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## REVIEW ARTICLE

**NO POVERTY VS REDUCED INEQUALITY: PARTNERSHIPS TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL**

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## ARTICLE DETAILS

## ABSTRACT

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In September 2015, the United Nations established the Sustainable Development Goals toward eradicating world poverty by 2030. The 17 SDGs agenda adopted a 'holistic approach' in achieving them, which is a daunting task. The ultimate result of development is ensuring that people are pulled out of poverty and remain sustainable. To achieve this overall goal requires partnerships on the part of national governments and the people, international organizations and agencies to eradicate poverty. Against the backdrop, the questions this paper would address are: Can poverty be eradicated to reduce inequality? Focusing on social inequality in Nigeria, can balance be attained to guarantee social justice in which poverty is no longer the norm? From several theoretical perspectives, the structural analytics is here adopted, without disregarding individual choices within a given society. With concerted efforts, much can be achieved within the timeframe and beyond provided the momentum thus gained is sustained

## KEYWORDS

Sustainable Development Goals, World Poverty, Poverty, Social Inequality, Nigeria, Structural Analytics.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

On September 25, 2015, the UN's 193-member states adopted new global goals for 15 years (2016-2030) at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York. "Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" encapsulates 17 Sustainable Development Goals [1]. Issues related to poverty and inequality and the necessary partnerships to achieve the goals are comprehensively integrated among the 17 SDGs and 169 targets. SDG1, No Poverty, includes targets related to social protection, land rights and resilience, while SDG10 is focused on reducing inequality, ensuring accessibility to opportunities, eliminating most forms of marginalization, including gender discrimination. The link between no poverty and reduced inequality deserves serious attention in partnerships to achieve the goals as subsumed in SDG 17. To clearly analyse the identified and interconnected variables in the SDGs, the paper is structured into five parts, beginning with this introductory part, taking a cursory look at the background and theoretical perspective, poverty and inequality contrasted, combating poverty and inequality in Nigeria, the necessary partnerships, and the conclusion.

**2. BACKGROUND AND A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Development had always been the quest of the world society, even before the end of World War II in 1945, when it became pivotal focus of the United Nations as part of its mandate to ensure international peace and security. In 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), under the *Millennium Declaration*, aimed at putting an end to poverty, hunger, disease, gender inequality, and access to water and sanitation. The MDGs 15-year operational period (2000-2015) was partially successful, but 'the indignity of poverty has not been ended for all' by 2015 [2]. The inadequacies inherent in and the unfinished mission of the MDGs occasioned the need to negotiate a new set of global Sustainable Development Goals as a roadmap to guide development in the world after 2015, invariably setting another 15-year timeframe. Understandably, the SDGs took into account the inherent flaws that hampered the actualization of the MDGs. Thus, it was determined that the designated goals of the SDGs should be "action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries, while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities [2].

Poverty and inequality are universal realities and applicable in all countries and the goal of eradicating them poses a great challenge and aspirational at the minimal effort. The questions are, can poverty be eradicated? To what extent can inequality be reduced to attain a just society? The Nigerian state is of peculiar interest given its inherent contradictions as a rich and yet a poor country. Therefore, in Nigeria, efforts are being made to take concrete actions in partnership with the rest of the global community, in particular, the UN where 'there is the need to promote effective and transformation of implementation of SDGs at national and sub-national levels' [3].

**3. SOCIAL STRUCTURE THEORIES**

As the structure of the international system is unequal, so much so are social relations within the system. Poverty and inequality are just two of many socio-economic issues that have everything to do with every aspect of human relations in structural terms. In concrete terms, the task of structural analytics has to do with the rates of poverty and the several aspects of inequality. In this sense, the analysis focuses on empirical data that include the patterns of and access to land use, the shifts in educational achievement, changes in occupational structure, the increase in collaboration between institutions, the existence of networks among groups, and individual choices [4].

Two perspectives are worth considering, individual poverty and structural poverty. On the view that poverty is an *individual* phenomenon, a choice so to say, assumes that "people are in poverty because they are lazy, uneducated, ignorant, or otherwise inferior in some manner" [5]. If this were the case, it is submitted that a program of 'paternalistic' lifeline to sustain this category of underclass might conceivably 'end or drastically reduce poverty.'

