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## Nigeria's Economic Experience at 55: an Adventure or Expedition

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### Abstract

Development does not come overnight. It is achieved and not inherent and runs in stages. Every nation has her own history based on her own experience and development plans. Nigeria certainly cannot be an exception. This study attempts an appraisal of Nigeria's development strategies since 1960. It also attempts an assessment of the extent of development attained following such plans (policies). The study is situated within the context of three theories due to its nature. They include—the modernization theory with walter w Rostow as its principal proponent; the dependency theory, and the theory of strategic planning by Prince Waterhouse (1980). Data is obtained from secondary sources which include-Journals, newspapers, books, the internet, etc. the qualitative technique is employed for purposes of analysis. The paper runs in parts which revolve around---the introduction, theoretical perspectives, the need for planning/what is a plan, types of plans, an appraisal of various national (Nigeria) development plans. Effort is also made to situate the effectiveness of various development strategies in terms of Rostow's growth model. Finally, we conclude that Nigeria's development strides fall short of expectations when compared with other economies like Malaysia. While the latter has firmly embraced palm oil production as the mainstay of its economy, Nigeria has abandoned the production of the commodity inspite of her great potentials in its production. It has rather opted for the production and exportation of crude oil--- a commodity with a record of high market volatility. Following the conclusion that Nigeria's economic woes are rooted in her neglect and abandonment of the agricultural sector, this paper recommends a quick return to agriculture through an aggressive inward-looking industrialization policy.

*Keywords: Development, planning, effectiveness, industrialization, agriculture*

### **Background to the Study**

Nowhere in history has credit been given to man for his debut on earth. However the same history is known to have credited man with various efforts at making the world a better place to live in. Various theories of economic growth and development have also lent credence to this latter view. Thus, whereas, he first came on an initial adventurous journey of wandering, gathering and hunting, man's journey soon transformed to an expedition, slightly more focused, hence his early voyages of discovery. This became possible following the great asset of the brain, structured in a way to facilitate the power of thinking which raised him above the level of other animals (Homosapiens).

The implication is that man soon learnt to lead an organized, coordinated and arranged life which ensured his survival in a wild, hostile, physical and social environment. This is the essence of development which does not come overnight. History is replete with instances of nations which have achieved growth and development through share hard work and the effort of its citizenry. Every nation has her own history based on her own experience and development plans. Nigeria certainly has her own experience which is believed to be chequered. This study believes that the best assessment of the nation's economic experience is to run through an appraisal of her developmental strategies/strides within the past 55 years (since independence). In this vein, it might be necessary to begin with an explanation of what constitutes a plan.

### **Objective of the Study**

The aim of the study is to appraisal the development strategies of the Nigerian economy in the past 55 years. The outcome will help in advancing alternative development strategies for effective national development.

### **Conceptual Literature Review**

Extant literature on basic development strategies are examined in this section.

### **Planning**

Deepika, Garima, and Varsha, (N.D) submit that “planning is deciding in advance what is to be done, when, how and by whom it is to be done”. According to them, “planning bridges the gap from where we are to where we want to go. It includes the selection of objective, policies, procedures, and programmes from among alternatives”.

### **Types of Planning**

**Long term:** Strategic in nature and involves generally 3-5years. It relates to matters like new products and product diversification.

**Short term:** This typically covers time frames of less than one year in order to assist their company in moving gradually toward its longer term. Examples are the skills of the employees and their attitudes. The conditions of production equipment or product quality problem are also short-term concerns.

### **Advantages of Planning**

Planning facilitates management by objectives. Planning minimizes uncertainties. Planning facilitates co-ordination. It improves employees' moral. It also facilitates control and provides competitive edge. Planning encourages innovations. It highlights the purposes for which various activities are to be undertaken. Infact, it makes objectives clear and specific. Planning compels a manager to prepare a Blue- print of the courses of action to be followed for accomplishment of objectives. Planning facilitates coordination and revolves around organizational goals.

### **Planning in Business Environments**

Management theorist Henri Fayol (1841-1925) whose work still endures today included planning amongst what said were the prime responsibilities of management:

- 1 Planning
- 2 Organizing
- 3 Command
- 4 coordinating
- 5 Control

He described planning as 'examining the future, deciding what needs to be done and developing a plan of action' When planning is systematic and goes in sequence, it is referred to as “strategic planning”.

