

GOOD GOVERNANCE AS A PANACEA FOR RAPID ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is on good governance as a panacea for rapid economic transformation in Nigeria. Amidst incidences of challenges in governance, corruption and growing insurgences, this theoretical paper examines the concept of good governance which is very essential as a precondition for rapid economic transformation and sustainable development. It also discusses the interface between these concepts and identifies strategies for ensuring good governance for sustainable growth and development in Nigeria. The country has the capacity to design pathways to a future grounded in equitable and sustainable development, which meets the needs of current generations without compromising those of the future. This study recommends that for policies to work, good governance is important. Political leadership matters, and so does a quality civil service, capacity building, effective strategic implementation to drive the vision forward in order to enhance the wellbeing of its citizens and the globe. It is our sincere hope that proper implementation of the recommended strategies will proffer reliable solution to ensure good governance for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Governance, Panacea, Economic Transformation, Growth and Sustainable Development

Background to the Study

The hope as well as the ultimate desire of human beings, wherever they find themselves particularly in their home country, is to enjoy certain level of good and quality life. As a result, all nations aspire to achieve or attain the goals of rapid economic transformation and sustainable development that would ensure that their citizens enjoy better conditions of living in their various communities. The so called

developed nations, by most indicators, are closer to some of the goals of economic transformation and sustainable development. Better conditions of living for citizens, has been achieved in the developed nations of the world.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions such as, income poverty, disease, hunger, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion while promoting gender equality, education as well as environmental sustainability. The MDGs are basic human rights, that is, the rights of people, wherever they may reside to health, education, shelter and security. However, for most of the third and fourth worlds, Nigeria inclusive, they are very far from these goals. In fact, most of these nations are on the reverse and may never achieve these goals unless consistent efforts are made to ensure good governance. For example, many of these third and fourth economies are still saddled with series of crisis, such as continuing food insecurity, rise in extreme poverty, high rate of unemployment, and a widespread shortfall for most of the MDGs.

Research on empirical determinants of economic growth has exploded over the years, as many cross-national studies have been undertaken to approach the elusive and ever-important question of what causes growth and prosperity of nations (Rodrick, 2000). Economists have traditionally focused on the effects of physical and human capital accumulation, total factor productivity, technological innovation, the process of knowledge creation and diffusion, and international integration.

However, in recent time, literatures have continue to stress that governance, broadly defined by Daron, Simeon, James and Yunyong, (2003), as the traditions and institutions that determine how authority is exercised in a country, matters to economic development. That is, experts have increasingly recognized that the issue of good governance has become an important concept in the international development debate and policy discourse. How important is good governance for economic growth and sustainable development? Can economic growth be sustained without good governance? The objective of this paper is to examine good governance as a penance for rapid economic transformation and sustainable development in Nigeria.

In view of the forgoing, the rest of this paper is structured as follows:

- (i) the conceptual definition of governance, rapid economic growth and sustainable development,
- (ii) interface between good governance, rapid economic transformation and sustainable development;

- (iii) strategies for ensuring good governance and sustainable development; (iv) challenges and opportunities of the above discussion
- (iv) and reference to the research questions and
- (v) conclusion and recommendations.

Review of Some Conceptual Issues

The Concept of Governance

Governance generally, implies the process by which decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented. Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. It is essentially a political process whereby decision and policies are taken for the benefit of the citizenry. According to UNESCAP (2009), governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). It is a concept that is applicable to corporate, international, national, local governance or to the interactions between other sectors of society.

In short, governance refers to tradition and institution that determine how authority is exercised in a particular country. This includes:

- 1 The process by which government are selected, held accountable, monitored and replaced;
- 2 The capacity of government to manage resources efficiently and formulate implement and enforce sound policies and regulations; and
- 3 The respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them (Kaufmann, et al. 2000 in Finance and Development by IMF).

Viewed in this context, governance could be good or bad depending on the manner and method of governing. Essentially, good governance is a model or methodology of comparing ineffective economies or political bodies with viable ones. Governance refers to structure and process for decision-making and accountability and the International Institute for Sustainable Development has long had an interest in governance as it relates to the achievement of sustainable development.

