

Policy Framework for Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda in Delta State.

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Introduction

By policy framework, we refer to the plan(s) to be pursued, involving ideas, rules and beliefs that inform our decisions and actions in promoting the implementation of the SDGs in Delta State. What I have done in this lecture therefore has been to articulate the global creative thinking, informed thoughts and emerging best practice which form the realistic approach to the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, to serve as the platform for development of policies and related procedures on the issues of Development and operationalizing the SDGs in the State.

Challenges

Basically, the Sustainable Development Goals are outlines of lingering socio-economic and environmental problems and challenges prevalent in under developed countries which the United Nations is leading the world in proffering solutions. The overarching idea of the solution effort is to convert the challenges and problems into opportunities and profitable business cases.

Approaches to Solution

Unleashing human potentials

Unleashing human potentials is to engage people in diversified socio-economic activities as well as the use of technology. Engaging a lot of idle or inefficiently deployed manpower in an abundant resource environment can create a lot of wealth. The possibility of establishing such enormous wealth could attract investors if it is correctly structured and exposed. Investment is a booster. It will enable people accelerate their productivity to produce four to ten times the amount they are getting in their current daily activities.

It is evident that creating wealth through the broad deployment of manpower solves social problems such as poverty, hunger, human suffering, inequality and environmental issues. On environmental benefits, if people are enabled to greenhouse challenges and stop the degradation of landscape that are making good places uninhabitable. All these imply a mission to accelerate development in a new way by building on the best experience and the adoption of the latest techniques from various dimensions of human progress.

The strategy is about mobilization of the world resources for the integrated resolution of the challenging multi-dimensional issues for sustainable development and enduring peace. This will involve enlightening and engaging society to unleash their human potentials, enabling them to seize the reins of their development carte for creating higher value in their daily lives to emerge out of their challenges with their efforts. This is the situation

in which everyone is engaged in their areas of interest and in what they are good at to produce multiple outputs of the things they make, allow them to trade widely, openly and competitively within their region. Over 90% of every person's needs should be satisfied within their borders. Avoiding the challenges of lack of adequate productivity suggests that we cannot afford the framework and the organizations that are painstakingly set up to render or achieve very limited objectives.

No to the aid based initiative

Again we must be armed with the fact that although the aid based initiative of the past 5 decades have saved many lives and abated much socio-economic crisis, it has not successfully solved many of the world lingering problems.

Availability of Data

Data is strategic to development effort. Therefore attempts should be made to create data repository for monitoring the implementation of various activities directed towards achieving the SDGs. Data is a key factor that influences efforts to deliver services and infrastructure.

Leave no one behind

The fundamental principle of the SDGs is leaving no one behind and therefore a key commitment to the goals. The main objective is to leave no one behind in poverty eradication and promoting prosperity. This includes local and regional involvement to deliver the economic, social and environmental transformation needed for achieving the SDGs.

There is also the concept of inter-generational timeframe as a guide to make informed choices about sustainable development considering the long-term impact of policy decisions on the well-being of future generations.

Stakeholder Participation

Leaving no one behind is enhanced by stakeholder's participation to ensure that the SDGs owned by people, diverse actions and aligned and resources and knowledge for sustainable development are mobilized. Monitoring and reporting would help to better understand where there has been progress and where further action is needed.

Embracing the integrated approach

The integrated nature of the SDGs requires governments and key stakeholders to work across sectors, actors, government levels and time frames. It requires breaking out of sectorial silos and strengthening institutions to facilitate coherent, whole-of-government and integrated policies for implementation i.e. cross-cutting means of implementation. This will include considering systematically inter-linkages between economic, social and environmental policy areas before making decision. This will ensure that progress achieved in one goal or sector contributes to, rather than undermines other goals and sectors. This coherence is needed in policies.

Political commitment

Emerging good practices of starting points and implementation path to achieve the SDGs has been for governments to align national strategies, adapt institutional frameworks and shift policies.

Here, I must observe that Delta State Government as a case study has already scored high in this regard. I have said recently that a cursory look at the State medium-Term Development Plan (DMDP) framework and the SMART agenda suggests that the SDGs Oracle was consulted in arriving at them.

The DMDP is the present administrations' roadmap for achieving prosperity for all in the next four years. The document states that the plan "clearly outlines the goals we want to achieve, our approach towards achieving these goals, and strategic policy imperatives for engendering sustainable economic growth and development needed for poverty reduction. Anchored on the fundamental objectives and directive principles of State policy as contained in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the plan aims to generate substantial jobs and wealth, to reduce the worrisome high level of Youth unemployment and pervasive poverty and to improve significantly the quality of life of all Deltans. It aims at handling the economy to ensure sustained inclusive economic growth and development.

The DMDP highlights the Administrations' development priorities as encapsulated in the S.M.A.R.T Agenda;

- ❖ Strategic Wealth Creation Projects and Provisions of jobs for all Deltans
- ❖ Meaningful Peace Building Platforms aimed at Political and Social harmony
- ❖ Agricultural reforms and accelerated industrialization
- ❖ Relevant Health and Education Policies and
- ❖ Transformed environment through urban renewal.

Interestingly and in line with processes engaged in development, the DMDP and the SMART Agenda are products of stakeholder's consultation and participation. This is due to the recognition given to the role and responsibilities of stakeholders including the private sectors, civil society and development partners. The outcome is a mutually beneficial smart partnership to all stakeholders.

I shall leave the following posers as food for thought:

- I. Are there mechanisms in place in Delta State to monitor policy impacts and report to the public
- II. What mechanisms are in place to ensure that stakeholders input feeds into decision-making process?
- III. Are implementations responsibilities clearly divided and actions aligned across levels of government?
- IV. Have policy inter-linkages been considered in sectorial strategies and policy proposals?

Finally, what would you do about the above posers?