OVERVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF MDGs IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND LESSONS

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1. INTRODUCTION

The challenge of development and poverty eradication has attracted the attention of scholars, leaders and the international community over the years. Although different scholars have different perspectives on development, most students and practitioners of development accept that it must mean progress of some kind. It is seen as a multi-dimensional process, one that changes the economy, polity and society of the countries in which it occurs. Amartya Sen sees development as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. According to him, development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity of repressive states. In this conceptualization, freedom is central to the process of development and the achievement of development is dependent on the free agency of the people. For the people to be agents of their own development require advancement in five distinct types of freedom namely political freedoms; economic facilities; social opportunities; transparency guarantees and protective security.

Similarly, the 2010 human development report opined that human development is the expansion of people’s freedom to live long, healthy and creative lives; to advance other goals they have reason to value; and to engage actively in shaping development equitably and sustainably on a shared planet. People are both the beneficiaries and the drivers of human development, as individuals and in groups. According to Pat Utomi, development simply put is discipline. It is about how discipline drives the human spirit to triumph over odds of poverty trap, physical geography, fiscal trap, governance, cultural barriers, geopolitics, lack of innovation and demographic trap. Kambhampati argues that development requires growth and structural change, some measure of distributive equity, modernization in social and cultural attitudes, a degree of political transformation and stability, an improvement in health and education so that population growth stabilizes, and an increase in urban living and employment. Cowen and Shenton have argued that the modern doctrine of development was invented in the first half of the 19th century to control the social disruptions of poverty, unemployment and human misery caused by capitalism.

From the above, it is clear to us that even though there are different perspectives to development, there is a general consensus that development will lead to good change manifested in increased capacity of people to have control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology; and obtain physical necessities of life (food, clothing & shelter), employment, equality, participation in government, political and economic independence, adequate education, gender equality, sustainable development and peace. However, the reality of the world today is that many countries are very poor and cannot meet their development needs. It has been documented that more than 1.2 billion people, one in every five on earth live survive on less that US $1 per day. Wealth is concentrated in the hand of a few people while the majority wallows in abject poverty. The UNDP in its 1998 report documented that the three richest people in the world have assets that exceed the combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the 48 least developed countries. Similarly, the 1000 richest people in the world have personal wealth greater than 500 million people in the least developed countries.

Robert Chambers aptly captured it when he wrote:

I am so angry at what has been done, and continues to be done, in our world. It is hard to believe that the nightmare is real. We seem trapped in grotesquely unjust systems, more and more dominated by power, greed, delusion, denial, ignorance and stupidity, fuelled by symmetries of terrorism and fundamentalisms.
In a similar vein, Amartya Sen pointed out that:

> We live in a world of unprecedented opulence, of a kind that would have been hard even to imagine a century or two ago...And yet we also live in a world with remarkable deprivation, destitution and oppression. There are many new problems as well as old ones, including persistence of poverty and unfulfilled elementary needs, occurrence of famines and widespread hunger, violation of elementary political freedoms as well as of basic liberties, extensive neglect of the interests and agency of women, and worsening threats to our environment and to the sustainability of our economic and social lives.\(^{31}\)

There is no doubt that the challenges of development and poverty eradication are enormous. But in the last two decades, there has been a lot of discourse on what needs to be done to deal with the challenges. The UNDP has consistently argued that the Millennium Development Goals can be met if there is political will combined with good policy ideas which are then translated into nationally owned, nationally driven development strategies guided by good science, good economics and transparent accountable governance.\(^{12}\)

Nigeria, which was one of the richest 50 countries in the early 1970s, has retrogressed to become one of the 25 poorest countries at the threshold of the twenty first century. It is ironic that Nigeria is the sixth largest exporter of oil and at the same time host the third largest number of poor people after China and India. Statistics show that the incidence of poverty using the rate of US $1 per day increased from 28.1 percent in 1980 to 46.3 percent in 1985 and declined to 42.7 percent in 1992 but increased again to 65.6 percent in 1996. The incidence increased to 69.2 percent in 1997. The 2004 report by the National Planning Commission indicates that poverty has decreased to 54.4 percent. Nigeria fares very poorly in all development indices.

