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IMPLEMENTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NIGERIA (ROUTLEDGE, 2022)

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BOOK REVIEW

The book assesses Nigeria's progress toward achieving the United Nations Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The edited volume is divided into five parts with contributions from several scholars from different disciplines ranging from law, social sciences, and the sciences. The major themes covered in the book include SDGs conceptualisation and evolution, reducing and ending poverty, the relationship between SDGs and climate change, clean water, business, and taxation as well as societal and cultural dimensions. The book has 14 chapters with each chapter contributing a strand to the major themes covered. Furthermore, the editors of the volume, note that the rationale for the book is to use the SDGs as a basis to deal with some of the issues that have plagued the country such as corruption, maladministration as well as the failure of successive administrations in the country to ensure adequate distribution of the enormous wealth of the country given its massive oil wealth.

In the first chapter, the editors of the volume discuss an overview of the book. It begins with a discussion on the evolution of the sustainable development paradigm. They note, and rightly so that the concept of sustainable development has been a recurring factor in the international arena even though it has appeared in differing forms. Tracing the historical origins of the SDGs from the work of the Brundtland Commission down to the United Nations' formal adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on 25th September 2015. In the view of the editors, the evolution of the 2030 Agenda is firmly anchored on human rights unlike the previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Again, the editors in their opening comments, consider that the SDGs are critically different from early 'mutations' of sustainable development initiatives.

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In their contribution to the legal framework for the implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria, Inegbedion and Umoru emphasise the importance of the rule of law and its role in delivering the SDGs to the Nigerian people. They note that although the second chapter of the Nigerian Constitution 1999 (as amended) is non-justiciable, there are yet constitutional obligations to be undertaken by the Nigerian Government in

the quest toward achieving the SDGs. For example, Nigeria has an obligation under international human rights law to promote gender equality, decent work, quality education, and environmental sustainability among others. From the foregoing, there is an argument that international human rights law can serve as a basis for the operation and realisation of the SDGs in Nigeria. They recommend the integration of the private sector in the implementation of the SDGs. They do not state how this can be done. This is an area where further work or clarification is required.

Aimiebrovbiye and Osagie explore how law can contribute to food security through technological innovation in agriculture. They begin their analysis, by arguing that weak laws and inconsistent policies have been a challenge to food security in Nigeria. Nigeria has not fully embraced modern-day farming technologies. The bulk of farming in Nigeria is via traditional methods and if the country must drive food security, there is a lot to be done in terms of applying the legal framework and developing policies that would ensure access to finance, promote gender equality, and make a transition from traditional agricultural methods to one that is modern. The authors review existing laws relating to food security in Nigeria such as the 1999 Constitution, the Agricultural (Control of Importation) Act 1970, the National Crop Varieties and Livestock Breeds (Registration) Act 1987, and the National Agricultural Seed Act 1992 among others. In their view, Aimiebrovbiye and Osagie consider that the government of Nigeria needs to recognise and enforce the right to food as a justiciable right.

Igenegbai and Osasuyimake a strong case for implementing the teaching manpower policy in Nigeria. They argue for quality training for teachers as well as quality education for pupils. The authors identify 'teaching manpower' to be the human resources needed to bring about the needed changes in the attitude of pupils. Teachers are instructions and are socialisation agents and if society is to make the desired changes, the relevance of 'teaching manpower' must not be taken for granted. Some policies have been implemented in Nigeria such as making the minimum qualification for teaching to be the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). This is a departure from the previous Teacher Certificate Grade II. To teach in secondary schools, the minimum requirement now is a bachelor's degree in education

(B. Ed), B.A. (Ed) or BSc (Ed) or a bachelor's degree in a single subject with a postgraduate diploma in education (PGDE). The authors are of the view that the government should enforce these minimum requirements to ensure that only well-trained teachers are employed to teach in both public and private schools.

Ajayi, Oleabhiere and Enobakhare discuss the environment, climate change, and underdevelopment of Nigerian cities. They note that Nigeria's climate is already experiencing 'some drastic changes and likely to see growing shifts in temperature, rainfall, storms, and sea levels...' In their view, climate change is an adverse environmental phenomenon that should be of great concern to all citizens of the world including Nigeria. To have a sustainable world, there must be deliberate efforts to check climate change. Some of the evidence of climate change in Nigeria include the impact on crop production, increased levels of rainfall in the southern part of the country and adverse effects on the capacity to utilise the country's hydro energy resources at an optimal level. They note that sectors such as tourism, healthcare, energy and transportation could be adversely affected without a deliberate plan and strategy to check climate change in the country. The authors recommend the finalisation of the country's National Climate Change Policy and Response Strategy, the finalisation and launching of the National Strategic Climate Change Trust Fund as well as the commission of an extensive study on the socio-economic impacts of climatic change in the short term.

