

# **DELIVERING THE GOODS: REPOSITIONING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN NIGERIA TO ACHIEVE THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs)**

**By**  
**Professor Emmanuel Onyebuchi Ezeani**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**University of Nigeria**  
**Nsukka.**

Local authorities provide the opportunity for local people to participate in local decisions and local schemes within the general national policies, and to act above all, as local centers of initiative conducive to development (*Maddick, 1963:24, 44*).

It is important to realize that even though the MDGs are global, they can most effectively be achieved through action at the local level. It is at the local level that safe drinking water, electricity and other services including health and education are provided, that garbage is collected and that food is sold at market. In each city and town, there will be a local reality to be taken into consideration, and indeed the MDGs should be adapted to meet this reality (*Oyebanji, UN- Habitat, 2007*).

## **Introduction**

Mr. Chairman; The Vice Chancellor, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Professor Batho Okolo; Deputy Vice-Chancellors here present; Deans of Faculty; Directors of Institute and Centers; Heads of Department ; My Lord Spiritual and Temporal; Distinguished Colleagues; Lions and Lionesses; Ladies and Gentlemen. It is with humility and deep sense of gratitude to the Almighty God that I stand before this distinguished audience, consisting of some of the finest minds in our country today to deliver my inaugural lecture. This lecture is significant to me because it coincides with my birthday.

**My choice of topic:** *Delivering the Goods: Repositioning Local Governments in Nigeria for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals* was informed by several reasons. First, is my special interest in the area of Local Government which started during my Masters Degree Programme. I have researched and taught Local Government Administration for almost two decades now. Second, during my study tour of the United States of America in 2007, I had the opportunity to study the workings of Local Government system in the United States of America, particularly the State of Michigan. This singular opportunity further opened my eyes to the developmental role of local government. Indeed, local or city government is the closest and most relevant tier of government to an average American citizen. It is my firm belief that local government in Nigeria can be re-positioned to contribute meaningfully to the development of the country. Last but not the least, is the increasing realization by the global community of the need to localize the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The role of local government in this regard is very critical.

Mr. Chairman Sir, in September 2000, the United Nations General Assembly concluded the Millennium Development Summit with the adoption by 189 heads of state and Government of the Millennium Declaration Committing their nations to a partnership for a “peaceful, prosperous and just world” (Audinet and Haralambous, 2005:9). “The driving force of the partnership lies in combating poverty and the worst forms of human deprivation” (Panadero, 2004:1). The Declaration generated the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of concrete, quantitative and time-bound targets to be reached by the year 2015 through coherent, coordinated and mutually supportive actions (Audinet and Haralambous, 2005). The MDGs are the international

response to the recognition that the “central challenge” facing the world is “to ensure that globalization become a positive force for the entire world’s people” (See Audinet and Haralambous, 2005:9). Nigeria as a member of the United Nations is a signatory to the millennium goals. With only approximately four years to the 2015 deadline, many countries are off track to meet the Millennium Development Goals. Results so far have been mixed:

significant achievements in some parts of the world, particularly in Eastern Asia, but very limited achievements in others, where vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters and the silent tsunami of hunger and disease continue to claim millions of lives every year (Audinet and Haralambous, 2005:9).

Progress towards the MDGs has been uneven within world regions but also within country. The developing world as a whole remains committed to achieving the poverty reduction target:

the poverty rate is expected to fall to 15 percent by 2015, which translates to approximately 900 million people living under the poverty line- half the number in 1990 (Global Forum on Local Development, 2010:5)

Significant progress has been made in various development areas such as “getting millions of children into schools, success in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, malaria control, expanded access to clean water, reduced deforestation, and wider access to information and communication technology” (Global Forum on Local Development, 2010:5).

However, modest progress in key areas and significant inequities remain a cause for concern. Lack of progress towards the MDGs is often localized in specific regions and dependent on local circumstances (UNDP, 2010). Thus, “despite remarkable

achievements on an aggregate level in many developing countries, large differences in terms of access to services and performance against key MDGs delineate significant rural-urban divides” (Global Forum on Local Government, 2010:5). For example, according to United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2010) report, disparities in urban and rural sanitation remain huge, especially in Southern Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania. In all developing regions, children in rural areas are more likely to be under weight children than children living in cities and towns; and only one in three rural women receive the recommended care during pregnancy (Global Forum on Local Government, 2010:5). Poverty and underdevelopment in the developing countries remain rural phenomena. This fact was emphasized by Satterthwaite (2004:V) thus:

It is perhaps stating the obvious that deprivations faced by “the poor” are experienced locally- inadequate food intakes, inadequate asset bases, daily challenges to health in poor quality homes, the inadequacies in the provision for water, sanitation and drainage, the difficulties in getting proper health care (including emergency treatment for acute injuries or illness) and in getting children into schools (or in affording to keep them there), the long hours worked, in often dangerous conditions...

About three quarters of the world’s more than one billion extremely poor people live in rural areas of developing countries. Fighting poverty today means “first and foremost transforming rural lives and livelihood” (Audinet and Haralambous, 2005:5). This called to question the strategy for achieving MDGs. Initially, efforts to achieve the MDGs were focused at the national level. Sub- national governments and other local stakeholders who have important roles to play towards achieving the MDGs were relegated to the background. In recent years however, critics have revealed the limitations of top-down policies in terms of promoting sustainable and equitable development.

“While at the national level efforts are necessary in many developing countries, growing attention is now being paid to the role of local knowledge, monitoring and implementation in the achievement of the MDGs” (SNV and UNDP, 2009:8). In order to impact the lives of people, MDGs target indicators need to be adapted and translated into local realities, and embedded in local planning process (SNV and UNDP, 2009). Meeting the requirements for MDGs also requires collaborative efforts of major stakeholders – national, state and Local Government Units (LGUs) as well as the private sector for interventions geared toward mainstreaming the MDGs in the local development agenda (Panadero, 2004). The role of Local Government in the development process has long been recognized by scholars (see Olowu, 1998; Abubakar, 1993; Ezeani, 2004). According to Olowu (1988:5), among the many potential roles of the local government in the development process are the following:

- Helping to inculcate in people positive citizenship attitudes; such as consideration, self-control, community responsibility and identity;
- Providing basic community services which both improve the quality of peoples lives and enable the community to generate and attract economic activities, and
- Helping people, especially in the rural areas, to organize themselves for the mobilization and effective management of community resources and central government programmes respectively

Again, the 1976 “Guideline for local government Reform in Nigeria” states that local government exists for the following developmental reasons:

- To make appropriate services and development activities responsive to local wishes and initiatives by devolving or delegating them to local representative bodies; and
- Mobilization of human and material resources through the involvement of members of the public in their development.

Local Government as the tier of government closest to the grassroots has the primary responsibility in the implementation of the MDGs responsive programme and activities. With significant chunk of public expenditure decisions made at the local levels, the responsibility of realizing the MDGs rests on local government. The better local governments are able to target and develop the right interventions, the better will be the result on poverty reduction, health, sustainable development and education.

Regrettably, in Nigeria, the Local Government system has not fulfilled its mandate of bringing development to the grassroots despite the various past reforms implemented in the system. The local Government system is characterized by poor governance and weak government capacity. The capacity of local government institutions to plan, prioritize and deliver development initiatives is weak, resulting in inadequate provision of services. In addition, there are limited checks and balances on public funds spending and wide-spread corruption at all levels of the system. Consequently, there is a high level of frustration and distrust by the citizens about local government system. The poor performance of the local government system in Nigeria no doubt negates the achievement of the MDGs.

This lecture is broadly aimed at outlining the key policy issues that underlie the debate over local development and the role that local governments can play in

accelerating progress towards achieving the MDGs. The lecture is primarily aimed at suggesting ways of repositioning or strengthening the local governments in Nigeria to make them play a more active role towards the achievement of the MDGs.

This lecture is organized according to the following headings:

- i. What is local government?
- ii. Essence of local government
- iii. The Evolution of local government system in Nigeria
- iv. The Millennium Development Goals and targets
- v. Overview of trends and current MDG status in Nigeria
- vi. Localization of the MDG
- vii. Local development and the MDGS: the key role of local governments
- viii. Local Government and achievement of the MDGS; major challenges.
- ix. Towards making Local Government more effective Contributors to local development and MDGs.
- x. Conclusion
- xi. Acknowledgement

### **What is local government?**

Local Government has been variously defined by scholars and practitioners or administrators alike (see Ezeani, 2004; 2005; 2009). These various definitions have been subsumed under two broad approaches as reflected in the literature. The first approach which is usually adopted in comparative studies, regards all sub-national structures below the central government as local government (see UNO, 1962: 89; Alderfer, 1964;

SNV/UNDP, 2009:8; Global Forum on Local Development, 2010:7). A major criticism of this approach is that not all sub national structures below the central government possess the essential characteristics or features of local government.

The second approach to the definition of Local Government which is the one adopted in this lecture identifies it by certain defining characteristics (see among others Olisa, et. al. 1990:93; UNO, 1961:11; Mawhood, 1993:vii & 2). These attributes are essential to distinguishing it from all other forms of local institutions and also to ensure its organizational effectiveness (Mawhood,1983:1-24).For instance, Olisa, et. al. (1990:93) defines local government as “a unit of government below the central, regional or state government established by law to exercise political authority, through a representative council within a defined area”. This definition did not stipulate the method of constitution of the representative council, that is, whether they should be selected or elected.

The United Nations office for public administration (1961:11) defines local government as:

... a political sub-division of a nation or (in a federal system) state, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the powers to impose taxes or to exert labour for prescribed purpose. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected.

Despite the wide appeal or acceptance of the latter definition, it has some flaws. First, the power of the local government to “exact labour” creates an impression of its tendency to resort to forced labour which is unacceptable in modern times. Second, the assertion in the definition that the governing body of a local government can be “locally

selected” is faulty. It implies that in the case of Nigeria for instance, all the Caretaker Committees (of management) and Sole Administrator system instituted by the various past military administrators and even some serving state governors can pass as local government, “whereas in actual fact, such appointed bodies are mere brands of local administration” (Ozor, 2003:17).

The definition of Local Government as contained in the *Guideline for the Reform of Local Government in Nigeria* (1976:1) aptly captures the essential features of local government. According to the “Guidelines”, local government is:

Government at the local level exercised through representative council established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. These powers should give the councils substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal government in their areas, and ensure, through active participation of the people and their traditional institutions that local initiatives and response to local needs are maximized.

Implicit in the above definition are certain salient or distinguishing features of local government which are also well articulated in the work of the 19th century political philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville (1969), as well as in Whalen (1969) and Mawhood (1983) as shown in **table 1**. These include:

- (i) **Localness:** Local government is the lowest tier of government; it is government at the grassroots or local level.
- (ii) It has a legal existence enshrined in the constitution. This protects it from arbitrary actions of higher authority. As a legal entity, it can sue or be sued and has a perpetual succession.

- (iii) It enjoys substantial autonomy. This implies that although local governments are creations of the state or federal government, and therefore, are subject to state or federal government control in certain areas, nevertheless, “they enjoy a reasonable degree of independence in administrative and financial affairs” (Blair, 1977:13). For example, “the local governments enjoy considerable autonomy in the preparation of annual estimates or budgets, the hiring, control and discipline of their own staff subject to a certain upper limit and the execution of certain projects” (Ozor, 2003:19).
- (iv) It exists within a defined territory.
- (v) Local government exercises its authority over a given population.
- (vi) It exercises specific powers and performs certain functions as enshrined in the constitution (as is the case in Nigeria) or statutes.
- (vii) The council is composed of “elected representatives of the local people” (see Ezeani, 2004:28; Olisa, et. al. 1990:101; Ola, 1984:7-8; Blair 1977:13-14). Implicit in this feature is that “local government... cannot be ruled by local notables, by traditional or hereditary rulers, some special elites or such people, as a matter of right” (Olisa, 1984:8). Furthermore, “local government is not reconcilable with the running of local affairs by local men nominated for the purpose by the central (or state) government” (Ola, 1984:8).
- (viii) Local government is usually divided into departments, divisions and units which facilitate the accomplishment of its goals, objectives and functions.

It is important to state here that adequate provisions were made to safeguard most of these features in both the Guidelines on the 1976 Local government reforms in Nigeria

and in the 1979, 1989 and 1999 Constitutions (See Ezeani, 2004). However, if the experience of the actual practice of local government system in Nigeria is closely examined, it will be discovered that there have been deviations from most of the basic features. For examples, the rules of democracy and representativeness had been widely violated especially during the military era when the local governments were run by Councils whose members were not elected. Currently in Anambra state, local governments are run by Caretaker Committees whose members were hand-picked by the Governor of the State. So, what actually exists in a state like Anambra could be called local administration which is a form of deconcentration run by a Caretaker Committee composed of people appointed by the Governor and who owe total allegiance to him. The Chairman of the Committee serves at the pleasure of the State Governor who appointed him.

