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| **Sustainable Development Goals - your story of creating a food secure world** |

**Sustainable Development Goals -** [**SDG2 “Zero Hunger”**](http://newsletters.fao.org/c/1yjFZQOpTVTChg9jWNssH9qK)

1. **The Nigerian Story- Prospects and Challenges**

Dwelling on what impact SDG2 “Zero Hunger” have had so far in my country (Nigeria), I would like to share the story of the SDG2 in Nigeria in terms of the prospects, progress achieved so far and the major challenges.

Since the adoption of the resolution of the agenda for sustainable development made by the United Nation’s General Assembly during its high-level Special Summit which was held in New York in September, 2015. This led to the adoption of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). All nations are encouraged to work towards achieving these 17 goals with different 169 indicators by 2030 (UN, 2017a).

Considering SDG2 “Zero Hunger” which was set to tackle food and nutrition insecurity and encouraged member states to *“end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture”* by 2030. SDG2 has five principal targets and three implementing mechanisms (UN, 2017b). These are summarized below:

**Principal Targets of SDG 2**

By 2030, end hunger and ensure access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food.

By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition

By 2030, double the productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers

By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implementing resilient agricultural practices

By 2030, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, plants, and animals.

**Implementing Mechanisms of SDG 2**

Increase investment through enhanced international cooperation

Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets

Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information

1. **Telling the Nigerian SDG2 “Zero Hunger” Story**

**2.1 Nigeria’s Strategic Plans towards achieving the SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) by 2030**

Nigeria had enacted several policies and strategies aimed at reducing the level of food and nutrition insecurity. Some of these are briefly discussed below:

**2.1.1 National Policy on Food and Nutrition (NPFN)**

NPFN was developed by the national committee on food and nutrition of the National Planning Commission in 2002, focusing on Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) in different sectors and classes of the society. It targeted a 50% reduction in the incidence of vitamin and mineral deficiencies disorders such as iodine deficiency disorder by 2010 (IITA, 2017; Olomola, 2017). The NPFN was faced with a lot of challenges and made the implementation of the policy of infinitesimal impact on the Nigerian citizens. This led to its revision in 2016 to enhance maximum impact.

**2.1.2 Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) (2011-2015)**

The ATA was designed and implemented by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture which has food security and agricultural productivity as its main targets. The components of ATA were:

(i) The Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GESS) designed to enhance the provision of modern agricultural inputs to farmers at subsidized prices.

(ii) The Staple Crop Processing Zone (SCPZ) designed to enhance clustered food production (for example, cassava, fishes, rice and so on) based on the comparative advantage of each region. (iii) Agricultural Commodity Value Chain Development (ACVCD) designed to harness key commodities in crop and livestock sub-sectors in different agro-ecological zones.

(iv) Agricultural Marketing and Trade Development Corporations (AMTDCs) were established to enhance farmers’ access to markets.

(v) The Agricultural Extension Transformation Agenda (AETA) designed to improve dissemination of information and adoption of innovations.

(vi) The Nigerian Incentive-based Risk-Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL) designed to overcome the bottlenecks associated with agricultural commodity and financing value chains.

**Some ATA’s Achievements**

1. About 12 to 14 million farmers benefitted from means-based input subsidies provided by ATA between 2011 and 2014.
2. The Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GESS) was set up to register smallholder farmers (about 10.5 million farmers were registered)
3. Farmers also gained improved access to inputs i.e. access to fertilizer and improved seeds
4. Creation of special funds to support farmers e.g. ₦10 billion Cassava Fund.
5. Domestic food production rose by an incremental 20.1 million tons.
6. Commercial banks financed GES and boost lending to agriculture from about 1 percent to 6 percent of all formal credit by 2015 (FGN, 2016; Olomola, 2017; Olomola and Nwafor, 2018).

