

Young Nigerians' Migration in the Era of Sustainable Development Paradigm in Nigeria: Some Challenges

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Abstract

The contemporary international system is witnessing increasing call for nationalism as against internationalism with great consequences for the human family. One of the fallout of the call is seen in the problems of migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees and internally displaced persons all over the world. Against these backdrops, this paper examines the implication migration of young Nigerians poses for the development of Nigeria in the light of sustainable development paradigm as part of the new roadmap for development model of the UN. Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals are the concrete manifestation of the UN development model. The SDGs are designed to protect the planet, terminate poverty and safeguard the people's well-being. Hence, sustainable development paradigm has become the major template a wide range of policy makers, governance institutions and academics adopt as appropriate framework for mirroring developmental efforts. This is because most advocates and proponents of the sustainable development paradigm agree that the challenges threatening humanity in today's world such as ozone layer depletion, water scarcity, vegetation loss, hunger, insecurity, climate change, poverty and deprivation can be tackled by strict adherence to the principles and tenets of sustainable development since the sustainable development goals are pillared on achieving a balance in terms of economic, social and environmental sustainability. Today the objectives of the development goals are yet to be realised. Therefore, many young Nigerians can no longer be patient. They believe leaving Nigeria for greener pasture is where solution lies for them and yet it is the young dynamic Nigerians that are to build the country of today and tomorrow.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Paradigm, Migration, Development, International System, Modernisation Process.

1. Introduction

In the contemporary international system, states have floundered in human rights protection and foreign policies, especially in the area of migration. There is no doubt that mass media have made globalisation to bring with it increasing states connection and movements of not only capital and goods but also people. Besides, there is the increasing wars and violence as well as poverty that have made humans not only to forcefully leave their homelands but to go in search for better living conditions. Africa is not left out in the current wave of migration.

As a developing continent and as a continent that has witnessed so many wars with devastating consequences, citizens of different countries in Africa have often searched for ways to escape conflicts and poverty in order to improve their living conditions. It is already an established fact that the greater number of people emigrating from Nigeria to search for greener pastures are the young in their quest for improved lives. Nigeria, for instance has witnessed greater number of its dynamic youth citizens leaving the country since the year 2000 for diverse purposes, either for education, employment, reunion with families, or as asylum-seekers.

According to International Organisation for Migration, that increasingly more Nigerians find their way to industrial regions of the North is a function of employment-driven nature of Nigerian emigration. However, migration for citizens of the developing countries has been a herculean task due to the hard immigration policies of the industrialised world. The contemporary international system is witnessing increasing call for nationalism against internationalism with great consequences for the human family. For example, one of the falls out of the self-interested policies of states is seen in the problems of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees all over the world. Against these backdrops, this paper seeks to examine the implication migration of young Nigerians poses for the development of Nigeria in the light of sustainable development paradigm as part of the new roadmap for development model. The United Nations Development Goals are designed to protect the planet, terminate poverty and safeguard the people's well-being. Thus, *Sustainable development paradigm* has become the major template a wide range of policy makers, governance institutions and academics adopt as appropriate framework for mirroring developmental efforts. This is because most advocates and proponents of the sustainable

development paradigm agree that the challenges threatening humanity in today's world such as ozone layer depletion, water scarcity, vegetation loss, hunger, insecurity, climate change, poverty and deprivation can be tackled by strict adherence to the principles and tenets of sustainable development since the sustainable development goals are pillared on achieving a balance in terms of economic, social and environmental sustainability. For that to happen, proper healthcare systems, human rights promotion, gender equality, rule of law, security, improved living standards, having a decent work environment etc. must be made available. The realization of this objective/utopia is yet to be realised. Therefore, many young Nigerians can no longer be patient; they leave Nigeria for greener pasture. Yet it is the young dynamic Nigerians that are to build the country of today and tomorrow.

The outline of this work is captured under the following introduction, conceptual clarification of migration and sustainable development paradigm, challenges of sustainable development paradigm, some contributive factors influencing Nigerian youth migration, symbiotic relationship between the young Nigerians' migration and sustainable development paradigm in the context of the UN Roadmap of development for all and concluding remark.

2. Conceptual Clarification of Migration and Sustainable Development Paradigm

What is Migration?

The Nigerian National Migration Policy (2015) defines migration as 'the process of temporary or permanent relocation of a person from his or her place of primary abode to another, in search of better living, family reunification, further studies or other reasons'¹. Migration is a phenomenon that is constantly and radically evolving. It continues each day to assume unprecedented meanings and expressions². It is a global phenomenon that

¹ Iwuh, F. 2019 'Nigerian Youth Migration: A Quest for Peace' in Kanu, I, A., (ed), *Nigerian Youths in the Face of Migration, Drug Abuse and Fundamentalism*, Fab Anieh, Nigerian Limited, Jos p 5.