### 2. MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs)

In order to address the problem of poverty and promote sustainable development, the United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted in September 2000 at the largest ever gathering of heads of states committing countries both rich and poor to do all they can to eradicate poverty, promote human dignity and equality and achieve peace, democracy and environmental stability. The goals include those dedicated to eradicating poverty, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.

The eight main targets, using 1990 as a baseline, are:

1. **Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
   - 2015 target: Halve proportion of people living on less than $1 a day, and those suffering hunger

2. **Achieve Universal Basic Education**
   - 2015 target: Achieve universal primary completion

3. **Promote Gender equality**

4. **Reduce Child Mortality**
   - 2015 target: Reduce by two thirds the child mortality rate
5. Improve maternal health  
*2015 target Reduce by three quarters the proportion of women dying in childbirth*

6. Combat AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases  
*2015 target Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of HIV-AIDS, malaria and other major diseases*

7. Ensure environmental sustainability  
*Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources*  
*2015 target reduce by half the proportion of people without access to clean drinking water and basic sanitation*  
*By 2020 achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers*

8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development  
There are no measurables, but goal 8 commits north and south to working together to achieve an open, rule-based trading and financial system, more generous aid to countries committed to poverty reduction, and relief for the debt problems of developing countries. It draws attention to the problems of the least developed countries and of landlocked countries and small island developing states, which have greater difficulty competing in the global economy.

It is important to point out that there are limitations of utilizing the MDGs as a framework for delivering or measuring development. First, they risk simplifying what development is about, by restricting the goals to what is measurable. Many aspects of development cannot be easily measured. Secondly, some of the goals are very modest e.g. the goal to half the proportion of people living on less than $1 a day by 2015 and the target to achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. Finally, some of the targets do not address the problems holistically. For instance, the MDG on education talks only of a full course of primary schooling with no reference to secondary and tertiary education.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, it is necessary for us to engage the MDGs for many reasons. First, the MDGs draw together in a single agenda, issues that require priority to address the development question. Secondly, the MDGs have received tremendous endorsement and backing by world’s governments. Thirdly, the MDGs have the advantage being more or less measurable, few in number, concentrated on human development and focused almost on a single date-2015. Another advantage of the MDGs is that it adds urgency and transparency to international development. Finally, explicit resource commitments have been made to achieve the MDGs.

3. THE JOURNEY SO FAR  
   a. THE GLOBAL JOURNEY  

Since the millennium declaration in 2000, there have been efforts at the global level to track the journey to the achievement of the MDGs in 2015. Barely three years after the declaration, the UNDP human development report in its 2003 edition focused on the Millenium Development Goals. In the report titled Millennium Development Goals: A Compact Among Nations to end Human Poverty, the UNDP pointed out that to achieve the MDGs require policy responses to structural constraints on several fronts along with stepped up external support. The report recommended six policy clusters to help countries break out of their poverty traps:

1. Invest early and ambitiously in basic education and health while fostering gender equity. These are preconditions to sustained economic growth. Growth in turn can generate employment and raise incomes- feeding back into further gains in education and health gains.
2. Increase the productivity of small farmers in unfavourable environments— that is, the majority of the world’s hungry people. A reliable estimate is that 70 percent of the world’s poorest people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture.

3. Improve basic infrastructure— such as ports, roads, power and communications— to reduce the costs of doing business and overcome geographic barriers.

4. Develop an industrial development policy that nurtures entrepreneurial activity and helps diversify the economy away from dependence on primary commodity exports— with an active role for small scale and medium size enterprises.

5. Promote democratic governance and human rights to remove discrimination, secure social justice and promote well being of all people.

6. Ensure environmental sustainability and sound urban management so that development improvements are long term.

The most recent report on the global journey is the 2011 Millennium Development Goals report which indicates that there is a major progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals but that the most vulnerable are left behind. The report points out that the world as a whole is on track to achieving the poverty reduction target of 23 percent global poverty rate. Similarly, some poor countries like Burundi, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Togo and Tanzania have made great improvement in education achieving or nearing the goal of universal primary education. The number of deaths of children under the age of five has decreased from 12.4 million in 1990 to 8.1 million in 2009. New HIV infections have declined steadily by 21 percent since 1997. The number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy for HIV or AIDS increased by 13 fold from 2004 to 2009. An estimated 1.1 billion people in urban areas and 723 million people in rural areas gained access to improved drinking water source from 1990 to 2008. But the progress has been uneven and there are many people left behind especially the poorest people and those disadvantaged by their sex, age, disability or ethnicity.

