Sustainable Development and Good Governance: a Theoretical Overview

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A b s t r a c t

The Global arena is made up of people with diverse socio-political background, heritage and identities. These distinguish them as a people, with unique characteristics and common aspirations. Their world view and social relations are anchored on a global economic bond that brings them together. As the world gradually becomes a global village, they are economically linked to a productive and consumption chain. More worrisome is the geometric growth of the world population which has placed enough pressure on the available natural resources. In this scenario, how can we satisfy the needs of the teeming population without mortgaging the interest of the future?. Perhaps this was why the United Nations declared the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs) on September 25, 2015. This paper, therefore seeks to examine how sustainable development can promote good governance. In carrying out this study, we relied on two sources for our data collection. These include primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include interviews and group discussions, while the secondary sources include archival materials, review of existing literature, newspaper s, magazines and bulletins. It was discovered that the unsustainable consumption of goods and services have the potential of placing humanity on a threshold of extinction. We therefore recommend that in view of the fact that our natural resources are not inexhaustible, sustainable development should be adopted as a strategy for good governance, and human security.

Keywords: *Human security, Development, Culture, Good governance, Sustainable development*

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Background to the Study

The globe is endowed with essential resources for the sustenance of humanity. Without these resources, humanity will unarguably be on the fast lane of extinction. But they are not inexhaustible, hence a prudent management of our environment has become a desideratum. Thus, protecting the environment against despoliation and unsustainable exploitation becomes means of guaranteeing the rights of future generation, meeting the basic needs of the people and the much-yearned good governance. With the historic scientific and technological revolutions, and the increase in global population which has necessitated a growing increase in the consumption of resources, it is no more an unfounded pandemonium to surmise that our society is gradually moving to a tenterhook. It was this gloomy environmental situation that induced most of the environmentally-related global discourses starting with the United Nations Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972. At the core of these discourses is how to ensure the well being of the present and future generation through a sustainable appropriation of nature's resources. This is the essence of sustainable development and good governance. Since the environment is the bedrock of all human activities, it is imperative that we appreciate its limits and capacity because,

> *failure to appreciate the limits, to which the environment can accept residuals imposed by man and reverse to credence, perhaps becomes the greatest business risk we run. Robust ideas and magnificent postulations, as to how an environment can be protected or conserved, so as to move the economy forward can be progressive when everybody accord time to environmental nurturing, with its green seed that bears the desired fruit (Chukwuigwe, 200:28).*

Unfortunately, appreciable effort has not been made by African states to lay a firm foundation for the triumph of sustainable development. Most scholars have attributed this to a shallow commitment to democracy, self-idolization, most importantly the conscious evisceration of the tenets of good governance, personalistic and particularistic use of power essentially for private ends (Young, 2012:188). In this scenario, politics of exclusion and dogged reliance on extrinsic agents becomes the mode of governance. Most of the time, they are beclouded by the 'expert' advice of the marabout of development who foist on them a development strategy that is crafted in commodity fetishism and putrid economism of the western developmentalist ideology (Onimode et al, 2004:21). With this alliance, it becomes possible to jettison values that would embolden the spirit of the people for social networks. Perhaps, this accounts for the dire poverty in spite of the unrivalled reservoir of reaches in the continent. The aim of this paper is to examine sustainable development and how it can enhance good governance in Africa.

Conceptual Clarification

A better understanding of some of the concepts that will feature in this paper would be explained for a proper comprehension of the work. These concepts are Sustainable Development and Good Governance. The concept Sustainable Development became prominent in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the realization that humanity will face a dead end if there is no brake on the consumption locomotion. The WWF's Living Planet Index reported that there was a 35% decline in the earth's ecological health since 1970. This means that with the untrammeled and unregulated exploitation of natural resources, the world's ecosystems have been placed on the path of depletion. Beder (1994:1) stated that:

> *Sustainable development is part of a second wave of environmentalism and heralds a new approach to tackling environmental problems, a shift from protest to consensus*

and negotiation. The first wave of environmentalism was associated with the counter-culture movement of the 1960s and 1970s. It grew out of traditional nature conservation concerns into an awareness of the potential for a global ecological crisis and was clearly a protest movement.

