

Sustainable Development Goals and the Environment: Eradicating Poverty and Hunger in Nigeria Vis-A-Vis the Doctrine of Non-Justiciability

Abayomi Anthony Alayoku*

Omoniye Bukola Akinola**

Temitope Daniel, Bamidele***

Abstract

Critical to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the eradication of hunger and poverty. This paper seeks to examine the nuances of eradicating the menace of hunger and poverty in Nigeria through the application of SDGs vis-à-vis fair use of the environment. The paper adopts doctrinal methodology and found that majority of the goals that were agreed upon and named sustainable development goals are goals and objectives already substantially contained in the constitution of all these countries, but the question is why are these countries still have to agree upon them again and named it SDGs? The paper made some other finding and concluded by recommending among others, that Government should develop reasonable sustainable development goals policies that will help to eradicate poverty and hungers, as well as the political will to follow all their plans, policies and goals with reasonable action and that certain parts of Chapter 2 of the constitution on doctrine of non-justiciability should be done away with.

* Alayoku Abayomi Anthony, LLB (Hons), LLM, (PhD Candidate Babcock University), Lecturer: Faculty of Law, Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State. Email: abayomialayoku@yahoo.com

** PhD, Barrister at Law, Professor of Law at Faculty of Law, Baze University, Abuja. He is a former Dean of Law, Redeemer's University and also former Dean, School of Law, Kampala International University, Uganda. Former Deputy Director (Academics), Nigerian Law School. Email: omoniye.akinola@bazeuniversity.edu.ng, profobakinola77@gmail.com

*** LL.B (Hons) LLM, Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. Email Address: bamidele.temitope007@gmail.com.

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1. Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are targeted at eradicating extreme hunger and poverty in the 189 member countries of the United Nations (UN).¹ One major reason for formulation of the millennium goals was the need for eradication of poverty and hunger. Globally, poverty caused by economy recession, economic meltdown is an issue and Nigeria is not an exception. The decision to formulate a long-term poverty reduction strategy was reached during the United Nations Millennium Summit held in September 2000, in line with the International Development Target (IDTs) which aimed at improving economic well-being, social and human development.² To ensure environmental sustainability and regeneration, all member states, Nigeria inclusive, were mandated to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.³ As a way of improvement on Millennium Development Goal, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its 2030 agenda with the aim of promoting equity, stability, and prosperity among its member states in 2015. These goals were established as a blueprint consisting of 17 global objectives to be achieved by 2040, replacing the previous millennium development goals that spanned from 2000 to 2015.⁴

The major agenda of the Sustainable Development goal was to produce a set of universal goals that meet the urgent environmental,

1 Barnes Anger 'Poverty Eradication, Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development in Nigeria (2010) *Journal of Sustainable Development* Vol 3, No 4

2 Oyetade, Monilola Dasola et al. 'Assessment Of Extreme Poverty And Hunger Eradication Strategies Of Sustainable Development Goals (Sdgs) In Akinyele Local Government Area Of Oyo State, Nigeria' (Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State)

³ Ibid (n 2)

4 Afe B.&Damilola S.O 'Advancing Environmental Education for Sustainable development in higher Education in Nigeria: Current challenges and Future Directions (2021) 13, 10808. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13191080>

political and economic challenges facing our world.⁵ Nigeria been a member of United Nations and signatory to the Millennium Development Goals, prior to the introduction of the sustainable development goals, made remarkable efforts to eradicate hunger and poverty from Nigeria as a country by establishing several agencies to fight poverty and hungers among the citizenry. For instance, Nigeria as a member of the United Nation keyed into the implementation of the framework of the goals by formulating the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), NEEDS as a policy is targeted at eradicating poverty and bringing about sustainable development. This is done through the establishment of Agencies like the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP).⁶ However, the scourge of poverty is till been felt by the majority of the citizens of the country who do not have access to primary health care, water and food.⁷ This paper examines the overview of sustainable development goals and the environment: a panacea to eradication of poverty and hunger in Nigeria.

2. Conceptual Clarifications

There are certain concepts which are germane to our discussion as we proceed in this paper, therefore for an avoidance of doubt which shall give the meaning of the following concepts, Poverty, Hunger, Development, Sustainable Development.

