) Promote active private sector, CSOs and NGOs involvement in efforts to achieve MDG 6.
- 7) Intensify active surveillance of malaria with infection screening and early diagnosis of the disease and targeted indoor spraying combined with other vector control interventions.
- 8) Expand the reach and provision of existing TB control services beyond public health facilities into communities, private sector, and tertiary health care services.

### MDG 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

A mid-point assessment of the MDGs in 2007 showed that Nigeria still faced serious challenges in achieving MDG-7. The management of the country's natural resources continues to be inadequate. For example, it has been estimated that between 2000 and 2010, the country's forests shrank by a third from 14.4 per cent to 9.9 per cent. Progress in improving access to safe clean water and adequate sanitation has slowed down and the



country continues to face other environmental challenges, such as rapid deforestation and desertification, soil erosion, coastal flooding, environmental pollution, and climate change. This lack of progress is due to several challenges that continue to inhibit progress towards ensuring environmental sustainability in Nigeria including:

- Difficulties in translating substantial public investments in water into effective access and improved sanitation due largely to our socio-political peculiarities.
- Absence of community participation that encourages involvement by local communities in the identification of local needs and the design of holistic and appropriate solutions.
- Lack of the required managerial, technical and financial resources and absence of effective accountability mechanisms.
- Weak institutional capacities to enforce extant policies.
- Poor waste management.
- Overgrazing, land degradation and poor natural resource management practices.

To fast track progress towards ensuring environmental sustainability, there is need to have in place an all-encompassing policy that promotes transparency and accountability in land management, improves access to land for the urban poor, intensifies pro-poor growth, promotes access to safe drinking water and improves sanitation.

Introducing structural changes, enhancing distributive equity, and addressing climate change will also improve environmental governance in Nigeria. In addition, there is the need to strengthen the sourcing, maintenance, analysis and dissemination of environmental statistics. The capacity-building support of national and state environmental agencies by development partners should be also encouraged. Furthermore, technical assistance in terms of capacity building for mortgage firms and regulators for increased access to improved technology and

production/processing methods of local materials to reduce the cost of low income housing is essential for ensuring environmental sustainability.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) Review of existing environmental sustainability policies and integrating them into sectoral policies. There is also the need to improve and focus more on expanding the market for environmentally beneficial goods such as efficient stoves, anti-erosion tools for small scale farmers etc. while also enforcing such policies in the context of national development and poverty reduction strategies.
- 2) Ensuring commitment from governments at all levels to mainstream environmental concerns into development activities by building government capacity to coordinate a national framework for environmental management and making natural resource management sustainable.
- 3) Encouraging the use of gas for household needs.
- 4) Undertake an enumeration of slum populations and come up with realistic strategies to improve public facilities in slum communities and support people to upgrade their homes rather than displacing them under the guise of urban renewal and city beautification. This will help improve accountability and local governance at the city level and also address poverty in the long run.

### **MDG 8 Promote Global Partnership for Development**

This goal is extremely critical in the overall scheme of the MDGs as it is the only goal that generally and specifically covers the external economic environment, which is determined or influenced by the country's development partners. The country successfully negotiated debt relief in 2005 which reduced debt-servicing from 15.2 per cent of exports in 2005 to 0.5 per cent in 2008 and provided much needed financial resources and new opportunities for MDGs-related social investments. Since then, however, the trends in forging similar broad-based partnerships have not been particularly impressive and the country's development partners have failed to channel their support into the country's critical development areas. Although development assistance has increased, trade relations continue to be one-sided and without much impact on the country's development agenda. Progress in foreign direct investment has been slow and erratic. Although the deregulation of the telecommunications sector in 2001 has significantly increased the proportion of the population with access to mobile telephones from 2 per cent to about 50 per cent today, the digital divide is yet to be significantly bridged with only about 18% of the population currently having access to the internet.

There are number of challenges that are working against efforts towards developing a global partnership for development. These include:

- Difficulties in unleashing the potential of the private sector for development.
- Negative impact of the on-going global financial crisis.
- Slow pace of research, innovation, and protection of intellectual property rights.
- Imbalances and difficulties in implementing WTO agreements.
- Low access rate to the internet and the poor quality network services.
- Poor access to international markets.
- Weak regulatory environment.