**Table 1: The defining characteristics of local government**

<b>De Tocqueville (1835)</b>	<b>Whalen (1969)</b>	<b>Mawhood (1983)</b>
(a) Localness	(a) Given territory and population	(a) Representative of locality
(b) Participative	(b) Institutional structure for legislative, administrative purposes,	(b) Authority to allocate substantial resource
(c) Relative independence	(c) Authority, subject to the limitations of common law and test of reasonableness	(c) Authority to administer a range of functions
(d) Authority-especially to effectively influence community affairs to raise resources	(d) Separate legal identity	(d) Separate legal existence

**Source: Olowu, D. (1988:13).**

### **ESSENCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

One question that keeps reoccurring among Nigerians is “why is local government important?” “Do we really need local government?” A number of theories exist which have tried to justify the existence of local government mainly from a

functionalist perspective. In all, the theories contribute to a better understanding of local politics. As Stoker (1990:203) rightly noted, “an examination of different theoretical perspectives forces us to ask new questions; to consider the views of diverse range of thinkers, and provides access to competing explanations of the world of local politics”. Instructively, these theories were developed bearing in mind the experience of developed countries, particularly Britain, they are nevertheless relevant in varying degrees to developing communities such as Nigeria. We shall discuss the following four of such theories:

- i. Democratic-participatory theory
- ii. The efficiency – services theory
- iii. The developmental theory
- iv. The localist theory

### **Democratic- participatory theory**

This theory is closely associated with scholars such as Sharpe (1970), Mill (1912), Laski (1949:411); Maddick (1963). They contend that local government functions to bring about democracy and to afford opportunities for political participation to the citizens as well as educate and socialize them politically. According to this theory, local government is superior to other levels of government since it is only at the level of the municipality- the city state that the individual can really participate in his own government, and so government is truly democratic. Three related aspects of the democratic value of local government need to be emphasized. The first, according to Sharpe (1970:159) relates to “the role of local government as a political educator, and as

a means of civilizing men through the medium of self- government”. The second is its role as a training ground for democracy. According to Bentham (cited in Mackenzie, 1996:13) “local government provides a nursery for supreme legislature; a school of appropriate aptitude in all its branches for the business of legislature”. The third and final one is that which sees local government as the essential element for establishing a stable and harmonious national state, the breeder of better societies. “It is only by participating in and learning the arts of self- government at the local level that the individual had a stake in and came to appreciate the virtues of free government at the national level” (Sharpe, 1970:163).

### **Efficiency Services Theory**

This theory justifies the existence of local government on the ground that it is an efficient agent for providing services that are local in character. According to Mackenzie (1954: 14) “local government exists to provide service and it must be judged by its success in providing services up to a standard measured by a national inspectorate”. It is argued that because of its closeness to the grassroots, local government can provide certain services far more efficiently than the central government (Ezeani, 2004). Indeed, Sharpe (1970) was of the view that the efficient performance of these services is so compelling that if local government did not exist, something else would have to be created in its place.

### **The Developmental Theory**

The problem of underdevelopment remains a major challenge facing the Third World countries. Local government in developing countries is seen as a veritable instrument for development, national integration, national evolution and national consciousness (Ola,

1984:14). The proponents of this theory such as Sady (1982:137) among others contend “that far more than in developed western countries, local government in developing nations can and should have a function of helping to reduce the congestion at the centre”. This it can do at the local level by being involved in implementing socio-economic programmes that attempt to restructure the infrastructure necessary for an improved way of life (Ola, 1984).

### **The Localist theory**

This theory justifies the existence of local government on the following grounds: First, local government is grounded in the belief that there is value in the spread of power and the involvement of many decision- makers in many different localities. Diffusion of power is a fundamental value and local authorities as elected bodies can represent the dispensing of legitimate political power in our society. Second, there is strength in diversity of response. “Needs vary from locality to locality, as do wishes and concerns, local government allows these differences to be accommodated” (Stoker, 1990: 234). Furthermore, local government is local. Consequently, it is accessible and responsive to local needs because Councilors and officers live close to the decision they have to make, to the people whose lives they affect, and to the area whose environment they shaped. Its localness and visibility makes it open to pressure when it fails to meet the needs of people who work and live in its area (Stoker, 1990:234; Ezeani, 2004:46).

The localist theory explicitly recognizes that the existing local authorities do not always act in a way that facilitates responsiveness to changing local needs. This is because organizational arrangements associated with service delivery, bureaucratic

bottlenecks, etc, can constrain the capacity for local choice. It therefore advocates a major reform of local government. It is important to mention here that these various theories of local government are not mutually exclusive but complementary to each other. Together, they provide very good justification for local government

## **EVOLUTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN NIGERIA**

Mr. Chairman Sir, it is germane at this point to trace the evolution of local government system in Nigeria. This would further enrich our knowledge of the system. We shall start from the pre-colonial era.

### **Pre-Colonial Era**

Local government in Nigeria has undergone series of reforms aimed at evolving a viable system that could serve the purpose for which it is created (Ogunna, 1996; Olatunji, et. al. 2009). The history of local government system in Nigeria can be traced back to the traditional local administration system that existed in various parts of the country prior to the advent of British colonial administration (Ezeani, 2003:31; Ekumankama, 1996:9-10). Before the advent of British colonization, various communities in Nigeria were governed through the instrumentality of their traditional political institutions. In the Northern part of the country, the Hausa/Fulani Emirates operated a highly centralized, hierarchically organized political system with the Emirs wielding so much power. The local government administration under the Hausa/Fulani traditional political system was under the District Heads (Hakimis) and village heads who were accountable to the Emirs. The political system had a long standing system of tax assessment and collection.

In the Western part of Nigeria (that is, the Yoruba lands), there existed a centralized chiefdoms in which the Obas ruled their various chiefdoms. “The Obas played their roles as constitutional monarchs. They ruled their respective kingdoms with a Council of Chiefs which exercised dominant powers” (Ogunna, 1996: 61). In Eastern Nigeria where the Igbos were dominant, there existed a highly decentralized political structure in which many groups and institutions like age grades, women associations, Ozo title societies, the council of elders and the Peoples Assembly (Oha) shared political authority with the chief of the community. According to Gailey (1971:18) “the presence within the village of different organizations each charged with executive and moral functions, effectively prevent undue concentration of power”. Thus, consensus was the basis of decision making in the Igbo political system of Eastern Nigeria.

### **Colonial Era**

With the formal colonization of Nigeria in 1900, the British colonial government under Lord Frederick Lugard introduced the native authority system otherwise known as indirect rule. “It was a form of local government based on traditional authority which exercised legislative, executive and judicial powers over a local community, under the ultimate control of British authority” (Ogunna, 1996:63). Available record shows that the first nation-wide statute to deal with local government in Nigeria was the Native Authority Ordinance No. 4 of 1916 which in its content primarily saw the native administration as a personification of the traditional ruler or traditional court (Ekumankama, 1996:11). As Kirk-Greene (1965:68) rightly stated, this type of administration was largely a re-statement of what has been British policy for many years.

The native authority system was informed by administrative expediency and practical necessity (see Okonjo, 1974:44). According to Ogunna (1996: 64),

The “practical necessity” arose from a number of factors. The first was the vastness of the area in terms of geographical territory and population. The second factor was the absence of communications facilities in such a vast territory which were indispensable requirements for direct administration. The third factor was that the people particularly their leaders, were opposed to British intrusion and resisted it violently. This factor leads to the fourth factor which is lack of large body of British armed forces which would be used to garrison the whole territory to suppress the aggressive assistance of the people and keep them quiet. The fifth factor is that there was gross inadequacy of funds.

The colonial authority was not structured in consonance with the native, traditional social and political organization of the people. The system was first introduced in northern Nigeria where it recorded tremendous success due to the highly organized emirate government. In the western region, the system was structured according to the traditional social and political organization of the area but did not take into account the fact that the Yoruba Obas were not absolute rulers by tradition. This created resentment to the system coupled with the problem of taxation which was alien to the people.

In the Igbo dominated Eastern part of the country where there was lack of centralized authority, the British appointed traditional rulers “warrant chiefs” where none existed prior to colonialism, in spite of resistance and, in some instances, outright rebellion against what was perceived by the people as outright adulteration of local political values (see Afigbo, 1992; Whitaker, 1970). The attempt by the British to introduce taxation, particularly among the women folk, led to Aba women riot of 1929.

The despotic and exploitative nature of the native authorities and their inability to promote rural development made them objects of attack by their subject particularly the

educated elite. For instance, the former Nigerian Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (cited in Oladosu, 1981:190) inveighed against the native authority system, specifically, the Sole Native Authority institution in his motion before the Northern House of Assembly in August 1950, calling for the democratization of the system viz:

The illiterate masses of people recognize no change in their status since the coming of the British. They are still ruled by might and administration is still none of their concern... now this brings me, sir, to the question of sole native authority. How this idea originated, we do not know and nor could we discover the circumstances which made its creation in 1934 necessary. Whatever was the reason, it was an idea which should be condemned... I feel strongly that the revision of the native authority ordinance is overdue... the democratization of native authority councils has now also become necessary.

Due to mounting opposition to the native authority system, the then Secretary of State for the colonies, Arthur Crèche Jones, in 1947, issued his famous dispatch to all Governors of African territories calling for the rapid development of an efficient and democratic system of local government. "I believe," the Secretary of State declared, "that the key to success lies in the development of an efficient, democratic system of government" (see Kirk-Greene, 1965:238). The 1947 dispatch was itself very revealing. It was an admission of the fact that the British colonial administration had not promoted the cause of her African subjects. The emphasis of the native authority system was on maintenance of law and order necessary for economic exploitation of the rural areas. Consequently, "active participation of the rural population was not vigorously pursued except, of course, in so far as it related to extraction of economic resources for the coffers of the imperial authority" (Okoli, 1993: 460).

The reforms and democratization of the local government system in the various regions of Nigeria in the 1950s were obviously the outcome of the 1947 dispatch. Thus,

in July 16, 1949 the Eastern House of Assembly adopted a memorandum which gave effect to the Local Government Ordinance of 1950. According to Ogunna (1996:75), “this Ordinance was a significant milestone in the development of local government in Nigeria as a whole as it marked the birth of responsible and democratic Local Government system in the country”. Commenting on the local government ordinance of 1950, Wraith (1972:213-4) observed that,

It was a pioneer measure which foretold the end of philosophies and practices that held the stage for nearly fifty years. Its effects outside Nigeria were considerable for it influenced later legislations in Gold Coast 1951 and in western Nigeria 1952.

The 1950 Ordinance created an English model of local government adopting a three-tier system with the English nomenclature (namely, county, district and local councils) as well as its method of precept, its principle of autonomy and its principle of democracy (Ogunna, 1996: 76). Essentially, the main features of the local government system created by the 1950 Ordinance are: first, it was a three-tier system of local government. Second, local government was granted the power of taxation as a source of funding. Third, the local government councils were given adequate autonomy. Fourthly, there was democratization of the councils. And fifth, traditional rulers were not given position in the local government.

In response to the local government reforms introduced by the Eastern Nigerian government in 1950, the Western Nigerian government came out with its own reforms under the western regional local government law of 1952. In most respects, the western Nigerian local government system was the same as that of the Eastern Nigeria. For example, it provided for three tier local government structure – divisional, district (urban

and rural) and local councils. It also empowers local governments to impose taxes. The government of Northern Nigeria did not abolish the naïve authority system but merely modified it under the native authority law of 1954 (which was subsequently amended in 1955, 1958, 1960, 1961 and 1963), to suit the changing political situation and the state of educational development in the region.

Unfortunately, in spite of these reforms, local government remained instrument of coercion and exploitation of the rural inhabitants. Most of the councils suffered from inadequate funding, poor staffing, nepotism, bribery, corruption and mal-administration.

### **The Post-Colonial Era**

The attainment of independence by Nigeria in 1960 did not alter the exploitive role of local governments or their structure. Indeed, Nigeria at independence inherited the British model of local government which was predominantly the “county” system. Corruption was endemic, and perhaps, a central operating principle in most local councils especially in southern Nigeria. According to Ottenberg (1969:29), “the most characteristic feature of corruption in the local government council in southern Nigeria is that it occurs throughout almost all levels of council activity”. Corruption in the local councils during the early 1960s inhibited them from becoming effective vehicles for administration and development and, perhaps, constituted the primary cause of their political decay. As Smock and Smock (1972: 128) rightly observed, “the general dissatisfaction with the way in which councils operated and particularly the way they were handling money made the regional government wary of increasing their funds and probably discouraged any efforts to transform the county councils into agents of rural

development”. This was the situation in the local governments in the country when the military struck on January 15, 1966.

One of the first few decisions taken by the first military regime was the dissolution of all local government councils, and the Native Authority staffs in Northern Nigeria, for example, were banned in 1967 from participating in partisan politics apart from voting in elections. This was a period of searching and researching for what types of local government and what structures each of the states should have. In the words of Adedeji (1969), this was the time “when the local government system in the country was undergoing a most searching re-appraisal”. Oyediran (1985:3) described the period as “the confused years of the Gowon administration in the area of local government, that is, 1967 – 1975, when many and varied experiments were tried by many states”. According to Oladosu (1986:11):

This was the period of Council manager system in Western State; Development Administration in Bendel State; Divisional administration in then East Central state (now Anambra and Imo States); Local Administration in the then Benue Plateau state, local government authority in Kano and Kwara state and local authority in the then North central state (now Kaduna State); North-Eastern State (now Borno, Gongola and Bauchi States) and North-Western State (now Sokoto and Niger State).

It is important to note that in spite of the frequent reform of the local governments in the various states of the federation, they were unable to make any serious impact in rural development. In fact, the reforms were necessitated by the search for a viable local government. In the then East Central State for instance, it was the inability of local governments to act as viable agents for rural development that led its administrator, Ukpabi Asika (1971: 3 and 12), to say that in light of the back log of historical failures to

establish a viable system of councils, the ethnic unions constituted the real local government of the area. This assertion was corroborated by Smock (1972:130).

According to him:

Some 80 per cent of Eastern Nigeria's primary schools were built and maintained either entirely or partially by local contributions. In 1966, the government owned less than 1 percent of the 6, 000 primary schools and the local councils operated about 25 percent.

This trend was maintained in other areas such as health, roads, et cetera. Hence, the initiative of communities compensated to some extent, for the inability of the East Central State local government to penetrate down to local level. The same ugly situation existed in other parts of the country.