² Manchala, D. "Migration: An Opportunity for Broader and Deeper Ecumenism," in *Theology of Migration in the Abrahamic Religions*, ed. Elaine Padilla and Phan Peter C, 154-171 (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) 154

affects the demographic, social, political, economic, socio-cultural, religious, moral, and spiritual landscapes of the world and human activities³. Understood as human mobility, the human persons are the principal actors. They are technically labelled as migrants, sojourners, pilgrims, aliens and strangers⁴, It involves change of residence from a locale, country or region (emigration) to another (immigration).

As Feyisetan rightly observed:

Humans migrate for different reasons, purposes and by different means. Some travel in comfort and confidence such as those who travel for holidays, conferences, duty calls, service as diplomats, workers at both regional and international levels. Some have to relocate to foreign lands as a result of war or banishment as punishment for an offence. Some have to evacuate their homes because of plagues, natural catastrophes like earth quake as in the case of Haiti, volcanic eruption, flood, famine, epidemics, etc. Some have to seek asylum for political, social and economic reasons. There are many Africans and others from developing countries in this condition of existence. These are human made catastrophes resulting from injustice done by a few who hold the economic and political power⁵.

de Haas sees migration as:

An intrinsic part of broader processes of development and social change ... This is grounded in the tenacious idea that poverty, violence and other forms of human misery are the main cause of migration. Development is thus presented as a 'solution' to perceived migration problems. However, this ignores mounting evidence pointing to the fact development initially tends to increase internal and international migration⁶.

³ Phan, P, C. 'Embracing, Protecting, and Loving the Stranger: A Roman Catholic Theology of Migration,' in *Theology of Migration in the Abrahamic Religions*, ed. Elaine Padilla and Peter C Phan, 77-110 (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) 83:77-110.

⁴ Yong, A 'The Im/migrant Spirit: De/constructing a Pentecostal,' In *Theology of Migration in the Abrahamic Religion*, ed. Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan, 132-153 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) 134:132-153.

⁵ Feyisetan, G (2013). *Exodus and Deportation of Nigerian Youths Who is to Blame*, Kennylink Associates Limited, Lagos, p.3.

⁶ de Haas H. (2010a), Migration and development: A theoretical perspective. *International Migration Review* **44**, 227-264.

Furthermore, migration requires significant social, cultural and economic resources in the form of connections, knowledge, (human capital), and money. Extreme impoverishment, illiteracy, and inadequate infrastructure often deprive of the resources required to migrating⁷

Migration could be voluntary or forced. It is worth noting that migration is frequently done in long distances, such as from one country to another. There is internal as different from international migration. Internal migration is a practice where people would leave a region within their country in order to live in another region. This could be brought about by shifts of population into cities brought about by urbanization and sub-urbanization. Another factor could be the seasonal human migration which is primarily related to tourism and agriculture.

In the context of rural-urban migration, many opportunities and attraction of big cities pull large numbers of people to big cities. Migration there, impact on the life of the migrants. Some of the positive impact may include:

- i. Unemployment is reduced and people get better job opportunities.
- ii. Migration helps in improving the quality of life of people.
- iii. It helps to improve social life of people as they learn about new culture, customs and languages which help to improve brotherhood among people.
- iv. Migration of skilled workers leads to a greater economic growth of the region.
- v. Children get better opportunities for higher education.
- vi. Relatively the population density is reduced and the birth rate decreases.

Migration in the Rural-Urban context has negative impact as well. Some of these include:

- i. The loss of a person from rural areas, impact on the level of output and development of rural areas.
- ii. The influx of workers in urban areas increases competition for the job, houses, school facilities etc.

⁷ de Hass. H. 'Migration and Development', 17.

- iii. Having large population puts too much pressure on natural resources, amenities and services.
- iv. It is difficult for a villager to survive in urban areas because in urban areas there is no natural environment and pure air. They have to pay for each and everything.
- v. Migration increased the slum areas in cities which increase many problems such as unhygienic conditions, crime, pollution etc.
- vi. Sometimes migrants are exploited.

Another category of migration is that of 'undocumented migration' which is described as migration undertaken without identity papers and permissions required by states to allow migrants to move between jurisdictions and settle in new places. It is one of the forms of irregular movement that are at the centre of contemporary concern for many states. These states feel they are losing control of their borders or likely to be overwhelmed by the influx of people moving to settle on their territory. They consider the issue as problematic. The term 'undocumented migration' has emerged in the last 20 years as one alternative to 'illegal migration' and its association

What is Sustainable Development Paradigm?

