The Millenium Development Goals and Socio-Economic Indicators in Nigeria

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Abstract - This paper is based upon socio-economic indicators and Millenium development goals in Nigeria. Most of the third world countries including few developing nations are facing economic hardships and the condition of socio-economic indicators are not supporting the acceleration of the development index. Nigeria is also not an exception to these poor and deteriorating conditions. Poor social-infrastructural services are adding fuel to fire. The theme of the paper attempts to analyse the relation between socio-economic indicators and human development index of Nigeria.

Introduction

The prevailing economic hardship and the deteriorating state of some socio-economic indicators in Nigeria are already making the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) before the year 2015, difficult. Take for instance, the rate of poverty, that has increased from an average of 54 percent in the 1990s to about 70.2 per cent in 2003 and the nation's per capita income that has also reduced from about US$780.00 in the early 1980s to about US$ 350 in 2003 (World Bank 2005a, ADB 2006a, 2006b). The increase in poverty and reduction in the nation's per capita income has cast a lot of doubts in the minds of policy makers and scholars alike, of the possibility of achieving the Millennium Development Goals before the year 2015. Given this situation, what then are the challenges and prospects of achieving the MDGs in Nigeria before 2015? This is the question that this paper sought answer for, by examining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as it relate to Nigeria and the present state of the nation's socio-economic indicators.

Conceptual Clarification: Socio-economic Indicators and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Socio-economic Indicators: Definition and Types

According to the World Bank (1997, 2005a, 2005b) socio-economic indicators are indicators used in determining the extent of socio-economic development and the good quality of life of a people in a given society or country. Thus socio-economic development is determined by the availability of social infrastructural services (such as portable water, sanitation services, health care services, etc.) and the people's accessibility to these services and the growth of a

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nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while good quality of life as expressed by World Bank 1990; Narayan et.al 2000a; Narayan et.al 2000b; Ijaiya 2002 includes (i) material well-being which is often expressed as having enough (material well-being comprises of bodily well-being, which includes being strong, well and looking good); (ii) social well-being, which include caring for and settling children; (iii) having self-respect, peace and good relations in the family and community; (iv) having security, which include civil peace, a safe and secure environment, personal physical security and confidence in the future; and (v) having freedom of choice and action, which include being able to help other people in the community.

According to Ingram (1992), World Bank (1997), CBN (2000), ADB (2001a) ADB (2001b), World Bank (2005a), World Bank (2005b), ADB (2006a), ADB (2006b), some of the key socio-economic indicators are: rate of poverty; life expectancy at birth; adult illiteracy; access to health care services; access to safe water; access to sanitation; infant mortality rate; maternal mortality rate; prevalence of malnutrition, population estimates; Gross National Product (GNP) per capita; aggregate net resources flow; net batter terms of trade; consumer price inflation; and total external public debt.

i.   **Rate of Poverty:** Apart from the use of GNP per capita income in determining the rate of poverty in a particular country, the percentage of people living on less than $1 (US dollar) a day (PPP) at 1995 international (purchasing power parity) prices is also used. That is a person is said to be poor if he or she lives in a household whose total income or consumption per capita is less than $1 (US dollar) i.e. he/she lives below poverty line.

ii.   **Life Expectancy at Birth:** This is the number of years a newborn infant would live if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of its birth were to be the same throughout his life.

iii.   **Adult Illiteracy:** This is the proportion of adults age 15 and above who cannot read and write a short simple statement on their everyday life.

iv.   **Access to Health Care Services:** This is measured by the share of the population for whom treatment of common diseases and injuries including essential drugs on the national list is available within one-hour work or travel.

v.   **Access to Safe Water:** This shows the percentage of the population with reasonable access to adequate amounts of safe water (including treated surface waters or untreated but uncontaminated water from sources such as springs, sanitary wells, protected bore-holes and taps. In urban and rural areas a source must not be more than 200 meters away and members of the household do not have to spend a disproportionate part of the day fetching water.

vi.   **Infant Mortality Rate:** This is the number of deaths of infant under 1 year of age per thousand live births in a given year.

vii.   **Maternal Mortality Rate:** This is the number of female deaths that occur in pregnancy and immediately after childbirth per 100,000 live births.

viii. **Gross National Product (GNP) Per Capita:** It is the ratio of the country's total population to the total national income, converted to US dollar using the World Bank's Atlas method.

ix. **Average Annual Inflation:** This is measured by the rate of change in the GDP implicit deflator. The implicit deflator is calculated by dividing annual GDP at constant prices both in national currency. The GDP implicit deflator in the broadest – based measure of inflation, showing price movement for all goods and services produced in the economy.

x. **Net Present Value of External Debt:** This is the value of short-term debt plus the discounted sum of existing loans at current prices.