It was the inability of the local government system in Nigeria during this period to serve as a viable instrument for rural transformation that led to the nation-wide local government reform of 1976. Thus, in the "foreword" of the "Guidelines for Local Government Reform" of 1976, it was succinctly stated:

The defects of previous local government systems are too well known to deserve further elaboration here. Local governments have over the years suffered from the continuous whittling down of their powers. The state governments have continued to encroach upon what would normally have been the exclusive preserve of local government. Lack of adequate funds and appropriate institutions had continued to make local government ineffective and ineffectual. Moreover, the staffing arrangements to ensure a virile local government system had been inadequate. Excess politicking had made even progress impossible. Consequently, there has been a divorce between the people and government institutions at their most basic level.

Due to this catalogue of problems, the objective of the reform was to establish local government as the third tier of government in the nation so that local government

should do precisely what the word 'government' implies, that is, governing at the grass-roots or local level (Guidelines for Local Government Reform, 1976:16).

This reform is significant in many respects. First, it provided for a uniform single-tier, multi-purpose system of local government with a list of functions which were later enshrined in the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Second, it resulted to a clear-cut distinction between local government and traditional authority. The traditional rulers were insulated (at least theoretically) from active participation in partisan politics and involvement in local government matters. Third, the new system of local government administration was democratic. The Council was constituted by elected members. Fourth, the reform exercise also brought local government to mainstream of the country's inter-governmental fiscal relations by providing for statutory allocation of revenue to local governments. Finally, the reform made an attempt to improve the staffing of local government through the establishment of a Local Government Service Board . Its main duty was 'to recruit qualified staff for the local government and to deploy them appropriately' (FRN,1998:1). For a while, these reforms put local government administration in Nigeria on a sound footing. Unfortunately, during the Second Republic (1979-1983), many of the features of the 1976 reform were violated because of the pressure of party politics. This was the period when politicians dealt a shattering deathblow to local governments by creating mushroom local governments just anyhow without any regard paid to the need for viability, efficiency and effectiveness. Table 2 shows the astronomical increase in the number of local government during the Second Republic in Nigeria. By December, 1983, the number of local government has more than doubled what it was in October, 1979, when the army handed over the reins of

power to civilians. This meant that not less than 70 percent of total expenditure of the local government would be the cost of administrative overheads alone, leaving little for development.

**Table 2: Creation of Local Governments in Nigeria during the Civilian Regime, 1979 – 1983**

States	1980 projected population figures	No of local government as at October 1979	No of local government as at December 1983	% Increase
Anambra	5, 455, 600	23	54	235
Bauchi	86, 866	16	60	394
Bendel	5, 783, 080	19	19	-
Benue	3, 590, 000	13	34	252
Borno	4, 546, 900	18	53	294
Cross River	5, 275, 900	17	59	347
Gongola	3, 951, 900	17	40	235
Imo	5, 571, 500	21	59	281
Kaduna	6, 246, 700	14	70	500
Kano	8, 59, 800	20	29	145
Kwara	2, 600, 700	12	32	267
Lagos	2, 476, 300	8	23	288
Niger	1, 811, 900	9	18	200
Ogun	2, 532, 600	10	30	300
Ondo	4, 161, 600	17	17	0
Oyo	7, 501, 300	24	56	233
Plateau	3, 074, 200	14	25	179
Rivers	2.600, 900	10	10	0
Sokoto	6, 884, 300	19	32	168

Source : Aborisade, O. (1986 :23).

The main concern of the Second Republic politicians was attainment of their selfish interests and not the improvement of the lives of the rural dwellers who were simply manipulated and exploited by them. Thus, viable social development programmes that could have benefited the lower class individuals and raised their economic and social standards were hardly implemented. What emerged from the above discussion is that local governments in Nigeria were in parlous and perilous state of existence and were

badly in need of help when the military struck in December, 1983, and the Second Republic collapsed.

The military under General Mohammadu Buhari, immediately on assumption of office in 1984 directed that the situation prior to December 1983 in so far as the number of local governments was concerned be returned to. This directive was a call to sanity. There seemed to be a willingness on the part of the military to pursue vigorously rural development as evidenced by the setting up of the Ibrahim Dasuki local government Review Panel, the decision to forward local government revenue allocation directly to them, the December 1987 local government election, the dissolution of the ministry of local government in 1988 and its replacement with a department of local government in the Governor's office.

Also in the same 1988, the civil service reform was extended to local government. By this measure, the Chairman of a local government became its chief executive and the accounting officer. All these reforms were aimed at enhancing the autonomy of the local government so as to enable it perform its role of rural development.

The autonomy of local government was further enhanced by June 1991 by the enactment of the local government (Basic Constitutional and Transitional Provisions) (Amendment) No 23 Decree which extended the Presidential system to local government administration. By this Decree, the local government's council acquired full autonomy to approve the local budget and to pass by-laws.

These reforms were reinforced by enhanced revenue allocations from the Federal Account which increased from 10% to 15% in 1990 and to 20% in 1992 and currently 25%. Thus, in addition to expanded autonomy, Nigerian local governments also gained

substantially bigger revenues to enable them achieve rural development. Regrettably, in spite of these various reorganizations of the local government carried out by the military, local governments did not make any significant impact in the area of rural development.

Thus, in 1995, new guidelines were issued that required local governments to submit to stricter control of the state governments as in earlier years. However, the government since 1989 did not help matters. The creation of more local governments, which was banned in 1984, was lifted with more local governments created in 1989, 1991 and 1995. The number of local governments in Nigeria has therefore increased from 301 in 1984 to 449 in 1989, 589 in 1991 and 774 from 1996 to date. Some state governments have recently created more local governments but the federal government does not yet recognize these. The usual reasons for the creation of more local governments in Nigeria are to bring the government nearer to the people and to facilitate rural development. Unfortunately, many of the new local governments are not financially or economically viable and relied virtually on external revenue to operate. But more importantly, the clamour or agitation for more local governments was usual with the political class and elites whose main source of wealth is exploitation of state institutions. No wonder then that despite the creation of more local governments in Nigeria, the plight of the rural dwellers remains deplorable. In fact, the situation in Nigeria currently is that most people hardly remember the existence of local government. Table 3 below shows the distribution of local government by geo political zones in Nigeria.

**Table 3: Distribution of LGAs by Geopolitical Zones**

Zones	Number of LGAs	% of LGAs	Population of LGAs	% of National Population
North Central (+ Abuja)	120	15.5	12.5	14
North East	111	14.3	11.9	13.4
North West	186	24	22.9	25.8
South East	95	12.2	10.8	12.1
South South	123	16	13.3	15.1
South West	139	18	17.4	19.6
Total	774	100	88.8	100

**Source: Compiled from Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999).**

It is no surprise that shortly after the re-election of President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2003, he bemoaned the abysmal failure of local governments in Nigeria thus:

What we have witnessed is the abysmal failure of the local government system. It is on record that at no time in the history of the country has there been the current level of funding accruing to the local governments from the Federation Account, yet, the hope for rapid and sustained development has been a mirage as successive Councils have grossly under-performed in almost all the areas of their mandate... The number of Local Government Areas (LGAs) had also risen steadily from 301 in 1976 to 774 currently listed in the first schedule part of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, yet, the clamour for the creation of more LGAs has not abated. Indeed, as of date, a total of over 500 new LGAs are in the process of being created by the various State Governments (Obasanjo, 2003).

### **THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND TARGETS**

Mr. Chairman, in this section, we shall examine the major goals and specific targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The MDGs as we stated earlier on in this lecture are a set of concrete, quantitative and time-bound targets for poverty reduction to be reached by the year 2015 through coherent, coordinated and mutually

supportive actions (Audinet and Haralambous, 2005). For each goal, one or more targets have been set, most for 2015, using 1990 as a benchmark. This global consensus is a long history of international efforts to promote sustainable and equitable development.

**Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and hunger**

Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.

Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

**Goals 2: Achieve universal primary education**

Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

**Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women**

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

**Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality**

Target 5: Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.

**Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health**

Target 6: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.

**Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDs, Malaria and other Disease**

Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDs.

Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

**Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability**

Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into the country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.

Target 10: Halve by 2015, the Proportion of People without Sustainable Access to Safe Drinking Water and Basic Sanitation.

Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

**Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development**

Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally.

Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries. Includes: tariff and quota-free access for least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPG) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction.

Target 14: Address the special needs of land locked developing countries and small island developing states (through the programme of action for the sustainable development of small island developing states and the outcome of the twenty – second special session of the General Assembly).

Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international efforts in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.

Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.

Target 17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.

Target 18: In corporation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information communication.

The limitations of the MDGs and its targets are well documented (see Igbuzor, 2006:2, Igbuzor and Moru, 2005). Critics argue that MDGs risk simplifying what development is all about, by restricting the goals to what is measurable. Many aspects of development cannot be easily measured. Secondly, some of the goals are very modest, for example, the goal to half the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day by 2015 and the target to achieve a significant improvement in the lives at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. Finally, some of the targets do not address some of the problems holistically. For instance, the MDG on education talks only of a full course of primary schooling without reference to secondary and tertiary education.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, there are good reasons why we should engage the MDGs (Igbuzor, 2006). Firstly, the MDGs draw together, in a single agenda, issues that require priority to address the development question. Secondly, for the first time, they call for a compact between developed and developing countries governments, the United Nations system, civil society actors, the Bretton woods institutions and the World Trade Organizations (MDG8). Their interlinking nature requires each goal to be pursued not independently but as part of a unified whole (Audinet and Haralombous, 2005). Thirdly, the goals are time-bound and offer a minimum threshold of transparent

and measurable outcomes, targets and indicators. The last but the least, while they focus on ends and united efforts in their pursuit, they allow for a diversity of paths to get there (Audinet and Haralombous, 2005:9)

## **OVERVIEW OF TRENDS AND CURRENT MDGs STATUS IN NIGERIA**

Mr. Chairman, in this section, we shall assess Nigeria's progress towards the MDGs. In other words, we shall determine the extent of achievement of the targets set for each of the eight MDGs in Nigeria.

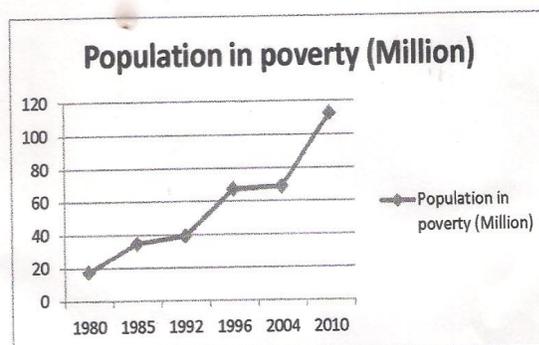
### **MDG 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger**

Progress towards the eradication of poverty and hunger in Nigeria has been slow. Although the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the rate of economic growth have improved over the last decade, this has not led to more jobs or less poverty. For example, the GDP at 1990 constant prices increased from 6.03% in 2006 to 6.60% in 2007 and fell slightly to 5.98% in 2008. The "GDP grew by 6.96% and 7.87% in 2009 and 2010" (NBS 2010b: 8). The percentage of the population living below the poverty line increased significantly from 27.2% in 1980 to 69% in 2010 (see **table 4 and figure 1 below**).

**Table 4: Relative poverty Headcount, 1980-2010**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Poverty incidence (%)</b>	<b>Estimated Population (Million)</b>	<b>Population in Poverty (Million)</b>
1980	27.2	65	17.1
1985	46.3	75	34.7
1992	42.7	91.5	39.2
1996	65.6	102.3	67.1
2004	54.4	126.3	68.7
2010	69.0	163	112.47

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, (2010c:11)

**Figure 1: Population in Poverty**

Source: NBS (2010c:1)

Distributing the population into non-poor, moderately poor and extremely poor, **table 5 below** shows a downward trend in percentage of the non-poor reduced from 72.8% in 1980 to 57.3% in 1992 and further to 34.4%, 43.3% and 31% in 1996, 2004 and 2010, respectively. The moderately poor recorded a percentage increase from 21% in 1980 to 34.2% in 1985. It went down from 36.3%, 32.4% to 30.3% in 1996, 2004 and 2010, respectively. The percentage of the extremely poor increased from 6.2% in 1980 to 29.3% and 38.7% in 1996 and 2010, respectively.

**Table 5: Relative Poverty: Non Poor, Moderate poor and the Extremely Poor, 1980-2010**

Year	Non-poor	Moderately poor	Extremely poor
1980	72.8	21.0	6.2
1985	53.7	34.2	12.1
1992	57.3	28.9	13.1
1996	34.4	36.3	29.3
2004	43.3	32.4	22.0
2010	31.0	30.3	38.7

Source: NBS (2010c:13)

An attempt was made in **table 6 below** to measure poverty in Nigeria using the following four measures: relative measure, absolute measure, dollar per day and food

measure. The table shows that food poor increased from 33.6% in 2004 to 41.% in 2010, absolute poor increased from 54.7% in 2004 to 60.9 in 2010; relative poor increased from 54.4% in 2004 to 69% in 2010, while the number of people living in one dollar per day increased from 51.6% 2004 to 61.2% in 2010.

**Table 6: National Poverty Incidence 2003/2004 and 2009/2010**

Year	Food Poor	Absolute Poor	Relative poor	Dollar Per Day
2004	33.6	54.7	54.4	51.6
2010	41.0	60.9	69.0	61.2

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2010c:15)

As we stated earlier in this lecture, poverty is predominantly a rural phenomenon. In other words, the rural areas have the largest concentration of the poor. **Table 7 below** shows urban/rural incidence of poverty in Nigeria by different poverty measures. Whereas only 26.7% of the urban residents suffer from food poverty, 48.3% of rural residents suffer from food poverty. The table also shows that 52% of the urban and 66.1 percent of the rural residents suffer from absolute poverty. Again 61.8% of the urban and 73.2% of the rural residents suffer from relative poverty. Finally, 52.4% and 66.3% of the urban and rural residents respectively live in less than one dollar per day.