The 2011 Millennium Development Goal report also indicated that sub-saharan Africa has made some progress towards achieving the MDGs but reaching all the goals by 2015 remains challenging. Although sub-saharan Africa account for 69 percent of new HIV infections and 68 percent of all people living with HIV and 72 percent of AIDS deaths in 2009, there was phenomenal increase of people living with HIV receiving anti-retroviral treatment from 3 percent in 2004 to 37 percent in 2009. Similarly, there was a significant reduction in malaria deaths. From 2000-2009, Botswana, Cape Verde, Eritrea, Madagascar, Namibia, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia reduced the number of confirmed malaria cases and deaths by more than 50 percent. In the same vein, the percentage of people with access to safe drinking water grew from 49 to 60 percent between 1990 and 2008. Also, there was an 18 percent point gain in primary school enrolment between 1999 and 2009. But almost half of the world out of school children (32 million) live in sub-saharan Africa. The highest level of under five mortality continues to be found in Africa with one in eight children dying before the age of five in 2009, about 18 times the average in developed regions. Africa has the highest maternal mortality level in the world with 640 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2008. In 2005, about 51 percent of the African population still lived in extreme poverty. Meanwhile only $11 billion was received in 2010 out of the $25 billion commitment made at the 2005 Gleneagles G8 summit.
b. THE NIGERIAN JOURNEY

The Nigerian journey with the MDGs started in September, 2000 with the signing of the historic Millennium Declaration along with other 188 countries at the millennium summit. We can trace the journey through the establishment of the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs and the Nigerian reports on MDGs since then.

At this time, Nigeria was under a crushing debt burden of about $35.9 billion with over 85 percent owed to the Paris Club. There was a huge campaign for cancellation of the debt. The House of Representatives passed a resolution that the debt should not be paid. The civil society under the auspices of Global Campaign Against Poverty (GCAP) campaigned vigorously for cancellation of the debt. It is instructive to note that even though Nigeria borrowed $13.5 billion from Paris Club between 1965 and 2003 and repaid $42 billion, as at the end of 2003, Nigeria still owed Paris Club more than $25 billion. President Olusegun Obasanjo and the Finance Minister, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala negotiated with the Paris club and just before the G8 meeting in 2005, the Paris Club granted a debt relief to Nigeria canceling $18 billion from the debt but requiring Nigeria to pay $12 billion in six months and comply with Naples terms and Policy Support Instrument (PSI).

During the negotiations, concerns were expressed as to whether the debt relief gains would be spent effectively and appropriately or will be misspent and embezzled. This led to the establishment of the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (OSSAP-MDG) to “guide the resources that would be freed up from the debt deal to MDG-related projects and programmes, whilst at the same time tracking, monitoring and evaluating their progress.”

Several reports have been produced on the status of MDGs in Nigeria. The 2004 report which was Nigeria’s first report on the MDGs states that “based on available information it is unlikely that the country will be able to meet most of the goals by 2015 especially the goals related to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, reducing child and maternal mortality and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.” It further states that “for most of the other goals (i.e apart from goal 1) up-to-date data exists which shows that if the current trend continues, it will be difficult for the country to achieve the MDG targets by 2015.”

The Nigeria Millennium Development Goals 2005 report is the second in the series of annual reports on the MDGs in Nigeria. The report which addressed the eight MDGs highlights the current status and trends of each of the MDGs, the challenges and opportunities in attaining the goal, the promising initiatives that are creating a supportive environment and priorities for development assistance. The report concluded that:

There is high potential to attain some of the Millennium Development Targets namely,

- Achieving universal primary education
- Ensuring environmental stability
- Developing a global partnership for development

Given the current policy environment and strong political will, there is also the likelihood of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.
However, based on available information, there is the need for sustained efforts to ensure that the country meets the following goals by year 2015:

- Achieving gender equality and women empowerments
- Reducing child mortality
- Improving maternal health; and
- Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

The conclusion of the MDG 2005 report is very remarkable and gives hope that there is possibility for achieving all the MDGs in Nigeria with sustained effort. This conclusion is quite different from the conclusions reached by the first report in 2004. It is intriguing that without providing the basis and reason for the dramatic change, the 2005 states that there is high potential to achieve 3 of the goals (Goals 2, 7 and 8) likelihood to achieve one with strong political will (Goal 1) and the need for sustained efforts to ensure that the country meets the remaining four goals (Goals 3, 4, 5, and 6).