These protests, movements and conferences were precipitated by the unsustainable use of industrial products, with their unwholesome effect on the environment. Specifically, the emission of Greenhouse Gases (GhGs) like carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (NOX), Carbon monoxide (CO) and chlorofluoro carbons (CFCs) into the atmosphere have the capacity to weaken the ozone layer, and increase the intensity of the sun's ultra-violet rays on the earth. The possible consequence of these, is increase in the earth's temperature, rapid melting of Iceland and rise of sea level, desertification and poor agricultural yield. All these point to the inescapable fact that there is need for a sustainable resource use, and that our environment must be protected to support and sustain present and future generation. According to the Brundtland Commission,

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

This definition takes for granted the inseparability and seamless relationship between the environment and development. The goal of Sustainable Development (SD) is to preserve human life and the environment. It means a high quality of life for the people, concern for our planet, and abhors unsustainable consumption. Therefore,

Sustainable development describes a process in which the natural resource base is not allowed to deteriorate. It emphasizes the hitherto unappreciated role of the environmental quality and environmental inputs in the process of raising real income and quality of life (Oyeshola, 2008:1161)

An essential ingredient of SD is Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP). The 1994 Oslo symposium on SCP defines it as:

The use of services and related products which respond to the basic needs and bring better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resource, and toxic materials as well as emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generation.

From the foregoing, we can see that SD is principally focused on achieving three major goals:
 i   Economic growth that is environmentally sustainable.
 ii   Environmental protection.
 iii Social equality.

These variables are interrelated, and to neglect any one is to derail the ideals of SD . It is not amazing that Desais, Nitun, Deputy Secretary-General of the Rio Summit in 1992 noted that Sustainable development is a bridge concept connecting economics, ecology and ethics. The challenge is to integrate various sectoral policies such as agricultural, energy, trade and investment. To get real action, SD must extend to all sectoral agencies and most importantly to key stakeholders. Perhaps this was why Beder (1994:3) stated that:

Ecologically, sustainable development provides a conceptual framework for integrating these economic and environmental objectives so that production processes and services can be developed that are both internationally competitive and more environmentally compatible.

It is within this scenario that we can see SD as a clarion call to divert the attention of humanity to the twin dangers of unsustainable consumption and poverty. As the earth's resources continue to deplete and environment degraded, many people are placed on the edge of poverty. The 2007 report of the African Economic Outlook stated that 210 million people live on less than $1 per day and 80% of the world's population live on less than $10 per day. Therefore, to enforce environmental discipline, poverty must be eradicated. After all, of all the pollutants we face, the worst is poverty (Oyeshola, 2008:38). Resolution 66/288 of the Rio Summit of 2012 (Rio + 20) titled The Future We Want, unambiguously stated that;

> Poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. In this regard, we are committed to freeing humanity from poverty and hunger as a matter of urgency.

In the same vein, the Johannesburg Declaration noted that the worldwide condition that pose severe threat to Sustainable Development of our people include chronic hunger, malnutrition, foreign occupation, armed conflict … and illicit drugs. This was also emphasized in the United Nations resolution A/RES/70/1 of September 25, 2015. It averred that Sustainable Development recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, combating inequality within and among countries, preserving the planet, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and fostering social inclusion are linked to each other and are interdependent. SD, therefore, is a comprehensive and holistic concept whose avowed objective is the improvement of the welfare and happiness of humanity, without unnecessarily damaging the ecosystem and mortgaging the future generations. It underlies the salient fact that economic growth, human progress are mutually indispensable and inseparable. It is against this backdrop that myriad conferences have been organized by the UN and other concerned social groups. These include, but not limited to the UN conference on Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden from June 5-16, 1972. This conference led to the formation of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) in 1973, and the Declaration of the 26 Principles focusing on the environment and development. The Brundtland Commission otherwise known as the World Conference on Environment and Development (WCED) set up by the former Secretary-General of the UN, Javier Perez de Cueller.