**Table 7: Urban/ Rural Incidence of Poverty by Different Poverty Measures**

Sector	Food Poor	Absolute Poor	Relative poor	Dollar Per Day
Urban	26.7	52.0	61.8	52.4
Rural	48.3	66.1	73.2	66.3

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2010c:16)

The rate or level of poverty varies from one geo-political zone to another. **Table 8** shows the level of poverty across the different geo-political zones in Nigeria. It is very obvious or glaring from the table that the North West zone has the highest incidence of poverty by different poverty measures followed by the North East, the North Central, the

South East, the South – South and then the South-West in that order. The South – West has the lowest incidence or level of poverty in Nigeria.

**Table 8: Zonal Incidence of Poverty by Different Poverty Measures**

Zone	Food Poor	Absolute Poor	Relative Poor	Dollar per Day
North Central	38.6	59.5	67.5	59.7
North East	51.5	69.0	76.3	69.1
North West	51.8	70.0	77.7	70.4
South East	41.0	58.7	67.0	59.2
South South	35.5	55.9	63.8	56.1
South West	25.4	49.8	59.1	50.1

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2010c:16)

The poverty forecast for 2011 shows that relative poverty increased from 54.4% to 69% and then to 71.5% in 2004, 2010 and 2011, respectively. Absolute poverty increased from 54.7% to 60.9% and 61.9% in 2004, 2010 and 2011, respectively. The number of people living in less than one dollar per day reduced from 62.8% in 2004 to 61.2% in 2010 and then increased again to 62.8 in 2011(NBS, 2011).

The level or rate of inflation and unemployment are indicators of the level of poverty in Nigeria. A high level of inflation for instance, reduces the purchasing power of the citizens with the resultant poverty and hunger. **Table 9** shows that there was no discernable pattern of movement in inflation rate within the period under review. The Headline inflation rate fell from 8.57 percent in 2006 to 5.2 percent in 2007. It increased to 15.10 percent in 2008 and slightly fell to 13.9 percent in 2009 before falling again to 11.8 percent in 2010. The Core inflation rate which was derived from all Consumer Price Index( CPI) less farm produce, stood at 17.27 percent in 2006, fell to 3.6 percent in 2007 and rose to 10.4 percent in 2008; it increased slightly to 11.2 percent in 2009 and then fell to 10.9 percent in 2010. Finally, the Food inflation rose from 3.9 percent in 2006 to 8.2

percent in 2007 before rising to peak of 18 percent in 2008. It fell again to 15.5 percent in 2009 and to 12.7 percent in 2010(NBS 2010:17).

**Table 9: Inflation Rate**

<b>Inflation rate (year on year change)</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Headline inflation</b>	8.57	5.2	15.10	13.9	11.8
<b>Core inflation</b>	17.27	3.62	10.40	11.2	10.9
<b>Food inflation</b>	3.89	8.22	18.00	15.5	12.7

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2010b:17)

The national unemployment rates show a consistent increase from 12.3% in 2006 to 12.7%, 14.9%, 19.7%, 21.4% and 23.9% in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011, respectively. In 2006, the rate of urban unemployment of 10% was lower than that of rural which was 15.1%. In 2010, urban unemployment rate of 22.8% was higher than that of rural which was 21.1%. But in 2011, the rate was higher in the rural area (25.6%) than in the urban area (17.1%) (NBS, 2010). The proportion of children under five years of age who are underweight as shown in table 10 was 35.7 percent in 1990, reducing to 28 percent between 2001 and 2003 and 23.1 percent by 2008. Also the proportion of the population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption reduced from 39 percent in 1990 to 34.1 percent in 2007 and to 32.83 percent in 2009. It is obvious from the discussions above that progress toward eradicating extreme poverty and hunger in Nigeria is slow. Reducing poverty and hunger remains a key development challenge in Nigeria. Sustainable growth is critical for poverty reduction.

**Table 10: The proportion of People who suffer from Hunger, 1999-2009**

Indicator	1990	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2015 target	Progress towards target
Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age (%)	35.7	31'	28.7	28.7	28.7	30	30	NA	25	23.1	NA	19.96	Slow
Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption (consuming 2,900 calories or less daily) (%).	39	29	NA	NA	NA	35	35	35	34.1	33.1 (est.)	32.83 (est.)	14.5	Slow based on 2007 data.

Source: FRN (2010:13).

## Goal 2: Achievement of Universal Primary Education

Nigeria has made significant progress in the area of school enrolment (see tables 11 and 12 below). Table 12 shows that the net enrollment ratio in primary education was 68 in 1990, increasing to 95 in 2000, before reducing to 88.8 in 2008. The proportion of pupils starting primary one who reached primary 5 was 67 percent in 1990, increasing to 97 percent in 2000 and 2001 and subsequently reducing to 72.3 percent in 2008. The primary 6 completion rate was 58% in 1990, increasing to 76.7 percent in 2000 and 2001 and to 82% percent in 2003 and 2004, reducing to 67.5% percent in 2008. The literacy rate of 15-24 years old women and men was 80% percent in 2008.

**Table 11: Primary School Enrollment in Nigeria, 2006-2010****Student  
Enrolment**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
All Primary Schools	22,861,884	21,632,070	21,294,517	20,080,976	20,663,805
Public Primary Schools	21,717,789	2,0469,395	18,980,395	18,818,544	19,042,167
Private Primary	1,144,095	1,162,675	1,011,914	1,262,432	1,621,638

**Source: NBS,2010**

Also Nigeria still has more than seven million children out of primary school, of which girls constitute about 62 percent. Furthermore, the education system largely excludes disadvantage groups and the quality of education is poor (FRN, 2010). A lot still needs to be done in teacher education and the development of infrastructure. In 2006 only 58% of primary school teachers in Nigeria were qualified. The situation was even worse in the northern states of the country. For example, in Sokoto and Zamfara states, only 22 percent of primary school teachers were qualified, in Bauchi state 21 percent and in Taraba 33percent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2009)

**Table 12: Showing the Net Enrolment in Primary School, 1990-2009**

Indicator	1990	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2015 Target
Net Enrolment Ratio in Primary Education	68	95	95	NA	NA	81.1	84.6	87.9	89.6	88.8	NA	100
Proportion of pupils starting Primary 1 who reach Primary 5 (%)	67	97	97	96	84	74	74	74	74	72.3	NA	100
Primary 6 completion rate (%)	58	76.7	76.7	NA	82	82	69.2	67.5	67.5	NA	NA	100
Literacy rate of 15-24 years old, women and men (%)	NA	64.1	NA	NA	60.4	60.4	76.2	80.2	81.4	80.0	NA	100

**Source:** Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2010b: 17)

### **MDG3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women**

Improvements have been made in gender parity particularly in the area of school enrollment as shown in Table 13. However, the proportion of girls enrolled is still lower than that of boys across all levels of education. The ratio of girls to boys in primary education (girls per 100 boys) was 76 in 1990, increasing to 78 in 2000 and to 85.4 in 2008. However, the table shows that in the core northern states of Sokoto, Zamfara, Yobe, Katsina and Nassarawa, more work needs to be done to encourage girls to enroll in primary school. The gross enrolment ratio has consistently been over 10 percent higher

for boys than for girls. At the secondary level the situation has worsened since the baseline year of 2000. For instance, in 2000, the ratio was 81, while in 2008 it was 79.8. However, the ratio for 2008 was an improvement over the previous year when it was 75.4. Furthermore, at the tertiary level (university education), the ratio is not encouraging. The ratio was 66 in 2000, increasing to 87 in 2002, reducing to 75.5 and 66.8 in 2004 and 2008 respectively. On the whole, the progress is slow and well below the rate required to achieve the desired result. Reaching the target of 100 percent enrolment of girls by 2015 would require government intervention, specifically funding of education.

Women are also grossly under-represented in leadership and key decision – making bodies at all levels (federal and state legislature, cabinets at both federal and state levels, etc). Although there has been a slight increase in the proportion of seats held by women in the National Assembly from 3.1 percent in 2000 to 7.5 percent in 2009, this is still far below the target of 30 percent. Table 14, further confirms that women are grossly underrepresented in both Houses of the National Assembly. Women constitute only 11.8 percent of the 17 members of the Supreme Court bench. Across the 36 states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory judiciaries, women constitute 30 percent of the total number of High Court judges. The number of female Deputy Governors increased slightly from 3 in 2003 to 6 in 2007 (FRN, 2010). Efforts at achieving gender equality in Nigeria have been largely undermined by persistent cultural beliefs and practices, poverty and poor implementation of relevant government policies.

**Table 13: Showing Gender Disparity in Primary, Secondary and tertiary Education, Women in Wage Employment in non-Agricultural Sector and Proportion of Women in National Parliament in Nigeria, 1990-2009**

Indicator	1990	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2015 Target
Ratio of girls to boys in primary education (girls per 100 boys)	76	78	78	79	79	81	81	83	85.1	85.4	NA	100
Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education (girls per 100 boys)	75	81	81	80	78	77.4	77.4	79.4	75.4	79.9	NA	100
Ratio of girls to boys in tertiary education (girls per 100 boys)	46	66	68	87	72	75.5	75.5	69.0	66.4	66.8	NA	100
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (%)	66.3	NA	NA	NA	NA	79	79	NA	NA	NA	NA	-
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (%)	1.0	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	7.7	7.5	30

Source: NBS: Annual Abstract of Statistics, 2009.

**Table 14 – Comparative Analysis of the Distribution of Senators and Honourable members from 1999 – 2011 by Gender**

1999 – 2003			2003 – 2007			2007 – 2011		
Chamber No.	Gender		Chamber No.	Gender		Chamber No.	gender	
	M	F		M	F		M	F
Senate 109	106	3	Senate 109	105	4	Senate 109	100	8.26
	97.2%	2.8%						
House 360	348	12	House 360	338	22	House 360	330	27
	96.7%	3.3%		939	6.1		92.50	7.50
Total 469				469			469	

Source: National Assembly Statistical Information (2008:43) Ezeani (2009:111)

**Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality**

Child mortality refers to the death of children before their fifth birthday. The child health targets include the reduction of infant mortality rate (IMR) and child mortality rate to 45/1,000 in 2010 and 35/1,000 in 2015 respectively. Nigeria has recorded an average progress in reducing child mortality (see table 15 below). There has been a significant reduction in under-5 mortality from 201 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003 to 157 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2008 (see NPC, 2004 and 2009). Infant mortality increased from 81.38 in 2000 to 100 per 1,000 live births between 2003 and 2006, reducing to 75 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2008. The percentage of children 12 months of age immunized against measles increased from 32.8 percent in 2000 to 74.3 percent in 2009 (FGN 2010; 27). However, a comparison of infant mortality rate of Nigeria with other African countries shows that while Nigeria has an infant mortality rate of 89, Senegal has 51, Algeria 22, Egypt 23, Libya 14, Ghana 45, Cape Verde 19, South African 48, Namibia 31 (World Population Data Sheet, 2011). So, the infant mortality rate in Nigeria is very high compared to these African countries. More than one million children under five years die each year in Nigeria from preventable causes (<http://ipsnews.net/africa/nota.aspx2008>).

**Table 15: Showing under-five mortality rate, Infant mortality rate and Percentage of one-year olds fully immunized against measles in Nigeria, 1990-2009**

Indicator	1990	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2015 Target
Under-five mortality rate (per live 1,000 births)	191	183.75	183.75	183.75	201	201	201	201	138	157	NA	63.7
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 births)	91	81.38	81.38	81.38	100	100	100	100	86	75	NA	30.3
Percentage of one-year olds fully immunized against measles	46	32.2	41.1	61.8	31.4	50	60	60	60	41.4	74.3	100

**Source:** Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2010b: 27)

### **MDG 5: Improve Maternal Health**

Maternal and child health provide key indicators of a society's level of development and the performance of its health delivery system (NDHS,2003).Progress towards improving maternal health in Nigeria has been slow. Maternal mortality is still high. The World Health Organization defined maternal mortality as the death of a woman, while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration or site of pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by pregnancy or its management but not from accidental causes. "Although maternal mortality fell from 800 deaths per 100,000 births in 2003 to 545 deaths per 100, 000 births in 2008, progress in this goal has been slow and challenges remain" (FRNa, 2010: 5).The Federal Ministry of Health (FMH) and World Health Organization (WHO) estimate that over 50,000 women die each year in Nigeria due to complications of pregnancy and child birth. This

in relative terms, is the worst in the world (Abdul'Aziz, <http://ipsnews.net/africa/nota.asp?idnews>, 2008). According to Okonofuo (2010), Nigeria contributes 10 percent to the global burden of maternal mortality, despite accounting for less than 2 percent of the world's population. Overall, the maternal mortality rate falls far short of the MDGs target of reducing maternal mortality ratio (MMR) to 125/100,000 life-birth in 2010 and to 75/100,000 life-birth in 2015. The percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel increased slightly from 36% in 2003 to 29% in 2008 (FRN, 2010b:5).

