PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH GRANTS IN DELTA STATE: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN EDUCATION FUND (UNICEF)

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ABSTRACT

In recent time, the concept of sustainable development cannot be overemphasized. Since the early 1980s, the term ‘sustainable development’ has been used widely and indiscriminately. The term began to gain popularity, when it became increasingly fashionable to use it as a way of responding to global environmental concerns, biophysical issues, fairness, equity and distribution. This paper is to examine the role of grants on sustainable development in Delta State. The paper adopted the historical method of data analysis involving the review of secondary data. The findings revealed amongst other things that while grants as a supplement to other means of finance to ensuring sustainable development in Delta State, the reality on grounds is such that there is failure on the part of the government of Delta State to fashion out appropriate policy framework that would ensure that there is significant interactions between international grants such as that coming from UNICEF and social, economic and institutional processes in Delta State in such a way to continually sustained and meet up with increasing future demands in terms of population growth and continuous use of natural, human and material resources. It has been observed that changes in the integrated approach to social, economic and environmental issues have not really facilitated the developmental goals in Delta State. For instance, problems such as poverty, flooding, ethnicity, environmental pollution corruption, attitudes and lopsided income distribution have been on the increase. A cursory look at socio-political, economic and environmental situations in Delta State showed that these issues has continued to undermine every efforts at ensuring that available resources and grants in critical areas to meets the needs of the populace in ensuring sustainable development that is all encompassing. To achieve the ultimate goal of sustainability, this paper reinforces the urgent need for a shift to the third arena, which facilitates a smooth integration of public needs (through public debates and capacity building), scientific evidence and policy, and extensive use of innovative tools such as precautionary principle (preventative measure, even without scientific certainty of major human or environment impairment) to ensure a high-quality decision-making process. In addition to the above, it recommended that to achieve the SDGs, creating and maintaining smart and effective partnerships founded on the undoubtable patriotism and goodwill of the entire citizenry, alongside the moral and in kind support from the global fraternity of nations will be critical.

Key Words: Sustainable Development, UNICEF, Delta State, Globalization, Environment.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development, according to the United Nations (UN, 2015), is the organizing principle for meeting human development goals while at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystems services upon which the economy and society depends. The desirable end result of this is a state of society where living conditions and resource use continue to meet human needs without undermining the integrity and stability of the natural systems. Sustainable development is that development that meets our present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. According to the United Nations, the components that work together, to produce sustainable development are economic development, social development and environmental projection (UN, 2015). These three must be conceptualized together, planned together and implemented together by a government to achieve the desired results. So, sustainable development in a way has a moral dimension that demands a great sense of responsibility from the leader (government) and the follower (citizen).

However, for some decades now, the issues of aids and grants has played an important, yet disputed, role in the relation between the so called developed and developing world as well as in internal processes of the latter. The nature of aid or grant, nevertheless, and thus the role of foreign donors in the developing world, including Africa, has not been a static one and have been marked by important changes. In the African context this ranged from supporting the transition of the former colonies to independent states - guaranteeing a certain degree of influence within them by the former colonial master - to structural adjustment and conditionalities in the 1980s (Owusu,2013). The latter mainly implemented through the international financial institutions of the Bretton Woods system such as the IMF and the World Bank in face of a striking debt crisis. Since the end of the Cold War the focus gradually shifted towards an agenda defined by poverty reduction, debt relief, 'good governance' and sustainable development.

In Nigeria and Delta State in particular the dearth of development in the face of abundant resources has called into questions the organizing principle for meeting human development goals while at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystems services upon which the economy and society depends. Delta is one of the 36 states in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It was created on 27 August 1991 by the Babangida administration out of the former Bendel State. Bendel State covered the entire territory formerly known as the Midwest Region after it was excised from the then Western