The UN Resolution ARES/38/161 of 1983 mandated the commission to:
i. Propose long-term environmental strategies for achieving SD to the year 2000 and beyond.
ii. Consider ways and means by which the international community can deal more effectively with environmental concerns in the light of other recommendations in its report. The commission headed by Gro Harlem Brundtland from Norway laid the foundation for more conferences and deepened popular interest on the environment and SD. Some of these conferences include:
iii. The Rio de Janerio, Brazil in 1992 often called the Earth Summit. A fall out of this conference is the Agenda 21.
iv. The establishment of the UN commission on Sustainable Development(UNCSD)..
v. The UN conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janerio, January, 2012 otherwise called Rio + 20.
vi. 3rd UN conference on Environment and Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, 2012.

It was in furtherance of the ideals and vision of SD that the UN through resolution A/RES/70/1 of September, 2015 declared the Sustainable Development Goals – Transforming our world. The Agenda 2030 . SDGs reinforces the commitment of world leaders to transform the globe in the next fifteen years through SD. Hence, it is an agenda for 2030. SDGs is not an isolated and exclusive project, but a follow up of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other concerns aimed at improving the quality of human life and preserving the environment. In its Preamble, it stated that:

> *This agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognize that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty is the greatest global challenge and indispensable requirement for sustainable development.*

Good governance is associated with the power to administer State resources, to guarantee the basic needs of the people. It involves the responsibility and responsiveness of public officials to govern in accordance with democratic tenets. The commission on Global Governance (1985) noted that governance is the sum of the variety of ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manager their common affairs. It is a continuous process through which conflict or diverse interests may be accommodated and comprehensive action taken. According to Adedeji and Ayo (2000:75),

> Good governance depends on the extent to which a government is perceived and accepted as legitimate, committed to improving the public welfare and responsive to the needs of its citizens, competent to assure law and order and deliver public services, able to create enabling environment for production activities, and equitable in its conduct.

It involves the whole gamut of organizational effectiveness, policy formulation and implementation. All these are geared towards socio-political growth, macroeconomic stability and the public good. Good governance is directed towards meeting the people's needs and guaranteeing their human security. Hence, some of its essential traits include:
(i)   Managerial and organizational efficacy.
(ii)   Strict observance to rule of law and popular participation.
(iii)   Effective seal setting and public accountability leading to effective governmental performance (Vinod and Deshpande, 2013:29a).

This fact was reinforced by the World Bank (2000) when it declared that it is the form of political regime, the process by which governmental power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources and government capacity to implement public policies. Good governance is bayed up when democratic tenets are institutionalized in the State.

Sustainable Development and Good Governance
As we noted in the previous section, sustainable development presupposes the use of the environment and the resources therein to sustain the wellbeing of the present and accommodate succeeding generation. This calls for a prudent management of resources that requires effective collaboration of the leadership and the followership. It is not only concerned with development, but one that encompasses all the social activities of the people, and can be sustained from one epoch to the other. Hence, it is a goal that emphasizes a long-term

(intergenerational) and holistic perspective, integrating economic, political, social, cultural, technological and environmental dimensions (Akpotor, Otite et al, 2010:95). Two salient facts need to be appreciated here . These are:

(i) That human beings, not necessarily economic factors are at the centre of development, and

(ii) That we are borrowers of earth from our grand children and must hand it on to them in reasonable usable shape (Albert, Eselebor and Danjibo, 2012:5).

The primacy of people in any development strategy has been elucidated by Adedeji (1989) especially when he was the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Commission for Africa (UNCA). He had emphasized that:

> *It is only people who make development possible. Unless they participate in policy making, they are not likely to be enthusiastic in their implementation… the human factor is the ultimate dialectic whereby people are necessarily and, immutably and the mentors of the process of change and transformation and the beneficiaries of such process. Thus, our future development must be human-centered and must be dedicated to the goal of ensuring the overall wellbeing of the people through the equitable distribution of the fruits of development (Adedeji, 1989:5).*

On December 4, 1986 during the 25th anniversary of the United Nations (UN), the UN Declaration on the Right of Development was proclaimed. While Article I stated that the right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate, Article 2 stated unequivocally that human person is the central subject of development and should be active participant and beneficiary of the right of development. Impelled by the desire for an equitable distribution of the fruits of development, the UN established the UN office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) in November, 2011. Among other things, UNOSD is to:

(i) Facilitate knowledge exchange

(ii) Reform research and policy analysis

(iii) Provide opportunities for capacity building

(iv) Help to form and nurture networks and partnerships.