The other perspective is that poverty is a *structural* phenomenon, which contends that people are in poverty because they find themselves in holes in the economic system, which confine them to inadequate income level. It is further stressed that others 'inevitably find themselves in that hole because it is a persistent defect in the economic structure' [5]. However, because individual lives are not static, the same people do not remain in those holes perpetually. Nevertheless, while some are moving out of the hole because they gained employment or were promoted, others would find themselves

in it because of the persistent defect in the economic structure. It then follows that the only way to end poverty and reduce inequality is to restructure the social and economic system.

#### 4. POVERTY AND INEQUALITY CONTRASTED

The World Bank contends that there will be “no end to poverty without reducing inequality” [6]. A World Bank senior economist, Jose Cuesta, believes poverty and inequality is not the same thing, but they are very much interlinked. Cuesta concedes, “There is a global consensus on the need to reduce poverty,” however, he says, “I don’t think there is such consensus on the need to reduce inequality” [6].

Frankly, there is outright resistance to combating wealth inequality as a means to reduce poverty. Aside from the opposition from mainstream upper high classes to main the status quo, there are other voices who disagree with the notion of reducing poverty instead of inequality. Martin Feldstein believes that “inequality as such is not a problem and that it would be wrong to design policies to reduce it. What policy should address is not inequality but poverty” [7]. The thesis here is that sources of poverty should be identified such as unemployment, lack of earning ability, and individual choices and policies should be put in place for their mobility.

When concrete policies are enacted to create jobs and fiscal accessibility, this would mitigate unemployment; quality and functional education would increase skill, ability, and earning capacity. The argument follows that when poverty is reduced by these means, it would enhance social mobility and invariably reduce poverty and social inequality. Socio-anthropologically, poverty is part of the social problem while inequality is nature-structured; however, a certain aspect of inequality is human-engendered, such as rigid hierarchical status and conditionality attachment to opportunities. From this perspective, the questions follow: Are poverty and inequality the same? Can poverty be eradicated? Can inequality be eradicated?

While World Bank asserts that poverty could be eradicated by reducing inequality, Feldstein, writing in *The Public Interest (Number 137, Fall 1999)*, believes in the reduction of poverty and not inequality. In other words, inequality is not the problem but poverty in the drive to achieve sustainable development goals. In fact, poverty and inequality are not the same. While measures can be put in place to eradicate poverty, inequality can only be reduced. Society is anthropologically structured; social stratification is nature-structured. In every society, there will always be leader/follower; strong/weak; old/young; fat/thin; tall/short; master/servant, and so on. When it comes to poor-rich differentials, “poor people” are not the same people perpetually but social inequality remains (which can only reduce as people move from one status to another).

To illustrate, take a manufacturing industry, for example, the organogram is more or less administratively structured-the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at the apex and the messengers and cleaners at the bottom. Or, take a military command structure, the “officers and men” expression would always remain, even though the low-cadre officer may rise through the ranks to become General or Field Marshall, the Private is at the base of the structure. Nevertheless, the structured positions remain and people will always occupy them while their material well-being could be enhanced appreciably out of poverty.

The battle against poverty and inequality is age-long and victory is far-fetched because of the dynamism of social flux. The social dynamics involved in poverty tracking has been demonstrated by the *World Poverty Clock* barometer. A device of the World Data Lab, the World Poverty Clock tracks poverty outcomes in about 99.7 percent of the nations of the world “using data obtained” from the International Money Fund, World Bank, United Nations, and national governments [8]. With the obtained data, WPC estimates the rate at which poverty is being reduced worldwide, and how many people are becoming “extremely poor” in these nations.

Living in extreme poverty is defined by the World Bank as someone living under \$1.90 per day. People living in extreme or abject poverty find it very difficult to meet their minimal basic needs for survival. In effect, SDGs Goal 1 as set by the UN in 2015 is to “End Poverty,” or, put differently, “eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030.” As WPC data reveals, to achieve that goal globally, in statistical terms, “90 people need to leave poverty every minute to eradicate poverty totally by 2030” [8]. However, currently, the WPC calculus predicts That for the 2030 SDG target to be met in Africa, 57 people have to leave extreme poverty every minute. However, that is not the case, as on the average, 9 people rather than leaving, enter extreme poverty every minute. Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo are both responsible for the 9. Nigeria needs 11.9 people per minute to escape extreme poverty, but presently has a deficit of 6.8 people every minute, i.e. 6.8 people enter into poverty every minute” [8].

