

Addressing the Challenges of Governance and Economic Development in Africa on Disability Economic Empowerments Through the Sustainable Goals (SDGs)

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Abstract

The sustainable development goals (SDGs) were initiated due to the fact that 2000 millennium development goals (MDGs) of the international monetary fund and United Nation came short of the much-expected visions and commitment to a wide range of goals to eradicate poverty and increased economic prosperity. This paper is an attempt to examine the influence of the 2016 sustainable development goals in addressing the challenges of African development on disability economic empowerment and growth. The paper highlights the concepts of disability and discusses the failures of the MDGs of 2015 adding that the failure was since persons with disabilities were not included in the development and economic agenda and were left behind in all programmes of action that were addressing the challenges of African development on disability economic empowerment. The paper discusses futures of persons with disabilities in the newly introduced sustainable development goals, adding that disability was cheerfully mentioned 6(six) times in order to address challenges of African development on disability economic empowerment. The paper also highlights the 17(seventeen) goals indicating that SDGs-4 were the main instrument which therefore strengthen the development and growth of disability through equality education. The paper asserts that one of the crucial factors of addressing the challenges of African economic empowerment is the education system of the African nations adding that the UNESCO'S attempt to build peace, eradicate poverty has been subscribed by SDGs, Goal-4. The paper made some recommendations among them, are that educational facilities, inclusiveness of programme of action and effective environment should be upgraded to meet the demand of persons with disabilities.

Background to the Study

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was initiated since the 2000 Millennium Development Goals of the United Nation came short of the much-expected visions and commitments to a wide range of goals to eradicate poverty. It was envisaged that by 2015 all children would have access to free primary education, access to basic healthcare as well as action to eradicate polio and protect vulnerable children and reduce poverty across all population (Kalu & Adeosun 2012). This paper is an attempt to examine the influence of the newly introduced United Nations sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in addressing the challenges of African development on disability economic empowerment and disability growth in Nigeria. The question may be asked, who are those persons with disability or special needs?

The following are the concepts of special needs education or disability:

1. **Hearing impairment:** This refers to inability or ineffective to hear and to use speech. It includes total deafness, partial deafness as well as hard of hearing.
2. **Gifted and talented:** These are terms used to describe those with superior intellectual and creative attainment and significant performance. They may require difference educational programmes and services to accelerate their educational progress.
3. **Learning Disabilities:** These are learners who manifest undue specific learning difficulty in few subjects, especially school subjects, such as reading, writing, spelling, comprehension or mathematics, Obani (2006) asserts that these types of children or learners vary on the level of difficulty experienced from slight to more profound in the different aspects of school subject.
4. **Visual Impairment:** This is the inability to use vision as do visual activities. It may range from total and partial blindness and slight loss of vision. According to Abang, (2005), blindness is the severe loss of visual activity.
5. **Intellectual Disability:** Intellectual disability is characterized by significant limitation both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior which covers everyday social and practical skills (Kalu 2014). This disability originates before the age of 18, (AAIDD, 2010). Adaptive behavior is the effectiveness of an individual to cope with the nature and social demands of his/her environment. Intellectual disability according to Obani (2006), refers to low level of learning capacity in school and social learning and has various degree of severity.
6. **Physical and Health Impairment:** This is conditions that affect one's health and physical conditions. This refers to children who are crippled, deform physically or neurological impaired, (Dafwat & Dada 2013). It is a reduced or impaired mobility and other forms of bodily movement needed with access to and participation in school and learning activities (Obani, 2008).
7. **Communication and Behavioural Disorder:** This refers to impediment to academic and social progress as a result of behavior maladjustment. The behaviours manifested by these children or learners are not within the social and cultural expectation of the environment. It is a disability characterized by behavior or emotional responses that are very different from all norms and

reference groups and have adverse effects on educational performance and achievement.

Following the failure of the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which was the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund's various instruments and procedures that was built ostensibly in addressing the challenges of African development on disability economic empowerment and reducing poverty. In the words of Paul Wolfowitz, Albert & Harrison (2006), was of the opinion that unless person with disabilities is brought into development mainstream, it will be impossible to cut poverty in half by 2015 or to give every girl and boy the chance to achieve a primary education. Kalu & Adeosun (2012) was of the view that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) failed partly because disability was not addressed in the eight MDGs, the 18 targets set out to achieve these goals as well as the 48 indicators for monitoring the progress of the MDGs.

The World Bank (1999) indicates that people with disabilities account for as many as one in five of the world's poorest people. It has been stated that about 20 million people with disabilities are in Nigeria, going by the estimates of WHO (1981) indicates that 10 percent of any population in Africa is disabled. It is assumed therefore that the population of Nigeria is 200 million people, by implication, it means that 20 million Nigerians are disabled, if however 53 other sovereign African countries were added in the 10 percent projection according to WHO (1981) the population of person with disabilities in African will be enormous. No wonder, the Millennium Developments Goals (MDGs) failed woefully as a result of huge population of persons with disabilities were not added and were left behind in Africa in all the 18 target goals in the (MDGs).