2.1 Poverty

Despite several efforts undertaken by international organisations, countries, and communities, poverty is still one of the biggest problems in the world. Currently, 10% of world's population live under the defined international poverty line of US\$1.90 a day.⁸

5 John Agbo and Others 'Analyzing the Progress, Pitfalls and Prospects For Attaining Environmental-Related Sustainable Development Goals In Nigeria' (2021) *Animal Research International Journal* 18 (1) 3990-4004

6 Adejo, A.M. Poverty in the Land of Plenty. (2006) NUBESS Journal of Contemporary Issues, Vol. 1, No.2.

7 Ibid (n 6)

8 United Nations "Global issues: Ending Poverty," (2020) <<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/ending-poverty>> assessed 23rd July 2024.

Whereas some industrialized countries may not perceive poverty as such a big issue, this phenomenon is also seen among them: even rich countries such as the UK, Germany, the United States or Sweden, have areas where poverty is widely spread, despite the fact that its consequences are not as dramatic as in the developing world since they have well developed social safety nets.⁹ Poverty may be difficult to define. This is because it has been submitted that Poverty entails more than the lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods. Its manifestations include hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion, as well as the lack of participation in decision making.¹⁰ World Bank has summarized their view on the concept of poverty when same opined that “poverty encompasses not only a shortfall in income and consumption, but also low educational achievement, poor health and nutritional outcomes, lack of access to basic services, and a hazardous living environment”.¹¹

In an attempt to define the concept poverty, two questions have always repeated itself as begging for answer and the questions are ‘Who are the poor?’ and at what level is poverty defined?¹² Conventional definitions in attempt to come to terms with these issues consistently conceive poverty as an economic issue. This is measured either as a minimum flow of real income per capita, or as a bundle of basic needs which may be qualified.¹³ One of the pioneers of the social science in defining poverty has submitted that poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by a wide range of factors, these include poor people lack of access to income earning and

9 Walter Leal Filho and Others, ‘Poverty: A central barrier to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals’ (2021) *Journal of Environmental Science and Policy* (125) 96-104

¹⁰ Ibid (n 8)

11 World Bank, *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2018: Piecing Together the Poverty Puzzle*. 2018 Washington, DC: World Bank. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY3.0 IGO, <<http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/poverty-and-shared-prosperity>> assessed 23rd July 2024.

12 Edoh, T. ‘Poverty and the Survival of Democracy in Nigeria’ (2003). In *Nigerian Journal of Political and Administrative Studies*. Vol. 1, No. 4.

¹³ Ibid (n 12)

productive activities and to essential social service.¹⁴ Edoh while submitting on the definition Poverty coined in the Copenhagen Declaration of 1995 opined that:

Poverty has various manifestations, including lack of Income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihood; hunger and malnutrition, ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increase morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments, social discriminations and exclusion. It is also characterized by a lack of participation in decision and in civil, social and cultural life¹⁵

In a nutshell, Poverty may be regarded as a puzzle, as it leads to and is mainly influenced by problems such as income inequality, unemployment, high vulnerability to disasters, poor health, crime and lack of education. Poverty is also negatively influenced by climate change, since it may be associated with reductions in agricultural yields or crop failure, droughts or floods, which may cause significant damages to properties, and endanger livelihoods, representing a set of poverty traps.¹⁶

2.2 Hunger

The concept of hunger is often used interchangeably with the concept of food security; however, these two concepts are differed in their meaning, but one may be tempted to conclude that they have the same meaning. Hunger is “A condition, in which people lack the basic food intake to provide them with the energy and nutrients for fully productive lives.”¹⁷ Nutrients provided by food combine with other

¹⁴ Kankwanda, M. Poverty Eradication: Where Africa Stands. (2002). London: Economica.

¹⁵ Ibid (n 12)

¹⁶ Ubisi N.R et al. ‘Smallholders Farmers Perceived Effects of Climate Change on Crop Production and Household Livelihood in Rural Limpopo Province of South Africa

¹⁷ Hunger Task Force, ‘Halving Hunger by 2015: A Framework for Action, Interim Report, Millennium Project (2003):, UNDP, New York

factors, including the health state of the person consuming the food, to produce “nutritional status.” Some forms of poor nutritional status often described as undernutrition reflect an absence of macro or micro nutrients which may be exacerbated by debilitating health stresses such as parasites.¹⁸ On the other hand, the concept of food security is hinged on the four pillars, namely; availability of supply, accessibility, stability regardless of seasonal fluctuations and utilization.¹⁹

It is therefore, food security is conceptualized as a situation when individuals at any given time, have access to adequate, nutritious and safe food, which meets the dietary requirement of any human to live actively and healthily making them free from hunger²⁰. This means that an individual or group is referred to being food secure if they are not hungry or free from living with the fear of hunger.²¹ It is also essential that before we give final definition on the concept of hunger to also examined the meaning of food insecurity as the three terms are interwoven, therefore, food insecurity is the inability to consume adequate nutritious food within the domain of nutrition and health needed for one’s physiological use is known as food insecurity.²² food insecurity refers to the consequence of undernourishment as a result of the unavailability of food as well as