- Lack of accountability of the grants administered by donors.
- Unsustainable debt management.
- Lack of good governance for improved evidence-based planning, public financial management and institutional coordination.

For Nigeria and other African and developing countries to begin to make concrete progress towards achieving all the MDGs, they should be given the opportunity to initiate and contextualize appropriate and realistic approaches towards selectively integrating their domestic economy with the world economy such that the policies, rules and conditionalities arising from these systems would reflect the realities facing their countries and their peculiar requirements. Development of a global partnership for development will require a policy to protect affordable access to telephony through the establishment of a fund to subsidize network rollout to under-served areas and thus grant increased access to the poor. Similarly, additional licenses should be issued to small businesses to service areas where access to basic telephony and broadcasting signals are still a problem. Encouraging public-private partnerships in the provision of social services is crucial as is the targeting by the country's development partners of initiatives to improve government institutions and management and governance systems. Government on its part should facilitate the emergence of a strong national research and innovation policy. In this regard, government agencies and institutions should be reinforced to develop a more effective strategy to curtail smuggling. The implementation of the Import Prohibition Policy should also be strengthened to promote Nigeria's access to international markets.

Government on its part should facilitate the emergence of a strong national research and innovation policy. In this regard, government agencies and institutions should be reinforced to develop a more effective strategy to curtail smuggling. The implementation of the Import Prohibition Policy on certain items should also be strengthened to promote local manufacturing of goods and increase local and external demand for made in Nigeria goods.

## **Recommendations**

- 1) Increased transparency and accountability of donor support through better access to information on how the development funds on offer to the country are utilised or administered.
- 2) Promote good governance through improve evidence-based planning, public financial management and institutional coordination.
- 3) Encourage public-private partnerships in the provision of social services is crucial as is the targeting by the country's development partners of initiatives to improve government institutions, management and governance systems.
- 4) Provision of physical and social infrastructure, legal environment and the quality governance as a means of attracting FDI and optimize its development relevance.
- 5) Improve tax administration so as to boost public revenues, reward those who fulfill commitments and discourage fiscal tax avoidance and evasion
- 6) Improved debt management to forestall a relapse into heavy burden of indebtedness that could slow down the country's progress towards the achievement of MDGs by 2015.

- 7) Introduction of measures to promote aid quality, i.e., reducing tied aid, increasing the grant element, enhancing direct budget support, and ensuring better targeting.
- 8) Improvements in the availability and affordability of essential medicines such as the establishment of international patent pools.
- 9) Expand access to telecoms for people in rural areas
- 10) Intensification of collaboration with the private sector in treating greater chronic disease by improving accessibility to treatment facilities.

## **General Recommendations**

With less than two years to 2015, the MDGs target year, Nigeria has made relative progress in her efforts to achieve the various targets. The decision to channel the resources from the debt relief gains into MDGs-related projects and programmes in 2005 provided much needed resources to enable the government to take bold steps towards the MDGs and, more importantly, try to mainstream MDGs policies into its on-going development strategies and plans including: NEEDS, SEEDS, LEEDS, Vision 20:2020 and the Transformation Agenda. However, despite this progress, the analyses carried in this study reveals that some of the goals and targets are likely to be missed unless additional, strengthened, and corrective policy actions and investments are taken.

Rapid progress in achieving the MDGS will require coherence in federal, state and local policies as well as harmonization between and among them. It would require coherence in the formulation and implementation of priorities and in the financing of MDGs-related interventions. It would also require coherence between interventions designed to manage short-term emergency situations and longer-term development goals. Six action areas, which should receive attention to help accelerate the achievement of the MDGs as the country approaches 2015 are outlined below:

## **Vision 2020: From Visioning to Implementation**

Nigeria stepped up its efforts to achieve the MDGs with the launching of Vision 2020 in 2009 as the country's blueprint for economic transformation. The expected outcome of the policy is a high standard of living and quality of life for its citizens. To achieve this, the policy framework attempts to prioritise economic growth and job creation over the next seven years. The MDGs have been incorporated into the visioning process but the key challenge is that there is very little being done on the implementation of the policy package. The level of investment on infrastructure and job creation is insufficient to push the country to the desired goal of being part of the top twenty economies in the world. There is, therefore, need to invest more to meet the explicit targets for access to energy and transportation, provide key inputs to economic development that are deeply important for agricultural productivity, health, education, and other key Goals. This area typically requires a strong blend of partnership between public and private sectors, on both the investment side and the regulatory side, in order to ensure efficient operations with equitable access for poor people. The public sector must however take the lead if the country is to achieve the targets and policy- and decision-makers must develop clear benchmarks for implementing the visioning process. Public

budgeting processes must also become more closely aligned to the Vision 2020 implementation benchmarks.