Sustainable development paradigm may be described as the totality of environmental regimes, earth summits, conventions, conferences, declarations, agendas, principles, institutions, efforts, materials, etc., at the disposal of the international community in addressing the challenges of environmental degradation and climate change. Accordingly, it may be classified into four sections namely: General principles of sustainable development, International Environmental Law Principles, The Legislative and Institutional Framework of Environmental Protection and Remediation and Principles of international collaboration.

i. General Principles of Sustainable Development:

Here four principles can be deciphered.

- a) *Preventive principle.* This requires that an activity which causes or will cause environmental pollution or damage is to be prohibited.
- b) *Precautionary Principle.* In its most progressive formulation, the principle may be utilised to overturn the traditional burden of proof that is presently weighted in

- favour of polluters in the sense that any activity has to be proven to cause pollution before action may be taken to prevent, reduce or control such pollution. The precautionary principle would act to reverse the burden of proof and require any potential polluter to ensure that the activity would not cause pollution before it is allowed to commence.
- c) *The third principle is polluter pays.* This principle provides that the cost of environmental pollution should be borne by those whose activities are responsible for causing pollution.
 - d) *The principle of citizen participation and the right to a healthy environment.*

This is based on the premise that to ensure the effective implementation of environmental laws at all levels, individuals should be able to participate in environmental decision-making.

ii. **International Environmental Law Principles** *Sustainable Development*

This is the first international environmental law principle that states that conservation of natural resources for the benefit of the present and future generations (inter-generational equity) must be sustained while the exploitation of natural resources must be 'sustainable' or 'prudent' (sustainable use). There is 'equitable use' of natural resources which implies that the use by one state must take account of the needs of other states (equitable use, or intra-generational equity). Further elements of sustainable principle include integration of environmental considerations into socio-economic and development plans, programmes and projects (integration of environment and development needs)⁸. All these elements, later in 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa, became the articles of the Conference.

⁸ Sands, P. (1995a), *Principle of International Environmental Law*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Sands, P. (1995b), 'International Law in the Field of Sustainable Development' in Lang, W. (Ed) *Emerging Legal Principles in Sustainable Development and International Law*, Graham & Trotman Publishers

Through Decleries⁹ (2000a) the following international law principles have seen the light of day.

- a) *Principle of Public Environmental Order*
That all members of the society, the administration, groups, organizations, businesses and citizens are called upon to collaborate in sustainable development but under the strategic control and supervision of the state (i.e. Government).

- b) *Principle of Carrying Capacity*
In its narrow scientific meaning, carrying capacity is the number of species or units or species which can be maintained indefinitely by an ecosystem without degradation of that system. Arguably, is our ecosystem not being stressed beyond its carrying capacity as a result of human population, climate change, flamboyant life style of some nations and some people and environmental degradation?

- c) *Principle of Obligatory Restoration of Disturbed Ecosystem*
Sustainable development, understood as the balanced co-evolution of the human-made system and ecosystems, has become obligatory in Law when that balance had already been seriously disturbed to the detriment of the ecosystems. Forests have been burned or cleared, wetlands have been drained, coasts and seas have been polluted. Consequently, in today's world, it is an exercise in futility to strive for balance between human-made systems and ecosystems except correspondingly, abrupt stride is taken to restore the destroyed ecosystems.

⁹ Decleries, M. (2000 a), *The Law of Sustainable Development: General Principles*. A Report produced for the European Commission, Luxembourg: European Communities, See generally, pp. 60-124. Available online www.woodlandleague.org/documents/sustainability/sustlaw.pdf, and also available at <http://europa.eu.int> (both last visited on June 12, 2012).

d) Principle of Biodiversity

The principle of biodiversity recognizes the inherent value of wild flora and fauna species, and provides legal protection, for all the variety of these species and for their habitats. The intrinsic value of species is in particular that they are biogenetic reserves and constitutes an integral part of the ecosystems. In that sense, biodiversity is protected as the pre-eminent principle of the stability and vigour of ecosystems, according to the reasoning that the greater an ecosystems' biodiversity, the greater is its stability.

iii. The Legislative and Institutional Framework of Environmental Protection and Remediation

These are the legislative and institutional framework of environmental protection and remediation of nation states and international community

iv. Principles of international collaboration

Under this sub section some enunciated principles of Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm (1972) may be illustrative e. g, Principles 1,2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24 and 25 are some of the examples and a few of these can be cited.

PRINCIPLE 1: Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equity and adequate condition of life, in an environment of quality that permits a life of dignity and wellbeing, and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations. In this respect, policies promoting or perpetuating apartheid, racial segregation, discrimination, colonial and other forms of oppression and foreign domination stand condemned and must be eliminated.

PRINCIPLE 2: The natural resources of the earth, including the air, water, land, flora and fauna and especially representative samples of natural eco-systems, must be safeguarded for the benefit of present and future generations through careful planning or management, as appropriate.