¹⁸ Ibid (n 17)

¹⁹ Applanaidu, S.D., Bakar, N.A., & Baharudin, A.H., ‘An Econometric Analysis of Food Security and Related Macroeconomic Variables in Malaysia: A Vector Autoregressive Approach (VAR). UMK Procedia (2014)

²⁰ Ibukun, C.O., & Adebayo, A.A., ‘Household Food Security and COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria. African Development Review’ (2021) <https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/AEC/2020/presentations/household_food_security_and_covid_19_ibukun_and_adebayo.pdf> assessed 23rd July 2024.

²¹ Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally ‘Essential Concepts in Agriculture and Food Systems, Session Guide Three of the Nutrition- Sensitive Agriculture Training Resource Package’ (2018) <https://www.spring-nutrition.org/sites/default/files/training_materials/files/session-3-essential-nutrition-concepts-agri.docx#:~:text=%5Bclick%5D%20Agriculture%20is%20the%20science,%2C%20wool%2C%20and%20other%20products%20> assessed 23rd July 2024.

²² Food and Agriculture Organization ‘The State of Food Insecurity in the World: Eradicating World Hunger- Taking Stock Ten Years after the World Food Summit’(2006) <<http://www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0750e/a0750e00.htm>> FAO (2010). World Food Crisis the Price of Neglect.> assessed 23rd July 2024.

lack of economic and social access to sufficient food. In addition, when food insecurity is left unaddressed this leads to hunger and malnutrition.²³

Having defined the related terms to hunger which are food security and food insecurity, we then summarize in a nutshell that hunger is “the uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food, the recurrent and involuntary lack of food... with a potential... consequence of food security”. Hunger is therefore a possible sign or result of food insecurity, as it relates to an acute food access or deprivation due to the unavailability and inaccessibility to food due to circumstances that can be socio-economic in nature.²⁴

2.3 Development

The world currently revolves around development as the need for development occupies a primary place in the lives of individuals and countries.²⁵ Therefore, the term ‘development’ is a process that creates growth, progress, positive change or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social and demographic components.²⁶ Development is further defined as the ability of the State to harness its natural resources or endowment for the well-being of the citizens.²⁷ It has been opined that the purpose of development is to provide a rise in the level and quality of life of the population, and the creation or expansion of local or regional income and employment opportunities,

23 Otoha, I.M., ‘Food Insecurity in Nigeria: Way Forward’. (2013). African Research Review, An International Multidisciplinary Journal, 7(4), pp. 26-35

24 National Research Council, ‘Food Insecurity and Hunger in the United States: An Assessment of the Measure’ (2006) The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, Washington DC: National Academies Press, pp. 41-144.

25 Barnes Anger ‘Poverty Eradication, Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development in Nigeria (2010) Journal of Sustainable Development Vol 3, No 4

26 Society For International Development ‘The Future of Development in a Rapidly Changing World’ (2018) SID- Washington Annual Conference. Held at Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington DC, USA,

27 Rodney Walter. How Europe Underdeveloped Africa. (1976). Washington: Howard University Press.

without over-depleting the available environmental resources.²⁸ The concept of development has been adjudged to encompass the economic, political, social, cultural and environmental dimensions. While economic and social progress and the elimination of poverty are the objectives of development, it includes also freedom from fear and arbitrary arrest; free speech, free association and the right to vote and be voted for.²⁹

It has further been argued and opined that in defining the concept of development, the questions to ask about a country's development are; what has been happening to poverty, unemployment and inequality? If all these have declined from high levels then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse especially if all there have, it would be strange to call the result development even if per capita income doubled. This definition is centered on the improvement of the living condition of the citizens and it means that an economy could grow without developing.³⁰

2.4 Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development is defined as a development that meets the needs of present human generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meeting their own needs.³¹ Sustainable development, simply put, entails development that can be kept going or maintained. This should entail proper attention given to the transformation of productive forces and commensurate transformation in the social relations of production; the ability to maintain this guarantee sustainable development.³²

²⁸ John Agbo et al. 'Analyzing the Progress, Pitfalls and Prospects For Attaining Environmental-Related Sustainable Development Goals In Nigeria' (2021) *Animal Research International Journal* 18 (1) 3990-4004

²⁹ Sen, A "*Development and Freedom*" (1989) Anchor Books.