### **Combating Public Corruption**

Over time, there has been increasing evidence of the growth of mega corruption in Nigeria. Revelations over the past year relating to the petroleum subsidy reveal monumental and growing level of fraud in public life in which over one trillion naira has been looted so far. Corruption has therefore become a stumbling block to combating poverty and achieving the MDGs. In addition to fuel subsidy, the country has been witness to the recent police pension scam and the unbelievable spectacle in the House of Representatives investigations on the power probe where it was discovered that over \$16bn was spent to provide electric power without commensurate results. Government is currently negotiating a N1.5 trillion loan to pay more fuel “subsidy”. Nigeria is suffering from a pattern of organised looting of its national resources. If Nigerians do not stand up to fight and hold their leaders accountable for their actions, the country’s prospects for development will remain mortgaged to poor governance. The spectacular failure of recent high profile criminal prosecutions relating to corruption dramatizes the collapse of the system of public prosecution in Nigeria. Public prosecution rests on a tripod - the detection and investigation of crime, the prosecution of offenders and the conviction and punishment. All levels are in crisis and for Nigeria to return to its development agenda and implementation of Vision 2020, the promotion of transparency and accountability in public life must become a priority. There is increasing evidence that Government will not act on anti-corruption if citizens do not mount sufficient pressure. Nigeria belongs to all its citizens. They should, therefore, no longer leave the political space and bureaucracy to the shenanigans of common thieves and crooks. The fight against corruption must be comprehensive and all encompassing. All sections of the society must stand up and fight corruption and take responsibility for insisting that projects implemented by the government yield expected positive outcome, as part of the collective strategy of liberating the resources that are needed to achieve the Vision 20:2020.

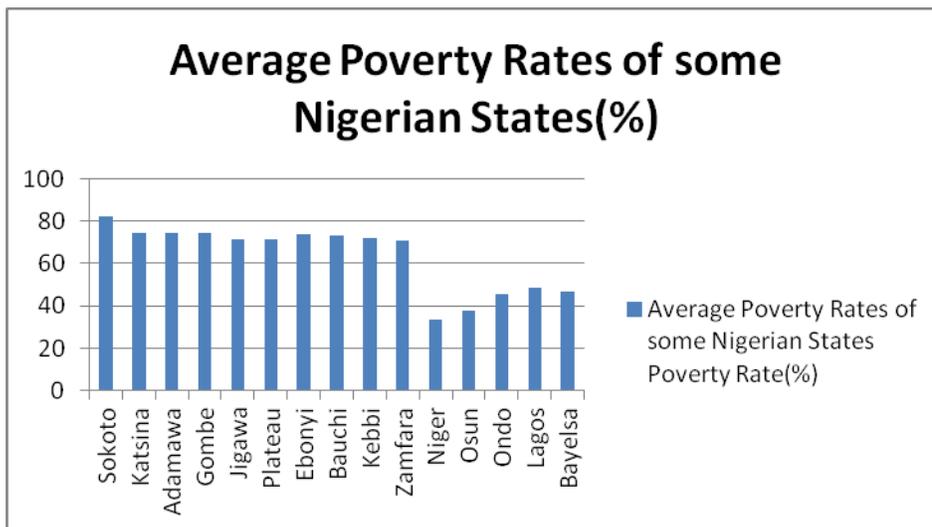
### **Addressing Poverty and Inequalities**

Since the return to democratic rule, a number of dangerous trends have emerged that reveal that the country has not been on course to achieving the MDGs. The first is that while the economy has sustained a growth rate of over 5% since 1999, the rate of poverty has increased over the period from 54% to 69% of the population.