### **Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning helps determine the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, matching its resources to its changing environment and, in particular, its markets, customers and clients so as to meet stakeholder expectations –Johnson and Schales, 1993.

Strategic planning therefore is a systematic process of envisioning a desired future and translating this vision into broadly defined goals or objectives and a sequence of steps to achieve them. In contrast to long-term planning (which begins with the current status and lays down a part to meet estimated future needs), strategic planning begins with the desired-end and works backward to the current status. At every stage of long-range planning the planner asks “what must be done here to reach the next (higher) stage?.

### **The Classic 4- Step Approach to Strategic Planning**

The 4-step approach is a simple structure that helps us to look both holistically and in detail at the drafting and development as well as the implementation of our plan:

- 1 Step 1: where are we now?
- 2 Step 2: where do we want to get to?
- 3 Step 3: how do we get there?
- 4 Step 4: how do we know when we get there?

### **Development Plans**

The ultimate aim of governments across the globe is to achieve sustainable improvement in the welfare or quality of life of its citizenry. In this regard, nation states no matter their size or developmental status strive to achieve some measure of good governance. Achieving the goals of governance requires that deliberate action plans be set to guide governance throughout the process. This plan exposes the detailed vision, focus and steps to be followed such as the overall vision of the government, what is expected to be achieved at the end of the plan period, the direction of public and private investments, the pace and focus of infrastructural development etc. While the plan is purely a guide and amenable to review (or redirection) as dictated by the operating environment, its absence can however spell doom for the country. Development planning therefore, becomes a necessary tool by many countries and organizations to set their visions, goals and effective means of realizing development through effective direction and control.

For more than two decades, most African countries have been plunged into economic crises which have seriously affected the well-being of large sections of their populations, weakened nation states and increased social and political tensions. The continued suffering emanating from such economic crises have resulted in 'reactive' policy initiatives aimed at ameliorating the multi-faceted negative impacts of the crises. As a result, most African countries are presently undergoing managed adjustment processes with profound implications for all sectors of the economy. The crises have also resulted in far-reaching dependence upon and interference from external forces, notably multilateral and bilateral donors, as these nations attempt to set out their plans for sustainable development. With particular reference to Nigeria, she is presently rated along with countries that can be referred to as failed states, that is countries still at war or just coming out of war. This is in spite of the nation's vast and enormous natural and human resources endowment base, given her present development status. Like most other countries of the world, Nigeria has never lacked development (economic) plans/visions. Her development planning experience predates her independence in the sixties.

### **Development**

Development in its simplest form means to improve or become more advanced, more mature, more complete, more organized, more transformed, etc. Todaro(1982), views the concept as a “multi-dimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of the entire economic and social system”. This involves in addition to improvement on income and output, radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes, customs and belief. Todaro's definition gives the meaning, which the concept of development assumes whenever it is discussed in relation to countries. Development at this level of conceptualization is often understood in terms of economic development but, the new focus is now beyond income or innate factors such as GNP or GDP to human focus in terms of quality of life. Ibezim (1999) further explain that economic development does not only involve

physical and financial progress but also improvements in the political and social aspects of society. Both as a theoretical construct and a strategy for practice, development is largely a product of the last 65 years. Despite the argument of some writers like Cowen and Shenton (1996), that its origins lie in the century prior to 1945, the shaping of development theory and practice, and its institutionalization, has been a recent phenomenon (Rist, 1997: McMichael, 1996). Yet, although it emerged from the aftermath of the last great global conflict (Second World War), development has been pursued against the backdrop of a long catalogue of more or less continuous political and social conflicts throughout the world (Overton, 2000).