³⁰ Dudley Seer "The meaning of Development" (1969) *International Development Review* 11 (4)

³¹ World Commission on Environment and Development 'Our Common Future' (1987) Oxford University Press

³² Barnes Anger 'Poverty Eradication, Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development in Nigeria (2010) *Journal of Sustainable Development* Vol 3, No 4

The concept of sustainable development has been adjudged as a necessary global developmental mechanism because: (i) the Earth has finite resources, (ii) humankind is increasingly efficient at the extraction and conversion of the Earth's resources and (iii) development and consumption patterns fundamentally become unsustainable with increasingly significant social, economic and political consequences. As a result, the aim of sustainable development would be to address the numerous aspirations of humans for better life without exceeding the carrying capacities of environmental resources found on Planet Earth.³³

Sustainable development means better ways of doing things without compromising the health status of the people. Thereafter, sustainable development includes economic growth environmental stewardship and social inclusion.³⁴ The Sustainable Development Goals comprises 17 goals and 16 targets, the goals includes; No poverty, Zero hunger, Good health and well-being, Quality education, Gender equality, Clean water and sanitation, Affordable and clean energy, Decent work and economic growth, Industry, innovation and infrastructure, Reducing inequality, Sustainable cities and communities, Responsible consumption and production, Climate action, Life below water, Life on Land, Peace, justice and strong institutions, Partnerships for the goal.³⁵

Out of all these seventeen goals, our concerns in this paper are the first two major goals which are Zero Poverty and hunger, these two goals can be regarded as twins, a poor man shall surely go hungry because definitely there will not be money to buy the food to quench his hunger. However, before we proceed on the discussion and the impact of SDGs on these two concepts in Nigeria, we shall briefly

³³ Ibid (n 31)

³⁴ Akinloye I.A. 'Towards the implementation of sustainable development goals in Nigeria: Maximizing the influence of religious leaders' (2018) Stellenbosch Theological Journal 4(1)

³⁵ Shulnom Jeremiah Hassan and Omenke Maimunat Umar 'Actualizing the Sustainable Development Goals 2030: The Role of Environmental Education in Poverty Eradication and Tackling insecurity in Nigeria' (2024) Scholar J, Research Article

discuss the theoretical frame work for poverty which we believe it shall also cover hunger too.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theory used in this study is the Structural theory on poverty. To the structural theorists, poverty is due to the structure of the larger socio-economic order.³⁶ The proponents of this theory attribute the source of poverty to economic, political, and social system which causes people to have limited opportunities and resources with which to achieve income and well-being³⁷. This view was further corroborated when it was opined that larger economic and social structures is a cause of poverty. It has been argued that capitalism creates conditions that promote poverty and that irrespective of individuals' effort; (hard work, skills and competencies); the structure of some economies, for instance the economy of United States of America ensures that millions of people are poor.³⁸ In other words, a greater number of literature suggest that the economic system is structured in such a way that the poor fall behind regardless of how competent they may be.³⁹ The theory also asserts that within a market-based competitive economic system, unequal initial endowments of talents, skills and capital which determine productivity of an individual cause poverty.⁴⁰

In the application of this theory to poverty and hunger situation in Nigeria, it has been opined that a critical look at the challenges of tackling poverty in Nigeria, one can attribute some of the factors to the political and economic structures that are present in the country, one can rightly say it has contributed to the impoverished nature of its people. The government's inability to formulate and implement such

36 Abdulai, A. & Shamshiry, E 'Theory and Practice on the Nexus between Poverty, Natural Resources and Governance' (2014). Springer Link

37 Bradshaw, T. 'Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development' (2006). Rural Poverty Research Centre (RPRC)(06-05)

38 Sameti, M. E. 'Theories of Poverty: A Comparative Analysis' (2012) *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 1(6), 57-69.

³⁹ Ibid (n 37)

40 Davis, P., & Sanchez-Martinez MA 'Review of the Economic Theories of Poverty'. (2014). National Institute and Social Research, 435-447.

policies that could bridge a gap between the rich and the poor has continued to make the poor people poorer and the few rich people, richer. In rare situations when few of those policies are made, no efficient monitoring team is put in place to ensure such policies are implemented to the letter. Furthermore, no political will among the political office holders to ensure the basic needs of the people are met. Instead, they ensure that economic and political power continues to remain the hands of a selected few in the society. This could assist in understanding some of the challenges faced by the SDGs in achieving its set goals at the moment in Nigeria.⁴¹