The gap between the rich and the poor has been widening and the number of the poor growing. Secondly, according to recent statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics, there is significant spatial differentiation in Nigeria’s poverty profile with the Northern region lagging behind its southern counterpart. Sokoto State has remained the poorest state in the country with an 81.2% poverty rate. Other Northern states have the following poverty rates; Katsina, 74.5%; Adamawa, 74.2%; Gombe, 74.2%; Jigawa, 74.1%; Plateau, 74.1%; Ebonyi, 73.6%; Bauchi, 73%; Kebbi, 72% and Zamfara, 70.8%. The state with the lowest poverty rate was Niger with 33.8%, followed by Osun with 37.9% and Ondo with 45.7%. Others include Bayelsa State with 47% and Lagos State, 48.6%. The average poverty rate of the states in the North-West geopolitical zone remained the highest at 71.4% followed by North-East 69.1% and North Central, 60.7%. The record showed that poverty was least prevalent in the South-West, with an average of 49.8%, followed by South-South, 55.5% and South-East,

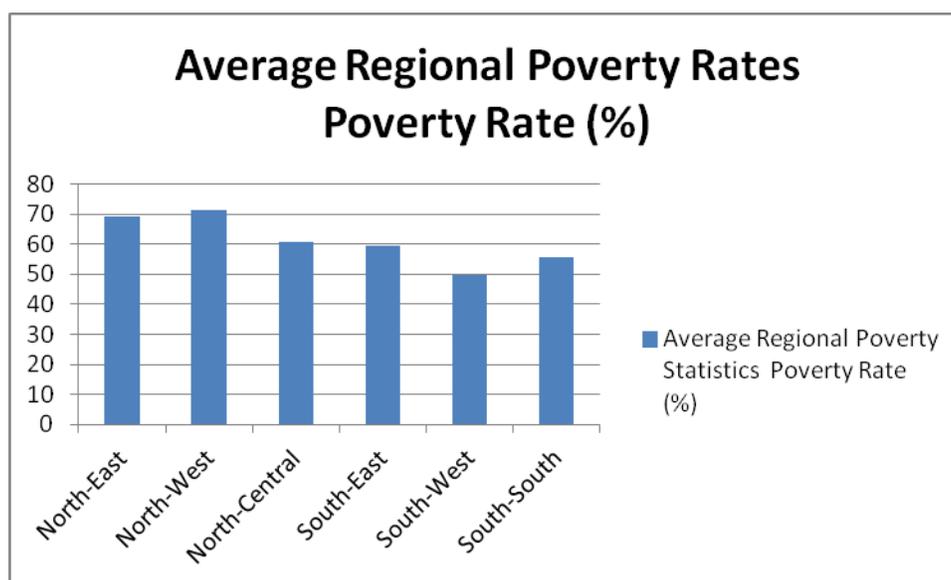
59.5%. The country's development agenda must therefore address both the growing incidence of poverty and the significant spatial differentiation in its distribution through improved planning and data collection, expansion of social safety net programmes and efficiency in the use of resources

Graphical Representation of Average Poverty Rates of some Nigerian States



Source: Nigerian Bureau of Statistics

Graphical Representation of Average Poverty Rates by Regions



## **Taking Population Dynamics Seriously**

Whilst Nigeria continues to grapple with economic crisis, the population growth rate continues to soar and to change in composition. The population of young people between ages 15-34 years has increased markedly as a proportion of the total adult population (greater than 15 years) creating a huge youth bulge of particular concern to Nigeria is the age distribution ratio as young adults make up the higher proportion of young adults as a ratio of the total adult population.

Achieving Vision 2020 is dependent on Nigeria prioritizing its demographic transition. This means that the population must be transformed from one characterized by short lives and large families to one with long lives and small families, in addition, small families are able to cater for the needs of dependants than larger families. The country cannot achieve its development objectives if the current rapid population growth which results in an unusually large proportion of children and adolescent dependents and a relative dearth of working age adults per dependent, is maintained. Young people (particularly those aged between 15 and 29) are known to comprise a historically volatile population that produces an increased possibility of violence in countries with low and declining capacity to educate them and provide them with the requisite means of livelihood. Action is needed to reduce the country's high population growth rate and provide jobs for the youths.