Region in August 1963. Consequently, the Midwest Region became a state among the 12 new states created by the military regime of General Gowon on 2 May 1967 (Timi, 2016). The name was changed to Bendel State in February 1976 in light of the two provinces – Benin and Delta that constituted the state. In the state creation exercise of 1991, the Asaba Division of the old Benin Province was finally emerged with Delta province to constitute Delta State. Its capital city is Asaba, located on the western bank of the River Niger. Delta State lies roughly between latitudes 5 0 00' and 6 00' north of the Equator and 0 0 longitudes 5 00' and 6 45' east of the Greenwich Meridian. The State covers a land 2 mass of about 18,050 km of which about 60 per cent is land while the rest is swampy and waterlogged. This means that the State's development policies and programmes have to take due cognizance of the peculiar geography whereby 40 per cent of the geographic area is riverine, which renders many communities inaccessible all the year round and locked in the informal sector of the economy. Delta State is bounded in the North by Edo State, on the Eastern front by Anambra and Rivers States, and on the Southern front by Bayelsa State. The Bight of Benin of the Atlantic Ocean forms the western boundary while the northwest boundary is Ondo State. At present, Delta State is made up of 25 Local Government Areas (LGAs). Besides the political division of the State into LGAs, it is further divided into three senatorial districts – Delta North, Delta South and Delta Central – and nine federal constituencies, for the purpose of electing representatives into the National Assembly in Abuja (Timi, 2016). The State has been administered by both military administrators and civilian governors: six military administrators and one civilian Governor, Olorogun Ovuodoroye Felix Ibru, between 28 August 1991 and 29 May 1999, and two civilian governors, Chief James Onanefe Ibori, 29 May 1999 – 29 May 2007; Dr Emmanuel Eweta Uduaghan, 29 May 2007 – 2015 and Dr Ifeanyi Arthur Okowa, 2015-till present.

As would be expected, the population of the State has grown steadily. The 1991 census estimated it at 2,590,491. This figure rose to 4,112,445 by the 2006 population census, indicating a growth rate of 3.92 per cent per year compared to 3.85 per cent for the nation (Delta State, Vision 2020:6). The 2012 estimate of the population was 4,802,480. While the 1991 census indicated more females (1,318,559) than males (1,271,932), the 2006 exercise showed a structural change with males (2,069,309) being slightly more than females (2,043,136). Although peopled by less than 3.0 per cent of the national population and occupying only 1.99 per cent of the country's land area, it has been a major producer of oil and gas in Nigeria since 1958 when the first wells were drilled by Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC). The State accounts for 40 per cent of the country’s gas reserves and significant proportion of its national oil output – an average of 25 per cent since 1999 (Delta State, 2014a: 48)). It is the fourth largest producer of oil in Nigeria, ranking after Akwa Ibom, Rivers and Bayelsa States (Delta State, Ministry of Economic Planning, 2012).

Giving the brief profile of Delta State giving above, many would preferred to argued that giving the amount of resources accruing to Delta State is enough to promote development, others have argued that the huge amount of socio-political, economic and environmental challenges besetting the states will required additional sources of finances from various international donor organizations in order to ensure sustainable development. It is in this regards, that this study will examined the role of grants in sustainable development in Delta State. In doing this, this paper will examine the various Development Grants and Activities of the United Nations International Children Education Fund (UNICEF).

Statement of the Problem

The defining challenge of many states in Nigeria including Delta State is to accelerate development that is economically sound, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable. The Sustainable Development Goals embody nothing less and represent the best possible opportunity of all the complexities of economic development that we face today. The looming challenges in Nigeria and indeed Delta State are wide and deep. It is common knowledge within development circle that development involves a physical reality and a state of mind (Timi, 2016). Through development process, the interactions between social, economic and institutional processes must be continually sustained to meet up with increasing future demands in terms of population growth and continuous use of natural, human and material resources. It has been observed that changes in the integrated approach to social, economic and environmental issues have not really facilitated the developmental goals in Nigeria. For instance, problems such as poverty, flooding, ethnicity, environmental pollution corruption, attitudes and lopsided income distribution have been on the increase. A cursory look at socio-political, economic and environmental situations in Delta State showed that these issues has continued to undermine every efforts at ensuring that available resources meets the needs of the populace. The situation is such that even with the level of resources available to the state including grants and aids from international organizations like UNICEF, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Department For International Development (DFID) etc, sustainable development continued to be a mirage. It is against this backdrop that this study will examine the impact of grants on sustainable development in Delta state, with a focus on the activities of United Nations Children, Education Fund (UNICEF).

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the role of Grants in promoting sustainable development in Delta State, with a focus on UNICEF. The specific objective includes the followings to:

i. Critique the place of grants and international aids on development in Africa.
ii. X-ray the role of UNICEF as a grants giving organization in Delta State.
iii. Examine the impact of UNICEF Grants on sustainable development in Delta State.
iv. Identify the challenges of promoting sustainable development in Delta State

Literature review

The role of grants in Africa have been subject of a long debate and attracted critiques from a wide range of ideological and practical perspectives. This section will first review some of the vast literature considering - to varying degrees - negative the activities of foreign donors for Africa's development, opposing it then to the positive effects identified by some authors.