PRINCIPLE 4: Man has a special responsibility to safeguard and wisely manage the heritage of wildlife and its habitat, which are now gravely imperiled by a combination of adverse factors. Nature conservation, including wildlife, must therefore receive importance in planning for economic development.

PRINCIPLE 12: Resources should be made available to preserve and improve the environment, taking into account the circumstances and particular requirement of developing countries and any cost which may emanate from their incorporating environmental safeguards into their development planning and the need for making available to them, upon their request, additional international technical and financial assistance for this purpose.

PRINCIPLE 21: States have, in accordance with the charter of the United Nations and the principle of the international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other states or of areas beyond the limit of national jurisdiction. **PRINCIPLE 22:** States shall co-operate to develop further the international law regarding liability and compensation for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage caused by activities within the jurisdiction or control of such states to areas beyond the jurisdiction.

3. Challenges of Sustainable Development Paradigm in Nigerian Context

As a starting point an observation on the credibility or otherwise of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) may form a basis to explore the challenges of sustainable development paradigm in Nigeria because they are concrete and specific. The year of reckoning for the evaluation of the SDGs is 2030 and so it may be argued that its assessment now is premature. However, if the foundation of a project is very weak and the way its execution is being carried out is calling for attention, then the likelihood that the result will not obtain its objective may be entertained. From the

following observations some conclusions may be arrived at. Due to limitation of space seven challenges are mentioned here¹⁰.

The SDGs framework is silent on social groups as agents of change alongside governments. The SDGs framework addresses key systemic barriers to sustainable development such as inequality, unsustainable consumption patterns, weak institutional capacity and environmental degradation that the MDGs neglected. However, it may be observed that the SDGs framework does not identify the wide range of critical social groups that will need to be mobilized to deliver on the goals as agents of change alongside governments.

Some targets do not have focus to enable effective implementation Out of the 169 SDGs targets, 49 (29%) are considered well developed while 91 targets (54%) need to be reinforced by making them more specific and significant work is required to be done on 29 (17%). Overall, the targets require a technical review in such areas as consistency with existing international agreements and processes. This is because some targets do not have focus to enable effective implementation and since there exist important trade-offs among several goals and targets.

A typical example is the trade-offs existing between the target aiming at increased agricultural land-use to help end hunger which ultimately may lead to biodiversity loss. It could also lead to overuse and/or pollution of water resources and downstream, and perhaps, have ill-effects on maritime resources. This in turn could aggravate food security apprehensions. Again, ending poverty and hunger is not only dependent on food security target in SDG 2 but also on macroeconomic policies connected to targets on full and productive employment and decent work under SDG 8 and the reduction of inequality under SDG 10 which should not contribute to climate change under SDG 13. Success in all these is most likely going to improve and better health and wellbeing and then enhance attainment of SDG 3.

¹⁰ For further clarification consult Oyeshola, D, 2019: 217 – 240, *Sustainable Development: Issues and Challenges for Nigeria (2nd Edn)*, Atman Limited, Osogbo, Nigeria.

Challenges of banditry, kidnapping and insurgencies are not taken into account.

Lack of enhancement of close collaboration between the policy and epistemic communities and other stakeholders The Report of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) and International Social Science Council (ISSC) (2015) points out that 'SDGs framework poses a number of conceptual as well as implementation challenges. The implementation challenges require 'enhancement of close collaboration between the policy and scientific communities and other stakeholders. The necessary collaboration is not yet in place. The implication of this is that without this partnership which is hard to come by, the hope of achieving the ambitious and overarching Sustainable Development Goals is but chimerical. Nilsson and Costanza (in ICSU and ISSC Report, 2015) believe that SDGs 'offer major improvements on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)'.

Implementation Mechanism Within Each Society Seems Inadequate Though universality is intricately associated with the SDGs in different ways, the framework however does not sufficiently state the groups within society other than aid agencies and national governments that is necessary to employ in trying to deliver on the goals. The private sector perspectives and incentives to participate in the delivery of the goals are not reflected in the SDGs framework. This implementation mechanism seems inadequate and thus cast doubt on its efficacy. Also, the SDGs framework allows for low level of inter-linkages and integration. In line with Sen's argument (1999) the framework of SDGs does not articulate 'freedoms' of economic opportunities (like participation in trade and production), political liberty, social empowerment, dignity and basic conditions such as good health and education.

Sustainable Development Goals Were Framed from Modernization Theoretical Perspective and Philosophical Assumption that Development must wear the cloak of the West. As Wisor¹¹ rightly observed, MDGs were hastily designed while the SDGs were consummation of:

...intense political lobbying by every interest group that wants its issue represented on the international agenda. The result is a long and entirely unattainable wish-list of development targets that utterly fails to prioritize

those areas on which international coordination and goal setting is both desirable and feasible¹¹.