These socio-economic indicators are significant in determining the overall social well-being or the quality of life of the people in a particular country and in comparing relatively the quality of life of people in different countries, from which appropriate lessons can be learnt and measures for possible improvement in the life of the people can be effected.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Origin and Content

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reflect key aims of various UN development conferences in the 1990s (e.g. The Beijing- China Conference on Women and the Social Development Conference in Copenhagen). Thus they are the product of many national, regional and international consultations that involved millions of people and represented a wide range of interests, including those of governments, civil society organizations and private sector actors. These conferences emphasizes on the multidimensional nature of development with human well-being as its end (UNDP 2003; Bayliss and Kessler 2006).

The Goals also build on the momentum created by the International Development Goals devised in 1996 by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to define how its 23 bilateral donors would work together to improve lives in developing countries in the 21st century.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are a set of measurable and time-bound targets that were adopted at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. They consist of the following eight goals:

i. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by the year 2015;

ii. Attain universal primary education in all countries by year 2015;

iii. Promoting gender equality (especially in education) and empower women;

iv. Reducing child mortality;

v. Improve maternal health;

vi. Combat major diseases e.g. HIV/AIDS and Malaria;

vii. Ensure environmental sustainability;

viii. Develop a global partnership for development between rich and poor countries (see ADB 2003; UNDP 2003; FGN 2004; Vandemoortele 2004; ADB 2006; Bayliss and Kessler 2006; DFID 2006; Dalgaard and Erickson 2006; Kakwani and Son 2006; Weeks and Mckinley 2006; Zepeda 2006; Bayliss and McKinley 2007; Vandemoortele 2007).

As factors entrenched in the Millennium Declaration adopted by 189 countries, the MDGs are also benchmarks for progress towards a vision of development, peace and human rights guided by certain fundamental values essential for international relations in the twenty-first century. These values include among others: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and share of responsibility (UNDP 2003).

Drawn from these values, the MDGs address many of the most enduring failures of human development. Unlike the objectives of the first, second and third UN Development Decades (1960s, 1970s and 1980s), which mostly focused on economic growth, the Goals, place human well-being and poverty reduction at the center of global development objectives. The MDGs are therefore intended to ease the constraints in people's ability to make choices and to participate in the decisions that affect their lives or increase their civil and political freedoms. The goals also reflect human rights agenda, such as the rights to food, education, health care and decent living standards as enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDP 2003). The Goals and the promotion of human development also share a common motivation and reflect a vital commitment to promoting human well-being that entails dignity, freedom and equality for all people (UNDP 2003).

MDGs and Socio-economic indicators in Nigeria

Drawing from the views of Vandemoortele (2004), the MDGs are morally imperative and legally binding as they are embedded in the human rights treaties. They are technically feasible and financially affordable. They also make good economic sense. Yet all is not well with the MDGs because global program towards the MDGs has been slow and uneven. These views were not different from the situation in Nigeria given the state of the nation's economy, which has continued to reverse.

For instance, the 1990s, which were the starting point for the implementation of the MDGs, witnessed an unprecedented decline in both economic growth and human development and increase in poverty. As indicated in Table 1, the nation's per capita income has been on the decline since the 1980s except in 2004 when it increased to $390.00. The state of the nation's Human Development Index (HDI) (which comprises longevity as measured by life expectancy at birth, educational attainment as measured by a combination of adult literacy and improvement in standard of living as measured by the real GDP per capita income) is not different from the nation's level of economic growth, because Nigeria with HDI of 0.453 was ranked number 158 out of 177 countries. The poverty situation in Nigeria has been on the increase with the rate increasing from 28.1 percent in 1980 to 88.0 percent in 2002. This situation when compared with countries like Mauritius and South Africa provides a pathetic situation and doubts on the possibilities of the nation achieving the targets of the MDGs.