In our review of the 2005 MDG report, we identified three major problems. First, there is the challenge of accurate, reliable, credible and believable statistics. The draft of the first Nigeria MDG progress report prepared by NISER stated that at the primary school level “by 2002, the gender ratio was 1.04 in favour of girls”. This was seriously criticized by CSOs as not reflecting reality. When the final report came out, it stated that “at the primary school level, the gender ratio increased from 0.76 in 1990 to 0.78 in 1995 and 0.96 in 2000”. The statistics had changed. In the past two and a half decade, statistics in Nigeria have always indicated increasing levels of poverty over the past two and a half decades from 28.1% in 1980 to 65.6% in 1996 (MDG Report, 2004). In the early 2000s, there were many estimates that poverty rate was above 70%. But President Obasanjo has always insisted without any study that the poverty level was much lower. Expectedly, when the NPC conducted a survey in 2004, the poverty level was put at 54.4%. Before this report was released the 2004 MDG report stated that “it is unlikely that the country will be able to meet most of the goals by 2015 especially the goals related to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger”. After the release of the report, the 2005 MDG report stated that “given the current policy environment and strong political will, there is also the likelihood of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger’ p.viii.

The second problem with the report is that it is development assistance focused. The 2005 MDG report highlights the status of the MDGs, the challenges, opportunities and priorities for development assistance. This is not surprising for development strategy planning in Nigeria has been essentially external focused. According to the Nigerian draft interim poverty reduction strategy paper prepared in November, 2001 (the precursor of NEEDS),

Nigeria has embarked on preparing its own PRSP as a requirement for concessional assistance from its development partners abroad, including the World Bank, the IMF, the bilateral donors and other sources of such assistance. Given the importance of the subject and the tight timetable, the Nigerian authorities fully recognize the need to move forward expeditiously to the timely completion of the countries PRSP of which this interim PRSP (IPRSP) is the preliminary step.

The final drawback of the report that we will like to point out is that the report did not indicate the policies and practices that need to change to attain the goals. Meanwhile, scholars and agencies have documented what needs to be done to tackle poverty and achieve the MDGs. The World Bank in its 2001 report titled Attacking poverty points out that “physical capital was not enough, and that at least as important were health and education” and proposed a strategy for attacking poverty in three ways namely promoting opportunity, facilitating empowerment and enhancing security: The UNDP has
pointed out that to achieve the MDGs require policy responses to structural constraints on several fronts along with stepped up external support including investment in education and health; small farmers; basic infrastructure; industrial development; democratic governance and environmental sustainability. ActionAid International has shown that there is a yawning gap between MDG needs and spending realities in poor countries and that macroeconomic policies enforced by the IMF block poor countries from being able to spend more on education, health and economic development. ActionAid further argues that for the MDGs to be achieved, the world must start to change course now and adopt at local, national and international levels alternative economic policies that allow for much higher long-term public investments in health, education and development.

In 2006, there was no MDG report. The year 2008 marked the mid-point on the MDG journey from 2000 to 2015 and the Mid-Point Assessment of the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria was produced. The report showed that the proportion of the population living in relative poverty was expected to have fallen to 28.78 percent in 2007, if the MDG target is to be met in 2015 but this has not happened. In fact, the primary six completion rate actually declined from 8 pupils out of 10 in 2004 to 7 in 2007. Women continued to be grossly under-represented at the highest decision making levels. Infant mortality rate actually rose from 81 per 1000 live births in the year 2000 to 110 per 1000 live births in 2005/6, which is farther away from the global target of 30 per 1000 live births in 2015. Midway to the target date for achieving the MDGs, the maternal mortality rate should be 440 per 100,000 live births but the reality is that in the rural areas, it was 828 deaths per 100,000 live births, and 531 deaths per 100,000 live births in urban areas. The proportion of gas flared fell from 53 percent in 2000 to 34 percent in 2007. The proportion of people with access to safe drinking water rose from 54 percent in 2000 to 60 percent in 2005/6 but the proportion of the population with access to basic sanitation dropped from 42.9 percent in 2000 to 38 percent. The ODA from the developed countries to Nigeria rose from US $167 million in 2001 to US $578 million in 2004, and US $11,433 million in 2006.

c. CAN NIGERIA MEET THE MDGS IN 2015?

