



**THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP,
STRATEGY & DEVELOPMENT**
(Centre LSD)

POLICY BRIEF

***SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)
IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA: STATUS,
PROGRESS AND CONCERNS***

CENTRE LSD POLICY BRIEF SERIES NO. 24



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*POLICY Brief: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)
IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA: STATUS, PROGRESS
AND CONCERNS*

Executive Summary

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all the 193 members of the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

Nigeria has had a chequered narrative in its implementation of this grand strategy that has often been hailed as a comprehensive and integrated approach to national sustainable development. Consisting of seventeen (17) global goals and 163 targets expected to be achieved by 2030 in every country of the world.

Nigeria has been actively working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since their adoption in 2015. It has the dedicated office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President (OSSAP-SDG) providing coordination and Policy advise. The country has demonstrated its commitment through leadership and ownership of the implementation process, with the United Nations providing technical support to the OSSAP-SDG and line Ministries.

The implementation of the SDG cuts across the 36 States and the FCT. While Government push for the attainment of the SDGs is commendable, the status of implementation can best be described as average. It currently ranks in 146 out of 166 on the Sustainable Development Report with a score of 54.58 as shown on their website*. The Sustainable Development Report (formerly the SDG Index & Dashboards) is a global assessment of countries' progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It is a complement to the official SDG indicators and the voluntary national reviews.

Countries are ranked by their overall score. This score measures the total progress towards achieving all 17 SDGs.

Without doubt the Government sustained commitment towards the implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria remains a potent mechanism towards achieving a prosperous, just and sustainably developed Nigeria. Thus, all must and should be done to accelerate the attainment of the goals with just over 5 years remaining. It is thus an imperative that to overcome these and other tangential challenges, Nigeria requires sustained efforts and collaboration among government, civil society, and international partners.

This Policy Brief highlights the status of SDG implementation in Nigeria, drawing attention to areas of success and proffering recommendations on where improvements should be made and how to achieve the espoused aspirations on the SDGs.

1. Background

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all the 193 members of the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. Prior to this launch, World leaders at the Rio+20 conference in 2012 had agreed to develop a new set of goals to succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This led to the formation of the Open Working Group (OWG), a UN-led process involving member states, civil society, and experts to draft the SDG. Finalization of the SDG framework was concluded at the UN General Assembly negotiations (2014-2015). Also called the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the 17 SDGs and 169 targets (with at least one or two indicators for each target) are seen as a comprehensive framework to address global challenges. Within the implementation period (2016-2030), Countries were required to develop national plans and strategies, UN agencies, international organizations, and stakeholders support implementation supported by regular progress monitoring and review. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- 1) **Goal 1: No Poverty:** End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- 2) **Goal 2: Zero Hunger:** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- 3) **Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- 4) **Goal 4: Quality Education:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- 5) **Goal 5: Gender Equality:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- 6) **Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation:** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- 7) **Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy:** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- 8) **Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- 9) **Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure:** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
- 10) **Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities:** Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- 11) **Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- 12) **Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production:** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

- 13) **Goal 13: Climate Action:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- 14) **Goal 14: Life Below Water:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- 15) **Goal 15: Life on Land:** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss.
- 16) **Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- 17) **Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

The SDGs are designed to end poverty, hunger, AIDS, and discrimination against women and girls. The creativity, know-how, technology, and financial resources from all of society are necessary to achieve the SDGs in every context. The 17 SDGs are integrated—they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Countries have committed to prioritizing progress for those who are furthest behind. The launch in Nigeria was highly decorated with the presence of dignitaries and key stakeholders to display their commitment to the attainment of the Global Goals for the 2030 Agenda, including heralding it with an Advocacy and Capacity Building Workshop for State Actors on SDGs Mainstreaming at the Sub-National Level in the country - 17 SDGs will not be reached without the engagement of local and regional governments.

2. Status and progress

Nigeria has been actively working towards achieving the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) since their adoption in 2015. The country has demonstrated its commitment through leadership and ownership of the implementation process, with the United Nations providing technical support to the Office of the Senior Special Advisor to the President on SDGs and line Ministries.

In Nigeria, the implementation of the SDG cuts across the 36 States and the FCT. While Government push for the attainment of the SDGs is commendable, the status of implementation can best be described as average. It currently ranks in 146 out of 166 on the Sustainable Development Report with a score of 54.58 as shown on their website*. The Sustainable Development Report (formerly the SDG Index & Dashboards) is a global assessment of countries' progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It is a complement to the official SDG indicators and the voluntary national reviews. Countries are ranked by their overall score. This score measures the total progress towards achieving all 17 SDGs. The score can be interpreted as a percentage of SDG achievement. A score of 100 indicates that all SDGs have been achieved.

The Sustainable Development Goals have a total of 169 targets, which are divided among the 17 goals. Each goal typically has eight to 12 targets, and each target has between one and four indicators used to measure progress toward reaching the targets, with an average of 1.5 indicators per target. These targets are either "outcome targets" (circumstances to be attained) or "means of implementation targets" (actions to achieve the outcomes). There are 231 unique indicators used to measure progress toward the targets. These indicators have varying levels of methodological development and data availability at the global level.

Nigeria has demonstrated its commitment to achieving the SDGs since their adoption in 2015. It has also made progress in certain fronts. Some notable milestones include:

- a) **Improved Access to Healthcare:** Reducing maternal mortality ratio to 70/100,000 live births.