Probably the fiercest critique emanated from the (radical) left, completely calling into question the assumption that foreign donors' objectives in Africa are about the promotion of the continent's economic development at all, let alone sustainability. In the tradition of dependency theory, those authors see the donor's aid as part of a structural relationship between the North and the South, which evolved over time and led to the underdevelopment of Africa (Carlsson, 2007). In its more radical formulation, the foreign donors representing the rich countries and the economic elite of the recipient countries are thought to engage in mutually enriching economic exchanges - the South providing the resources for the industrial North and the foreign donors providing the foreign exchange necessary for the recipient elites to maintain their internal position of dominance, at the expense of the ordinary people of the South. Clapham (2006) attack not the economic aspects of development separately, but the whole idea of 'development' as a Western concept destined to maintain social and economic control over the rest of the world. This led Escobar (2004) to conclude that all development has been able to 'develop' over time was inequality and asymmetry on a global level through the expansion of capitalism. According to this view, (western) foreign donors in Africa are, above all, agents of the global capitalist hegemonic system, adapting the African periphery to the needs of the global market. From the ideological right, the role of donors in Africa has been widely critiqued as well, based on the assumption that state-led foreign aid is either rendering impossible or, at the least, hindering “improvement in the well-being of the masses” (Cumming, 2001) which is thought possible only through the further freeing of market forces.

Another critique pertinent to this essay stems from the debate on the relationship between the political system of African states and their economic development. Gould, (2005) identifies that a growing number of empirical research underlines the argument that a consolidated democracy is favourable for sustainable economic development. In the 1980s, however, the World Bank’s first major report on Africa entitled ‘Accelerated Development in Sub-Sahara Africa’ (Berg Report), identified bad policy within African states as the main reason for the continent’s ailing economic state (Groves and Hinton, 2004). As a consequence, many external donors tried to impose their own financial aid management, and the structural adjustment programmes of World Bank and IMF further reduced the states’ sovereign control over their domestic economies, disempowering African states and undermining democratic state consolidation in Africa (Clapham. 2006). The argument advanced is that this laissez-faire approach and the role foreign donors assumed - circumventing African governments in the development of their proper countries leading to the erosion of any credible democratic substance – discouraged any attempts of developing African economies in a sustainable manner. Lastly, some authors criticise, on a more practical level, that the results of donor activity simply do not sufficiently benefit sustainable economic development in Africa. Although some benefits are identifiable, the bulk of the aid never reaches the poor constituencies - in fact, the biggest beneficiaries being the donors themselves and only increases donor dependency (Igoeand Kelsall, 2005). Easterly (2006) concluded that, seen in a bigger context, the positive correlation between aid and growth does not hold and that the ‘aid buys growth’ idea is the founding myth of the aid bureaucracy.

On the contrary, some authors and economists have advanced potential benefits foreign donors can have in advancing sustainable economic development in Africa. The initial basic assumption relied upon by foreign donors – highly debated but hardly resolved – is that the provision of aid would promote growth by supplementing the resources a developing country has at its disposal. The Harrod-Domar model shows that a sufficient increase in aid would enable a developing economy to reach a growth level it could then sustain by its own efforts (Cumming, 2001). In the same sense, Busiinge (2009) argues in the tradition of ‘big-push’ economists that a doubling of aid by donors would be able to end extreme poverty by 2025 through filling developing countries’ financial gaps, thus enabling them to stand on their own economic feet. Collier (2009) adapted this approach to Africa by claiming, from a neoliberal perspective, that private capital will be decisive in sustaining growth, but that foreign donors must facilitate this transition through the provision of public funding while private investment steadily rises. Burall, Maxwell and Menocal (2006) took on an even more radical position, claiming that an "external intrusion by more advanced societies is a necessary condition for the successful economic development of a country. On a more practical level, Carlsson (2006), argue that indiscriminate critiques of foreign aid are misplaced as empirical research suggests that some foreign interventions can be effective in promoting sustainable economic development if certain circumstances are present. Those benefits are seen to come in the form of supporting infrastructure, the development of national human resources, improving of health and literacy, the empowerment of societal groups and the transfer of technical know-how, forming a corner stone of overall economic development" (Jegede, 2012;).

Lastly, relating back to the debate about the relationship between the political system and economic development, some of the proponents of foreign aid accept the same basic assumption that democracy favours sustainable economic development, but are more optimistic in the conclusions they draw concerning the role of foreign donors than the abovementioned critics. It is advanced that, within the framework of the 'good governance' agenda, democratisation in Africa would not have taken place without the pressure donors exerted on recipient countries through the political conditionalities attached to their aid. According to this view, donors focus not on directly advancing economic development, but encourage it by removing internal political hindrances through outside intervention (Cumming, 2001).