#### **MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDs, Malaria and other Diseases**

The HIV/AIDs prevalence rate in Nigeria increased from 4.6% to 4.8% between 2001 and 2003; it rose from 4.8% to 11.4% between 2003 and 2005. However, between 2005 and 2008, the prevalence rate decreased from 11.4% to 4.6% (NBS, 2009: 182). It dropped to 4.12% in 2010 (NBS, 2010). Mother to child transmission fell from 10 percent in 2004 to 4 percent in 2010. The current adult prevalence rate translates to about 3 million infected persons, with women and girls bearing the brunt. The number of AIDs orphans is estimated at about 1.97 million in 2010 (FRN 2010: 35). The use of contraceptives increased from 8 percent in 2003 to 10 percent in 2008. However, a comparison of the percentage of married women (15 – 49 years) using contraception in African countries as at 2009 shows that while 10% of married women in Nigeria used modern contraceptives, in Ghana it is 17%, Cape Verde 57%, South Africa 60%, Namibia 53%, Cameroon 12%, Sao Tome and Principe 33% (World Population Data

sheet, 2011). So, Nigeria has not fared well in the area of use of contraceptives by married women.

The proportion of the population accessing antiretroviral drugs increased from 16.7% in 2007 to 34.4% in 2010 (FRN, 2010a:5). Reported cases of malaria increased from 2, 710, 407 million in 2002 to 5, 307, 553 million in 2008 (NBS 2009: 187). Malaria still accounts for an average of 300, 000 deaths a year. Cases of tuberculosis are decreasing but it still poses a serious public health problem in Nigeria (Nigeria ranks 4<sup>th</sup> out of 22 countries for tuberculosis prevalence). Reported cases of tuberculosis increased from 31, 164 in 2002 to 94, 114 in 2009. On the whole, Nigeria has recorded an average performance in combating HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases.

#### **MDG 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability**

The proportion of Nigeria population with sustainable access to an improved water source increased from 54.2% in 1990 to 58% in 2008. However, a comparison of the percentage of population with improved water supply in selected sub-Saharan African countries shows that Nigeria is yet to record significant progress in providing improved water supply to her citizens. For example, whereas 75 percent of Nigerian urban population has access to improved water supply, 90, 96, 93, 95, 100, 92 and 99 percents of the urban population have access to improved water supply in Ghana, Gambia, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Cameroon and South Africa, respectively

**Table 16 – Percentage of Population with Improved Water Supply in Sub-Saharan African (2008)**

Country	Percentage	
	Urban	Rural
Nigeria	75	42
Ghana	90	74
Gambia	96	86
Cote d'Ivoire	93	68
Benin	84	69
Burkina Faso	95	72
Egypt	100	98
Cameroon	92	51
South African	99	78
Algeria	85	79

**Source: World Population Data Sheet, 2011.**

The percentage of Nigerian population with access to improved sanitation declined from 37% to 31.2% in 2008 (FRN 2010: 36). Desertification is on the increase in Nigeria. The area of forest fell from 14% of the land area in 2000 to 12.6% in 2007, against the target of 20% by 2015 (FRN 2010: 36). The 2008 deadline for eliminating gas flaring is yet to be achieved.

### **MDG 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development**

Nigeria remains a key player in regional and international initiatives such as the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the World Trade Organization, Economic Community of West African States, among others. Debt-relief gains have contributed immensely to Nigeria's modest progress towards achieving the MDGs. For instance, the government has used debt relief for social safety net policy initiatives, such as Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTS), Micro-Credit Scheme, Universal Basic Education counterpart fund scheme, HIV/AIDS (Distribution of antiretroviral drugs), the Community Health Insurance Scheme, the Rollback Malaria partnership with

the global fund, et cetera. However, the benefits of debt relief have not been matched by an increase in aid. Development assistance to Nigeria only amounts to 1% of Gross Domestic Product (FRN 2010:36). Trade and access to markets remain unequal.

In summary, approximately three years to 2015, available data show that Nigeria is unlikely to achieve the MDGs, except probably Goal 6. In fact, Nigeria's Human Development Index (HDI) ranking and value as shown in **table 17** below are good indicators of both her level of development and the fact that she is unlikely to meet the MDGs targets by 2015. The United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) HDI is a comparative measure of life expectancy, literacy, education and standards of living for countries worldwide. It is a standard means of measuring well-being, especially child welfare. It distinguishes countries according to whether they have very high HDI, High HDI, medium HDI and low HDI. The table 17 below shows clearly that Nigeria with the value of 0.459 which is low HDI ranked 156 in the HDI ranking for 2011. With the value of 0.541 which is medium HDI Ghana was ranked 135. Countries like Libya, Mauritius and Tunisia with the values of 0.760, 0.728 and 0.698 which are high HDI ranked 64, 77 and 94 respectively. Nigeria's performance is very disappointing when one considers the fact that she is blessed with abundant human and natural resources.

**Table 17: Human Development Index (HDI), Value/Ranks for selected African Countries**

S/N	Country	Rank	Value
<b>Very High HDI</b>			
Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
<b>High HDI</b>			
1	Libya	64	0.760
2	Mauritius	77	0.728
3	Tunisia	94	0.698
<b>Medium HDI</b>			
4	Algeria	96	0.698
5	Gabon	106	0.674
6	Egypt	113	0.644
7	Botswana	118	0.633
8	Namibia	120	0.632
9	South Africa	123	0.619
10	Morocco	130	0.582
11	Ghana	135	0.582
12	Equatorial Guinea	136	0.537
<b>Low HDI</b>			
13	Kenya	143	0.509
14	Angola	148	0.486
15	Cameroon	150	0.482
16	Tanzania	152	0.466
17	Senegal	155	0.459
18	Nigeria	156	0.459

Source: (UNDP) Summary of Human Development Report. New York: United Nations

The achievement of MDGs requires the combined efforts of all the tiers of government and other actors. Local government in particular, due to its proximity to the grassroots, has a key role to play toward achieving the MDGs if sufficiently empowered. Table 18 below shows the potentials of achieving the MDGs in Nigeria by 2015. It shows that it is only in the area of halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS (Goal 6, target D) that Nigeria has good potential.

**Table 18: Potentials to achieve MDGs targets**

<b>MDG 1:</b>	<b>Extreme Poverty</b>	<b>Potential to meet target</b>	<b>Supportive policy environment</b>
Target 1:	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.	❖	➤
Target 2:	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.	❖	❖
<b>MDG 2:</b>	<b>Universal Primary Education</b>		
Target 3:	Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.	❖	❖
<b>MDG 3:</b>	<b>Gender Equality</b>		
Target 4:	Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.	❖	❖
<b>MDG 4:</b>	<b>Child Mortality</b>		
Target:	Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.	❖	❖
<b>MDG 5:</b>	<b>Maternal Health</b>		
Target 6:	Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.	❖	➤
<b>MDG 6:</b>	<b>HIV/AIDS,</b>		
Target 7:	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	■	❖
Target 8:	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence malaria and other major diseases	❖	❖
<b>MDG 7:</b>	<b>Ensure Environmental Sustainability</b>		
Target 9:	Integrate the principles of sustainable development into the country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.	➤	➤
Target 10:	Halve by 2015, the Proportion of People without Sustainable Access to Safe Drinking Water and Basic Sanitation.	➤	❖

Source: Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2010a:18.

**Key to Achievability potentials:**

- Good Potential
- ❖ Average Potential
- Weak Potential

## **LOCALIZING THE MDGS: THE LIMITS OF THE TOP-DOWN APPROACH**

One of the major shortcomings of earlier development efforts in most developing countries was the over-centralization of the process- the top- down approach. Although national governments are necessary to mobilize political and financial support and to coordinate efforts and develop necessary enabling policies to support the achievement of the MDGs, experience shows that traditional sectoral, centralized approaches have often been ineffective in addressing the specific development challenges in a particular locality. The top-down policies have revealed their limitations in terms of promoting sustainable, equitable development. As rightly observed by the Global Forum on Local Development (2010), this development model has worked well at an aggregate level, but, it has been accompanied by widening individual and territorial disparities: often times only a small part of the population has been able to take advantage of economic growth. As a result of these development dynamics, the economies of many developing countries remain concentrated in a few urban centres, characterized by a narrow base and highly vulnerable to external shocks.

The limitations of the top-down approach has brought about a rethinking which eventually manifested in the need for a decentralization of both structures (machinery) and process of development (see Abubakar, 1993). In other words, a new policy approach is needed, one that builds on local knowledge to tailor public policy to specific circumstances. As the World Bank (1975:36) noted, “decentralization or ‘local control’

provides the flexibility needed for proper integration and timing of activities and for the modifications of programs in response to changing conditions. Community involvement, which is essential to a sustained development process, is greatly facilitated by local rather than centralized control. One particular advantage is that the

problems of the community, as perceived by its residents and those imputed by local officials, tend to be more easily reconciled.

Localizing the MDGs' is an important prerequisite for success. It is a process of designing (or adjusting) local development strategies to achieve locally adapted MDGs targets (UNDP, 2007; SNV and UNDP, 2009). In order to impact the lives of the people, MDGs targets and indicators need to be adapted and transplanted into local realities and embedded in local plans process. Localizing the MDGs means promoting local ownership, understanding local needs and trends and allocating resources to achieve outcomes at the local level. Through MDGs localization, nationally defined targets are adapted to the local context to meet the development needs and priorities of specific communities. At the same time the resulting localized development targets must help achieve the country's overall development strategy. Meanwhile, active involvement of actors at the local level is very essential to the localization process. The role of local government in this regards is critical.

### **ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS: THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

In developing countries such as Nigeria, local governments can have a direct impact on the achievement of the MDGs locally. The United Nations (2005) in Paragraph 173 of one of its Resolutions states as follows: "we underline the important role of local authorities in contributing to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals". Poverty is mostly experienced in the rural areas. Therefore, it is primarily at the local level that the services and programmes to tackle poverty and underdevelopment should be delivered. Local

governments are well positioned to involve communities, local business, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and vulnerable or marginalized groups in responses and actions to advance the MDGs. The commitment of local government and other local actors can assist in translating plans and sectoral priorities into local realities that improve public services and reduce socio-economic differences (SNV and UNDP, 2009). There are key areas in which local governments in Nigeria, as in many countries, have a strong comparative advantage to deliver on MDGs.

1. **Service Delivery:** Local governments are tasked with providing services that are highly relevant to MDG progress. The fourth schedule of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria stipulates the services to be provided by local government in Nigeria. Table 19 below contains major services provided by local governments in Nigeria and some other countries.

**Table 19: Showing Major Services Performed by Local Government in Some Countries**

CANADA	USA	WEST GERMANY	GHANA	SOUTH AFRICA	NIGERIA
Education	Education	Education (except higher Education)		Police	Rates, taxes, licenses
Police	Highways	Hospitals and health	Fire protection	Fire Protection Kindergarten & Nursery	Cemeteries, homes for destitute
Fire Protection	Public Welfare	Public welfare	Pre-school	Primary care	Rates
Health	Police & fire protection	Recreation	Primary	Primary care	Rates
Water supply	Police & hospitals	Market halls/abattoirs	Secondary	Healthy Protection Housing	Slaughter Houses. Slaughter slabs
Sewage	Air Pollution control	Adult education	Family welfare services		
Refuse	Public recreation	Fire Prevention, Economic Development, Local Transportation	Welfare House Primary Care Health Protection	Town Planning Transport Urban roads Urban rails	Markets, motor park & public convenience, sewage and refuse disposal
Power	Public Housing Public Works (street construction)				
Traffic					
Social Services	Building inspection	Electricity, gas and long	Housing	Airports	Roads, streets,

		distance heating			parks, gardens drains Registration births, deaths and marriages
Planning and Zoning	Water/sewer utilities Airports	Water purification and sewerage waste disposal	Town Planning  Roads Transportation	Water & Sanitation  Refuse collection and Disposal	Control of outdoor advertising and hoarding, shops, kiosks, restaurants, bakeries, laundries etc.
	Public transportation		Water & sanitation	Cemeteries And crematoria	
	Planning and land use	Water basins  Libraries	Refuse Collection & Disposal  Slaughter Houses  Water Supply Tourism Sports and leisure parks and open spaces  Theatre & Concerts  Agriculture, forestry & Fishery cemeteries and crematoria	Slaughter Houses Environmental Protection  Parks & open places Sports & leisure Religious facilities Water supply  Agriculture, forestry & fishery  Economic Promotion  Tourism	Primary, adult and vocational education  Agriculture and natural resources  Health services

**Source:** Olowu, D. (1988:22); Ezeani, E.O. (2004)

Local government, as the tier of government closest to the grass-roots is in the best position to provide these services. The provision of key services such as primary education, basic health, access to potable water, agricultural extension, roads, et cetera, will no doubt accelerate progress towards the achievement of the MDGs. Table 20 shows

the extent of relationships between service delivery functions commonly assigned to the local government level and the MDGs.

**Table 20: Relationship between service delivery functions commonly assigned to the local government level and the MDGs**

MDG	Primary education	Primary health	Agricultural extension	Water and sanitation	Roads	Solid waste mgmt.	Firefighting and police	Land use planning*	Economic development*
1. Poverty and hunger	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	❖	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	○	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Primary education	❖	○	○	○	○			○	
3. Gender equality	<input type="checkbox"/>		○				<input type="checkbox"/>		
4. Child mortality	<input type="checkbox"/>	❖	○	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		○	
5. Maternal health	○	❖	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	○	○		
6. HIV/AIDS and Malaria	○	❖	○	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		○	
7. Environmental protection	○	○	○	❖	❖	❖	○	❖	○
8. Partnership									○

**Key**

- Some relationship
- ❖ Direct provision
- Indirect relationship

\*In some cases local government can influence the MDGs negatively through poor governance

**Source: Commonwealth Government Forum, 2009 (Box 2)**

2. **Fostering Local Economic Development (LED):** Local governments are in a vantage position to play a leading role in the design and implementation of local programmes. Economic development is essential to generate resources and jobs that can then support social outcomes and contribute to achieving

MDGs. In most developing countries such as Nigeria, enormous unexploited and under-exploited economic development potentials, abound in the rural areas where poverty and exclusion are the greatest. Local governments, because of their knowledge of local situation, are in an advantaged position when it comes to identifying the right ‘mix of services’ that is needed to realize the potential of their territory, adapting public spending to specific circumstances and priorities. Equally important is the fact that they can partner with key actors and form public- private partnerships that are often essential to promote local development.