By 2015 it was obvious that the MDGs has failed and there was the need to fashion out relatively similar programmes by international organizations, hence, the birth of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) come into existence in 2015 in when leaders from 193 countries came to review the success or failure of the MDGs and resolved that since the MDGs has partial succeeded, there was the need to fashion out once more robust development ideology that would all embracing. Hence the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which commenced in 2016 with 17 set of goals and 169 targets as well as 231 indicate or with the theme: Transforming Our World in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The following are the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs): United Nation

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning

- opportunities for all.
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and reproductive employment and decent work for all.
 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.
 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
 12. Ensure sustainable employment and production patterns.
 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective accountable and inclusive institutions.
 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Addressing the Challenges of African development on disability economic empowerment in the new sustainable development goals (SDGs)

At the look of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), disability was mentioned six (6) times to underscore the importance of persons with disabilities, by the proponents, of the goals, unlike the previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which ended 2015, persons with disabilities were not mention at all and they were left behind. Goals-4 (SDG-4) is quality education. Aremu (2019) asserts that one of the crucial factors that determine the development of a nation is the education system of the country. You will agree with me that UNESCO'S attempt to build peace, eradicate poverty and bring about sustainable development that do with the provision of equality and equitable education which sustainable development goals 4 (SDG-4) subscribed, which it described as ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

This goal 4 has tremendous influence on the repositioning of special education and growth of disability and could be the pivot for achieving other SDGs. Aremu, further stated that a consideration of other SDGs shows that achieving SDG-4 would go a long way in helping to achieve the other goals. She was of the view that education that possess high quality and is relevant in all its aspect, would definitely lead to elimination of poverty and bring about zero hunger which SDG-1 and SDG-2 has been subscribed. SDG-4 has been broadened to strengthen persons with disabilities through elimination of gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and

vocational training. Training and employment of persons with disability call for sustainable knowledge and training in vocational work which therefore will guarantee employment and drastically reduce poverty. If all countries of the world, especially those in development nations can drastically implement the SDG-4, it would help to build and upgrade education facilities towards increasing the sustainability of persons with disability and therefore address the various challenges confronting disability empowerment. It is important to note that SDG-4 would galvanize and give persons with disabilities ability to choose good health and well-being, promote clean water and sanitation, develop system that would encourage decent work and economic growth. SDG-5 which call for the achievement of gender equality and empower all women and girls will therefore end all forms of discrimination against women and girls with disabilities, especially in the employment of women and discrimination in school enrolment of girls with disability.

SDG-5 has tremendously upgraded and address the challenges of African development on governance and economic disability economic empowerment through:

1. Elimination all forms of violence against all women and girls in both public and private entities, including trafficking and sexual and other inhuman exploitation.
2. Elimination of all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) which are the major causes of disability.
3. Ensure women full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.
4. Enhance the use of enabling technology, such as assist technologies in particular for information and communications technology to promote the empowerment of women, especially women with disabilities.

In other words, SDG-10 also drastically empower person with disability, thereby ensuring in equality within and among countries. It emphasizes the empowerment and promotion of social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex and disability.

Fundamentally, the SDG-11 has again lifted and upgraded persons with disabilities by making citizen and human settlements inclusive, safe resilient and sustainable. SDG-11 improve self-esteem of persons with disabilities by provision of access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport system for them. Improving road safety, expansively public transport to the repositioning of special attention to the need of persons with disabilities. SDG-11 again empower persons with disabilities by provision of universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on the findings of this paper.

1. With the enviable provision of sustainable development goals, especially SDG-1-5, there is the need to engage in data collation and need assessment of persons with disabilities in Africa. This data will enable policy makers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Non state actors to know the actual figure of numbers of

- persons with disabilities in Africa for development purposes.
2. Government, policy makers and non-governmental organization should utilize the document on sustainable development goals (SDGs) to implement sustainable project and policies that will better the lot of persons with disabilities in Africa, especially in areas of human rights and rehabilitation.
 3. The paper recommended that ensuring inclusive and equitable quality educations and promote lifelong learning opportunities means that there is need to eliminate gender, disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education for persons with disabilities in Africa.
 4. There is the need to build and upgrading educational facilities, inclusive and effective environment for persons with disabilities means providing all necessary and relevant educational programme that would enhance the independent and sustainable living of all persons with disabilities in Africa.
 5. There should be an establishment National Commission for persons with disabilities in all the 54 (fifty-four, sovereign African countries with the mandate to pursue rigorously the empowerment in all aspect of national life and defend their interest against marginalization and non-inclusion, Kalu, (2004).
 6. Legislation should be provided for a robust legislation in areas of empowerment, access to education and in political participation.
 7. There should be elimination of gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for persons with disabilities and other of valuable groups.

Conclusion

It is of much cheering news and interest that persons with disabilities was mention six (6) times in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and this has confirmed the assertion of Paul Wolfowitz in Albert and Harrison (2006) that unless persons with disabilities are brought into the development mainstream, it will be impossible to cut poverty in half by 2015 as to give every girl or boy the chance to achieve or access a primary education in Africa. From all indications, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) holds the key for empowerment of persons with disabilities in Africa in the 21st century and beyond. All indicators point out that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will eradicate extreme poverty among persons with disabilities. It is important that government, non-state actors and non-governmental organisations should utilize the provision of the Sustainable Development Goals to help built partnership and ensure equal access to all levels of development in the sustainable development goals (SDG-4), ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities, this emphasis that education possess high quality and is relevant in all its aspect, would definitely lead to the eliminating of poverty and eliminate hunger (SDG 1 and SDG 2). All hands should be on the deck to utilize this instrument by all development partners to galvanize support with a view to removing all known barriers and blockages hindering persons with disabilities to sustainable development. The Time to act is Now.

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