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopted the Sustainable development theoretical framework. Sustainable development is a new term but its thoughts have a very long history. Because of its plentiful connotation, it is difficult to define precisely the "what", "when" and "how". In other words, there are many uncertainties in such questions as "What is sustainable?" When development is sustainable and how to realize the sustainable development, it is true that sustainable development is the only way to promote economic growth, rational utilization of resources and environmental protection. For this reason, almost every country's government has made arduous efforts to promote the concept and have made remarkable achievements since the early 1990s. But this is only the first step of the "long march". There is far more work to be done, both conceptually and in implementation of sustainable development. It is expected that there will be breakthroughs in sustainable development research. The first target is to establish an independent discipline of sustainable development. The second is to perfect the methodological system of sustainable development. Third is to search for rational and effective approaches towards sustainable goals. Therefore, much cooperation is necessary, not only has the combination of different disciplined but different sectors, different regions, and different countries as well. Only by these means can thoughts of sustainable development be fully understood, strategies of sustainable development are implemented, and the goal of sustainable development be realised.

In recent years, food security, employment, income generation, resource conservation and environmental protection have emerged as major world concerns. Since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held at Stockholm in 1972, many efforts and grand plans have been made in order to solve these problems. These include the World Conservation Strategy, prepared by World Wide Fund and United Nations Environmental Programm in 1980, and the report entitled Our Common Future in 1987. The United Nations Environment Programme tabled its Environmental Perspective to the year of 2000 and beyond, particularly the Agenda 21, which was approved by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The concept and principles of sustainable development have been formulated and widely accepted by decision makers and people all over the world.

In terms of practical planning guidance, Agenda 21 proposes a number of concrete measures to achieve ‘sustainability’ in the socioeconomic realm. These include equity, entrepreneurship and technology transfer. Agenda 21 ties access to land, security of land tenure, tenants’ rights, liberalized credit policies, and low-cost building material programs to ‘sustainable’ urban living for the homeless and for the urban poor. It calls upon developing countries to foster small businesses in the informal economic sector and developed countries to provide developing countries monetary and technical aid to educate environmental managers. Within nations, wealthy districts are asked to provide clean water, sanitation, and waste collection services to poorer ones. Agenda 21 also proposes a number of tangible strategies to bring about ‘sustainability’ in the environmental realm. Agenda 21 calls for appropriate technology, transport reform, and urban renewal. Governments are asked to improve rural areas and urban slums, to build moderately sized cities that promote job creation and housing, and to build cities invulnerable to natural disasters. National construction programs based on technologies that utilize local materials and are energy-efficient, nonpolluting and labor-intensive, as well as action programs in energy conservation and renewable energy, such as wind, solar, hydro-electric and biomass, are urged. Transport policies that favor public, bicycle, and foot transport over automobiles, municipal development designed to reduce commuting, and land use that contains urban sprawl and prevents it from encroaching upon agricultural land and environmentally sensitive areas are enunciated (Keating, 2003) .

In terms of planning principle, however, Agenda 21 introduces a new paradigm of development rests on three conceptual pillars. These pillars are 'economic sustainability', 'social sustainability', and 'environmental sustainability, Economic sustainability, by way of growth, development, and productivity, has guided conventional development science in the past. Market allocation of resources, sustained levels of growth and consumption, an assumption that natural resources are unlimited and a belief that economic growth will 'trickle down' to the poor have been its hallmarks. 'Sustainable development' expands development's concern with monetary capital to consider natural, social and human capital. Restraint upon economic growth and consumption which deplete these is favored (Kahn, 2005). Social sustainability encompasses notions of equity, empowerment, accessibility, participation, sharing, cultural identity, and institutional stability. It seeks to preserve the environment through economic growth and the alleviation of poverty. Environmental sustainability involves ecosystem integrity, carrying capacity and biodiversity. It requires that natural capital be maintained as a source of economic inputs and as a sink for wastes. Resources must be harvested no faster than they can be regenerated. Wastes must be emitted no faster than they can be assimilated by the environment (Kahn, 2005). In all the theoretical framework posits that economic, social and environmental 'sustainability' must be 'integrated' and 'interlinked'. They must be coordinated in a comprehensive manner to enhance greatest benefits for all citizens.

Keys Features of Sustainable Development Goals

In September 2015, world leaders converged at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to consider and adopt a new comprehensive, ambitious and transformational development agenda. The Outcome Document adopted during the summit outlines a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets and 240 indicators aimed at eradicating poverty in all its forms and shifting the world onto a sustainable and resilient development pathway while ensuring that 'no one is left behind'. Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages; Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.; Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation; Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries; Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss; Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development(UN, 2015).