Sustainable Development Goals, like MDGs, were framed from modernisation theoretical perspective and philosophical assumption that development is linear and could only be effectively attained through adoption and application of western models and policies (political and socio-economic). Built on this tradition and imposed on developing countries, the SDGs may again well duplicate the MDGs in terms of progress and results after implementation. It is also observed that the SDGs are not primarily result-oriented owing to the ambitiousness and ambiguity with which they are inextricably formulated. This may perhaps originate their potential failure.

Some SDGs Targets Are Unreachable There are other equally unreachable targets that have been set and hope to be achieved before deadline. Others that are identified include AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. These are to be eliminated while hepatitis, water borne diseases and other communicable diseases are to be combated. Achieving these targets especially in developing countries where the said diseases are endemic, is conditional upon revitalizing and reinforcing the capacity of the weak and pathetic health institutions.

This is expected to be achieved through training and retraining of medical personnel and experts, and adequately equipping the existing hospitals and medical centres with sophisticated medical apparatuses and medicaments. These should be administered at subsidized cost or even free of cost where and when necessary. This is highly impossible. COVID-19 virus pandemic and medical personnel brain drain to Europe, America and Asia have complicated the challenges.

Other infrastructures that enhance access to the hinterlands should be developed and upgraded. The point in focus is that the decadence and deterioration that characterized developing countries health sector must first

¹¹ Wisor, S. (2014), 'The Impending Failure of the Sustainable Development Goals' in *Journal Ethics and International Affairs*. Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2014/theimpendingfailureofthesustainabledevelopmentgoals/24/03/2016>

be reversed before any meaningful fight against diseases and ailments could achieve results. These facilities are elusive given the drastic and persistent diminishing capacities of developing countries, even when boosted by aid and development assistance.

It is, perhaps, with illusory sense of feasibility and optimism that the target of cutting by 1/3 premature mortality from non-communicable diseases and that of road accidents by ½ were set. Wisor¹¹ was puzzled by these targets and reacted thus:

Were these numbers pulled out of a hat, or are they based on rigorous assessments of what might actually be achieved over the next 15 years? And does anyone anywhere seriously think malaria can be eliminated by 2030?

The SDGs Embrace ‘Admirable but Decidedly’ Issues of Secondary Importance to Developing Countries It is contended that the SDGs embrace ‘admirable but decidedly’ issues of secondary importance to developing countries. Such matters as those which are primary concerns and sole responsibilities of advanced nations are emphasized. A case in point is target 1.4 of the poverty eradication goal. It assures or guarantees that microfinance is to be accessible by everyone, but it is negligent of the available evidence pointing to the fact that microfinance could make little or no difference to poverty alleviation. SDG 4 deals with education. It states promotion of enduring learning opportunities for all and sundry. As creditable as this may sound, it is scarcely any goal to prioritize over more pressing needs of developing countries such as economic prosperity and wellbeing of the citizens. Perhaps, its aim is to foster luxury among developed countries of the west. Though universal and all-embracing, the SDGs and their targets are too vast and embedded with ambiguities and rhetoric requiring urgent review if they are to be taken seriously by anyone. The goals, targets, and indicators must be cut to size and appropriately prioritized on international agenda to boost confidence and feasibility in them. Otherwise, they are too idealistic and superficial to be achievable.

Lastly, the United Nations Development Programme developed strategies to help alleviate poverty at national level through training of youth and making grants available to beneficiaries. The Federal Government established Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency. CSOs, CBOs and international partners were around. Nonetheless, MDGs’ low

performance in sub-Saharan Africa are still on ground. Some of the challenges mitigating against success of the goals are issues of data collection, inequality and distributional dynamics, unemployment, economic crisis and weak institutional planning and implementation framework, political instability and governance issues, corruption, mismanagement and maladministration of revenue, inflation, development policies limitations, conflicts and ethnic violence that disrupt government institutions, terrorism, kidnapping and insurgency.

In relation to **the Legislative and Institutional Framework of Environmental Protection and Remediation**, there are many rules and regulations. Unfortunately, in the Nigerian context the transparent, honest and on-time implementation of them is problematic. Similarly, in the context of the area of the **principles of international collaboration** and cooperation the West is not always honouring the financial obligations towards the South. This is understandable because many countries particularly in the West are shifting from internationalism to nationalism in order to protect their national interests. A clear example is the exit of Britain from the European Union.

4. Some Contributive Factors Influencing Young Nigerian Migrants

Young Nigerians migrants primarily may be classified into two namely legal and illegal. The legal are generally trained and are professionals like the medical doctors, nurses, teachers' technicians, students etc. The second category can be put under the general group of artisans These two groups are within the age range of 18 and 39. The non-professionals often migrate through the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea to their arrival in Europe. Illegal migrants do not only engage in long and tortuous journey through the Sahara Desert but are also abandoned and isolated in a foreign land without protection and security (food security, medical, economic security etc.) from the foreign land.