### **Development Planning**

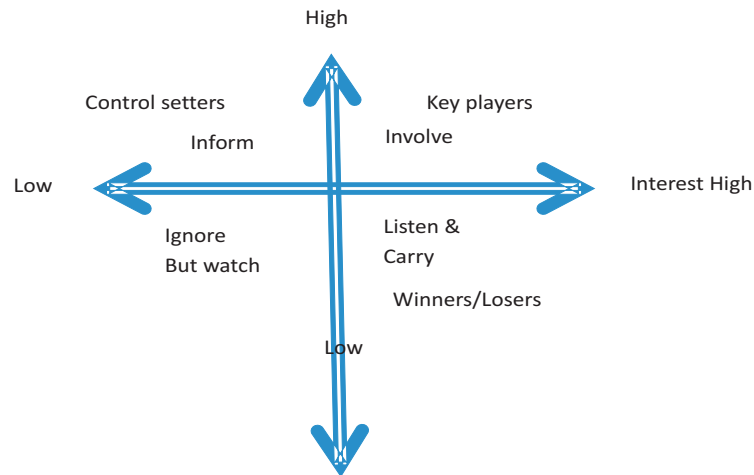
Marcellus (2009) posits that the conceptualization of development as given by Ibezim (1999) above has some serious implications for a holistic development planning in developing countries. To him, Ibezim's (1999) submission promotes the idea and practice of equating development planning with economic planning as the economy is usually regarded as the bedrock for a nation's development. Understood this way, Jhingan (2005:489) believes development planning implies, "deliberate control and direction of the economy by a central authority for the purpose of achieving definite targets and objectives within a specified period of time". However, emphasis on purely economic factors in development planning has not been successful in achieving development in the economic sector talk less of the overall national planning to increase the rate of economic development by increasing the rate of capital formation through raising the levels of income, saving and investment.

Against the foregoing, one can conclude that, Development planning comprehensively involves predetermining a nation's visions, missions, policies and programmes in all facets of life such as social, human, political, environmental, technological factors, etc. and the means of achieving them. Economic visions and programmes cannot be realized without looking at developmental issues holistically, which entails improvement in all human endeavors. Development planning presupposes a formally predetermined rather than a sporadic action towards achieving specific developmental results. More importantly, it entails direction and control towards achieving plan targets.

### **Theoretical Literature**

Theories of development planning

Prince water house (1980), in his development planning theory, outlines a matrix on how to prioritize stakeholders and make decisions about their entrance within the planning process. The matrix runs thus: Power/ Influence



Sally Markwell: adapted from: <http://www.cphp.uk.com/downloads/GN%20stakeholders%20Analysis%20Form.pdf>.

Stakeholder analysis (illustrated above) is the identification of a project's key stakeholders, an assessment of their interests in the strategic planning and the ways in which these may affect a project. The reason for doing a stakeholder analysis is to help identify:

1. Which individuals or organizations to include in your planning process.
2. What roles they should play and at what stage.
3. Who you should build relationships with and how you might nurture those relationships.

### Dependency Theory

Dependency theory developed in the late 1950s under the guidance of the Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, Raúl Prebisch. Prebisch and his colleagues were troubled by the fact that economic growth in the advanced industrialized countries did not necessarily lead to growth in the poorer countries. Indeed, their studies suggested that economic activity in the richer countries often led to serious economic problems in the poorer countries. Such a possibility was not predicted by neoclassical theory, which had assumed that economic growth was beneficial to all (pareto optimal) even if the benefits were not always equally shared.

Vincent (1996), of Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA, presents the central propositions of dependency theory. For him, there are a number of propositions, all of which are contestable, which form the core of dependency theory. The propositions include:

1. Underdevelopment is a condition fundamentally different from undevelopment. The latter term simply refers to a situation in which resources are not being used. For example, the European colonists viewed the North