The SDGs seek to build on and complete the unfinished business of the MDGs; realize the human rights of all; achieve gender equality in all sectors and spheres of life; and importantly, strike a balance between economic, social and environmental dimensions of development. In this regard, the Document also calls on national governments to draw on the contributions of the UN system, parliaments, indigenous peoples, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders. Identify in advance the actions that need to be taken to capitalize on Nigeria's MDGs successes, learn from its weaknesses and to position the country to take the fastest and most reliable trajectory possible to achieving the SDGs.

Strikingly, the jump from the MDGs to the SDGs is not simply a question of extending the timeline and the ambition of the goals. New goals have been added, entirely new sectors have been introduced and the number of indicators has more than doubled. The breadth and depth of the endeavour will now involve a substantial multiplication of activities and an expansion of partnerships and institutions. Moreover, a number of the SDGs do not simply specify outcome goals, but also the means by which these goals should be achieved. An emphasis on rights, justice, social inclusion, sustainability, access to technology and reducing inequality will place new constraints and demands on policy at all stages – in planning, implementation and monitoring. Preparing for these complex policy issues over a time horizon of fifteen years will depend on laying a solid foundation. Timi (2016). Luckily, Nigeria does not need to start from scratch. The experience of the MDGs, if properly leveraged, should provide the foundation for achieving the SDGs. Looking at the enormous amount to institutional, political, social and economic change needed to transit from the MDGs to the SDGs, some key areas of focus have been identified as crucial to the successful take off of the new goals. These are essentially the strategies that have to be implemented in order to ensure an effective transition from the MDGs programme period to the SDGs. It should be noted that a good number of the transition actions that appear below are interrelated. Therefore, they will need to be considered holistically at the point of implementation (Timi, 2016:9).

Analysis of UNICEF Activities and Grants in Ensuring Sustainable Development

Emerging from a recession with major currency depreciation and high inflation in 2016 the pace of economic growth in Nigeria (1.7 per cent) was still below the population growth rate resulting in decreased per capita income. Delta State continued to be affected by numerous challenges that seemingly is affecting sustainable development. However, despite the widespread insecurity and challenging operating conditions, in 2017 the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Nigeria continued to scale-up the delivery of basic social services that enhances sustainable development in Delta State through the giving of grants.

In nutrition, over 200,000 children with severe acute malnutrition were treated. Over 43,000 pregnant women, children and young adults were tested for HIV across Delta State with a positivity rate of 0.4 per cent. UNICEF provided 6,082 persons associated with armed forces and survivors of sexual violence with social reintegration assistance. In water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), through strong local partnerships, 134,000 people gained access to water supply services despite delays in counterpart funding and over 300,000 people gained access to improved sanitation services. In Delta State, the UNICEF (2017) reported that over 800,000 people are now living in communities that are open defecation free. To reduce this trend, the UNICEF through various aids and grants up-scaled emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), response resulting in the containment of a cholera outbreak in many rural communities in Delta State(UNICEF, 2017).

Through UNICEF advocacy and technical support, the Delta State Ministry of Education (Basic and Secondary) developed basic education strategic plans linked to the national Ministerial Strategic Plan (2016-2019). In Delta State, UNICEF through grants help prepared for a new state Programme (2018-2022) which will prioritize enrolment to reduce out-of-school children, routine immunization, feeding, hygiene and sanitation practices, prevention and treatment of severe acute malnutrition of children under five. UNICEF also went through a large-scale management plan which aimed to consolidate planning, programme monitoring, cross-cutting thematic mainstreaming, contribution management and management for results. Another important exercise was the audit conducted in the last quarter of 2017, for which the report is still pending. Expanding partnerships was also a priority, with private-sector agreements under consolidation with key influencers such as the Dangote Foundation. Despite a challenging funding environment, UNICEF almost doubled its resources grants to Delta State from US$27 million in 2016 to over US$49 million in 2018.

UNICEF humanitarian assistance in Delta State also focused on identifying the most vulnerable populations, assessing their needs and providing a response based on the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action and the Humanitarian Action for Children appeal. Since UNICEF activated its level three corporate emergency procedures on 29 August 2016, the UNICEF Delta State has significantly strengthened its activities, and is now operating with 88 staff, including 33 international staff. In Delta State, UNICEF led sectors have a dedicated sector coordinator and information management officer. For more effective scale-up, UNICEF diversified and strengthened its partnerships. Alongside Government, UNICEF increased partnerships with reliable non-governmental organization (NGO) partners, strongly promoted outreach and mobile strategies in nutrition and supported the State Primary Health Care Development Agency to set up 25 outreach sites in all Local government in Delta State, In addition to providing integrated nutrition services to 50 sites. To improve the quality of response, UNICEF increasingly integrated its approach, especially amongst health/nutrition/WASH and where possible, multi-sector programme agreements were developed with NGOs.