The Sahara Desert is world's largest hot and driest desert covering much of North Africa and many illegal migrants heading for Europe in search of greener pastures through this Desert have lost their lives in the desert. More than half of Saharan migrants in Africa are Nigerians and it has been

difficult to get the correct number of people that die in the Sahara Desert. However, more people die in the Sahara Desert than the Mediterranean¹².

In addition, illegal migrants that are lucky to get to Europe alive face another struggle for acceptance into the European society. They are abandoned to frustration as they face the task of getting legal residence permit. For Nigerians, getting asylum has been a herculean task. This is because Nigeria is not considered by the European Union as a country where there is political persecution and migrants' asylum claims are hardly treated¹².

Generally, Nigerian illegal migrants adopt sophisticated, daring and evasive methods to elude increasingly tight border controls and enter countries in the developed North. A growing number of young people are involved in daredevil ventures to gain entry into Europe. Movements are more clandestine, involving riskier passages and trafficking via diverse transit points, such as trafficking through Senegal to Spain by way of the Canary Islands. Individual stowaways engage in life-threatening trips hidden aboard ships destined for Southern Europe and recently they have headed as far as East Asia. Unscrupulous agents exploit these desperate youths with promises of passages to Italy, Spain, and France. Increasing numbers of West Africans especially from the coastal states are risking their lives to get to Europe by sea as unemployment soars in Dakar¹³

According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the Senegalese government has reached an agreement with Spain and illegal migrants from Senegal upon arrival in the Canary Islands are normally repatriated within 40 days under the terms of an agreement between the Spanish and Senegalese governments.

¹² Awoniyi, F. (2018), 'At least 30, 000 Nigerians are Awaiting Deportation in Germany', <https://www.pulse.ng> Accessed September 10, 2018

¹³ Poverty, search for status driving migration to Europe.
<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/feature/2007/07/04/poverty-search-status-driving-migration-europe>

As African migrants continue to find their ways to Europe, they transit different countries where they face inhuman and cruel treatments. These illegal migrants are forced to go into prostitution (women primarily) for survival, and are also sold into slavery to work under torture and meagre pay. In spite of the difficulties the illegal migrants face, many young Nigerians are bent on migrating to other lands. Why are they so disposed? There is no doubt that certain factors motivate people to migrate across international borders and Young Nigerians' migration is not an exception. Nigerian young migrants, particularly illegal ones often target Europe because of the sea and land routes that African countries such as Libya and Morocco share with European countries such as Italy and Spain. The poverty situation of citizens is also a significant factor driving migrants to Europe. The former Nigeria President Olusegun Obasanjo has said the worsening level of unemployment, poverty and unresolved conflict across the African continent are major threats responsible for increasing illegal migration from Africa, through Mediterranean, to Europe by Africans.

In the case of Nigeria, the breakdown of the Nigerian educational system at virtually all levels, high unemployment and poverty rates in Nigeria and a general disillusionment with the country's political leadership¹⁴ and insecurity are the major causes of youth discontent with the Nigerian state. Many young Nigerians are frustrated and see their ambition dashed away. They lose hope in the country and in some cases take up unholy activities like taking drugs, joining armed robbery and cultism. Some become so frustrated and venture to leave for foreign lands.

Albert Hirschman¹⁴, a renowned social scientist in the areas of economics and politics in developing countries contends that there are three ways of responding to the discontents of politics. Some people opt to 'exit' their country while others remain in their country and vent their discontent ('voice') and still others decide neither to exit nor voice their dissatisfaction. While Nigerians have always opted out of their state and immigrated to other states within and outside the continent, the recent flux of Nigerian Young to Europe has led to a constructed 'migrant crisis' that has shown a light on migration as a phenomenon within the continent.

¹⁴Hirschman, A. O. (1970). *Exit, voice, and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states* (Vol. 25). Harvard University Press.

The illegal migration of thousands of Nigerian youths has been a response to the unviability of life in Nigeria. In 2017, Nigerian returnees from Libya appealed to the federal and state governments to provide job opportunities to prevent the youth from embarking on dangerous journeys to secure better living in Europe. According to the Nigerian Immigration Service, more than 10,000 Nigerians died between January and May 2017 attempting to reach Europe through the desert and the Mediterranean Sea. The Federal Government of Nigeria has consistently reacted to the issue of youth unemployment with a wide array of empowerment programmes.