In order to meet the MDGs in 2015, poverty rate in Nigeria is supposed to be reduced from 42 percent in 1990 to 22 percent in 2015; out of school children will be completely eliminated; reduce under five mortality per 1,000 from 191 to 63.7; maternal mortality rate from about 704 in 1999 (no figure for 1990) to 176 in 2015; to reverse HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis; improve access to water from 54 percent to 77 percent; and improve access to sanitation from 39 percent to 70 percent.

In 2009, we produced a book titled Can Nigeria meet the Millennium Development Goals in 2015? We argued that given the trends, Nigeria is unlikely to meet the MDGs by 2015. We posited that for Nigeria to meet the goals in 2015, there is the need to formulate and implement policies that will promote transparency and accountability; overcome institutional constraints; promote pro-poor growth; bring about structural change; enhance distributive equity; engender social and cultural re-orientation; engineer political transformation; promote human development; practice inclusive urban development; generate employment and transform power relations.

But according to the 2011 UN MDG report, Nigeria stands a good chance of achieving the MDGs by 2015. The report pointed out that significant progress has been made on each goal over the last ten years and there is realistic chance of achieving the goals by the target date. Nigeria has integrated the MDGs into the national development strategies and has introduced good initiatives aimed at reducing poverty including conditional grants scheme and conditional cash transfer. The prevalence of HIV fell from 5.8 percent in 2001 to 4.2 percent in 2008. Maternal mortality has fallen by 32 percent in five years. Maternal mortality fell from 800 deaths in 2003 to 545 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2008.
Infant mortality rate has fallen from 100 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003 to 75 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2008. Similarly, in the same period, the mortality rate of children under five years reduced from 201 to 157 deaths per 1,000 live births.

It must be noted that there are huge challenges to the achievement of MDGs in Nigeria. However, even if the MDGs are achieved, the goals of the MDGs are very modest. With achievement of the MDGs, there will still be over 35 million people living in extreme poverty even with a modest population estimate of 160 million people. Achievement of the MDGs will mean that there will be access to universal primary education. Achievement of MDG means that 63 under five will die in every 1,000 live births. Achievement of the MDGs will only mean halting and reversing HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis prevalence rate. Achievement of MDG will mean that over 36 million people will not have access to improved water and over 48 million people will not have access to sanitation. It is therefore necessary to look beyond the MDGs to formulate an alternative development strategy to accelerate the development of Nigeria.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MDGs

The OSSAP-MDGs was established in 2005 to ensure effective implementation of project from the Debt Relief Gains (DRG) of $1 billion annually. It was also meant to track public expenditure in what is termed Overview of Public Expenditure in NEEDS (OPEN). The implementation of projects by the OSSAP-MDGs is organized around the following:

a. **MDG Related Sectors**: The office co-ordinates the implementation of projects from debt relief by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in the MDG related sectors namely: Health, Education, Agriculture, Roads, Energy, Water and Sanitation, Women Affairs, Youth, Housing and Environment. Projects implemented included microcredit facilities, training of teachers, production of National Gender Policy, construction/rehabilitation of primary health centres, deployment of midwives, purchase of anti-malarials, construction of VIP toilets, polio eradication initiative, immunization of children, youth training, training of federal civil servants, construction of roads and drainage works, construction of boreholes, etc.

b. **Conditional Grants Scheme** (CGS) consists of funds that are transferred to states with a matching or counterpart funding mechanism. The CGS is being scaled up to 113 local government areas across the 36 states of the federation.

c. **Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Expenditure on the MDGs**: As noted above, the OSSAP-MDG was established to among other things “guide the resources that would be freed up from the debt deal to MDG-related projects and programmes, whilst at the same time tracking, monitoring and evaluating their progress.” The debt relief gain is to be comprehensively tracked on three critical components:

I. Accurate receipts of expenditure would detail what debt relief had been spent on.

II. The outputs of these expenditures would be monitored to ensure the requisite quantity and quality had been supplied.

III. The outcomes relating to these outputs should be evaluated to identify what debt relief had achieved.
The establishment of the office is with the recognition that the debt relief funds were a small fraction of government resources but that if spent strategically, they could be a catalyst for broader public expenditure management reform. The debt relief was also meant to be a catalyst to accelerate the development of a rigorous results-based monitoring and evaluation framework for development that was integrated with the nation’s development strategy.

d. **Quick Wins Projects (Constituency Projects):** The quick wins project was conceived by the Federal Government in 2007 to promote the active and visible presence of government in all federal constituencies and senatorial districts to provide basic infrastructure and services for the realization of the MDGs. This was captured in the 2008 budget from the DRG. The project type/location is chosen in consultation with the respective members of the National Assembly. Projects were implemented in the areas of health, education and water sectors and included building of classrooms, primary health centres, libraries, boreholes etc.

e. **Social Safety Nets:** Nigeria has the third largest number of poor people in the world after China and India. Between 2007-2009, there was conditional cash transfer to 18,750 vulnerable households in Nigeria.

5. **CHALLENGES**

The implementation of the mandate of the OSSAP-MDGs has been beset with a lot of challenges. First and foremost, the M & E component of OPEN had no coherent national system to plug into. But this challenge has been overcome with the establishment of a national M & E system by the Nigeria vision 2020. Secondly, the procedures were initially met with resistance by MDAs. Thirdly, there were capacity constraints by the public sector, private sector and civil society. Fourthly, there is the challenge of coordination between the three tiers and arms of government. Finally, a major challenge that has confronted efforts at development in Nigeria is overconcentration on economic reforms/transformation and neglect of political and social reforms/transformation.

6. **LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE**

The office has recorded some remarkable achievements. The monitoring and evaluation scheme has led to improved budget performance. For instance, the Conditional Grants Scheme recorded an average of 97 percent. A major lesson from the operation of the OSSAP-MDG is that an office cannot achieve MDGs for a country. The achievement of MDG is a collective responsibility of all tiers of government and all sectors (public, private and civil society). The role of the office is to serve as a catalyst to make this happen.

The way forward is to build on the success of the past and refocus the office to issues that will improve the possibility of achieving the MDGs by 2015. In this regard, it will be necessary to focus on the following areas:

- Build on the successes of the OSSAP-MDG since establishment. In particular, there is the need to continue the innovative partnership with the private sector and CSOs to provide independent
and objective assessment of MDG projects across the country. In our view, this is the greatest contribution of the OSSAP-MDG to public sector management in Nigeria.

- Advocacy on appropriate strategies for achieving the MDGs. For instance, there is the need for a holistic social protection strategy for the country and political and social transformation strategy.
- Institutionalization of monitoring and evaluation across the country in line with vision 2020.
- Engagement with the Economic Team. It has been proven that economic growth does not necessarily translate to poverty reduction. There is the need for advocacy to include in the Economic management team the SSAP-MDG and the co-ordinator of NAPEP to bring pro-poor perspective in the management of the economy.
- Implementation of projects: There is the need for continuous improvement on the implementation of project especially in terms of speed and quality.
- There is the need for a new communication strategy to communicate the mandate of the MDGs and ways of achieving the MDGs.

7. CONCLUSION

The challenge of development and poverty eradication is huge necessitating the collective effort of all. Nigeria which was one of the 50 richest countries 40 years ago is now one of the poorest in the world. The MDGs draw together in single agenda issues that require priority attention. In Nigeria, the debt relief granted in 2005 led to the establishment of OSSAP-MDG to ensure effective implementation of projects from DRG and act as catalyst and enabler for the achievement of the MDGs. The office has implemented project in the MDG related sectors, conditional grant scheme, monitoring and evaluation of public expenditure on the MDGs, quick wins projects(constituency projects) and social safety nets.

There have been challenges in implementing the mandate including resistance from MDAs, capacity constraints, poor co-ordination and lack of focus on political/social transformation. However, the office has recorded some remarkable achievements and there is the need to refocus the office to build on the successes of the past, step up advocacy on appropriate strategies for achieving MDGs, institutionalize monitoring and evaluation and improve upon the implementation of projects.

It must be recognized the OSSAP-MDG cannot achieve the MDGs for Nigeria but it can accelerate the process towards the achievement of the MDGs with correct strategy and clinical execution.

ENDNOTES

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