Since development is human-centered, building the capacity and competences of the people becomes a sure way of eliciting the participation and contribution of the people to the change and development processes. Perhaps, this was why the UN Resolution 66/288 of January 12, 2002 often called The Future We Want, stated that:

> *We emphasize the need for enhanced capacity building for sustainable development and, in this regard, we call for strengthening technical and scientific cooperation including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation's. We reintegrate the importance of human resource development including training exchange assistance for capacity and expertise, knowledge transfer and technical assistance for capacity building, which involves strengthening institutional capacity including planning, management and monitoring capacities (The Future We Want, 2012, Paragraph 277).*

The mantra of sustainable development is clear. That the unsustainable economic activities in this epoch of globalization can be damaging to the environment and stultify development. That the dire poverty, widening economic inequality and mal-development, especially in

Africa, cannot provoke good governance. Good governance thrives with equitable, prudent management of resources, sustainable consumption. It emphasizes strict and adherence to democratic values and etiquette. This is why Section 1 of Agenda 21 placed emphasis on changing consumption patterns, combating poverty in developing countries and conservation and management of resources. It is against this backdrop that Onimode et al (2004:236) opined that:

> *Sustainable development is development that not only generates economic growth but also distributes its benefits equitably, that regenerates the environment rather than destroying it, that empowers people rather than marginalizing them. It is development that gives priority to the poor, enlarging their choices and opportunities and providing for their participation in decisions that affect their lives. Sustainable development that is pro-people, pro-nature, pro-jobs and pro-women.*

From the above, sustainable development enables, ensures and emboldens an atmosphere of responsibility and responsiveness of public officers (Jega, 2007:158). This is the bedrock of good governance which has as its starting point, the primacy of the people and sustainability of development. It is within this milieu of sustainability, accountability and transparency that the people enjoy the fruits of development. Indeed, the two concepts complement each. While the one provides the basic institutions and processes that would support equity and justice, the other creates a leeway for popular participation, strengthens capacity building processes and assures the wellbeing of the people. The aftermath of this combination is sustainable peace and environmental justice. A society on this pedestal would not experience penury, chronic disease and starvation. It is in this sense that development alongside sustainability can be far-reaching and more impactful (Odai, 2017:2). As Igbuzor (2002:269) puts:

> *Good governance entails respect of the rule of law, ensuring effective delivery of public goods and services, participation of all (men and women) in the decision-making process, institutional effectiveness and accountability.*

Sadly, Africa has fallen short of the values of these fundamental concepts necessary for a self-sustaining trajectory. The result is that the mass of the people are acutely suffering the darkest misery, consolidated by a combination of leadership ineptitude and inhibiting paternalistic influence. It is this overbearing influence that has stiffed the emergence of self-reliant sustaining development initiative right from the 1960s. Correspondingly, good governance has become an illusion. The negative realities of disastrous failure of leadership in the continent necessitated the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme (AAF-SAP) in the 1980s. In fact,

> *AAF-SAP as an African alternative to SAP was to create an enabling environment for suitable development through a broad participation in decision-making, consensus building, maintenance of equity and justice, elimination of civil strife and instability, facilitation of access to opportunities for all and creating a favourable investment clement (Onimode et al, 2004:39).*

Today, most African energetic youths have taken the dehumanizing option of crossing the Atlantic Ocean to Europe for what they call 'huzzle'. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2016, more than 227,316 Africans migrated to Europe (especially Greece, Cyprus and Spain). In the same year, about 2,920 death occurred and within the first six months of 2015, about 1,838 migrants died. As a result of the absence of a sustainable development process in the continent, the younger generation feel disillusioned

and can only realize his/her dream outside the continent, hence growing of number of migrants to Europe (see table 1).