- American continent as an undeveloped area. The land was not actively cultivated on a scale consistent with its potential. Underdevelopment refers to the situation in which resources are being actively used, but used in such a way which benefits dominant states and not the poorer states in which the resources are found.
2. The distinction between underdevelopment and undevelopment places the poorer countries of the world in a profoundly different historical context. These countries are not “behind” or “catching up” to the richer countries of the world. They are not poor because they lagged behind the scientific transformations or the enlightenment values of the European states. They are poor because they were coercively integrated into the European economic system only as producers of raw materials or to serve as repositories of cheap labor, and are denied the opportunity to market their resources in any way that competed with dominant states.
  3. Dependency theory suggests that alternative uses of resources are preferable to the resource usage patterns imposed by dominant states. There is no clear definition of what these preferred patterns might be, some criteria are involved. For example, one of the dominant states practices most often criticized by dependency theorists is export agriculture. The criticism is that many poor economies experience rather high rates of malnutrition even though they produce great amounts of food for export. Many dependency theorists would argue that those agricultural lands should be used for domestic food production in order to reduce the rates of malnutrition.
  4. The preceding proposition can be amplified: dependency theorists rely upon a belief that there exists a clear “national” economic interest which can and should be articulated for each country. In this respect, dependency theory actually shares a similar theoretical concern with realism. What distinguishes the dependency perspective is that its proponents believed that this national interest can only be satisfied by addressing the needs of the poor within a society, rather than through the satisfaction of corporate or governmental needs. Trying to determine what is “best” for the poor is a difficult analytical problem over the long run. Dependency theorists have not yet articulated an operational definition of the national economic interest.
  5. The diversion of resources overtime (and one must remember that dependent relationships have persisted since the European expansion beginning in the fifteenth century) is maintained not only by the power of dominant states, but also through the power of elites in the dependent states. Dependency theorists argue that these elites maintain a dependent relationship because their own private interests coincide with the interests of the dominant states. These elites are typically trained in the dominant states and share similar values and culture with the elites in dominant states. Thus, in a very real sense, a dependency relationship is a “voluntary” relationship. One need not argue that the elites in a dependent state are consciously betraying the interests of their poor; the elites sincerely believe that the key to economic development lies in following the

prescriptions of liberal economic doctrine.

### **Rostow's Theory of Modernization/Development**

The Modernization theory is one which states that “development in developing countries can be attained by following the processes of development used by current developed nations (Rostow, 1960). It is a social economic theory which is sometimes known as the development theory. It highlights the positive role played by those countries which are developed in modernizing and facilitating sustainable development in those countries that are less developed and it often contrasted to dependency theory. This means that for development to occur in underdeveloped countries, there is need for developed countries to provide aid to developing countries to enable them learn from their own progress. It looks at the state to be the central actor in bringing about modernization in societies that are backward. The theory also believes that it was possible for equal development to be reached between the underdeveloped and developed countries (Hollis and Robinson, 1986)

### **The Thrust of the Theory**

#### **The Traditional Society Stage**

This is known as the traditional society which is associated with the country that has not yet developed but the majority of the people are engaged in subsistence agriculture and investments are channeled to services or activities such as military and religion. It is important to understand that this stage of development is concerned with societies that have a pre-scientific understanding of gadgets (Hollis, 1979).

### **Second Stage: Economic Growth**

The second stage of development is called the pre-condition for take-off. The economy undergoes a process of change for building up of conditions for growth and take-off. Rostow (1960) asserts that the changes in this stage are fundamental in nature in the socio-political structure and production technique. It is characterized by massive development of mining industries, increase in capital use in agriculture, necessity of external funding and some growth in savings and investments. It also consists of certain dimensions that are associated with this transition from traditional society through the conditions to the take-off phase. For example, there is shift from agrarian to industrial or manufacturing society: trade and other commercial activities are broadened to reach not only local markets but also international markets and there is no waste of resources as surpluses attained by the land owners are used to develop industries, infrastructure and preparation for self-sustained growth development (Hollis and Ribinson, 1986). It is the stage in which agriculture is commercialized and mechanized to bring about technological advancement and growth in entrepreneurship activities. The main focus of this stage is to ensure that investment levels are above 5% of the national income depending on various sectors of the economy. The agricultural activities play an important role in the process of transition or development.



**Third Stage: Take-off.**

The third stage is called the take-off stage of development which is sometimes called the stage of economic take-off. It is characterized by dynamic economic growth which is due to share stimulus of economic, political or technological in nature. The main focus of this stage is the aspect of self- sustained growth. It is also referred to be an interval when the old blocks and resistance to steady growth have been removed (Rostow, 1953).

**Fourth Stage: Drive to Maturity**

The fourth stage after the take-off stage is the drive to maturity which is concerned with the extension of modern technology over other sectors of the economy or society. Drive to maturity stage refers to the period when a country has effectively applied the range of modern technology to the bulk of its resources (Rostow, 1953).