- b) **Increased Access to Education:** Implementing free Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school-going age.
- c) **Enhanced Gender Equality:** Improving girls' access to education, with enrollment rates increasing from 46.7% and 47.1% in 2010 to 48.3% and 47.9% in 2015.
- d) **Renewable Energy:** Aiming to achieve a 13% contribution of hydroelectricity to the electricity generation mix by 2020.
- e) **Economic Growth:** Having over 70 million Micro Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) contributing 50% of the nation's GDP.
- f) Despite this strides and progress, Nigeria still faces several significant challenges in achieving the SDGs including:
 - g) **Poverty and Inclusive Economy:** Struggling with poverty, affecting SDG 1 and SDG 8.
 - h) **Health and Well-being:** Facing significant healthcare challenges, hindering progress towards SDG 3.
 - i) **Education:** Having the highest number of out-of-school children globally, impacting SDG 4.
 - j) **Gender Equality:** Facing significant gender equality challenges, affecting SDG 5.
 - k) **Peace and Security:** Struggling with maintaining peace and security, crucial for achieving SDG 16.

3. Concerns and challenges

Other major concerns especially as highlighted at a recently convened National High-level meeting organized by The African Centre for Leadership, Strategy & Development in collaboration with the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs are:

1. Despite the commitment demonstrated by the government of Nigeria through the OSSAP-SDGs, the country's page on the global SDG dashboard shows green on only goal number 12 which does not tell well about the implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria.

2. At almost the midpoint of the SDGs journey, progress review reveals that Nigeria is off-track as only 15% of the SDGs targets are on track.
3. A major challenge in the implementation and achievement of the SDGs in Nigeria by 2030 is the enormous funding required to carry out its numerous projects.
4. Although there are critical activities carried out by the OSSAP-SDG, many of them are under-reported and therefore not captured on the SDG dashboard.
5. In an age where technology is increasingly deployed to promote development; not enough attention is given to its use to track progress on the implementation and performance of the SDGs in Nigeria.
6. There is apparent demand at the scale-up phase in the implementation of the SDGs to fully integrate other stakeholders to facilitate the participation of the civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector and the public.
7. The pace of progress on the implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria is grossly affected by the challenges such as the COVID 19, the two economic recessions, insecurity among others.
8. The SDGs seem not to be properly aligned with Nigeria's long-term development plan - Agenda 2050.
9. The communications strategy of OSSAP-SDG appears not to be deep enough to showcase the implementation process and achievements on the SDGs in the public domain.
10. Effective representation seems to be lagging on the implementation of the SDGs as stakeholders such as the private sector and other non-state actors are not adequately engaged in the process.
11. Although the Sustainable Development Goals which encompass all aspects of human development are 17 altogether, the activities of the OSSAP-SDG suggest a focus on only a few of them including - SDGs 2, 3, 4 & 5.
12. There are concerns in some quarters regarding the utilization of

donor funds in a manner that does not prioritize the implementation and achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

13. Although there have been conversations on the inclusion of sub-nationals in the implementation of SDGs in Nigeria over the years, many subnational governments have not adequately demonstrated the political will required to institutionalize the SDGs in their states.

4. Conclusion

Without doubt the Government sustained commitment towards the implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria remains a potent mechanism towards achieving a prosperous, just and sustainably developed Nigeria. Thus, all must and should be done to accelerate the attainment of the goals with just over 5 years remaining. It is thus an imperative that to overcome these and other tangential challenges, Nigeria requires sustained efforts and collaboration among government, civil society, and international partners .

5. Recommendations:

What Federal and State Governments should do

1. The Federal and State governments should explore innovative ways to intensify their commitments on the SDGs to improve Nigeria's performance on the global SDG dashboard beyond just scoring a green only in goal number 12.
2. Alternative funding strategy should be critically considered and explored by Federal and State governments to mobilize the enormous funding required for the implementation and achievement of the SDGs by 2030.
3. OSSAP-SDG should consider stepping up critical activities including the use of technology to track progress on the implementation and performance of the SDGs in Nigeria.
4. The institutional mechanisms established by the Federal

Government, the 36 States and the FCT to support effective implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria should be given the desired priority.

5. The Federal Government of Nigeria should align its long-term development plan - Agenda 2050 to incorporate the SDGs which has 2030 as its target date.
6. The OSSAP-SDG should deepen its strategic communications to put it in the public domain and effectively promote/showcase the implementation and achievement on the SDGs.
7. As the body set up to drive the strategic direction and give impetus to Nigeria's commitment on the SDGs, the OSSAP-SDG should spread its focus beyond SDGs 2, 3, 4 & 5.
8. Through the Budget and National Planning Ministry, the Federal Government should develop policies that should align the utilization of donor funds in a manner that prioritize the implementation and achievement of the SDGs by 2030.
9. To expedite the impact of the SDG on national development, the OSSAP-SDG need to deepen the implementation of the SDGs by giving priority attention to four key sectors which include – Infrastructure, Agriculture, Health, and Education.

b. What Civil Society, Private Sector and other non-State actors Should Do

1. Civil Society, Private Sector and other non-state actors should partner with OSSAP-SDG to accelerate the implementation and achievement of the SDGs in Nigeria by 2030.
2. The civil society should deploy its unique strengths in the area of monitoring and holding government accountable to the implementation and achievement of the SDGs by 2030.
3. The civil society and other non-state actors should be more circumspect and responsible when providing oversight to government MDAs in the implementation of the SDGs.

References

<https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>

#The 17 Goals- Sustainable Development [sdgs.un.org](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org)

*All data presented on this website are based on the publication [Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G. \(2024\). The SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future. Sustainable Development Report 2024. Paris: SDSN, Dublin: Dublin University Press. 10.25546/108572](#)



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