**2.1.3 National Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition (NPAN) (2014 to 2019)**

The objectives of NPAN are to:

1. promote the delivery of effective interventions that will ensure adequate nutrition to all Nigerians, especially vulnerable groups;
2. enhance the capacity to deliver effective and appropriate nutrition interventions;
3. contribute to the control of diet-related non-communicable diseases;
4. promote and strengthen research, monitoring, and evaluation;
5. promote and facilitate community participation for nutrition interventions;
6. promote and strengthen nutrition coordination and collaboration.

According to FGN (2014), effective implementation of these objectives is expected to:

1. reduce the number of under-five children who are stunted by 20% by 2018;
2. reduce low birth weight by 15% by 2018;
3. ensure no increase in the rate of overweight children by 2018;
4. reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 10% by 2018;
5. reduce anemia in women of reproductive age by 50% by 2018;
6. increase exclusive breastfeeding rates in the first six months to at least 50% by 2018.

**2.1.4 Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) (2016-2020):**

The APP is aimed at:

(i) ensuring national food security by expanding strategic food reserves to enhance food availability.

(ii) making nutritious food available at the local level through school-feeding programs and fortification of food through breeding and post-harvest handling.

(iii) raising awareness about nutritious foods.

(iv) enhancing the quality of food through the control and use of agrochemicals.

(v) encouraging continued expansion of organic farming and the sale of fresh foods in and outside the country.

(vi) creating a standard system for food safety through inspections, origin tracking, and labeling (Olomola, 2017).

**2.1.5 Zero Hunger Initiative (ZHI)**

The ZHI seeks to concisely formulate a strategic framework for achieving SDG2 in the Nigeria employing a multi-stakeholder and multi-dimensional approach in which all sectors have specific goals that must be met. The zero hunger strategic review, which was a flagship programme of the ZHI in Nigeria, was convened by former President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2017 with the support of the federal government and development partners, including the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), World Food Programme (WFP), and the African Development Bank (AfDB). The review was to leverage, support and encourage government in the proper and timely implementation of its policies, plans and programmes formulated decades ago, while principally focusing on achieving SDG 2 by 2030 (IITA, 2017). The roles of the forum are contained in IITA (2017). Other important responsibilities of the forum include:

1. establish and oversee a platform for sharing information about Zero Hunger.
2. propose progressive policies towards the attainment of Zero Hunger.
3. assist with land availability, preparation and resource mobilization to support Zero Hunger implementation in pilot States (Sokoto, Ebonyi, Benue, and Ogun) in the first two years with each pilot State having a minimum of two crops and one type of livestock as their focal commodities; addition of two more states per zone at the start of the third year and the inclusion of the remaining states at the beginning of the fifth year.
4. embark on awareness campaigns on the importance of food and nutrition security.

Nigeria’s concerted efforts geared towards the achievement of the SDG 2 target have also received tremendous support from various international Non- Governmental Organisations (INGOs) which include; United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP) among others. These INGOs have provide several humanitarian assistance to Nigerian government especially in the northeastern part of the country.

1. **Nigeria’s Social Safety Net Programme and Progress Achieved so far**

As part of Nigerian government effort to render assistance to the most vulnerable groups in the society, the National Social Investment Programmes (N-SIP) was launched in 2016. These programmes include:

(i) National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP)

(ii) National Home Grown School Feeding (NHGSF) programme

(iii) N-Power Programme

(iv) Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP

**3.1 National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP)**

In Nigeria, NCTP was implemented in 2016 to directly support the poorest of the poor in the population by improving their nutrition, increase household consumption, and enhancing the development of human capital. Cash benefits of N5,000 are paid to this group of people on a monthly basis. Also, household with pregnant women as well as school aged children are given double of the cash benefit (N10,000) monthly. The cash transfer programme has tremendously assisted in addressing the problem of hunger, malnutrition and extreme poverty (SDG 1 and 2) among the vulnerable groups in Nigeria with over 300,000 households benefiting since inception in 2016 (FGN N-SIP 2018).