To further ensure that all Aids and grants meets its intended target, Programme monitoring was strengthened with the implementation of a two-pronged strategy for field monitoring. This involved programme implementation monitoring by the programme sections, and complementary monitoring of response quality, gaps and emerging issues conducted by field monitors in collaboration with affected populations. As of 15 November 2018, UNICEF had granted US$2.3 million against the US$6.9 million appeal (including carried over funds from 2016 of US$3.6 million) leaving a funding gap of 32 per cent. Strengthening government capacity for emergency response and improving resilience after the response remains a key component of UNICEF's work. A key achievement for 2017 was that for the first time, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) took the lead in updating the National Contingency Plan. The National Contingency Plan Review Workshop was successfully held in October 2017 with participation from key stakeholders from ministries, departments, agencies, the United Nations (UN), international and national NGOs, the private sector, armed forces, police, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, academia, and the media (UNICEF, 2017).

Another key area where UNICEF has contributed to sustainable development in Delta State is in the implementation of Equity in practice. Equity in practice in Nigeria and Delta state in particular consists of a two-pronged approach: hardest-to-reach activities by programme sectors (including in emergency situations) and an equity campaign. A two-year communication campaign on equity, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, aims to create greater awareness among urban, educated, middle class Nigerian millennials about the persisting inequities in the country. It encourages and enables this primary target audience and civil society to act in addressing the inequities; and creates an environment conducive to changes in policy and funding allocation that will more directly address inequities among children (Mosley, Harrigan and Toye, 2017). The research phase of the campaign (one-on-one interviews with policymakers, focus groups with millennials, key stakeholder workshops, and a quantitative study on the millennials' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours) was completed by the end of November 2017. The research inputs were used to develop and design the building blocks of the campaign strategy, consisting of the identification of key target group habits, the content plan, the media outreach plan, the key influencer and partner engagement plan, and the measurement plan (Mosley, Harrigan and Toye, 2017:23).

On the programme side, UNICEF's (2017) integrated health outreach services reached 295,294 children in under-served hard-to-reach settlements in Delta state. In addition, 920,000 million doses of the oral polio vaccine were administered in 18 high risk communities in Delta State. To improve the equity of the nutrition response to the ongoing emergency in the Niger Delta Region, UNICEF increased access to nutrition curative and preventive services especially for children in the most remote locations. This involved: - the recruitment and training of 529 community nutrition volunteers and existing polio voluntary community mobilizers (VCMs) on screening referral and follow up of cases of severe acute malnutrition; - Monthly mass screening targeting areas with high malnutrition and set up and support for 358 mother support groups to support counselling on child feeding at community level. Due to these efforts, admission levels sharply increased since June 2017 and the programme is close to reaching 100 per cent of the target of 20,000 cases of severe acute malnutrition. Community-led total sanitation (CLTS) response activities were also based on equity analyses. Once a local government area was selected for intervention, a baseline survey was conducted and an investment plan set defining the required number and types of systems. Prioritization plans followed an equity analysis approach, using baseline data on indicators that presented a picture of the degree of deprivation. Thus, the most marginalized, the aged and people with disabilities were ensured access to WASH facilities in the bid to stop open defecation in the communities (Whitfield, 2018).

In furtherance of the ingredients of sustainable development, the UNICEF in Delta State has increasingly provided grants to support deployed climate-informed technology options towards delivering improved and sustainable WASH services for children. Of the over 200 water supply systems constructed in 2017 in Delta State, only technology options with clean energy, such as solar powered schemes and hand pump boreholes, were deployed. As an alternative to the conventional use of fossil fuel generators for power by most of the State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency and LGA WASH department offices, UNICEF supplied 70 units of solar-based inverter systems for power supply in project LGAs(Bomadi, Patani, Ughelli North, Ughelli South, Isoko South, Aniocha North, Ika North East, Warri South West, Burutu, etc). In flood-prone areas, UNICEF deployed adaptive technology options for sanitation and water supply facilities in communities and public institutions as part of resilience building. Populations in at-risk communities (especially children and adolescents) were trained on disaster risk reduction and resilience building (Whitfield, 2018).

In 2017, UNICEF increased engagement in early childhood development, especially in early learning through pre-primary education. Increased awareness on the need to invest early in every Nigerian child was achieved through a high-level Accelerate integrated early childhood development (ECD) national conference initiated and funded by UNICEF in collaboration with the World Bank and the Global Partnership for Education and led by the Government of Nigeria. The conference raised the profile of early childhood education not just in the education sector, but in the health, nutrition and child protection sectors as well as amongst NGOs, civil society organizations, the media and international development partners.