Good governance describes how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources. The UNDP (2002) defines good governance as striving for rule of law, transparency, equity, effectiveness/efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision in the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority. Simply put, it is the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realisation of human rights. Good governance accomplishes this in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the rule of law. Good governance is the exercise of power or authority, political, economic, administrative or otherwise to manage a country's

processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and harmonises their differences.

Governance as pointed out by the UN Human Development Report (2004) has two faces. The first is the leadership which has responsibilities derived from the principles of effective governmental organisations. The second is the governed, that is, the citizens who are responsible for making relevant inputs to the socio-economic and political affairs of their society. Simply put, governance is a relationship between rulers and the ruled, the state and society, the governors and the governed.

Good governance is about leadership and people-focused political institutions, working with the people to empower them to reach the highest points of their productive and creative abilities. Good governance is about democratising politics and economic opportunities, and opening sustainable options and possibilities for peace, harmony, unity, collective work, and collective progress.

Although good governance implies many different things in many different contexts depending on the organization in focus, it could be said to have several general characteristics. Good governance according to UNESCAP (2009) has eight major characteristics. The first is participatory by both men and women which is key to good governance. The second is the rule of law which requires a fair legal framework that is enforced impartially. It also requires full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. Impartial enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary as well as incorruptible police force. The third characteristic is transparency which means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. The fourth is responsiveness which means that good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe.

The fifth characteristic of good governance is consensus orientation. Good governance requires mediation of the different interests in the society to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It also requires a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development. The sixth characteristic is equity and inclusiveness. A society's well being depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. This requires that all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, have opportunities to improve or maintain their well being.

The seventh is effectiveness and efficiency. Good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of the society while making the best of use of resources at their disposal. The concept of efficiency in the context of good governance also covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment. The last characteristic of good governance is accountability. This is a key requirement of good governance, not only of governmental institutions but also the private sector as well as civil society organisations.

Rapid Economic Transformation

Rapid economic transformation is a situation where economic structures, process and institutions are operating effectively, efficiently and at close to full capacity in the interest of the larger society and the citizenry. The deliverables of such an economic environment would involve a steady and systematic process of structural change or transformation that moves the people toward meeting their basic needs and guarantees social security, and almost full employment.

The essence of rapid economic transformation is to bring about development that would facilitate and guarantee the social and economic well-being of the citizens of a country.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development involves meeting the needs of people today, without compromising those of future generations (Todaro and Smith, 2009). This requires governance to rise to new levels of effectiveness and develop new capacities for integrated policy-making around a clear vision for sustainable development. Nigeria has the capacity to design pathways to a future grounded in equitable and sustainable development, which meets the needs of current generations without compromising those of the future.

Globally, there has been unprecedented development progress over the last four decades, leading to the global population as a whole being healthier, wealthier, and better educated than ever before. As we approach the 2015 target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, we are within reach of seeing every child enrolled in primary school, and many fewer lives are being lost to poverty, hunger, and disease.

Sustainable development must be about enabling countries to accelerate and sustain that progress. It must be about establishing a trajectory of human development which allows all people to exercise their choices and meet their aspirations, both in this generation and those to come. It must also be about enabling the benefits of development to spread to those left behind in the progress made to date. Good

governance which drives the achievement of development results must also now rise to the challenge of achieving the equitable and sustainable development which will secure our common future.

Economic and human development progress cannot be sustained if the ecosystems on which they depend are irreparably damaged, and if gross inequity leaves our societies unstable and lacking cohesion. Effective governance is a prerequisite for putting in place the integrated policymaking capacity which is needed to drive sustainable development. A sustainable development response to the complex and interlinked challenges countries face today demands policymaking which views economic growth, poverty reduction, social development, equity, and sustainability not as competing goals to be traded off against each other, but as interconnected objectives which are most effectively pursued together.

The Interface between Good Governance, Rapid Economic Transformation and Sustainable Development

Good Governance and rapid economic transformation are separate conceptual entities and yet in practice often interact with each other. An old doctrine in the development process as noted by Stiglitz (2000) sees it purely as transformation of the society. A new form of thinking on development and development transformation does not talk only about a move from the old ways of thinking, and of social and economic organisation to new ones, but a change in the way people think and the way societies function. That is, a change in norms, expectation and institutions. Good governance is an essential precondition for rapid economic transformation. Various countries that are quite similar in terms of their natural resources and social structure have shown strictly different performance in improving the welfare of their people. Much of this is attributable to standards of governance which stifles and impedes development. A nation where there is corruption, poor control of public funds, lack of accountability, indiscipline, among other vices, there can never experienced any meaningful economic transformation. It is good governance that can makes rapid economic transformation possible.