**3.2 National Home Grown School Feeding (NHGSF) Programme**

NHGSF is another major N-SIP initiative established by Nigerian government to reduce hunger and malnutrition especially among school-age children so as to stimulate learning process. It is designed to provide minimum of one meal a day to each school pupil. It focuses on providing food and fruits to school children (food based safety net) which will indirectly help improve food security in the beneficiary households. The preparation of the meals will include the supply of protein rich foods like poultry products (fish, beef, chicken and eggs) and other carbohydrates. The NHGSF programme helps to deliver a government-led, cost-effective school feeding programme with a specific focus on development of smallholder farmers and local procurement to enhance growth in the local economy (FGN N-SIP, 2018; FAO, 2019)

Children will benefit from a hot, nutritionally balanced school meal; farmers will benefit from improved access to school feeding markets; and communities will benefit from new jobs across the supply chain such as catering, processing and food handling jobs. Besides the direct benefits, the NHGSF can act as an important catalyst to drive agriculture-nutrition policies given the direct nutritional components of HGSF menus, and smallholder market participation with spill-over effects on broader public agriculture commodity procurement.

In October, 2018, Nigeria’s Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo stated that over 183 million dollars have been invested in the school feeding programme with about 9 million primary pupils benefitting per day in 26 states across Nigeria (Vanguard, 2018). As at May 2019, 31 states have started implementing the programme with about 9.3 million pupils in 56, 506 public primary schools across Nigeria (Punch, 2019).

**3.3 N-Power Programme**

The N-Power is the employability and enhancement programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria with the main objective of inculcating the learn-work-entrepreneurship culture in youths aged 18-35. This programme will help in reducing the high rate of unemployment in the country by providing a structure for large scale economy. The N-Power programme is sub-divided into eight categories. These are:

1. N-Power Agro
2. N-Power Tax
3. N-Power Build
4. N-Power Creative
5. N-Power Health
6. N-Power Teach
7. N-Power Tech Hardware
8. N-Power Tech Software

The N-Power programme helps in deploying trained graduates who will bring massive improvement in the public services like health, education among others. The N-Power volunteers are paid a monthly stipend of N30, 000 and equipment/devices with relevant content for continuous learning are provided so that each volunteer is able to successfully start the selected vocation at the end of the three month training period.

As at 2018, there were 200,000 existing beneficiaries with another 100,000 trainees selected for in-demand economic jobs (FGN N-SIP, 2018).

**3.4 Government Enterprise and Employment Programme (GEEP)**

The GEEP (also referred to as “MarketMoni”) was established with the main purpose of providing financial support and training to businesses at the bottom of the financial pyramid. The GEEP targets the provision of micro lending to about 1.66 million businesses. The target groups include traders, enterprising youth, market women, farmers, women cooperatives and agricultural workers. A no collateral interest loan of between N10,000 and N100,000 payable within 6 months is obtained through application from the Bank of Industry (BOI). The major prerequisites are membership of a cooperative association and the assurance of credibility and timely payment of the loan by their cooperative leaders.

As at 2018, the government has been able to make a total of 308,737 loan disbursements in all 36 states while 4,084 Cooperative societies have been established (FGN N-SIP, 2018).

**4.0 The Nigeria Zero Hunger Challenges**

Nigeria’s Global Hunger Index (GHI) scores for 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2018 (Table 1) reflected that the score increased to 31.1 (in the *serious* category) in 2018 from 29.2 in 2010.

The child stunting, child wasting and under-nourishment rates increased significantly when compared to their 2010 rates; with all values greater than 5%. This is an indication that Nigeria is not making progress on these indicators. The only indicator that showed remarkable progress is the child mortality rate which declined from 13% in 2010 to 10.4% in 2016.Overall, Nigeria needs to do more on all the four indicators of GHI in achieving the SDG 2 target by 2030.