In real life, people or persons cannot be decimalized, as the above statistics do show. Nigeria, for instance, will need 12 people or persons (not 11.9 people) in real terms to escape extreme poverty, but currently has a deficit of 7 people or persons (not 6.8 people) every minute, that is 7 persons slump into poverty every minute. The socio-economic dynamics of people in-and-out of poverty, especially sliding into the poverty hole, are due to a number of factors that exist within and outside the society. In the case of Nigeria, as will be demonstrated shortly, factors feeding poverty include resource mismanagement, corruption and uncontrolled population growth, which will require concerted efforts to mitigate. In Nigeria, poverty and inequality are not due to lack of resources but largely to prodigality in the use and greedy attitude in the management of the resources. It is a culture of corruption combined with kleptocratic ruling elites oblivious to the daily struggles of the mass of Nigerians.

What the SDGs are demanding from every nation is to take drastic actions to pull people out of poverty and inequality. The State and corporate organizations are required to ensure that a *Private* within the military command structure, for example, should have access to credit facilities to own car, decent housing, quality education, health care for members of his family. The same argument is made for the *Cleaner* at the lowest rung of the organizational structure. In recent times, steps have been taken to change status nomenclature in some Nigerian universities where “Cleaners” are no longer so-called but “Campus Keepers” or “Sanitation Assistants.” In some government departments, “Messengers” are “Office Assistants.” Nevertheless, the change has not affected their economic wellbeing.

These categories of people in Nigeria and other developing nations do not have access to about \$2 per day nor basic needs such as decent food, housing, healthcare and quality education for their families. These are the daunting challenges the partnerships to achieve the SDGs must confront headlong. In Nigeria, in some universities, campus keepers or sanitation assistants earn about N15, 800 (\$43.9) per month, which translates to about \$1.57 per day, which still falls below \$1.90 for people living in extreme poverty. Moreover, the job is not secured and the position is not pensionable as required by international labour standards, even more, skilled workers are not. Our finding showed that more than 90 percent and in some places 100 percent of these campus keepers are women; some of them are widows with more than five children on the average.

The facts that these categories of workers are women and have children as primary dependents, both governmental and non-governmental efforts are needed to introduce some fiscal policy in terms of social safety nets. Farther inland, in the rural areas, the majority of the agricultural workers are also women. For these people to come out of poverty, they need assistance that will take care of the education of their young children (either formal or vocational, or both). Alternatively, fiscal incentives for lending institutions (banks) can encourage them to lend money to poor people, providing guarantees of payment and creating funding programs targeted to the poorest deciles [9].

#### 5. COMBATING INEQUALITY AND POVERTY IN NIGERIA

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals agenda, it is clear that the number one goal (SDG 1) of the international community is to end poverty by the year 2030. However, it has been acknowledged that a great threat to progress around the world is inequality [10]. According to the Cambridge English Dictionary, inequality is the unfair situation in society when some people have more opportunities, money, and so on, than other people. It is also seen as a difference in social or economic status and or differences in opportunities between people and groups of people. At its most basic, it refers to the hierarchical distribution of social, political, economic and cultural resources [11]. A closely related concept is that of stratification, a more specific and technical term that refers to a model of social inequality that specifies the relationship between particular variables, such as wealth and social standing [11].

Inequality is different from poverty, although there exists a correlation, as earlier alluded to. Inequality concerns variations in living standards across a whole population [12]. Poverty whether defined in absolute or relative terms ‘focuses only on those whose standard of living falls below an appropriate threshold level (such as a poverty line)’ [12]. Absolute poverty is concerned with when people’s income is so low that they cannot obtain the minimum needed to survive. In other words, people experience absolute poverty when their income is insufficient to obtain the basic needs to survive. Relative poverty is when people’s income is well below average, to the extent that they are poor, compared with others in their society and they cannot afford to have the general standard of living that most other people in their society enjoy. For example, increased inequality in income will usually imply higher levels of both absolute and relative deprivation. Intuitively, relative poverty is more closely related to inequality in that what

it means to be poor reflects prevailing living conditions in the whole population, even though the degree of inequality will have implications for both conceptions of poverty [12].