3. **Achieving food security and eradication of extreme poverty:** The issue of food security is high on the political agenda of the international community as evidenced by the number of high-level summits, including the first ever G8 Agriculture Ministerial in April 2009 in which more than US\$22billion were pledged by developed countries to boost food security (SNV and UNDP, 2009:11). Food security exists when all citizens of a country at all times have access to sufficient, safe food that meets their dietary needs and preferences for an active and healthy life (see SNV and UNDP, 2009:11). Local government is the tier of government that is closest and directly in touch with small holder farmers which are central to the implementation of any food security policy. They are most likely to understand local conditions affecting food security, including weather and crop planting patterns, local trade flows, as well as causes of chronic and transitory food insecurity (SNV and UNDP, 2009:11). Most importantly, “local governments are ideally placed-and

usually mandated- to promote integrated action to address the variables which make up the food security equation: providing basic infrastructure that supports the production and distribution of food crops (including roads, wells, dams, markets, etc); dealing with land title disputes; providing forum for community groups (including farmer cooperatives); monitoring of local food security; managing the trade-offs between agricultural productivity and environmental sustainability ( SNV and UNDP, 2009:11).

4. **Promoting gender equality and women empowerment:** In recent years, public opinions have changed tremendously in favour of women's participation in local level decision- making (UNCDF, 2009) and the need to remove the obstacles that are inhibiting women's effective participation (UNCDF, 2005). This is in recognition of the fact that gender equality contributes substantially to development and social stability. Whether they are the targets or implementers of local gender programmes, local governments have a central role in local level action towards gender equality. In other words, they can be a platform for change and inclusion of women in local decision- making process. Regrettably, over the years, gender concerns have not been effectively incorporated into local council development plans and activities. Local government can promote gender equality through initiating gender- sensitive planning, budgeting and resource allocation processes and enacting policies that would enhance women's participation in local decisions- making. It can also conduct vocational and technical

training/seminar for women and mothers, among other things (Panadero, 2004).

**5. Building climate change resilience /environmental sustainability:** The threat of climate change is more severe in developing countries which face 75-80 percent of the potential damage from climate change. Local governments in Nigeria can play a key role to foster climate change resilience by integrating climate change considerations into local planning, budgetary and investment cycles. Unfortunately, they lack the awareness, information, resources and capacity to exercise the role they could play in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

In summary, although local governments have a key role to play in realizing the MDGs, the fact remains that all sectors of the society have a role to play in promoting local development and the achievement of the MDGs. Therefore, realizing the MDGs requires collaborative efforts of major stakeholders- public and private actors, financial institutions and civil society at large, at all levels (see table 21 below).

**Table 21: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders**

S/n	Goals	Roles and Responsibilities
1	<b>Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</b>	<b>Lead:</b> Federal Government <b>Partners:</b> National and state assemblies, states and local governments, civil society, private sector, international development partners
2	<b>Attain universal primary education in all countries by 2015</b>	<b>Lead:</b> States and local governments <b>Partners:</b> Federal government, national and state assemblies, civil society, private sector, international development partners
3	<b>Promote gender equality and empower women</b>	<b>Lead:</b> Federal government <b>Partners:</b> National and state assemblies, states and local governments civil society, private sector, international development partners
4	<b>Reduce child mortality</b>	<b>Lead:</b> States and local governments <b>Partners:</b> Federal government, national and state assemblies, civil society, private sector, international development partners
5	<b>Improve maternal health</b>	<b>Lead:</b> States and local governments <b>Partners:</b> Federal government, national and state assemblies, civil society, private sector, international development partners
6	<b>Combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases</b>	<b>Lead:</b> Federal government <b>Partners:</b> National and state assemblies, states and local governments civil society, private sector, international development partners
7	<b>Ensure environmental sustainability</b>	<b>Lead:</b> Federal government <b>Partners:</b> National and state assemblies, states and local governments civil society, private sector, international development partners
8	<b>Develop a global partnership for development</b>	<b>Lead:</b> Federal government <b>Partners:</b> National and state assemblies, states and local governments civil society, private sector, international development partners

Source: FRN,2010a:61.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MDGS: MAJOR CHALLENGES**

Local governments in Nigeria face a number of challenges which hinder them from contributing meaningfully to the achievement of the MDGs. The main challenges are as follows:

**1. Financial constraints:** The effectiveness of Local Governments and the quality of local government services- particularly in developing countries- are often constrained by the limited financial resources available to them and the degree of autonomy granted by the federal/state governments. Adedeji (1972) identifies finance as elixir necessary to break what in his terminology is “the vicious circle of poverty of local government” and make local governments relevant in the country’s development process. Although the financial or fiscal position of local governments in Nigeria has improved considerably in recent times due to enhanced allocation from the federation account (see table20),this development cannot without major institutional reforms be translated into an effective means for local governments to contribute in any significant sense to local development (Abubakar, 1993). In the first place, the assurance of getting regular and substantial allocations from the Federation Account has made local governments to lose the incentive to explore new ways and methods of boosting their revenue from domestic or independent sources. The statutory allocation constitutes over 80% of the total allocation of most local governments in Nigeria.

Again, the structure of local government expenditure in Nigeria shows a preponderance of recurrent expenditure over capital expenditure (see **table 22 below**).

As Abubakar (1993:38) rightly states:

since a large chunk of developmental funds for local government come from recurrent budget surpluses, there

is usually hardly anything left after taking care of recurrent expenditures which incidentally are growing daily for reasons not totally unconnected with the new system of local government being operated in the country.

**Table 21: Summary of Local Governments' Finances (N' million)**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Current revenue	151,8773	171,5231	171,5231	370,170.9	468,295.2	597,2191	674,255.7	832,300.0	1,387,8713	1,069,365.3	1,359,161.3
Federation account	118,589.4	128,500.5	128,896.7	291,406.9	375,656.3	493,00.3	550,796.3	568,300.0	722,258.6	529,315.0	1,082,302.9
State allocation	1,923.1	1,598.6	1,672.3	2,119.8	3,625.7	3,243.9	3,434.8	3,00.0	3,3174	19,735.7	12,673.9
Value added tax	13,9087	20,120.7	18,7272	39,648.4	45,985.2	55,793.6	75,920.0	105,100.0	135,921.3	157,378.6	189,119.8
Internal revenue	7,152.9	6,020.4	10,420.8	20,175.5	22,407.8	24,042.5	23,225.1	21,300.0	22,731.4	26,064.2	26,150.0
Grants & others 2/	10,303.2	15,300.9	12,434.1	16,820.3	20,620.2	21,138.8	20,879.5	134,600.0	503,642.6	336,871.7	48,914.6
Recurrent expenditure	93,899.9	122,7127	124,701.6	211,633.0	295,654.7	374,514.6	398,1812	683,600.0	1,140,100.0	704,610.0	823,693.3
Current surplus (+)/Deflect (-)	57,9774	48,810.4	47,449.5	158,537.9	172,6405	222,7045	276,0745	148,700.0	247,771.3	364,755.2	535,468.0
Capital expenditure	59,964.9	48,,661.8	45,118.6	150,080.2	165,395.9	213,463.2	267,656.7	143,800.0	247,7713	364,7552	532,958.9
Total expenditure	153,864.8	171,374.5	169,8202	361,713.2	461,050.6	587,977.8	665,838.0	827,400.0	1,387,900.0	1,067,613.7	1,356,652.2
Overall surplus (+)/Deficit(-)	-1987.5	148.6	2,330.9	8,457.7	7,244.6	9,2413	8,417.8	4,900.0	-28.8	1,751.6	2,509.1
Financing	1,987.5	-148.6	-2,330.9	-8,457.7	-7,244.6	-9,241.3	-8,417.8	-4,900.0	28.8	-1,751.6	-2,509.1
Loans	3,734.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,800.0	0.0	6,076.2	3,242.2
Opening cash balance	3,356.0	3,756.3	4,928.1	6,805.4	8,714.4	51,7072	-20,560.1	37,300.0	0.0	38,453.4	30,420.0
Other funds 3/	-5103.1	-3,904.9	-7,259.0	-15,263.1	-15,959.0	-60,948.5	12,142.3	-45,000.0	28.8	-46,281.2	-36,171.3

Source: NBS,2010; CBN Bulletin,2010

Finally, “the financial crisis or stress being suffered by local governments in Nigeria is further worsened by the erosion of their financial autonomy due to frequent, interference by state governments on their finances” (Ezeani, 2009:21). This situation is caused by some constitutional provisions. For instance, section 162 (5-8) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides as follows:

- The amount standing to the credit of local government councils in the Federation Account shall also be allocated to the states for the benefit of their local government councils on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly.
- Each state shall maintain a special account to be called “State Joint Local Government Account” to which shall be paid all allocation to the local government councils in the state from the federation account and from the government of the state.
- Each state shall pay to local government councils in its area of jurisdiction such proportion of its revenue on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly.
- The amount standing to the credit of local government councils of a state shall be distributed among the local government councils of the state on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the House of Assembly of the state.

The above constitutional provisions are clear indications of the subordination of local governments to the states. The result has been unbridled interference of the state in local government affairs particularly, the confiscation of allocations to local governments by some state governments; funds meant for local government councils have been diverted

to other projects by state governments. Meanwhile, the constitutional provision for ‘State Joint Local Government Account (JAAC) negates both the spirit and letter of direct funding of local government from the Federation Account. Commenting on state government’s interference on the finances of local governments in Nigeria. Onah (2004:15) states:

Regrettably, state governments do not stop at not remitting the 10 percent statutory allocation; they also tamper with the 20 percent federal allocation made to local government via the state Joint Local Government Account.

The resultant effect of the state government’s insurgence on the finances of the local government is that despite enhanced statutory allocation to local governments, most of them are left with little money to execute capital projects that in fact would contribute to poverty alleviation in the rural communities, thereby achieving MDG1.

### **Personnel problem**

Most local governments in Nigeria, particularly, the rural ones, suffer from paucity or dearth of competent manpower particularly, professionals, necessary for successful execution of rural development projects. Yet, the fact remains that the ability of any organization to achieve its goals depends largely on the caliber of its human resources (Ezeani, 2002:1). This point was succinctly captured by Likert (1974:9) thus:

all the activities of any enterprise are initiated and determined by the persons who make up that institution. Plants, offices, computers, automated equipments, and all else that a modern firm uses are unproductive except for human effort and direction.

Similarly, Harbison (1974:52) opines, “human resources and not any other constitutes the ultimate bases for the wealth of nations”. The poor financial state of many local governments in Nigeria particularly, the rural ones, makes it difficult for them to recruit and retain high caliber professionals. Service in the local government system is unattractive to high caliber manpower due to unattractive conditions of service and in some cases non-payment of salaries.

The dearth of competent manpower in many local governments in the country is worsened by politicization of recruitment into the service (see Orewa and Adewumi, 1983; Nkala, 1985; Onah, 1995 and Ezeani, 2005), with the reluctant recruitment of incompetent staff and disregard for organization’s manpower needs.

### **Inadequate constitutional provisions**

The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria does not adequately guarantee the autonomy of local government. Section 7(1) of the Constitution provides that: “The system of local government by a democratically elected local government council is under this Constitution guaranteed; and accordingly, the government of every state shall, subject to section 8 of this Constitution, ensure their existence under a law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance and functions of such councils”. However, the Constitution contains no explicit provisions guaranteeing the tenure of local government councils as it provided for the President, state governors and the legislatures (both federal and state) (Ezeani, 2003;2006). As a result of this singular omission, the various state legislatures now determine the tenure of its elected councils and the result is the lack of uniformity of tenure across the country of elected local government officials. While a few states graciously grant local governments a 3-year tenure, the majority

operate a 2-year tenure, some 2 ½ year, others even less than 2 years. The tenure of 2 years or less is hardly enough time for a council to settle down, plan, execute and monitor programs and projects that can have meaningful impact on the lives of the people in their locality.

### **Lack of autonomy- Interference by state governments**

We had earlier in this lecture discussed the problem of lack of financial autonomy by local governments in Nigeria and the negative impact this has on their ability to provide services to the local people. More worrisome is the unconstitutional and unceremonious termination of the tenure of elected councils by the Governors and legislatures before the expiration of the mandate given by the people during elections and the subsequent replacement of elected councils with Caretaker Committees composed of unelected and selected individuals and political associates. The Committee's lifespan or tenure is at the whims and caprices of the Governor; usually it depends on the time the Governor thinks is most convenient for him politically to conduct local council elections. A good example is Anambra state where election into the local government councils was last conducted in 1999. Since 2002, the affairs of the local governments in the state have been managed by the Governor through Caretaker Committee. The practice of using Caretaker Committee to run the affair of local government councils has now become the accepted norm instead of an aberration to democratic practice. As at June 2011, over 2/3 of the 774 local government councils in Nigeria are being run by non elected Caretaker Committees, appointed by state governors. The action of the state Governors amount to a complete contempt and disregard to the letters and intent of the 1999 constitution, and the resultant effect has been avoidable and palpable tension which significantly constitutes a

veritable treat to the survival and operations of the local governments and indeed their ability to implement their constitutionally assigned functions.