In this stage, growth becomes self-sustaining in the sense that wealth generation activities enable further investment in value adding industry and development. It is important to understand that during this stage the economy finds its place in the international economy and those goods that were imported begin to be produced locally and new requirements for import are developed (Todaro and Smith, 2003). It is generally an improvement on the take –off whose economy focused relatively on narrow complex of industrialization and technology and the economy of the maturity stage extends its range into a more refined and technologically often more complex processes.

**Fifth Stage: High Mass Consumption**

The fifth and final stage is called the age of high mass consumption were the leading sectors in the society shift towards durable goods and hardly remember the subsistence activities of other stages.

**Nigeria: 1960 to Date.**

At independence in 1960, expectations were high. It was therefore anticipated that political freedom would usher in a new thinking and new policies which together would lead to a rapid transformation of the country from exploitation and underdevelopment as a former colony. Nigerians were so optimistic about the bright prospects of Nigeria becoming a country where its citizenry will live in justice, peace and prosperity as could be found anywhere else on the globe. 55years after independence, these aspirations have been dashed and the present generation remains confused and they must be justifiable in asking for explanations from the older generations. Several development plans have come and gone and the nation's poor development performance could be explained from a number of perspectives. These include:

Political Instability: Between 1960 and 2016, the world's most populous black nation has witnessed not less than 15 heads of state (an average of three years each). Nine of these were not elected. Out of the remaining six, only two were elected through processes that could be adjudged as free and fair. Thus, the nation has not experienced

the kind of stable political atmosphere necessary for growth and development in democratic societies. This has retarded the nation's rapid economic development and a number of reasons have been given.

Other reasons range from tribalism/ethnicity/sectarianism, to neo-colonialism after 1960, bad governance/corruption etc. These factors have succeeded in rubbishing all development plans/strategies to move the country forward; there has also been the emphasis of good plans with poor implementation- an argument that has little or no validity considering the concept/principles/models of planning as presented in this paper.

### **Turning Point in Nigeria's Development Planning**

In 1946, the first attempt at development planning was introduced through a 10-year plan of development and welfare for Nigeria. The plan was purely expenditure- related as its main aim was “primarily to guide the allocation of the development and welfare funds made available by the imperial power, Britain” (Adamolekun, 1983:157). Major areas of attention were transport, communication and a few cash crops (Obikeze and Obi, 2004). Little attention was paid to developing the productive base and defining a comprehensive development objective for the country. The plan suffered a revision half way through in 1951 and the introduction of a federal structure in 1954 reduced its efficacy. However, it continued to guide the central and regional governments until the launching of the First National Development Plan in 1962. Ademolekun (1983) and Ayo (1988) exhaustively listed the problems that marred the plan. They include poor financial resources for plan implementation, weak formulation and implementation machinery, lack of technical skills by the generalist administrators who prepared the plan, and the absence of clearly defined national objectives.

### **The Era of Fixed Medium-Term Plans**

Within this period, four successive plans were entrusted to the few Nigerian technocrats (who had played only a minor role in the plan's formulation). This meant that the chance of the planning implemented successfully was very limited. There was also the military take-over in 1966 and subsequent 30 months civil war from 1967 to 1970. The plan saw the establishment of the Niger Dam, the port- Harcourt Refinery, The Nigeria Security and Minting plant, The Jebba Paper Mill, The Niger Bridge, and The Bacita Sugar Mill.

### **The Second National Development Plan**

The subsequent plan in this era (2<sup>nd</sup> National Development Plan- 1970-1974) witnessed attempts to rectify some of the shortcomings of the first development plan. The planning machinery was strengthened and inputs were drawn from all relevant bodies and ministries including the Federal office of Statistics, the National Manpower Board, Universities, trade unions, etc. Five objectives were spelt out. These were to establish Nigeria firmly as:

- i. A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
- ii. A great and dynamic economy
- iii. A just and egalitarian society,
- iv. A land of bright and full opportunities and
- v. A free and democratic society.

These national objectives were considered so important that they were included in the 1979 Constitution. Yet, such inclusion did not actually influence plan implementation as they were not legally enforceable. Abasili (2004:94) in part reports that “the directive principles were not legally enforceable”. Part of the problems remained lack of the will to perform, lack of finance, corruption, mono cultural oil economy etc.