4. Overview of Poverty and Hungry as Sustainable Development Goals

Zero tolerance of poverty is one of the first major goal of sustainable development goals, SDGs targets provide thus:

1. By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day.
2. By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.
3. Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.
4. By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.
5. By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and

41 Balogun Osebi Sophia ‘Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Challenges of Poverty Reduction in Nigeria’ (2023) African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies pg. 682-693

- vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters
6. Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions.
 7. Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions.⁴²

Before we proceed to discuss the efforts that Nigeria government has rolled out to implement the SDGs of zero poverty and hunger, it is important to establish from the onset the close relationship between SDGs, poverty, the environment, hunger and the people. It has been submitted by several authors that the concept of ‘sustainable development’ does not only mean saving the environment or some particular species, but human survival which is most important living being, but also points to a clear statement that the human environmental system makes up a single, indivisible system, since by mentioning the “generations” it refers to generations - past, present and future related to the human environment, since they are inseparable.⁴³

It has been further submitted that SDGs entails intergenerational equity corresponds to maintaining the planet’s natural resources we share with other species and humans, in past, present and future generations.⁴⁴ The key principle of sustainable development underlying all others, is the integration of environmental, social, and economic concerns into all aspects of decision making, all other principles in the sustainable development framework have integrated decision making

⁴² Ibid (n 41)

⁴³ Barter, N and Russell, S ‘Two Snapshots Reinforcing Systemic Thinking and Responsibility (2014) *Journal of Global Responsibility*, 5(1) pp 45-54

⁴⁴ Weiss, E. B. Fairness to Future Generations and Sustainable Development. (1992) *American University International Law Review*, 8, 19-26.

at their core.⁴⁵ It should be noted that the economic concerns of SDGs encompasses all the efforts of the government to take their populace out of poverty via various ways, programs or policies they have highlighted to promote the prosperities of their citizens. The concept of sustainable development can be interpreted in many different ways, but at its core is an approach to development that looks to balance different, and often competing, needs against an awareness of the environmental, social and economic limitations we face as a society.⁴⁶ It has been further submitted that Sustainable development “aims towards economic growth without human-lead damage to the environment, long term view in relation to future generations to include environmental, economic and social aspects in mutual balance as well as proposed changes in humanity’s behaviour and materialized through strategies involves processes and practices.”⁴⁷

Poverty has been described as the lack of income needed to acquire the basic needs of life”. Here, poverty depicts is a major threat to human existence.⁴⁸ Furthermore, people are said to be poverty stricken when their income even if adequate for survival, falls below those of the commodity they cannot afford what the larger community regards and deems necessary.⁴⁹ It has been asserted also that “several types of poverty may be distinguished depending on such factors as, time or duration (long, short terms or cyclical). Poverty may be widespread throughout a population, but the occurrence itself is limited to direction and distribution (widespread, concentrated

45 Dernbach, J. C. ‘Sustainable Development as a Framework for National Governance’ (1998). *Case Western Reserve Law Review*, 1-103.

46 Davis, P., & Sanchez-Martinez M. ‘A Review of the Economic Theories of Poverty.’ (2014). *National Institute and Social Research*, 435-447

47 United Nations ‘Resolution adopted by the General Assembly. Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ Retrieved From www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals

48 Anger, B. ‘The Structural Adjustment Programme of the IMF and Nigeria’s Economy: A Revisitation.’ (2005). *NAPSS Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 4(1), 1-26.

49 Edoh, T. ‘Poverty and the Survival of Democracy in Nigeria’ (2003). *Nigeria Journal of Political and Administrative Studies*, 1(4), 7-15.

individuals).⁵⁰ It can also involve relatively permanent insufficiency of means of securing basic needs.⁵¹

The present condition of poverty rate in Nigeria may be described as the average level of life in a large group in concentrated or relatively large groups in an otherwise prosperous society. Poverty as lack of access to basic needs/goods is essentially economic or consumption oriented. Thus, the poor are perceived as those individuals or households in a particular society, incapable of purchasing a specified basket of basic goods and services.⁵² Basic goods as used here include; food, shelter, water, health care, access to productive resources including education, working skill and tools, political and civil rights to participate in decisions concerning socio-economic conditions.⁵³

As regards the hunger and Sustainable Development Goals, it must be stated from the beginning that a necessity for life and disease prevention is food, as it plays a crucial role in providing health, social and economic benefits, in the world at large.⁵⁴ To this end, the term food security gained global recognition in the World Food Conference of 1974, where it was declared that every person regardless of their sex or age had the right to be free from hunger and malnutrition, in order to function socially and develop mentally.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Aliyu, K. & Dansabo M.T. Poverty as Development Challenge in Nigeria: An Assessment of Some Poverty Eradication Policies. (2017) *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(10A), 920-927.