It is governance that provokes and defines the nature of developments. In effect, when there is governance failure, the policies and programmes put together to drive development would remain what they are only on paper. Africa is replete with fantastic developmental policies put together by the best brains, but they have not translated into economic development due to bad governance.

There are extensive econometric studies that show strong correlation between long-term economic performance and good governance. In other words, the quality of governance fundamentally determines long-run developmental outcomes. The World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project (developed by Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastuzzi) reports aggregate and individual governance

indicators for 215 economies over the period 1996 – 2011, for six dimensions of governance – Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law and Control of Corruption. The authors, as reported by Daron, et al. (2003), conclude that good governance is not only critical to development but also that it is the most important factor in determining whether a country has the capacity to use resources effectively to promote growth and reduce poverty.

In a related development; Fayissa and Nsiah (2013) studied the impact of governance on economic growth in Africa. Using fixed and random effects models, they found out that good governance or the lack, contributes to the differences in growth of African countries. Furthermore, these results indicated that without the establishment and maintenance of good governance, achieving the goals of NEPAD-eradicating poverty, promoting sustainable growth and development, integrating Africa into the world's economy, and accelerating the empowerment of women-will be hampered in Africa. As noted by Fayissa and Nsiah (2013), sub-Saharan African countries have had a mixed governance record in comparison to other regions of the world as a result of being bogged down with manifestations of bad governance like political instability, government ineffectiveness, the lack of rule of law, and serious problems of corruption. The above traits are also inherent in Nigeria. Hence, there is a clarion on the Nigerian government to tackle the problem of corruption, inefficiency and ineffectiveness in governance, political and party rancour, and enthrone the rule of law.

The crucial role of good governance in development has been the focus of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is a program of the African Union. NEPAD seeks to attract increased investment, capital flows and funding, providing an African-owned framework for development as the foundation for partnership at regional and international levels with its secretariat in Midrand, South Africa. The eight priority areas of NEPAD are political, economic and corporate governance, agriculture, infrastructure, education, health, science and technology, market access and tourism and environment.

Strategies for Ensuring Good Governance and Sustainable Development

Economic transformation as envisaged by some nations can only be achieved if the culture of good governance is fully entrenched into all levels of governance in the public and private sectors. Developed nations by most indicators have witnessed rapid economic transformation, but same cannot be said of most developing nations. Some nations, especially in Africa, have been bogged down with crisis due to poverty and underdevelopment, government ineffectiveness, corruption, etc., due to bad governance records compared to other regions of the world (Fayissa and Nsiah (2013).

To this end, there is need for the right tone to be set by persons who have responsibilities relating to governance. Indeed, economic transformation will remain a mirage so long as the processes and institutions that guarantee accountability, transparency, the rule of law and security of the citizens are either absent or rudimentary. In effect, achievement of the goal of rapid economic transformation in a nation will depend to a very large extent on people particularly those in position of authority's ability to suppress the selfish interest in favour of the nation's interest. The following strategies are highlighted for good governance, rapid economic transformation and sustainable development in Nigeria:

- 1 For good governance, there must be entrenched framework and enforceable rules which will ensure that the nation's resources are judiciously deployed for the benefit of all its citizens.
- 2 Institutions must be strengthened; the roles of individuals must be de-emphasized in a truly democratic setting and there should be zero tolerance for corruption and other economic crimes.
- 3 The government should enthrone the rule of law while the legislature should enact enabling laws and the judiciary should interpret same and deal decisively with offenders irrespective of primordial affiliations. Only through the sum total of these actions would governance be seen to be effective, efficient, good and functional; and only then would it lead to accelerated economic development and sustainable/attainable economic transformation. An independent and well functioning Judicial System should be established as good governance requires fair legal framework that are enforced impartially by an independent judiciary and whose decisions and enforcement are transparent.
- 4 The Nigerian government to tackle the problem of corruption with Anti-Corruption Strategies including zero tolerance for corruption and other economic crimes, inefficiency and ineffectiveness in governance should be eliminated through reform of government agencies, political and party rancour should be prohibited through discipline and exemplary leadership.
- 5 Accountability and transparency should be maintained both in the public and private sectors. Rapid economic transformation will remain a mirage if the process and institutional framework that would ensure accountability and transparency for those in position of authority are either absent or rudimentary.
- 6 To experience good governance, significant emphasis must be placed on Property Rights and Enforcement of Contracts as well as pursuance of an Investigative and Informed Media.
- 7 Nigeria should ensure full inclusive citizenship, based on respect for gender, cultural, religious and other differences. Similarly, Institutions must be strengthened with the roles of individuals de-emphasized and there should be respects for limits of constitutional powers and responsibilities.