### **Lack of explicit national policies for local development and MDGS localization**

Although the benefits of decentralization and in particular, the need for localized efforts towards the MDGs are subjects of public discourse across developing countries such as Nigeria, in many cases governments are yet to develop an explicit policy focus to target places or ‘types of areas’ (rural, urban, remote, mountain coastal, etc) to address these challenges (Ezeani, 1995;1997). For instance, “MDG acceleration strategies are often not translated into localized, integrated actions that envisage a clear role for local governments” (Global Forum on Local Development, 2010:15).

### **The problem of corruption**

Corruption remains a major problem which has constrained local governments in Nigeria from contributing meaningfully to the improvement of the standard of living of the local people. This problem exists in almost every local government in Nigeria (Lawal and Oladunjoye, 2010). It is rife in the areas of revenue declaration by collectors, to award of contracts, and embezzlement of local government funds by chairmen, counselors and other officials of local governments (Ezeani, 2005). Kolawole (cited in Lawal, et.al. 2010:232) laments this situation when he opines that the lack of funds was no more a constraint on local government performance, but a mismanagement and misappropriation of the funds accruable to it.

In an audit report published by the Newswatch Magazine of December 20, 1993 captioned ‘Fortress of corruption: Most local governments were indicted of fraud and corruption’. The following revelations were made:

- i. That all the Chairmen of the twenty one local governments in a particular state were pronounced guilty of financial irresponsibility.
- ii. That the local government councils had become fortresses of financial malpractices
- iii. That these financial malpractices include inability to produce payment vouchers for monies paid out, non-availability of revenue receipts, loss of public funds, irregularity in stores accounts, irregular payment and inflation of contracts, non-retirement of imprest advances as well as non-refund of personal advances collected by some local governments on behalf of other agencies. To be precise, the following amount could not be accounted for, seven million naira for payment vouchers, one million naira was paid out and the contractors never touched the work.

In fact, the Auditors report revealed that a total sum of nine million naira was outstanding as personal advances against local government officials. It was also found that five million naira was deducted under various headings such as PAYE, trade unions, but never paid to the respective agencies.

The result of another investigation on local governments in Nigeria carried out by *Newswatch Magazine* in 2001 revealed that no fewer than thirty-one local government chairmen from different parts of the country were either under investigation, impeached or on suspension due to allegations of corruption. The state Governors are not exempted from the looting and corruption taking place in the local governments system. Most of the Governors as we stated earlier have exploited the constitutional provision for the establishment of Joint State and Local Government Account (JSLGA) to control local

government funds and use it as they like. It is hardly surprising that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) alleged that 31 out of 36 state Governors have tampered with local government council funds (This Day, 2006; Ukiwo, 2010). Human Rights Watch (2007) had detailed the various strategies that state government officials and local politicians have used to divert funds meant for provision of basic social services for the people at the grassroots levels. Corruption in the form of fraud and embezzlement of funds, has contributed immensely to the inability of local governments in Nigeria to achieve development at grassroots levels.

## **TOWARDS MAKING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS MORE EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTORS TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND MDGs**

### **1. Building/Strengthening Capacity of Local Government**

As I earlier stated in this lecture, one of the key factors militating against the effectiveness of local government in developing countries generally and Nigeria in particular is the inadequate or inappropriate mix of individuals, organizational and institutional capacities at the local level. Thus, while financial resources are vital to success, they are not sufficient to promote sustainable human development. The right enabling environment, well-functioning organization, and a high-performing human resource base are the foundations needed to plan and implement local development strategies, and in particular, the MDGs (SNV and UNDP, 2009: 12, and UNDP. 2008).

There is therefore an urgent need to strengthen the capacity of local governments in Nigeria in order to improve their performance level. Capacity development has been defined as “the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development

objectives over time...” (SNV and UNDP, 2009: 13). In other words, the aim of capacity – building is to improve the performance of local governments by addressing human resource, material or logistical, institutional and other constraints. Different measures can be utilized to address different types of constraints, and any comprehensive capacity-building strategy should be a composite of these (<http://cencd.org/document/delivering-th-goods-building-local-government-capacity-acheivement-millenium-development-gaols>). Some crucial capacities necessary for improving the effectiveness of local government to achieve MDGs include:

- Capacity to engage stakeholders
- Capacity to collect and analyze data, to plan and budget
- Capacity to mobilize resources and forge partnerships
- Capacity to implement development plans and to monitor and evaluate progress
- Capacity to adapt and self-review
- Leadership capacities

Capacity building at the local government is therefore a desideratum for achieving the MDGS.

### **Creation of Innovative partnership between Local Government and Non-State Actors**

Realizing local development potential is not just a matter for local governments to act. On the contrary, all sectors of society have a role to play in promoting local development and the achievement of MDGs (Global Forum on Local Development, 2010: 18).

The ability of local governments to collaborate with non-state actors is a key factor in their effectiveness at structuring programmes that can significantly improve the

lives of the local people. “Partnership provides for a new opportunity for doing development better – by recognizing the qualities and competencies of each and finding new ways of harnessing these for the common good” (SNV and UNDP, 2009:11).

Non-state actors are those actors outside the realm of state institutions and the government such as private sector and CSOs, such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), cooperatives, trade unions, services organizations, community – based organizations, youth and women organizations and social movements (UNDP, 2009). Non-state actors, particularly, the CSOs, have a very important role to play in efforts to achieve the MDGs. For instance, they can emphasize specific issues and encourage government accountability (UNDP, 2008). Also by virtue of their local knowledge and experience on the ground, the CSOs can provide solutions and analyses that respond to local situations (UN-NGLS Roundup, 2003). The private sector and financial institutions have a critical role to play to ensure that local economic development opportunities are seized. Academic institutions can play an important role in helping to fill knowledge and technical gaps.

### **Tackling the Financial Problem**

In order to solve the financial crisis facing local governments in Nigeria, there is an urgent need for a Constitutional Amendment to include direct funding of local governments in the country. The provision for Joint State and Local Government Account should be sponged from the Constitution due to its abuse by the state governors. In addition, local governments in Nigeria should improve their financial standing through diversification of their internal sources of revenue. As a way of encouraging local governments to increase their internal revenue generation, the state and federal

governments should institute financial awards to be given to local governments that excelled in internal revenue generation. The statutory allocation to local governments should be increased to enable them play more active role towards achieving the MDGs. The state Governors should henceforth remit the Constitutional 10% of their internally generated revenue to the local councils as a condition for accessing the fund from the federal government. Finally, “local governments should re-order their priorities and block all avenues of wastage and leakages” (Adeyemo, 2005: 86).

### **Eradication of Corruption**

The problem of corruption in local governments should be tackled by the appropriate institutions including the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Any cases of corruption should be reported immediately to these agencies for appropriate action. Regrettably, in Nigeria, both the ICPC and EFCC beam their search lights mainly on federal and state officials, ignoring the local government officials who are equally deeply involved in corrupt practices. This situation should change. Henceforth, the anti-corruption agencies should pay serious attention to financial transactions in the local governments. Again, all the internal mechanisms of financial accountability in the local government such as audit alarm, internal and external auditing, et cetera, must be completely enforced.

### **Integration of MDGs into Local Government Plans**

Most local governments in Nigeria have not yet integrated the MDGs into their local development plans. The present approach of ad hoc handling of the MDGs without a strategic plan will not be expected to provide the desired results of poverty reduction and

sustainable development. Local governments need to set local MDG targets and adopt homegrown strategies for achieving them. This is one of the ways they can make any meaningful progress towards the achievement of MDGs.

### **Strengthening the autonomy of local government**

One way of making local governments in Nigeria effective instrument for achieving the MDGs is through Constitutional amendment that will address the issue of tenure and autonomy of local governments.

A situation as we have now, where elected government officials have no Constitutional protection for their tenure, but left to the vagaries or whims and caprices of state Governors and where funds meant for councils are hijacked by the states does not augur well for the survival of a vibrant local government system in Nigeria. The controversy surrounding the position of local government in the 1999 Constitution should, without further delay, be resolved through constitutional amendment, otherwise, the autonomy and developmental efforts at the grassroots will be in jeopardy (Adeyemo, 2005). Any future amendment of the Constitution should also include the takeover of elections into the local council by the National electoral body to stop the electoral fraud and manipulation of the State Electoral Commission by the Governors.

Apart from constitutional amendment, local governments should work hard to enhance their autonomy themselves through more internal revenue generation (<http://saharareporters.com/articles/local-governments-and-nigeriafiscal-policy>)

### **Development of local government monitoring tools for MDGs**

The real implementation and delivery of basic services compliant to the MDGs as I stated earlier occur at the local level. It is therefore necessary to develop local

government monitoring tools for MDGs. The main existing tools and instruments used in monitoring local government compliance to MDG are as follows (see Panadero, 2004).

*1. Minimum Basic Needs- Community Based Information System (MBN-BIS)*

This is a strategy of prioritizing primary requirements for survival, security and enabling needs of the family and community. In other words, it is a strategy of using basic needs as basis for situation analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Panadero, 2004). Some of the basic information which can be generated under the MBN approach are as follows:

**Survival Information**

- ❖ Food and nutrition
- ❖ Health
- ❖ Water and sanitation
- ❖ Clothing

**Security Information**

- ❖ Shelter
- ❖ Peace and order/public safety
- ❖ Income and employment

**Enabling Information**

- ❖ Basic education and literacy
- ❖ People's participation
- ❖ Family care/psychosocial needs

*2. Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP):*

IRAP is a poverty reduction monitoring tool which focuses primarily on access of rural households to basic goods, services and facilities. It is a local level planning tool

which aims to contribute to the socio-economic development and poverty reduction efforts of the country through effective development planning capacity at the local levels (Panadero, 2004). IRAP leads to the generation of available information relating to:

#### **Subsistence needs**

- ❖ Potable water
- ❖ Fuelwood collection
- ❖ Domestic food production

#### **Economic needs**

- ❖ Roads and transport systems
- ❖ Markets
- ❖ Agricultural inputs
- ❖ Post harvest facilities
- ❖ Electricity

#### **Social needs**

- ❖ Health services and facilities
- ❖ Education services and facilities

#### **3. *Local Government Performance Measurement System (LGPMS):***

LGPMS is an assessment tool which has the ability to identify service improvement areas, as well as to determine the extent of improvement achieved (Panadero, 2004). LGPMS also provides indicators and programmatic local services standards intended to measure the efficiency, effectiveness, adequacy and equity of services provided by local government units to allow them to take corrective actions towards better service delivery performance (Panadero, 2004). The LGPMS has local measurement system on the following priority areas:

1. **Governance:** Financial accountability, transparency, citizen satisfaction, equity and local legislation.
2. **Administration:** Development planning, revenue generation, revenue allocation and utilization, human resource management and development and customer service.
3. **Social Services:** Health and nutrition , education, housing and basic utilities and peace, security and disaster preparedness.
4. **Economic Development:** Agriculture, and fisheries development and business, enterprises and industrial promotion.
5. **Environmental Management:** Natural resources and management and waste management and pollution control.

## CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman sir, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, local government, the world over, is a veritable instrument for achieving local development and the MDGs. This is because, as the tier of government closest to the grassroots, local government has an inherent potentials to provide the most effective organizational framework for responding to a myriad of local demands and aspirations using, as much as is statutorily permissible, local initiatives and resources.

In Nigeria, a system of local government by democratically elected representatives of the people is enshrined in the constitution. One of the key objectives of local government as clearly stated in the 1976 *Guidelines for Local Government Reform in Nigeria* is “to make appropriate services and development activities responsive to local wishes and initiatives by developing or delegating them to local representative bodies.”

The various reforms instituted in the Nigerian local government system in the past were all aimed at enhancing its ability to achieve its mandate. Unfortunately, despite an enhanced constitutional status and funding, local governments are yet to play a commensurate role in the country's development process. This is as a result of the following factors: financial stress, personnel problem, corruption, lack of autonomy, et cetera.

As the international community shifts some of the responsibilities for achieving the MDGs from the central or federal government to local government and as 2015 is fast approaching, there is an increasing call to reposition local government to enable it contribute meaningfully towards achieving the MDGs. Local governments, being the frontline service providers of most basic services to the people, can contribute substantially to the achievement of the country's commitment on MDGs. Some of the recommendations made in this lecture towards empowering local governments to achieve the MDGs include: integration of MDGs into local development plans, development of an effective local monitoring system for local government units; enhancing the autonomy of local governments through constitutional reforms, addressing the financial crisis in the local governments, building local government capacity, creation of innovative partnership between local governments and Non-state actors, et cetera.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:**

Mr. Chairman, permit me to end this lecture with a note of appreciation and some acknowledgements. There are a number of people who in one way or another influenced positively my journey through life and who contributed immensely to my professional growth. I thank in a very special way my parents, late Sir Damian Ezeani (KSM) and

Lady Louisa Ezeani for their moral upbringing and financial support which saw me through my undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. My parents enrolled me as an Altar Boy at the young age of ten years. Due to a dearth of priests in those days, many towns were merged under one parish. My town belonged to the old Adazi parish. I remember very vividly that I had to trek to the various towns within the parish to serve mass. This singular experience has shaped positively my moral values and actions in life. My father believed so much in me and always advised me to focus squarely on my academic pursuit for according to him education holds the key to Nigeria's development. I thank God I took his advice. I remember my unassuming uncle Chief Francis Ezeani, for his financial support to me while in school. I appreciate my siblings- Philip Uche Ezeani, Cosmas Ezeani, Stella Okonkwo (nee Ezeani), Anastasia Analike (nee Ezeani) and Rose Ofomogbo (nee Ezeani) for their love and support.

I remain very grateful to my former lecturers, Professor M.S.O. Olisa, late Professors Mirian Ikejiani-Clark, Aforka Nweke and Lambert Ejiofor for shaping my early career by challenging and encouraging me.