⁵¹ Mohammed, A., Hassan, H., & Zakari, M.. 'Impact of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) on Poverty Alleviation among Rural Women and Youth in Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria'(2021). *NIU Journal Of Humanities*, 6(1), 109-122. < <https://ijhumas.com/ojs/index.php/niuhums/article/view/1175>> assessed 23rd July 2024.

⁵² Balogun Osebi Sophia 'Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Challenges of Poverty Reduction in Nigeria' (2023) *African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies* pg. 682-693

⁵³ Gbosi, A. & Philip, C.O. 'The Nigerian Economy and Current Problems.' (2004) Abakaliki, Ebonyi State: Pack Publishers

⁵⁴ Neumann et al Animal Source Foods Improve Dietary Quality, Micronutrient Status, Growth and Cognitive Function in Kenyan School Children: Background Study Design and Baseline Findings' (2003). *The Journal of Nutrition*, 133(11), pp. 3941-3945.

⁵⁵ FAO, 'The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World' (2019).

In addition, to drive the point on the importance of food as a strong determinant for sustainable development of nations, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1976, not only proclaimed the right to be free from hunger, but also, acknowledged the need for hunger to be eliminated through an international cooperation.⁵⁶ To this end, the highest profile commitment in international efforts to address hunger is through the SDGs.⁵⁷ Hence, the international agreement on Goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the agreement to include Goal 2 into the broad Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which superseded the MDGs in 2015. Although, the SDGs in its Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), has an ambitious aim to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition by 2030, through sustainable agriculture, support to small-scale farmers, access to land and markets, as well as investments in agricultural technology and infrastructure.⁵⁸ While in the past two (2) decades the number of the undernourished dropped by almost half, as a result of increase in agricultural productivity and economic growth by a number of nations, including some developing countries which were suffering from acute hunger and famine. Nevertheless, despite the drop in the numbers, malnutrition and hunger still lingers as a barrier to sustainable development in many countries.⁵⁹

Studies shows that an estimated 821 million persons as at the year, 2017, were acutely undernourished, 90 million children underweight, and most South America and sub-Saharan African nations were witnessing severe food insecurity, as a direct consequence of environmental degradation, drought and conflicts, to mention a few.⁶⁰ Additionally, research show that the worst hit

56 Ajibade, I., Egge, M. & Pallathadka, A., 'Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Goal on Food Security: Barriers and Opportunities for Progressive Realization on Qatar and Nigeria'(2019). *Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy*. 10 (1&2), Afe Babalola Press, pp. 158-183.

57 Blessing Adedokun 'Nigeria's Food Insecurity and Its Implications on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 Amidst the COVID-19 Era (2021) *Journal of Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Africa* Vol.6 No,5

⁵⁸ Ibid (n 57)

⁵⁹ Ibid (n 57)

60 UNESCO, *Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future: A Multimedia Teacher Education Programme*. (2010) Paris: UNESCO

continent by global warming is Africa, hence, projections shows that the most vulnerable sector is the African agricultural sector.⁶¹ Similarly, Nigeria's food insecurity and the resulting malnutrition are being aggravated continuously by a number of factors including climate change, violent clashes, intra-state conflicts and more recently, the outbreak of the pandemic. Hence, prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, Nigeria in a bid to support the effective implementation of the SDG 2 launched some policies and programs to address issues bordering on food insecurity.⁶²

5. An Overview of Sustainable Development Efforts in Nigeria over the Years

The centrality of poverty and hunger has made successive Nigerian governments to initiate sustainable development programmes aimed at alleviating or minimizing the deadly scourge of the poverty phenomenon.⁶³ It has been submitted that the programmes such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) which was launched in the 1970s and Green Revolution initiated in 1980 existed in the past to address the problems of poverty.⁶⁴ Other efforts made by successive governments include the establishment of the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Better Life Programme, (BLP), the Peoples' Bank of Nigeria (PBN), Family Support programme (FSP), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) and National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).⁶⁵ DFRRI was established in 1986 to construct feeder roads, provide rural water

⁶¹ Ojo, E.O., & Adebayo, P.F., 'Food Security in Nigeria: An Overview' (2012). European Journal of Sustainable Development, 1(2), ECSDEV: Rome, pp. 199-222, ISSN: 2239-5938.