At global level, The UNDP has proposed, as an option, the creation of a Sustainable Development Council. Such a Council could be equipped with a universal periodic review mechanism, through which countries would review each other's performance, on a voluntary basis, across the three dimensions of sustainable development. The review could be tailored to the specific circumstances and challenges of each particular country, and might also include an assessment of the international support being provided by the UN and the International Financial Institutions. A voluntary review mechanism could also be a way of sharing best practice and lessons on how to advance sustainable development. Ongoing reform of the UN development system can also help developing countries design joined-up policies for sustainable development. A well co-ordinated UN Country Team can offer the integrated policy services which can support countries to tackle cross-cutting issues.

There are now widely accepted arguments that governance is of high relevance to the post-2015 development agenda: effective governance institutions and systems that are responsive to public needs deliver essential services and promote inclusive growth, while inclusive political processes ensure citizens can hold public officials to account. In addition, good governance promotes freedom from violence, fear and crime, and helps build peaceful and secure societies with the stability needed to attract and sustain development investments. A consensus is emerging to accept divergence in the way countries develop and improve their systems of governance, while reaffirming the global norms and standards agreed upon by member states. In practice, improving governance requires action in a wide range of areas, not all of which can be addressed at once, and not all can be subject of a global consensus. The challenge in integrating governance into the post-2015 development framework is to translate experience and evidence from multiple and diverse governance systems into concrete, measurable and broadly acceptable global development goals and targets.

The Challenges and Opportunities posed by Governance, Rapid Economic Transformation and Sustainable Development

The UNDP Discussion Paper on 'Governance for Sustainable Development provides an overview of the challenges and opportunities that evolve from the ongoing discussions on how best to integrate governance, rule of law, peace and security priorities into the post-2015 development agenda, and lays out the case for why different aspects of governance, peace and security matter for a universal sustainable development agenda. From the discussions in the Open Working Group, several broad options are emerging, which are not mutually exclusive: stand-alone goals on governance, rule of law and peaceful and stable societies; and governance as an enabler that is referenced in accompanying text, and is "mainstreamed" across other targets.

Development indicators have experienced unprecedented development progress over the last four decades, leading to the global population as a whole being healthier, wealthier, and better educated than ever before. As nations approach the 2015 target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, measurement indicators showed that every child enrolled in primary school, and many fewer lives are being lost to poverty, hunger, and disease.

Sustainable development must be about enabling countries to accelerate and sustain that progress. It must be about establishing a trajectory of human development which allows all people to exercise their choices and meet their aspirations, both in this generation and those to come. It must also be about enabling the benefits of development to spread to those left behind in the progress made to date. Good governance which drives the achievement of development results must also now rise to the challenge of achieving the equitable and sustainable development which will secure our common future.

Economic and human development progress cannot be sustained if the ecosystems on which they depend are irreparably damaged, and if gross inequity leaves our societies unstable and lacking cohesion. Just as the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro set a new direction for our world twenty years ago, so now, current development models should be re-examined to see what works, why, and where we can and must do better.

First, active governance, which anticipates and responds to the needs of its citizen and evolving development challenges, with deliberate, targeted, and pro-active planning and delivery, is essential to getting the business of development done.

Second, effective governance is a prerequisite for putting in place the integrated policymaking capacity which is needed to drive sustainable development. A sustainable development response to the complex and interlinked challenges countries face today demands policymaking which views economic growth, poverty reduction, social development, equity, and sustainability not as competing goals to be traded off against each other, but as interconnected objectives which are most effectively pursued together.