### **Third & Fourth National Development Plans**

The serious impact of a mono cultural economy in which over 90% of the government's source of revenue upon which development plans were based became more critical from the Third and Fourth National development plans. In the Third plan for instance, the government could only spend #29.43 billion out of the projected #43.31 billion as reviewed. In the Fourth plan, only #17.33 billion was actually spent against the projected total expenditure of #42.20 billion. Okojie (2002) shows an analysis of Nigeria economic (GDP) growth rate of 5.1%, 8.2%, 5.0% and 1.2% for the First, Second, Third and Fourth fixed term planning periods respectively. The truth indeed is that planning in Nigeria markedly showed increasing development crisis that climaxed with the Fourth plan. Development Planning is meant to control the future. But within this era, plans were rather overwhelmed by the future and external events especially the fluctuations of oil pricing, which even happened in some cases immediately after the launching of the plans. Okojie laments that:

at the end of the four plan periods, the foundation for sustainable growth and development was yet to be laid. The productive base of the economy and sources of government revenue were yet to be diversified. The economy did not have its own driving force and was therefore, highly susceptible to external shocks.

### **The Rolling Plan Era (1990-1998)**

Development planning in Nigeria had hit the rocks by 1986 following the huge deficits accruing from the third and fourth development plans. The country's external debt burden now stood at about \$22 billion dollars and to guarantee further debts rescheduling the nation's creditors had to be involved in her development planning. Thus, an emergency programme of structural programme became- inevitable. SAP was inevitably introduced under the supervision of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The programme underscored a shift from project- based planning system, and emphasized a private sector- led philosophy that had inspired previous plans. SAP also presented the opportunity for reevaluating the planning system for the country as the fixed medium term planning system had failed.

A three tier planning system was to succeed SAP, which had only 2years to do the magic that never was. The new proposal consisted of:

- i. A 15-20 year Perspective or Long term Plan;
- ii. A three- year Rolling Plan; and
- iii. An Annual Budget that will draw from the Rolling Plan (Okojie, 2002).

### **The New Democratic Dispensation (1999-2007): Needs-Vision, Objective sand Strategies**

After a long period of military rule, democratic governance returned to Nigeria in May, 1999. This saw the introduction of NEEDS. NEEDS was described as Nigeria's plan for prosperity. It was a four year medium term plan for the period 2003 to 2007. It was a federal government plan which expected the states and local governments to have their counterpart plans. Thus, the country witnessed the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) at the Federal level, State Economic Empowerment and Development strategy at the state level (SEEDS) and the Local Government Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy at the local government level (LEEDS), respectively. Even the Private Sector, the general public and the Non-governmental agencies were all involved in the pursuit of developmental goals. It was not only a macro-economic plan document but also a comprehensive vision, goals and principles of new Nigeria that would be made possible through re-enacting core Nigerian values like respect for elders, honesty and accountability, cooperation, industry, discipline, self-confidence and moral courage.

#### **As Established in NEEDS Document**

Needs wished to significantly eradicate poverty in Nigeria. It aimed to create Nigeria that Nigerians can be proud to belong and grateful to inhabit, a Nigeria that promotes self-reliance, entrepreneurship, innovation, reward shard work, protects its people and their property, and offers its children better prospects than those they may be tempted to seek in Europe or the United States (National Planning Commission and Central Bank of Nigeria 2005:4).

Like every other plan before it, NEEDS was also a failure as Nnadozie(2003) laments that:

Not much has been done by the various schemes of the programme to eradicate poverty as funds allocated to the agency are too small to create any significant impact in addition to other militating problems. For instance in 2005 approximately #500 million were disbursed to 120,000 people to enable them set up small enterprises (CBN, 2005).

#### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The Nigeria economic experiences since 1914, in many circles have been viewed as chequered as not even the vision 2020 of the Yar 'Adua administration succeeded in making any positive impact. It has been a catalogue of stories of woe as the economy has

grown from bad to worse and there is even the fear of an imminent recession. An appraisal of the various development plans since independence portrays the country as not having embarked on any serious development plans or even planning to fail. This is in view of the concept/process of planning. The essence of monitoring and evaluation at every stage in the planning process provides for fine-tuning to ensure effective starting and finishing achieving results. Failure to deliver is an indication that the nation has just been wandering without focus. Hence, the nation's economic experience has been adventurous and not an expedition.

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