In the new Country Programme, UNICEF aims to strengthen convergence under the child-friendly community approach focusing on the whole child especially young children (Whitfield, 2018). The approach provides an entry point for nurturing care practices as well as early stimulation and communication at the community level – linking nutrition, vaccination and early stimulation into early learning.

Furthermore, to increase demand for social services for children and women including uptake of vaccination, prevention of communicable diseases, promotion of sanitation and nutrition, favourable behaviours, and girls' enrolment, UNICEF supported the capacity development of over 200 traditional and religious leaders. The capacity of 1,137 health workers was strengthened to deliver maternal, neonatal and child health services. Over 839 trained service providers are delivering adolescent and young people-friendly friendly HIV services (Andrews, 2018). The immunization manager capacity was increased for data management through the visibility and analytics network initiative which helps to assess performance and inform decision-making. Over 7,361 voluntary community mobilizers were trained in interpersonal communication skills to support polio and measles campaigns in Delta State. For nutrition, 4,000 community nutrition volunteers and 8,000 health workers were trained to support timely delivery of nutrition curative and preventive services. As a result, emergency severe acute malnutrition treatment coverage increased from 50 per cent in June to 86 per cent in November 2018. Delta State ministry of education have increased capacity to collect, analyse and use school based data on children for sector planning, while 33 states developed increased capacity to prepare basic education sub-sector plans. UNICEF also supported the training of 1,500 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) committees, thus supporting communal dialogue and promoting child survival activities, birth registration, exclusive breastfeeding, immunization and ante-natal care attendance (Andrews, 2018).

In enhancing capacity for sustainable development in Delta State**, UNICEF (2017)** expanded on the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey initiated in 2016, UNICEF in Delta State through various grants and technical support to different NGO's continued to generate evidence to inform and support advocacy and policy. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey initiated (MICS) 2016-2017, finalised in 2017, contains nearly 200 indicators at national and state level and provides key evidence for the new UNICEF Nigeria country programme and for advocacy with the Government. In collaboration with the Government and other stakeholders, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) conducted an effective vaccine management (EVM) assessment in 191 sites nationwide including Delta State to measure effectiveness in managing vaccines. Despite significant investment, there was only a two per cent increase from 2014. These findings were used to advocate for a participatory and collaborative effective vaccine management (EVM) improvement plan. UNICEF supported the assessment of 250 health facilities in three states including Delta State to evaluate readiness for the national one primary health care centre (PHC) per ward strategy (known as 'One PHC per ward'). Recommendations included integrating gender in primary health care programming, more effective data management and geo-mapping of hard-to-reach settlements. UNICEF also provided grants and led a strategic shift in building sustainable and cost-effective statistical capacity to support evidence-based and result-based reporting in the education sector in 16 states including Delta State. This data collection approach, introduced by UNICEF, is being promoted by development partners as a harmonized approach with Government.

Private sector partnership was an increasing area of development for UNICEF in Delta state. This included screening and outreach to private sector companies, attendance at networking events to engage potential donors as well as cultivation of high net worth individuals. UNICEF Nigeria engaged Blaugrana Sports International, a representative of FC Barcelona, in support of basic education programming. An agreement with the Dangote Foundation for the private sector procurement of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) in-country is being finalized (Andrews, 2018). In addition, UNICEF Nigeria is negotiating an agreement with the Africa United Foundation in support of education programming in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in Delta State, which could result in significant and multi-year funding to address the large burden of out-of-school children.

As should be noted, Delta State is vulnerable to flooding and to saline water intrusion in the southern coastal belt, while it is prone to flash floods along the river banks and upland areas. Floods ravage communities, destroying social infrastructure, while contaminating drinking water. In coastal areas, hydrocarbon exploitation and seawater intrusion adversely impact ground water quality. Droughts and floods are known to affect food production and can lead to malnutrition. The combination of open defecation, poor sanitation, and flooding provides fertile ground for malaria, diarrhoea, cholera and polio epidemics, and exacerbates morbidity and mortality in already-stressed communities. Currently, UNICEF is supporting the Delta state Government's roadmap "Making Delta State Open Defecation Free by 2025," which was launched in 2016. Over 200 communities have already achieved open defecation free status. UNICEF Nigeria further supported the Government to develop a state wide strategy for hygiene promotion and guidelines for water safety planning to foster appropriate behaviour by households and pupils for water handling, hygiene and environment conservation (Busayo, 2017). These efforts reached over 150 communities. Feasibility studies and environmental examination of WASH technology led UNICEF to adapt climate-resilient technologies with low carbon footprints such as hand pump boreholes which have low potential to deplete groundwater. In addition, raised platforms for WASH facilities were used in flood prone areas, and solar-powered (green energy) boreholes installed. In humanitarian interventions, UNICEF supported garbage removal, the use of sand to fill flooded areas, treatment and dislodging of latrines, and extension of water systems' pipe networks where possible, rather than constructing new boreholes.