This might not be unconnected with the poor economic situation the country is currently grappling with. Nigeria slipped into economic recession in Q1 of 2016 but recovered in Q2 of 2017 with an initial growth rate of 0.72%. But this has not resulted into any significant impact on the overall livelihood of Nigerians. Extreme poverty in Nigeria is growing by six (6) persons every minute and as at May, 2018; 86.9 million Nigerians are living in extreme poverty making her a nation with the highest number of people living in extreme poverty in the world that is the world poverty capital (Business Day, 2018). Also, it was quite disheartening that recently precisely in May 2019 that according to the data released by World Poverty Clock revealed that the number of Nigerian population living in extreme has increased from 86.9 million in 2018 to 91.78 million in May 2019 indicating that an additional 4.88 million are now plunged into poverty within a year period (World Poverty Clock, 2019).

Another critical challenge to achieving SDG2 in Nigeria is the issue of corruption that has become endemic in every sector of economy. The money and other resources that are supposed to be used to cater for the urgent food needs of the most vulnerable in the country especially in the conflict areas (northeast) were converted to their own financial gains.

Moreover, chronic and seasonal food insecurity occur in every part the country, worsened by spike food prices and unfortunate impact of conflict events. The North-East, North-Central and South-South are the three geo-political zones mostly affected by conflicts in Nigeria. In *figure* 1, the reoccurring conflict events are terrorism in the North-East (73%), land or resource access in the North-Central (55%) and cultism/criminality in the South-South (36%) (NBS/World Bank, 2018).

According to the International Office of Migration (IOM) assessment in October 2018, over 1.8 million persons were displaced across Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states with Borno state remaining the epicenter of Boko Haram conflict hosting over 1.4 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) while agriculture which is a major source of livelihood of people in these areas and other income-generating businesses were abruptly brought to a halt leading to reduced household income and limited access to food (USAID, 2017; FEWS NET, 2019). The food security situation in Nigeria is shown in *figure* 2, regardless of the effort of the Nigerian government reflected a that majority of the northeast part of the country are faced with severe to marginal food insecurity

**Table 1:** ***Nigeria’s GHI scores and Indicator Values for year 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2018***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | GHI Score | Under Nourishment (%) | Child Wasting (%) | Child Stunting (%) | Child Mortality (%) |
| 2000 | 40.9 | 9.3 | 17.6 | 39.7 | 18.7 |
| 2005 | 34.8 | 6.5 | 12.3 | 42.9 | 15.8 |
| 2010 | 29.2 | 6.2 | 10.2 | 36 | 13 |
| 2018 | 31.1 | 11.5 | 10.8 | 43.6 | 10.4 |

*Source: Author’s collation using von Grebmer et al., 2018*

Note: Data for GHI scores, child stunting andchild wasting are from 1998–2002 (2000), 2003–2007 (2005), 2008–2012 (2010), and2013–2017 (2018). Data for undernourishment are from 1999–2001 (2000), 2004–2006(2005), 2009–2011 (2010), and 2015–2017 (2018). Data for child mortality are from2000, 2005, 2010, and 2016 (2018).

*Figure 1: Primary cause of conflicts in three Geo-political zones (2010-2017)*

*Source: Authors’ graph using NBS/World Bank (2018).*



*Figure 2: Food Security Outcomes in Nigeria as at February, 2019*

*Source: FEWS NET, 2019*

**Conclusion**

Nigerian government remained focused on ending hunger by 2030 regardless of the challenges faced in achieving the global vision of the SDG2. Moreover, Nigerian government have launched, revised and currently re-launched Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) - related policy documents and action plans centred on achieving zero hunger target. Relevant stakeholders at local and international levels are working assiduously to implement the intervention programmes so as to achieve the SDG 2 targets.

It is therefore, imperative for all stakeholders to de-emphasize unwarranted advocacy and politicisation of the intervention programmes; rather, they should advocate for adequate resource allocation by all partners to finance FNS-related programmes.

The Nigerian government should ensure that the policy and institutional frameworks formulated towards achieving SDG2 programmes are properly supported and strengthened financially and in all ramifications.

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