The other dimension of Nigeria's population dynamics is that the country has become a collection of internal migrants and settlers with a considerable part of the population settled and engaged in economic activities in parts of the country where they are considered non-indigenes. This process cannot be reversed and it is imperative that as part of the needed strategy for economic growth and progress, the settler/indigene divide is abandoned. It is estimated that almost 50% of the people in Nigeria had moved from rural to urban settlements in the post-independence period. When pre-colonial migration patterns are factored into current trends, it becomes clear that the great majority of Nigerians are settlers, not indigenes of the places in which they presently live and work. As this cannot be reversed, there is need to incorporate indigeneity for all Nigerians in all localities as part of the Vision 2020 strategy and the constitution review process.

## **Addressing the Insecurity/Poverty Nexus**

Nigeria has several sources of instability. The Niger Delta amnesty remains fragile. Ethno-religious conflict in the 'middle belt' with its epi-centre in Plateau state continues to grow. An Islamist insurgency in Nigeria's north-east is spreading to other parts of the country. Banditry and kidnapping are making the south-eastern and south-southern parts of the country difficult to live in. These conflicts are fuelled at the national level by deepening poverty, an expanding demography as well as ethnic, religious, social and economic grievances. These grievances point to a crisis of democratic consolidation in which citizens are not seeing the dividends of the democratic transition that occurred in 1999. The reality is that the Nigerian state is undergoing a serious existential crisis. Nigeria has been rapidly urbanising at an incredible rate. The urban centres are focal points for the globalisation of the economy, society and religion, while shanty towns and their lumpen culture are the flash-points. Life is becoming increasingly precarious because of the breakdown of social fabric and family bonds as well as

the mounting pressures on livelihoods. In these contexts, religious activities have proliferated, with both Muslim and Christian actors and movements stepping in to provide critical services that the family and the state are unable to provide. Most of the new religious actors operate in the field of popular religion and act autonomously with little or no supervision from the mainstream religious establishments.

The counterfactual message from this analysis is that if achieving the MDGs had been prioritized as a strategy for national survival and progress, the country would not have found itself in the present situation. The urgent message from this is that addressing poverty and misery is a vital component of the country's national security strategy but even more importantly, it is a fulfilment of the pact signed by Nigerians and their governments to achieve the social and economic goals set out in chapter two of the country's Constitution.

### **Climate change and its attendant effects on livelihoods**

Nigeria is one of the tropical countries with the largest forest losses in the world. The country is experiencing an annual rate of deforestation of about 3.5%, resulting from illegal and uncontrolled logging, incessant and uncontrolled bush burning, overgrazing and unsustainable fuel wood gathering. The rich biodiversity of the forests remains imperilled by the high rate of deforestation and degradation not minding that forests play an important role in the global carbon cycle. Currently, forests in Nigeria occupy about 10 million ha(100, 000 sq/km), close to 10% of Nigeria's initial forest land area and well below the Food and Agriculture Organization's recommended national minimum of 25%. From 2000-2010, the area of forest reduced by one third, from 14.4% in 2000 to 9.93% of its land mass in 2010. The desert in the Sahara continues to encroach southwards at a rather unprecedented rate of 0.6km per year, causing the country to be losing 1,355 square miles of cropland and rangeland due to desertification each year.

Elsewhere, the effects of global greenhouse gas continue to rise, causing dramatic changes in temperature, and precipitation. The impact of this on Nigeria has been dramatic in the last two years as floods and erosion continue to pose threats to human and food security and causing environmental degradation in alarming magnitudes in different parts of the country. Between 2010 and August 2012 alone, over a million people have been displaced by erosion and flooding in several parts of the country. These have led to the contamination of unprotected water sources, thereby exposing people to the risk of waterborne diseases; destruction of crops and disruption of the planting season. As Nigeria approaches 2015, there is an urgent need for the implementation of policies and programmes aimed at addressing the challenges of climate change.

### **Conclusion**

Nigeria is a country of enormous diversity. The country's zonal and regional differences and disparities are traced to history, culture, natural endowment and politics. These, in turn, have resulted in poverty reduction challenges that are peculiar to some regions and zones and not others and that manifest themselves in different intensities in different regions, zones, states, and communities. Consequently, a one-size-fits-all set of MDGs-inspired interventions and investments is likely to miss the goals and targets. The enormous diversity among the different regions, zones, states, and communities in Nigeria with respect to their specific conditions, institutions, culture, and governance structures, implies that accelerated progress on the MDGs will depend on the unique conditions, opportunities and constraints of each of

these component parts. No single roadmap will be adequate in scaling up the MDGs interventions in Nigeria.