Table 1: African Immigrants in Europe

Country	African Population	Year
France	35.5 million	2014
United Kingdom	2,800,000 million	2011
Germany	800,000	2015
Italy	1.6 million	2015
Spain	683,000	2015
Belgium	550,000 – 600,000	2015
Portugal	700,000	2008
Turkey	50,000	N.A
Switzerland	73,553	2009

Source: Wiki/African.immigration-to-Europe. Retrieved on 16/01/2017

All these signpost the neglect of African leaders to implement a sustainable development strategy that would provoke a qualitative and quantitative improvement on the wellbeing of the people. It is this neglect that has stifled the efflorescence of good governance, and inability of the continent to make any appreciable impact on the global chessboard.

Conclusion

The world has become a global village because of the deepening forces of globalization. This has facilitated an immensurable consumption of resources, especially those who have the competitive advantage. Consequently, a global inequality has ensued. The 2008 World Bank Indicators reported that the share of world's private consumption in 2005 was in this order. World Middle 60% consumed 21.9%, World poorest consumed 1.5%, and world's richest 20% consumed 79.6%. The friends of the Earth in 2000 stated that the United States of America emitted over 4,000,000,000 Ibs of pollutant a year and produce 22% of world's total carbon dioxide emission. Kordlo (2013:133) noted that in 1960, the income gap between 20 percent of the richest and 20% poorest countries in the world was 30 to 1. This rose to 60 to 1 in 1990 and to around 75 to 1 at the last century. In Africa, resources are distributed in a way that benefits those within the corridors of power and their cronies, while the majority wallow in unending starvation and depression. In this scenario, good governance becomes a phantom, a tale told by a few denoting nothing to the governed. Albert et al (20012:5) stated that:

> Underdevelopment breeds deprivation, poverty, hunger and disease. A hungry man is an angry man… whether his hunger is caused by other men, by underdevelopment or by natural disasters. Thus, development by removing strain and deprivations from human life and making it possible for men to live a life, worthy of human dignity, brings about harmony and peace.

Peace and justice can only be institutionalized in an atmosphere of good governance and where development is not only sustainable but place a premium on the primacy of people. It is not for nothing that the UN Declaration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 15, 2015 has become a signpost for global development in the next fifteen years. Among the 17 Goals, Goal 1 seeks to end poverty in all forms everywhere, and Goal 12 is to ensure sustainable consumption and production pattern. These are necessary prerequisites for good governance, the latter cannot blossom in an environment laden with unemployment,

inequality, poverty, and exclusive governance. African leadership has failed to rise beyond neo-colonial trivialities dished out by those who present an all-purpose cure for the continent's development crisis. It has also failed to appreciate the fact that leadership is a catalyst for social transformation. The time has come for African leadership to tap into the creative energy that abound in the continent and institutionalize a process of good governance through sustainable development. As Chancellor Williams pontificated,

> *When, if ever black people actually organize as a race in their various population centers, they will find that those basic and guiding ideology they now seek and so much more are embedded in their own traditional philosophy and constitutional system, simply waiting to be extracted (Adedeji and Ayo, 2000:26).*

It is obvious that the mantra of sustainable development reinforces the chorus of good governance. It is a development that does not mortgage the future and suffocate the renaissance of human dignity. Onimode et al (2004:78) added that:

> *The development paradigm should also call for a shift in the definition of development from a purely economic perspective to cultural, historical, social, economic, political, environmental components. By so doing, development will adopt a holistic perspective, becoming inclusive and not exclusive in nature.*

In conclusion, therefore, Africa should not hesitate to appropriate the inherent benefit of sustainable development strategy for the welfare and happiness of the governed.

Recommendations
Based on the above, we make the following recommendations:
(i)   African leaders must become Pan African in all their activities.
(ii)   All development strategies must give a pride of place to the people as the beginning and end.
(iii)   Time has come for the resuscitation of the vision of LPA because of its inherent capacity for good governance.
(iv)   African resources must be equitably, prudently and judiciously managed as a prelude to poverty eradication.
(v)   Inter-African interaction and solidarity should be facilitated and heightened for cooperation and economic assistance. This will embolden our unique African Personality.

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