The important realization is that in pursuing one objective, we can either advance, slow, or stall progress in another. Reducing environmental degradation, for example, can create jobs, and help alleviate poverty. The converse also applies: a degraded environment can undermine the long term economic and social health of a country. To get the wide range of policies moving in the same direction, governments must be able to understand and harness the connections between them. Policy makers and their advisors need to be able to weigh the evidence and identify the 'triple-win' solutions which can bring economic, environmental, and social benefits. Policy and

regulatory frameworks must also be designed to attract and use finance and new technologies in ways which generate sustainability and meet the needs of citizens, including the poorest and most vulnerable.

Third, fair governance matters for sustainable development because it holds the key to building stable and secure societies and to driving inclusive growth within the finite boundaries of our planet over the long term. Fair, reliable, and accountable governing institutions build trust between people and government. Such institutions need to be free of corruption. Meaningful engagement and participation of citizens in shaping decisions which impact on them is also important, as is the existence of independent institutions which can hold government to account.

Through its democratic governance work, UNDP is supporting over one hundred countries to strengthen the institutions and processes needed to build trust, improve responsiveness, and advance development. Through our experience of this work, we have learned that there can be no uniform approach to it. Our efforts are tailored to individual countries' contexts and respond to their requests, for example, to help strengthen electoral, legislative, justice and anti-corruption systems, and enhance public administration and service delivery, including to reach those most in need. Meeting the needs of people today, without compromising those of future generations, requires governance to rise to new levels of effectiveness and develop new capacities for integrated policy-making around a clear vision for sustainable development.

East Asia's dynamic economic performance has benefited hundreds of millions of people, but, as elsewhere in the world, that growth model has also led to environmental degradation, and it has exposed inequalities within nations, as some have clearly benefited far more than others. There are dimensions to the sustainability challenge where regional frameworks for co-operation and integration are useful, enabling exchange of best practices and innovation, and fostering a sense of shared responsibility for trans-border issues. As a founding member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Singapore has always given strong commitment to regional integration and to South-South co-operation across the grouping. The ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Co-operation (APAEC) 2010-2015 is an example of how a regional framework can lead the way, by providing targets for energy security and sustainability, and promoting shared responsibility for the region's development.

UNDP has proposed, as an option, the creation of a Sustainable Development Council. Such a Council could be equipped with a universal periodic review mechanism, through which countries would review each other's performance, on a voluntary basis, across the three dimensions of sustainable development. The review

could be tailored to the specific circumstances and challenges of each particular country, and might also include an assessment of the international support being provided by the UN and the International Financial Institutions.

Conclusion

This paper examines the concept of good governance which is very essential as a precondition for rapid economic transformation and sustainable development. There is a link between good governance and rapid economic transformation and sustainable development. It is good governance that makes rapid economic transformation possible. To reverse persistent anaemic growth trend in some countries, especially in Africa, and ensure rapid economic transformation, there is the need to work towards achieving good governance in all its totality.

For good governance emphasis must be on the maintenance of transparency, accountability, government effectiveness, and regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption. Nigeria has the capacity to design pathways to a future grounded in equitable and sustainable development, which meets the needs of current generations without compromising those of the future. It is our sincere hope that proper implementation of the recommended strategies will proffer reliable solution to ensure good governance for sustainable development.

Recommendations

For the recommended policies to work, governance is important. Political leadership matters, and so does a quality civil service. A nation committed to a vision of equitable and sustainable development, to clean and effective government, to engaging citizens in dialogue about the way ahead and in implementation, and to building the capacities required to drive the vision forward will be a nation which enhances the wellbeing not only of its own citizens, but of our planet as a whole. This paper therefore recommends the following:

- 1 There is need for regulatory quality.
- 2 There must be Rule of Law and strict enforcement.
- 3 Reform of Government Agencies – to ensure government efficiency and effectiveness.
- 4 Ensure full inclusive citizenship, based on respect for gender, cultural, religious and other differences.
- 5 Institutions must be strengthened; the roles of individuals must be de-emphasized.
- 6 Respects for limits of constitutional powers and responsibilities.
- 7 There must be Accountability and transparency in governance.

This presentation also recommends empirical study on the subject matter for further analysis to be carried out in the future.

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