The successful delivery of clean water is a key area identified in the volume. Chigor, Nwankwo et al note that water is central to the development and that access to water is necessary for health and progress in tackling poverty and hunger. The authors argue that water resources remain important to humans and the ecosystem. They identify the problems arising from poor environmental practices such as improper waste disposal and other forms of water contamination as areas that need urgent attention. Again, the authors opine that animal farming on water resources in Nigeria is on the high side. To improve access to safe water in Nigeria, there is a need to provide potable water both at the federal and state levels. The authors make a strong argument for preventing the discharge of wastes into water surfaces and the treatment of polluted water. They recommend

the preservation of underground water resources by adhering to stipulated criteria such as regulation of boreholes, construction of protection devices and fencing.

Okumagba explores the global court practices in reducing climate change impacts through litigation. The author of his chapter states that climate change is a global problem without a universally recognised legal solution. Although there is a growing awareness in developed countries compared to the developing world, climate change awareness is growing. The author identifies that several climate litigation have been brought before the courts in the United States and 36 other countries with most of the claims brought against the governments of those countries. The chapter could have been better developed if it identified cases and what the issues were, and the rationale given for the decisions made by the courts, especially for selected States. This would have provided key lessons to be learnt on climate change mitigation.

Taxation has been identified as a tool for achieving the implementation of the SDGs. Pearce and Onyejekwe note that taxation is a tool used by the public sector in generating funds and that taxation can be used to develop the economy. They argue for the reform of tax law in Nigeria intending to achieve development objectives. Pearce and Onyejekwe state that the low level of tax revenue in Nigeria affects the realisation of the SDGs.

The role of public-private partnerships (PPP) in attaining the SDGs is well captured in the volume. Richards argues that partnering with the private sector in raising funds for public infrastructure procurement is a viable solution to the problem of budget constraints in Nigeria. PPPs can be arranged for sectors that have huge deficits in the country such as healthcare, transportation, and energy. The author recommends that the laws on PPP in Nigeria should be amended to allow PFI-styled PPP in which the government pays the private sector for the use of the facility by the members of the public over a period. Another recommendation is that Nigeria should seek PPP arrangements that convert project costs to long-term development loans.

Hamza explores SDG 3 and maternal health against the backdrop of the VVF scourge in the northern part of Nigeria.

The author argues that the state of maternal health in Nigeria has remained below standards and that the country's maternal mortality ratio is a cause for concern. The author recommends improvement in healthcare facilities in the northern region of the country as well as the education of the public on VVF. The chapter could be improved by discussing the issues leading to the VVF scourge. The paper does not deal with the main issues that give rise to the problem besides discussing the improvement of healthcare.

There is a significant role to be played by churches in the achievement of the SDGs. Iyayi and Obani explore the role of the church in supporting government objectives. They draw examples from the experience in the past of church groups affecting decision making by congregants. They identify in their study that some participants responded that some SDGs were inconsistent with their beliefs. For example, gender equality was identified as against religious teachings. They recommend that the government must partner with the church to create awareness of the importance of the SDGs.

Okafor-Yarwood and Sefa-Nyarko discuss the need for an inclusive implementation of sustainable oceans, seas and marine resources in line with SDG14. The authors reviewed the literature and the scope as well as the challenges of implementing the SDGs in Nigeria. They focus on the significance of the marine environment. They highlight the need for the government to 'strengthen evidence-based planning and accountability mechanisms at the state and federal levels.' They also recommend community-based sensitisation to improve awareness of the SDGs.

Finally, the volume makes a significant contribution to the quest to ensure that the SDGs are implemented and realised in Nigeria within the few years left to the attainment of the United Nations Agenda 2030. In line with the statement of the editors in the introduction to the book, a series of long-term trends, from climate change to demographics, are already reshaping the national landscape for policymakers and practitioners.,' as such, there is a need to consider with urgency all areas identified by the various contributors. The federal government of Nigeria and the respective states must work out measures to close the current wide gaps identified. For example, the government at all

levels in the country must develop a holistic measure of reforming taxation to deal with the lingering issue of poor tax revenue. Furthermore, given budget constraints and competing needs for limited public resources, both the national and sub-national governments of Nigeria must look toward strengthening private sector participation in the delivery of public infrastructure. Again, from the various contributions in the volume, attaining the SDGs is not a government issue alone. There is a need for support and buy-in from members of the public, non-governmental organisations, and religious bodies. The book will be of interest to Nigerian policymakers at the national and sub-national levels. It is a volume that is a must-have for libraries across Nigeria and should be recommended as a text for studies on public administration as well as politics across institutions of higher learning in Nigeria.