⁶² Okolo, D.A., Agricultural Development and Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Building a Case for more Public Support: The Case of Nigeria. (2006). A paper prepared for the Policy Assistance Unit of FAO Sub regional Office for East and Southern Africa, pp. 1-42.

⁶³ Ibid (n 48)

⁶⁴ Odion, W. E Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Poverty Questions in Nigeria. (2009). in Omotor, D. G and Akpotor, A. S. (eds) Millennium development Goals and Challenges Abraka: Delsu Investment Nigeria Ltd

⁶⁵ Ibid (n 64)

supply and rural electrification for the rural areas. The NDE was also established in 1986 to provide training, finance, and guidance for unemployed youths. BLP on the other hand came into being in 1987 to provide empowerment self-help and rural development programmes, skills acquisition and healthcare for the rural women.⁶⁶

The PBN was established in 1989 to encourage savings and credit facilities for the underprivileged in urban and rural areas while Community Banks were established in 1990 to operate banking facilities for rural residents and micro enterprises in urban areas. The FSP came on board in 1994 to provide healthcare delivery, child welfare, youth development, etc. FEAP and their state variants (SEAP) were initiated to provide credit facilities to support the establishment of cottage industries in rural areas.⁶⁷ The poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) was an interim measure put in place in 2000 to address the problems of rising unemployment in the society and to increase the productiveness of the economy. Over the years attempts were made at alleviating poverty as reflected in the expression of commitment by successive governments, increase in the number of programmes and increasing commitment of resources in the process, however, very minimal success has been recorded or achieved and this is due to lack of coordination and commitment, lack of continuity, improper appreciation of the roots and magnitude of the problem, poor funding of the programmes, policy inconsistency, deficient infrastructural facilities and corruption.⁶⁸

This aspect of the paper should be concluded by reiterating the fact that the Nigeria government in the transition period of Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals, the vision 2020 was set by the government as the major goal which will bring about great sustainable development especially in the area of economies. Nigeria adopted a long-term approach to development planning and set the ambitious goal of being among the top20

⁶⁶ Ibid (n 64)

⁶⁷ Ibid (n 64)

⁶⁸ Muo, I. Poverty: 'The Challenges, the Imperatives'(2007).. Zenith Economic quarterly. 2 (12) September. National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy Document. (2004). National Planning Commission, Abuja.

economies of the world by year 2020.⁶⁹ This goal is yet to come to reality in 2025.

6.0The Doctrine of Non-Justiciability as an Impediment to Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals In Nigeria

The starting point of this sub-topic is to submit from the onset that almost if not all the goals highlighted in the Sustainable Development Goals agenda, or target are contained or provided for under the chapter two of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which is unfortunate it is regarded as the non-justiciable chapter of the constitution. The chapter two of 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria is titled Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, and same comprises 12 sections which range from political objectives, economic objectives, social objectives, educational objectives, environmental objectives etc. It must be submitted that without doubt all these objectives listed under the chapter two of the 1999 constitution are the mostly the fulcrum of the SDGs. However it is sad that in Nigeria the main reasons for the setting the target of the sustainable development goals which are people cannot approach the Court if the government fails to fulfil any of the promises or meet up with the goals set.

However, we shall briefly discuss the concept of non-justiciability. The concept of non-justiciability cannot easily be defined but as rooted in justiciable, whereby the Black's Law dictionary explained justiciable to mean;

Any issue to be examined in court of justice, subject to action in a Court of justice as held in *International Harvest Hat Co. v. Caradine Hat. Co* tried in a Court of law for presentation of real interests instead of hypothetical or abstract ones⁷⁰

Therefore, non-justiciable simply means inability of any Court of Law to try any matter even where real interest and rights are being

⁶⁹ The Government of Federal Republic of Nigeria 'Nigeria Sustainable Development Goals Implementations Plans 2020-2030' (2020) OSSAP-SDGS

⁷⁰ Gardner BA, Black's Law Dictionary' (7th Edition, Westgroup, 1990)

infringed. This definitely is against the spirit and objective of any good constitution in a democratic dispensation; where the rule of law and separation of powers of the arms the government should prevail.⁷¹ The Non-Justiciability provision in the 1999 Constitution is provided for in Section 6(1) provides thus:

The judicial powers of the Federation shall be vested in the Courts to which this section relates, being courts established for the Federation. Sections 6(6) provides that:

- 6 (6) The judicial powers vested in accordance with the foregoing provisions of this section;
 - (a) Shall extend, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this constitution, to all inherent powers and sanctions of a court of law;
 - (b) Shall extend to all matters between persons, or between government or authority and any person in Nigeria, and to all actions and proceedings relating thereto, for the determination of any question as to the civil rights and obligations of that persons;
 - (c) Shall not, except as otherwise provided by this Constitution, extend to any issue or question as to whether any act or omission by any authority or person or as to whether any law or any judicial decision is in conformity with the fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy set out in chapter II of this Constitution.