To make the concept less ambiguous, 'scholars have tried to make the meaning more specific.' For instance, "economic inequality", mostly meaning "income inequality" have been distinguished from more broad inequalities in "living conditions", "in opportunities", "inequalities in outcomes" and legalistic approach to inequality, which refers to inequality of rights and associated obligations (example, when people are not equal before the law, or when people have unequal political power) [13].

Inequality of outcomes occurs when individuals do not possess the same level of material wealth or overall living economic conditions [13]. Inequality of opportunities exists when life outcomes depend on attributes outside the individual's own control or when circumstances determine life outcomes. For example, opportunities related to education and employment should not be determined by gender, ethnicity or family background. According to a study, equality of opportunity exists when life outcomes depend only on factors for which persons can be considered responsible, and not on disadvantageous attributes outside of their control [13]. It is argued that gender, ethnicity, family background, and so on should not determine outcomes [13].

In combating inequality in Nigeria, two aspects of inequalities are considered, and these are, inequality of opportunity (such as education, employment) and inequality of outcome (with specific reference to income). The first aspect deals primarily with the inequality of opportunities such as unequal access to employment or education; and the second deals with the inequality of outcomes in material dimensions of human well-being such as the level of income. The two aspects of inequalities in Nigeria, which are considered in this work, seek to answer two basic questions: inequality between whom and inequality over what? To address the first question, the inequality between whom, the paper looks at gender inequality (inequality between men and women in Nigeria employment space). There is no doubt that opportunities are many times affected by different factors (ethnicity, geography, and so on) and one of them is gender. Inequalities could arise due to circumstances that are beyond the control of individuals. Gender inequality, for example, remains a major barrier to human development in many countries of the world, Nigeria inclusive.

There is no gainsaying that Nigeria is a highly patriarchal society, where gender discrimination abounds. Studies have attributed the causes of discrimination and marginalization of women not only to the historical legacy of patriarchal influences but also to culture, tradition and the form of socialization received from homes to public settings [14-21]. Nigeria, the 'giant of Africa' never featured among the world leading countries in gender equality promotion and is not among the 20 leading countries in Africa. Gender inequality remains deeply entrenched in Nigeria and the rights of the women continue to be 'strongly' violated and trampled on [22].

It should be recalled that in April 2016 the first Gender Equal Opportunity Bill presented to the Nigerian Senate was rejected and the argument of the Senators was that the country's culture and religion do not support women equality with men [15]. Although the modified version of the Bill (where the language of equality has been removed) got to the Chamber's second reading in September 2016, the Bill is yet to be finally passed into law. Cultural and traditional practices such as female genital mutilation and early marriage are still prevalent in the country, without adequate measures or law by the government to address them [16]. For example, the issues of girl-child marriage, deprivation of educational opportunity for girls and other opportunities that are deprived women such as land ownership in Nigeria do not portend well for women's development and cannot guarantee sustainable development for Nigeria.

According to a recent Oxfam report, over three-quarters of the poorest women in Nigeria have never been to school and 94% of them are illiterate [23]. Women represent between 60 and 79 percent of Nigeria's rural labour force but are five times less likely to own their own land than men are. Men dominate the formal sector and have a better income than women have [24]. According to the United Nations Development Programme, over 50 percent of women are in the informal sector engaging in agricultural activities and petty trading that provide lesser income [25]. For Nigeria, achieving equitable distribution of income and alleviation of poverty is a critical development issue that must be tackled in the country's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals agenda. A just society is an equal society and Nigeria's inequality problem has continued to exacerbate poverty and social injustice [26]. At the end of 2017, Nigeria's Human Development Index was put at a low category of 0.527, and the country's position was at 152 out of 188 countries. Nigeria retained its 2015 status with a computation of 0.527 [25]. Gender discrimination ordinarily implies structural deprivation (sometimes

interpreted as relative poverty) or a culture of poverty in Nigeria. While the international community has continued to push towards equality, gender mainstreaming and progress to sustainable development remains uneven among countries. While countries like Rwanda, in Africa, have made remarkable progress in gender equality, especially in political representation, the progress towards equal treatment of men and women in policies, laws and programs exists only in a paper in Nigeria, with little done in practice.