That the socio-economic indicators have not done well and achieving the MDGs by 2015 will most likely be a mirage could not be without some reasons, which include among others; macro-economic policy inconsistency, instability and policy reversals, conflicts of macro-economic policy goals, budget con-

traction, public sector dominance in production of goods and services, weak institutional capacity for economic policy management and coordination, lack of effective coordination among the three tiers of government, a huge external debt overhang, excessive devaluation of the nation's currency, deterioration in terms of trade, deteriorating state of infrastructural facilities (most especially electricity power supply), bad governance, pervasive rent seeking and corruption. For instance, the nation's external debt burden has continued to heighten since the debt problem erupted in 1982, when debt arrears accumulated owing to inadequate foreign exchange inflows. By 2002, Nigeria's external debt stood at about US$29.8 billion and external debt service payments amounted to US$1.2 billion. The total debt outstanding as a proportion of GDP was at 66 percent, while debt service payment stood at 2.5 percent of GDP. Despite attempts to effectively manage the debt in recent time, it has continued to grow persistently rising from US $28.3 billion in 2000 to US$29.8 billion in 2002 and about US$31.3 billion at the end of 2004. External debt service payment rose from US$1,728.3 million in 1995 to US$2,398.9 in 2004 (see also UNDP 2004).

Concluding Remark

This paper provided an insight into the Millennium Development Goals and some key socio-economic indicators that are considered paramount in assessing the possible achievement of the Goals in Nigeria by 2015. Given the present state of the Nigerian economy, the low rate of human development and the high rate of poverty and with factors like macro-economic policy inconsistency, instability and policy reversals, conflicts of macro-economic policy goals, public sector dominance in the production of goods and services, weak institutional capacity for economic policy management and coordination, lack of effective coordination among the three tiers of government, a huge external debt overhang, excessive devaluation of the nation's currency, deterioration in terms of trade, deteriorating state of infrastructural facilities, religious and ethnic tension, bad governance, pervasive rent seeking and corruption, achieving the MDGs looks bleak unless a number of measures are taken into consideration. Key among these measures are heavy investment in human development, reduction in income poverty, stable macro-economic policies to take care of the high rate of inflation, huge external debt and exchange rate volatility.

The government should also refocus on building her capacity in the provision of public infrastructural services like water, electricity, railways and roads instead of emphazing so much on privatizing the facilities like it is already being done.

Effort should also be made in preventing the spread of HIV/AID and provision of adequate care and treatment to those that are already affected with the disease and other related diseases like malaria and tuberculosis.

Tackling bad governance and fighting corruption that have disrupted the effective allocation of resources to the most vulnerable in the society should be the watchword of the government, its agencies and the civil society in general.

Table 1: Some Socio-economic Indicators in Nigeria (1970- 2005)

Year	Poverty Rate (%)	Primary School Enrollment Ratio (Gross) (%)		Low Birth Weight Babies (% of Births)	Infant Mortality Rate per 1000 [a]	Maternity Mortality Rate per 1000 [b]	Population 15-49 with HIV/AIDS (%)	Access to Water (%) [b]	Access to Sanitation (%) [b]	Access to Health h(%) [b]	Total CO$_2$ Emissions ('000 MT) [b]	GNI Per Capita ($)	HDI (0 to 1 out of 174) [c]	External Debt Serving ($) [c]	Total Female Labour force (as % of total) [c]
		Female	Male												
1970	-	32.2	55.3	-	148.2	-	-	-	-	-	41277.5	232.0	0.230	-	36.8
1975	-	40.3	63.0	18.0	138.5	-	-	-	-	-	54289.2	550.0	0.318	-	36.2
1980	28.1	108.8	122.6	20.0	130.0	1500.0	-	-	-	40.0	65800.4	652.0	0.376	503.0	35.5
1985	46.3	103.6	115.0	16.0	123.5	1500.0	-	16.9	62.1	-	70432.2	392.0	0.386	3822.4	35.1
1990	44.0	91.4	104.0	-	119.5	1000.0	-	40.0	63.3	67.0	70420.5	220.0	0.406	3285.2	34.6
1995	60.0	93.0	103.0	-	117.4	-	-	49.9	57.3	-	22555.6	210.0	0.418	1747.7	35.1
2000	74.0	92.0	114.0	-	115.3	800.0	-	57.0	63.0	-	36149.02	260.0	0.462	1728.3	35.7
2001	83.1	80.0	114.0	-	114.8	-	5.5	-	-	-	36149.02	300.0	0.463	2467.2	35.7
2002	88.0	107.0	132.0	-	114.4	-	-	-	-	-	36149.02	300.0	0.466	1429.2	35.8
2003	-	-	-	-	113.1	-	5.4	60.0	-	-	36149.02	350.0	0.453	1625.2	-
2004	-	-	-	-	111.9	-	3.4	-	-	-	36149.02	390.0	-	2398.9	-
2005	-	-	-	-	110.6	-	2.9	-	-	-	36149.02	-	-	-	-

Sources: (a) FOS 1999; Ijaiya 2005;(b) ADB 2003 and 2006a; (c) PRB 2005 and 2006; ADB 2006b

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