I am also grateful to other lecturers in the Department of Political Science, Professor Obasi Igwe, Prof. Okey Ibeanu, Prof. Jonah Onuoha, Dr. Aloysius- Michaels Okolie, Dr. Ken Ifesinachi, Dr. Ifeanyi Abada, Dr. Chuks Umezurike, Mr. Christian Ezeibe, Dr. Ede, Mr. Samuel Asogwa, Dr. Peter Mbah, Mr. P.C. Chukwu, Dr C.C. Ike, Mr. Raymond Adibe and Mr. Albert Okorie for their support.

I am particularly indebted to Professor Jonah Onuoha, Dr Aloysius -Michaels Okolie and Mr. Christian Ezeibe for being always there for me and I remain grateful to

Professor F.C. Okoli, for finding time to go through the manuscript. I appreciate his insightful comments.

May I also appreciate all the lecturers in the Faculty of the Social Sciences who contributed in various ways towards making my job as Dean of the Faculty of the Social Sciences a lot easier. They are too many to mention here but I must recognize my Associate Dean, Professor Rose Onah, Professors F.C. Okoli, R. N. Anyadike, C. C. Agu, Tagbo Ugwu, Malachy Okwueze, Fab Onah, Chikelue Ofuebe, J.C. Okeibunor, Emma Igbo, Chika Oguonu, Vero Okeke, Nkoli Ezuma, P.N. Ibeagha, Rev. (Fr.) C.M. Ifeagwazi, Drs. Rev. (Fr.) Njoku, Rev. E. Ituma, P. O. Phil-Eze, P.C.Mefo, C.U. Agalamanyi, P.J. Eze, B.A.Amujiri, , C.K.C. Ani, A. Onu, Tony Onyishi, Okey Ikeanyibe, Mabel Obi, Sylvia Agu, Sam Ugwu, Mr. S.I. Ejiofor, Mrs. Christy Obikeguna, Ms. Perpetua Lum Tanyi, and Mr.T.A. Mozie.

I will not fail to appreciate other great minds outside the University of Nigeria who contributed in no small way to my academic development by providing me with opportunities for international exposure. In this regard, I am grateful to Professor Murphy who was my host at Princeton University, New Jersey, United States of America in 1996; Professor Adeniyi Oshuntogun and the Management of LEADS International New York whose programmes on Leadership enabled me to travel to South Africa, Costa Rica and the United States for various leadership training.

My deepest appreciation and gratitude go to my dear wife Dr. (Mrs.) Chinwe Nwogo Ezeani, a Deputy University librarian in Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, for being always there for me. I thank her immensely for assisting in editing the manuscript. To my children Ugochukwu, Chinonso, Chukwuemeka and my darling daughter

Kamsiyochukwu, I thank you for being wonderful children. You are really special gifts from God.

May I acknowledge and thank immensely my parents –in –law, Mr Anude Okafor and Mrs. Eunice Okafor for accepting me to be their in-law.

I thank in a special way the members of Elite Club International, Nsukka, Nigeria for their cooperation and mutual assistance.

I am also very grateful to the President, Elders and distinguished members of the Senior Staff Club, University of Nigeria, Nsukka for providing an enabling environment for me to relax outside my home.

I appreciate immensely the members of the Senate Ceremonial Committee headed by my unassuming friend Professor Obi Njoku. Thanks for making this lecture a big success.

Finally, I thank all those present at this inaugural lecture for offering your invaluable audience. May God bless you all.

## REFERENCES

- Abani, C. , Igbuzor, O. and Moru, J. (2005) “ Attaining the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria. Indicative Progress and a call for Action” in Moru J. (ed.) *Another Nigeria is Possible*, Proceedings of the First Nigeria Social Forum , Abuja.
- Aborisade, O. (1986) ‘Local Government Administration in Nigeria between 1976 to 1986’ in Aborisade, O (ed.) *Reading Nigerian Local Government*. Ife: University of Ife Press.
- Abubakar, H.I. (1993) “ Local Government in Development” Commissioned Module for UNDP/UNPFA National Training Programme on Population and Development.
- Adedeji, A. (1972)“Financing Local Government in Nigeria: An Overview “ in Adedeji A and Rowland L (eds.) *Local Government Finance in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects*. Ile Ife: University of Ife Press.
- Adeyemo, D.O (2005) “Local Government Autonomy in Nigeria: A Historical perspective” *Journal of Social Sciences*, 10 (2).
- Asika, U. (1971) ’’The Structure of the Igbo Community’’ *The Renaissance*, March, 14.
- Audinet, J.P. and Haralambous, S. (2005) *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Rural Investment and Enabling Policy*. Rome: IFAD
- Awotokun, K. (2005) “Local Government Administration Under 1999 Constitution in Nigeria”, *Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(2).
- Ekpo, A.H. and Ndebbio, J.E.U (1998) “Local Government Fiscal Operations in Nigeria”, Nairobi AERC Research paper 73.
- Ekumankama, D.U. (1996) *The Law and Development of Local Government in Nigeria*. Ankpa: Ika Christian Press Ltd.
- Ezeani E. O. (2005) “Corruption in Nigeria: Implication for National Development” *Africa Renaissance*, Vol. 2. No. 2. pp. 22-33.
- Ezeani, E. O. (1995) “Tax Census and Tax Assessment in Local Government System in Nigeria”. In E. C. Emezi and F.C. Okoli (eds.) *Internal Revenue Generation: Strategies, Problems and Prospects*, Awka: First Data Search Ltd, pp. 38-41.

Ezeani, E. O. (1995). "National Planning and Rural Development in Nigeria". In Ebo, E. (eds.) *Rural Development in Nigeria: Concepts, Processes and Prospects*, Enugu; Auto Century Publishing Company, pp. 55-71.

Ezeani, E. O. (1997) "Sustainable Development: A Conceptual Analysis" *Journal of Liberal Studies* Vol. 6. Nos. 1&2. 125-135.

Ezeani, E.O (2002) " Basic Elements for Effective Human Resources Management in the Local Government System in Nigeria" in E.O Ezeani and B.C Nwankwo (eds.) *Human Resources Management in the Local Government System in Nigeria*. Nsukka: Great AP Express Publishers

Ezeani, E.O (2002) " Strategies for Identification of Training Needs in the Local Government in Nigeria", in E.O Ezeani and B.C Nwankwo (eds.) *Human Resources Management in the Local Government System in Nigeria*. Nsukka: Great AP Express Publishers

Ezeani, E.O (2003) "Local Government System in Nigeria As An Instrument for Rural Development: Myth versus Reality", *Nigerian Journal of Politics and Administration*, Vol. 1. No. 3.

Ezeani, E.O. (2003) (ed.) *Public Accountability in Nigeria: Issues and Perspectives*. Enugu: Academic Publishing Company.

Ezeani, E.O. (2005) "Local Government Participation in the National Development Plan in Nigeria", *International Journal of African Studies*, Vol 4, Winter

Ezeani, E.O. (2005) *Local Government Administration*. Enugu: Zik-Chuks Nigeria.

Ezeani, E.O. (2006) *Fundamentals of Public Administration*. Enugu: Snaap Press Publishers Nigeria Ltd.

Ezeani, E.O. (2009) "Gender and Democracy: A Survey of Women and Men Representation in Nigeria's National Assembly, 1999-2009", *University of Nigeria Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 3, No. 1&2.

Ezeani, E.O. (2009) "Strategies for Sustainable Wealth Creation by Local Governments in Nigeria", *Nigerian Journal of Politics and Administration*, Vol. 2.No 1

Ezeani, E.O. and B.C. Nwankwo (2002) *Human Resources Management in the Local Government System in Nigeria*, Nsukka: Great AP Express Publishers.

FRN (2010) *Countdown Strategy 2010 to 2015: Achieving the MDGs*. Abuja: The Presidency.

FRN (2010a) *Countdown Strategy 2010 to 2015: Achieving the MDGs*. Abuja: The Presidency.

FRN (2010b) *Nigeria Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*. Abuja: The Presidency.

Gailey, H.A. (1971) *The Road to Aba*. London: University of London Press

Global Forum for Development (2010) *Localizing the MDGs, Local Development and MDGs: What Role for Local Government?* Conference Framing Paper, Kampala, Uganda.

Igbuzor, O. (2006) "Review of Nigeria Millennium Development Goals - 2005 Report", Paper presented at the MDG/GCAP Nigeria. Planning Meeting held in Abuja on 9<sup>th</sup> March.

Imhanlahimi, J.E. and M.O. Ikeanyi (2009) "Local Government Autonomy and Development of Localities in Nigeria: Issues, problems and suggestions", *Global Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol.8. No. 2.

Kirk-Green, A.H.M. (1965) *The Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria*. London: Oxford University Press

Laski, H.J. (1949) *A Grammar of Politics*, London: Allen and Unwin

Lawal, T and A. Oladunjoye (2010) "Local Government, Corruption and Democracy in Nigeria", *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Vol. 12, No.5.

Mackenzie, W.J.M. (1961) *Theories of Local Government*, London: Greater London Council, No 2, L.S.E.

Maddick, H. (1963) *Democracy, Decentralization and Development*. London: Asia Publishing House.

Mawhood P. (1983) "Decentralization : The Concept and the Practice", in Mawhood, P. (ed.) *Local Government in the Third World: The Experience of Tropical Africa*. London: John Wiley and Son .

Mawhood P. (1983a) *Local Government in the Third World: The Experience of Tropical Africa*. London: John Wiley and Son .

National Bureau of Statistics (2010a) *2010 and Q1-Q3 2011 Gross Domestic Product for Nigeria*. Abuja: The Presidency

National Bureau of Statistics (2010b) *The Review of the Nigerian Economy 2010*. Abuja: The Presidency.

National Bureau of Statistics (2010c) *Nigeria Poverty Profile 2010*. Abuja: The Presidency.

National Bureau of Statistics (2011a) *2011 Annual Socio-Economic Report*. Abuja: The Presidency.

National Bureau of Statistics (2011b) *Economic Outlook 2011 GDP Forecast for Nigeria*. Abuja: The Presidency

National Population Commission (2004) Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2003. Abuja: NPC

National Population Commission (2009) Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2008. Abuja: NPC

Obasanjo, O (2003) An Address presented at the Inauguration of the Technical Committee on the Review of the Structure of Local Government Council in Abuja, June 25.

Ogunna, A.E.C. (1996) *A Handbook on Local Government in Nigeria*. Owerri: Versatile Publications

Okoli, F.C. (1986) 'Local Government and Community Development', Paper Presented at the National Conference on the New Local Government. Nsukka: University of Nigeria.

Ola, R.F. (1984) *Local Administration in Nigeria*. London: Kegan Paul.

Oladosu, S. A. (1986) "The Historical Development of Local Government in Nigeria" in Aborisade, O. (ed) *Readings in Nigerian Local Government*, Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press.

Olatunjmji, O.C, O.A Taiwo and J.O Adenoye (2009) "A Rearview of Revenue Generation in Nigeria Local Government: A case study of Ekiti state" *International Business management year*.

Olisa, M.S.O et al (1990) *Government for Senior Secondary Schools*. Onitsha: Africana Fep publishers.

Olowu, D. (1988) *African Local Governments As Instruments for Economic and Social development*, The Hague: International Union of Local Authorities

Onah F.O. (1995) *The Environment of Local Government Administration in Nigeria: Current Problems and Future Challenges*, Lagos: Mangrove Publishers.

Ottenberg, S. (1967) "Law in Southern Nigeria" *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 2.

Oyediran, O. (1985) 'Administration for Local Government. Where From?' Paper Delivered at the National Conference on Government at the Grassroots Levels in Nigeria, Zaria.

- Ozor, E (2003) *Third-tier Government in Nigeria: Evolution, Development, Future*. Ibadan: University Press
- Panadero, A.A. (2004) "Local Government Monitoring Tools for MDGs". 9<sup>th</sup> National Convention on Statistics, EDSA Shanghai-La Hotel.
- Satterthwaite, D. ed. (2004) "The Millennium Development Goals and Local Processes Hitting the Target or Missing the Point?" IIED
- Sharpe, L.P. (1970) 'Theories and Values of Local Government' *Political Studies*, vol. 18
- Smock A. (1972) *Political Aspects of Rural Transformation: A Case Study of Eastern Nigeria*. New York: Praeger Publishers Inc.
- SNV and UNDP (2009) "Going Local to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals: Stories from Eight Countries".
- Stocker, G. (1990) *The Politics of Local government*, London: Macmillan
- Tocqueville, A. (1969) *Democracy in Africa*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Ukiwo, U(2010) "Creation of Local Government Areas And Ethnic conflicts in Nigeria: The case of Warri, Delta State" The Hague: Koninklijke De Swart.
- UNDP (2008) "Achieving the MDGS- The call for Civil Engagement", Speech Delivered by UNDP Associate Administrator Ad melkert.
- UNDP (2009) *Voice and Accountability for Human Development: A UNDP Global strategy to strengthen civic society and civic Engagement*. New York: UNDP.
- United Nations Department of Economic and social Affairs (2010) *The Millennium Development Goals Report*, New York: UNO.
- United Nations Development Program (2010) *Beyond the Midpoint: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*, New York: UN.
- UN-NGLs Roundup (2003) *MDGs: taking Root at the National level?* New York: UN.
- Whalon, H. (1969) "Ideology , Democracy and the Foundations of Local Government" in Feldman, L.D. and Goldrich, M.D. (ed.) *Politics and Government of Urban Canada*. Toronto: Methuen.
- Whitaker, C.S. (1970) *The Politics of Northern Nigeria (1946-1996)*. Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Wraith, R. (1972) *Local Administration in West Africa*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