Concerning the second aspect of inequality that is addressed in this work (inequality over what), there is no gainsaying that income inequality persists in the country. Despite being the largest economy in Africa, economic inequality in Nigeria has reached extreme levels [23]. Nigeria is one of the poorest and most unequal countries in the world, with over 80 million or 64% of her population living below poverty line and the situation has not changed over the decades, rather it is increasing [27]. In rural areas, poverty and hunger have remained high. Income is distributed in an even manner not only among families, households, communities, professions but also among groups.

In Nigeria, educational qualification does not guarantee a better pay. Politicians and members of parliament are about the highest income earners in the country while a renowned university professor even earns less than a local government chairman who has little or no skill [26]. More than 50 years after Nigeria's independence, the gap between the rich and the poor have continued to widen. It is evident that income inequality has contributed to unrest and deep-rooted envy against the upper class who are often perceived to be exploiting the lower class. A good example is the Niger Delta militancy, where the people protested for years on the deprivation and inequalities in the share of the region's oil wealth. High levels of inequality create a sense of envy and resentment within communities, which leads to criminal behaviour as this is a way that excluded groups can achieve material success [11]. Large income differences affect how people relate to one another and create 'broken societies' [11].

There is a growing evidence that inequality is a major issue driving poverty. If the issue of inequality is not addressed, it is predicted that 'Nigeria may become the poverty capital of the world, and such prediction is not unrelated to its rising population, rising unemployment and uneven distribution of income [28]. According to Oxfam report the combined wealth of Nigeria's five richest men, \$29.9 billion - could end extreme poverty at a national level yet 5 million face hunger [23]. More than 112 million people are living in poverty in Nigeria, yet the country's richest man would have to spend \$1 million a day for 42 years to exhaust his fortune [23]. It is a common knowledge in Nigeria that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.

Inequality and poverty in Nigeria are not due to a lack of resources ('Nigeria has abundant resources'), but due to the ill-use, misallocation and misappropriation of such resources [24]. At the root, is a culture of corruption combined with a political elite out of touch with the daily struggles of average Nigerians [24]. One major consequence of the mismanagement of the nation's resources is the high rate of unemployment, which often translates into poverty. In 2016, more than 21 percent of Nigeria's youth were without a job [24]. Various surveys by the National Bureau of Statistics show that the unemployed constitute a critical component of the core poor [26]. It is estimated that an annual average of about 2.8million graduates enter the labour market, with only about 10 percent of them securing employment [26]. Without a source of income and adequate means of livelihood, people find it difficult to attend to their basic needs. It has been estimated that 57 million Nigerians lack safe water, over 130 million lack adequate sanitation and the country has more than 10 million children out of school [23].

While educated ones could at some point be opportune to get a job, it is not the same for the uneducated and the people in rural communities. According to a study, poverty in Nigeria is concentrated among persons with no education and those with only primary education [26]. Also, the upper class of the Nigerian society have continued to enjoy great wealth and are in better positions. It is also a common knowledge that children from affluent homes in Nigeria have easy access to gainful employment as their parents provide the needed links, and children from poor background are often left in the dark in pursuit of a decent job [26]. Thus, to combat inequality and poverty in Nigeria, or to make appreciable progress towards the world's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals agenda, the country must take adequate steps to address group inequality (especially in relation to gender) and income inequality. A society can be said to provide equal opportunities when circumstances do not determine the differences in life outcomes [13]. Also, equal opportunity exists when people can boast of a good source of income needed to survive, and where people can afford to have the basic standard of living that most other people in the society enjoy.



## 6. PARTNERSHIPS TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL

The link between poverty and inequality and all other aspects of the SDGs and 169 targets to be achieved are subsumed under SDG 17, underscoring the important role of partnerships to achieve the goal. The centrality of partnerships in every area of human endeavour cannot be overstated in the efforts to achieve the ambitious goals set for the development of every nation of the world. As contained in a U.N. report, "In addition to eliminating poverty, the new framework (the SDGs) must address the drivers of change, such as economic growth, job creation, reduced inequality and innovation that makes better and more careful use of natural resources. Industry will surely play a prominent role in advancing all these drivers" [2].