The set of social protection schemes are called National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). Some of the programmes include:

The N-Power Job Creation Programme that was launched by Buhari Administration to help Nigerians aged between 18 – 35 years acquire and develop the requisite skills and knowledge for self-development and economic growth;

Youth Empowerment Agribusiness Programme was launched in January 2016 by the Federal Government of Nigeria in collaboration with Africa Development Bank to help contribute to job creation, food security as well as improved livelihoods for Nigerian youth. The three-year US \$300 million programme was targeted to 18- to 35-year-old in 36 states and was projected to create 250,000 jobs. Beneficiaries of the programme were to complete a two-week training, an internship and were subsequently expected to submit agribusiness proposals for loan considerations of up to \$50,000. There were also other programmes such as:

The **Social Welfare Intervention Programme** where the Federal Government collaborates with state governments to implement social welfare intervention programmes such as conditional cash transfers, vocational training for youth, hiring of teachers, and school feeding programme among other interventions.

The Youths Entrepreneurial Support Project, a N10 billion Youth Entrepreneurial Support Project to empower youth with loans to start businesses. About 36,000 jobs were expected to be created annually through the project. While the government has initiated these programmes for the

youth, it has not at the moment translated into better live for the young Nigerians, and as a result, many young people are still eager to leave for foreign lands.

Unresolved economic and infrastructural problems, insurgencies and political challenges constitute some of the major factors responsible for increasing migration from Nigeria to Europe and to other parts of the world. As long as these challenges subsist, and overall, political unrest, economic instability and general deprivation are experienced on daily basis and journey of the youth migrants through tortuous desert routes before facing an even more dangerous crossing of the Mediterranean in flimsy, overcrowded vessels to Europe¹⁵ notwithstanding, Europe will continue to struggle with migrant inflows from Nigeria.

5. Symbiotic Relationship and Challenges Between the Young Nigerians' Migration and Sustainable Development Paradigm in the Country

Majority of the illegal migrants and casual workers are daily paid if they are able to get some employment. Some of them work as prostitutes, house girls and some are in prisons. Their owners may pay only little if they pay at all taxes or insurance on such jobs or on their workers. They do not need to think about pension or leave allowance or overtime for their workers. They call them only when they need them and pay them when or how they want to pay them. Illegal immigrants do not have local standing so they cannot complain, report or cry out for justice and in some places even the workers have to pay kick-backs to the owners for protecting them. They dare make any noise about the way they are being treated, they will in turn be threatened to be reported to the authority,

When they are sick they will not be able to go to hospitals. Alternatively, they seek private or self-medication and when they are seriously ill whether from the hazard of their jobs or hard condition and stress, they lose their jobs. When they die only the rest of the immigrants need to find a way of disposing of their dead colleagues.

¹⁵ Onajin, A. (2018), 'Illegal Migration: EU must Start in Nigeria', <https://www.vanguardngr.com> Accessed September 10, 2018.

Despite all these dehumanizing conditions, the immigrants will still manage to send few dollars or euros home to the hungry family members. The family members will share the stipend with joy and rejoice that their child is doing well abroad.¹⁶ Other categories of migrants like the legal, professional and those living in diaspora send money home as well.

Questionable character of the figures notwithstanding, during the 1990s, the value of official development assistance (ODA) remained roughly constant while the value of recorded remittances increased steadily and surpassed ODA in 1996.

By the turn of the millennium, while the ODA too has risen remittance amounts have skyrocketed, reaching 200 percent of ODA in 2006 and quickly approaching 300 percent (Carling, 2020, 114). From this it may be deduced that remittance has contributed to the home countries of the migrants. However, it may also be stated that it has affected the quantity of ODA available to the developing countries. Relative to the quantum of resources required for developmental programmes of Nigeria, remittance it receives is insignificant. Besides, it has contributed to the government syndrome of 'we cannot do it alone', private, individuals, religious groups and corporate entities must partner with the government.

Education and migration are symbiotically interconnected. In general terms as people become informed the levels of migration tend to increase because they are simultaneously endowed with capabilities and the aspiration to move.

Increasing education, access to modern media, and exposure to the relative wealth of migrant typically coincide with changing ideas of the 'good life' away from agrarian or pastoral lifestyle as well as increasing material aspirations. Increasing levels of education also tend to increase mobility levels because mobility is more likely needed in order to obtain degrees or finish secondary school, as well as to find jobs that match their qualifications in labour markets that grow in structural complexity¹⁷.

¹⁶ Feyisetan, *Exodus and Deportation of Nigerian Youths Who is to Blame*, 174

¹⁷ de Haas, H. (2007). Turning the Tide? Why development will not stop migration, *Development and Change* 38, 819-841 and
de Haas, H. (2009). *Mobility and Human Development*. UNDP, New York.

de Haas argues against the idea that much 'South-North' migration is essentially driven by poverty, war-fare, and environmental degradation and climate change. This is because the most long-distance migration neither occurs from the poorest countries nor from the poorest segments of the population in those countries. In fact, middle-income countries tend to be the most migratory and international migrants predominantly come from relatively better-off sections of origin populations¹⁸

He cites the examples of countries such as Mexico, Morocco, Turkey, and the Philippines prominently among origin countries of international labour migrants. In Africa for instance, extra-continental migration (mainly towards Europe, but also to the Gulf and the Americas) is dominated by middle-income countries in North Africa and South Africa, while migration from most low-income sub-Saharan countries is lower on average and predominantly intra-regional.