A major undertaking completed by UNICEF Nigeria to strengthen leadership and governance was a change made to the management process which aimed to consolidate programme monitoring and management for results. This was carried out on a participatory basis, with sessions organized to share the process with all staff. The risk control and self-assessment profile was updated during mid- and end-year reviews to ensure risks were appropriately mitigated. The key risks identified related to fraud and misuse of resources. To mitigate these risks, UNICEF Nigeria fully implemented the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) Framework, increased the use of direct payment modalities and updated its table of authority.

Challenges for ensuring sustainable development in Delta State

According to Busayo (2017) many states in Nigeria including Delta State has found itself at the crossroads caused by economic recession; political dislocations and upheavals, criminality, corruption and ineptitude leadership that has led to national insecurity and poverty. There is no doubt that Delta State has severe challenges in implementing policies and programmes aimed at sustainable development such as its inability to ensure participation, Limited economic diversification and continued vulnerability to external economic shocks, Limited financial resources for investments in SDG-related activities, Huge infrastructural and technological deficits, Militancy in the Niger Delta, Weak public sector institutional capacities, Lack of disaggregated comprehensive, up-to-date and reliable data. Report conducted by UNDP (2017) showed that there are challenges facing policy implementation in Delta State with a particular reference to Sustainable Development Goals. In the first instance, it is clear that up till now the programme has not been redesigned for easy implementation in Delta State; there are no local government contents, rural areas completely neglected. Other challenges are unrealistic goal setting, corruption and security challenges. When the United Nations set 8 goals terminated in 2015, Delta State could not realize any of them in fullest. Now we are talking about 17 goals to be achieved by 2030.

The MDGs were set in 2015, and before the 1st quarter of 2016, most of the countries of African economic had entered the recession, this situation also affected Delta State and indeed its effect is still being felt, with workers been owed salaries for months amongst other economic challenges. Oghenekome (2017) in discussing why international grants might failed in Delta State, attributes it to the neglect of the rural areas and comprehensive policy design and planning without doing a management policy that is implementable. His findings indicated that Underdevelopment situation in Delta State has not changed since the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals' programmes even with grants and international aids. Poverty and hunger have not reduced and the gap in gender equality and women empowerment has become broader, the environment is still far from been good. Child mortality has not reduced. Busayo, C. (2017) explains that "after more than 2 years of establishing SDGs, no country in Nigeria including Delta State has so far succeeded in eliminating extreme poverty completely and with regards to hunger, current rates of progress are prolonged.

The study discovered that the target beneficiaries are not participating in the SDGs programme with a particular reference to Delta State. The farmers, the rural people, the Community Development Associations (CDAs), women group and the youth, are neglected in the discussion on how to implement the SDGs. Easterly (2005) recognize the fact that there is need to involve the target beneficiary at every stage of the policy implementation process to ensure transparency and accountability. He is of the opinion that a programme carried out with the consent of the target beneficiary will not be sabotaged. This study discovered that Government in Delta State and by extension Nigeria are not sensitive to the implementing environment of Sustainable Development Goals' programmes. SDGs' programmes are not redesigned to meet the needs of the target beneficiaries. All these situations put together combined to undermine any efforts or impacts international grants and aids would have had on sustainable development in Delta State

Conclusions and recommendations

Sustainable development like any other evolutionary concept has a long history. The spectrum of challenges and their deep-rooted interconnectivity are the justification for the pursuit of sustainable development. Despite increasing effort to marry the social and environmental challenges with economic growth, progress remains remote. The key main barriers to progress in Delta State are lack of clarity and contradictions of the concept; lack of political will; corruption, poor planning and strategy for implementation, differing views and conflict of interest among major players; and inadequacy of the current societal conflict resolution mechanism (market and political arenas). To achieve the ultimate goal of sustainability, this paper reinforces the urgent need for a shift to the third arena, which facilitates a smooth integration of public needs (through public debates and capacity building), scientific evidence and policy, and extensive use of innovative tools such as precautionary principle (preventative measure, even without scientific certainty of major human or environment impairment) to ensure a high-quality decision-making process. In addition to the above, it recommended that to achieve the SDGs, creating and maintain smart and effective partnerships founded on the undoubtable patriotism and goodwill of the entire citizenry, alongside the moral and in kind support from the global fraternity of nations will be critical.

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