*Global Impact*, a non-governmental international organization, is championing the initiative captioned "IMPACT 2030," is essentially a collaborative effort. It is a "collaboration of international leaders from the private sector, non-profits and governments that are working towards the success of the SDGs exploring specifically what can be done to mobilize corporate volunteers to contribute directly to the success of the UN's SDGs." No one is in the delusion that achieving the SDGs would mean safer, cleaner, more peaceful and egalitarian world for all.

However, that success requires unwavering commitment, participation and coordination from all segments of the society---national governments, foreign governments, domestic non-governmental organizations, international non-governmental organizations, international governmental organizations, private sector corporations and individuals. While the next 12 years will bring challenges, they will also bring changes as the world work together to surmount barriers and achieve the goals.

It is worthy of note that Global Impact's areas of expertise are focusing on SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals with the Private Sector. We concede that a successful sustainable development agenda will require partnerships with every segment of society, 'partnerships that are inclusive, built upon principles and values, and with a shared vision.' In this endeavour, each country must take responsibility to ensure the implementation of each goal and should not hesitate to call for assistance when and where necessary from more advanced development partners.

Many people would like to see a world free from abject poverty and inhumane inequality. As a fighter against poverty, Muhammad Yunus dedicated the Grameen Bank and affiliated institutions to providing opportunities that can help improve the socioeconomic condition of people living in abject poverty. Yunus strongly believes that not only does "microcredit has a key role to play in reducing poverty," but also the "access to credit for microenterprises is important by itself in improving the lives of the impoverished," and "complemented by other strategies [29]. Parts of these other strategies include "partnerships between microcredit programs and technology-oriented institutions" which "will help reduce discrepancies in the opportunities available to the poor and nonpoor."

As information and communications technology (ICT) has revolutionized human interaction globally, Yunus and well-meaning others "would like to see all information available to all people everywhere (including the poorest, the ignorant, and the most powerless) at all times, almost cost-free" [29]. Then, Yunus posed the challenging question: "Why can't we create a poverty-free world before the new century (21<sup>st</sup> century) crosses the halfway mark?" that is, by 2050. Indeed, the SDGs sunset is 2030 but if by that date not all the goals have been achieved, the goal post can be extended to 2050. Eradication of poverty is feasible but the reduction is the first step toward that end, and as success is recorded in poverty eradication, there will be a drastic reduction in inequality. ICT has done a lot to reduce social inequality in almost two decades in Nigeria since 1999. While most African academics cannot afford to attend international conferences, due to air transportation costs, in some cases they could send their papers for presentation via the internet, for example, the 2018 SRD Indonesia Conference [30]. Similarly, the cellular phone has broken the barrier in communication, even the ignorant, the uneducated and old people have access to mobile phones. Thus, communication (verbal telephoning) is no longer the exclusive of the rich only as was the case 20 years ago in Nigeria. With concrete actions in partnerships with corporate organizations, much can be achieved in the end.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The 2015 U.N. Sustainable Development Goals was established to build on the progress made under the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015). It realized that despite the success recorded during the MDG years, "the indignity of poverty has not been ended for all." Therefore, this paper has focused on SDG 1, End Poverty, SDG 10, Reduced Inequality, and SDG 17, Partnerships to achieve the Goals. Partnerships in achieving the SDGs are a

critical goal on its own, bearing in mind that no single country nor organization can do it alone. Therefore, the partnership must be all-encompassing, inclusive of governments, NGOs and individuals.

Poverty and inequality in Nigeria have been used as a case study to illustrate the centrality of partnerships in the possibility of achieving the goals. We concede to Oxfam's position that Nigeria can close the poverty and inequality gap because "Nigeria is not a poor country yet millions are living in hunger. The government must work with the international community to get food and aid to hungry people now. But it can't stop there. It must free millions of Nigerians from poverty by building a new political and economic system that works for everyone, not just a fortunate few". In addition, the government must work with relevant stakeholders like the labour unions to enact a market-oriented minimum wage for workers. In furtherance of this, national budgeting in the next 12 years must make adequate provisions for affordable and quality education, good health care facilities, and decent housing, constant electricity supply and transportation systems. These measures would, largely, mitigate extreme poverty and inequality and enhance the living standard of the people. In this way, there is assuring hope that the SDGs will be achieved by 2030 and beyond.

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