Section 6 (6) (c) has made the almost all the sections contained in chapter two of the constitution as ouster clause and it must be said that this not proper in a democratic society such as Nigeria. Although the Supreme Court of Nigeria in *A. G. Fed v Sode*⁷² Belgore JSC on what the reaction and position of the Court should be on any purport of ouster clauses, stated thus:

⁷¹ Ogugua V.C. Ikpeze 'Non-Justiciability of Chapter II of the Nigerian Constitution as an Impediment to Economic Rights and Development (2015) Developing Countries Studies Vol. 5, No. 18

⁷² (1990) 1 N.S.C.C

The purport of ouster provisions in decrees is clear that is, no Court of law or tribunal should look into any matter. The Courts are so prevented from looking into. This is the peculiarity of the military regime, which makes the constitution subject to their decrees.... The original sources of jurisdiction is the constitution itself; but when a military regime by a decree promulgated ousts jurisdiction of courts or Tribunals in any subject matter as provided by the constitution or any other law, the decree must be followed”⁷³

It is therefore our opinion that with this above decision or pronouncement from the apex court in Nigeria, it is clear no one including the citizens of which are the main target of sustainable development goals can approach any Court in Nigeria if the government fails, neglects and abandoned it to fulfil their promises or targets of any of the sustainable development goals. We submit finally that the Court in Nigeria is often time weary to go against the provision of the constitution as regards the chapter two of the 1999 Constitution. In the case of *Okogie v The Lagos State*, the Court of Appeal held thus:

The Fundamental Objectives identify the ultimate objectives of the nation and the Directive Principles lay down the policies which are expected to be pursued in the efforts of the nation to realize the national ideals. While section 13 of the constitution make it a duty and responsibility of the judiciary among other organs of government, to conform to and apply the provisions of chapter II, Section 6 (6) (c) of the same constitution ensures no court has jurisdiction to pronounce any decision as to whether any organ of government has acted or is acting in conformity with the fundamental objectives and Directive principles of State Policy. It is clear therefore, that section 13 has not made chapter II of the constitution justiciable.⁷⁴

⁷³ *A. G. Fed. v Sode* (1990) 1 N.S.C.C

⁷⁴ (1981) 2 NCLR

It is our final view that inability of the citizens to approach the court so as to compel the government to be faithful in the execution of the SDGs has made all the goals and target to be ordinary suggestions on papers without any compelling enforcement either from United Nations, or by approaching any court in Nigeria. Some of the other identified challenges of enforcement of SDGs includes lack of political will, misplaced target and corruption.⁷⁵

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper examined the Sustainable Development Goals and the Environment: Eradication of Poverty and Hunger in Nigeria within the framework of the doctrine of non-justiciability. This paper found that the sustainable Development Goals truly replaced the Millennium Development goals. The sustainable development goals have seventeen goals and with each goal, targets were set by the world leaders of the 189 states that agreed to set up sustainable development goals. The paper found that majority of the goals that were agreed upon and named sustainable development goals are goals and objectives already contained in the constitution of all these countries, but the question is why are these countries still have to agree upon them again and named it sustainable development goals.

It is discovered through this research that the government of Nigeria as far back as 60's 70's 80's and even till year 2020 made several efforts and plans have always been highlighted by the government to eradicate poverty and hunger but it is disheartening to discover that poverty and hunger still subsist despite all the government plans. It is sad to find out that the corruption, lack of political will and lack of favourable policies by the government over the years has perpetually swamped the citizens in abject poverty and hungry. Another major problem is inability of the citizens to even proceed against the government through stern legal action if they fail to fulfil or carry out all these goals. It is therefore recommended that:

⁷⁵ Balogun Osebi Sophia 'Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Challenges of Poverty Reduction in Nigeria' (2023) *African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies* Pp. 682-693

1. Government should develop reasonable sustainable development goals policies that will help to eradicate poverty and hungers
2. Government should have a political will to follow all their plans, policies and goals with reasonable action
3. Government should fight every acts of corruption targeted against the fulfilment of the sustainable development goals especially poverty and hunger goals.
4. The doctrine of non-justiciability should be done away with in our constitution and probably replace with another doctrine which will not totally ouster jurisdiction to adjudicate on chapter two of the constitution.