According to migration transition theory¹⁹, demographic shifts, economic development and state formation initially increase internal (rural-to-urban) and international emigration. Only when countries achieve higher development levels does emigration tend to decrease alongside increasing immigration, leading to their transformation from net emigration to net immigration countries. Expanding networks partially gave migration its own momentum by reducing risks and costs of migration²⁰, see also Massey.²¹

¹⁸ Czaika, M., and de Hass, H. (2012). The role of internal and international relative deprivation in global migration. *Oxford Development Studies* **40**, 423-442.

¹⁹ Skeldon, R. (1997). *Migration and Development: A Global Perspective*. Addison Wesley Longman, Harlow, Essex.

Zelinsky, Z. (1971). The Hypothesis of the mobility transition. *Geographical Review* **61**, 219-249.

²⁰ Hatton, T.J., and Williamson, J.G. (1998). *The Age of Migration: Causes and Economic Effects*. Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York.

²¹ Massey, D.S. (2000), Book review. The age of mass migration: Causes and economic impact by Timothy J. Hatton and Jeffrey G. Williamson. *The Journal of Modern History* **72**, 191-204.

At the micro-level, for most people, migration represents opportunity and the hope of a better future. At the macro-level, the profound economic, demographic, and social transformations that accompany process of development and modernisation will inevitably lead to increased migration, particularly from rural-to-urban areas both within and across international borders. Migration is development, as Skeldon¹⁹ argued, instead of the antithesis of development.

However, the argument may carry some weight in countries that enter bilateral agreement with some industrial countries with the understanding that the citizens of the origin countries will migrate and after a period of time will come back home and the money that may accrue will go to the origin countries for government to use for development

Nigeria does not enter or have such a bilateral arrangement.

Virtually, all industrialised countries wish to attract and retain skilled migrants like managers, senior officials, legislators, professionals like doctors, nurses and engineers, technicians and associate technicians. On the other hand, restrictions are placed on the inflow of the less skilled and unskilled are not welcome. None Governmental functionary Nigerians particularly Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) view the emigration of their skilled migrants as a loss to their country leading to brain drain and dilapidation of some essential infrastructure like health and education.

At independence, Nigeria wanted to develop like Europe. Accordingly, it embarked on the process of development by establishing infrastructure of education, transportation, health facilities, water and communication etc. By 1980 Nigeria has become truly the giant of Africa. All those that the country trained have become profitable capital investment by contributing to the wellbeing of the country. All that is now in the past. Nigeria has become poor. Unresolved economic and infrastructural problems, insurgencies, political unrest, economic instability, general deprivation are experienced on daily basis. All these are taken place in the context of sustainable development paradigm, the UN road map of development for all. Except the young Nigerians are educated and skills empowered and the enabling environment to realize their full potential is available, the young will continue to migrate and the future of the country may remain bleak.

6. Concluding Remark

Sustainable Development Paradigm outfit is an innovative attempt, an orientation in the direction of development for all. Unfortunately, in practical terms and in relation to the evaluation of its half tenure which terminates by 2030, its objective is far from been realised. In the Nigerian situation, poverty, unemployment, sense of hopelessness among many young Nigerians, the unresolved economic and infrastructural problems, insurgencies, kidnapping, corruption and political challenges constitute the major factors responsible for increasing migration from Nigeria to Europe and other parts of the world. The assumption that development for Nigeria most go through modernisation process, in this case, through remittances from migrants and those in diaspora and sustainable development paradigm is villainous.

In Nigeria where that is a search for progress for all, there should be concerted efforts to implement the Second National Youth Policy Document of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 2009; it provides a foundational template for further discussions on the 'priorities, directions and practical support' that the government can provide for its youth. Similarly, the Nigerian government should provide funds, facilitate training and ensure conducive environment aimed at developing the informal sector. The country's formal economy is too weak to absorb the large number of young people. The informal sector therefore becomes crucial in the nation's aspiration to curb youth unemployment and economic growth.

The spirit behind sending remittances home by the migrants and those in diaspora is to be sustained and its spirituality from African culture perspective be better developed. Nigeria must approach its developmental challenges differently, the threat to use instrument of mass destruction and variety of sanctions from those who do not sincerely wish Nigeria well notwithstanding. Industrialisation as an instrument of progress for Nigeria is fundamental. Furthermore, as long as the challenges of political unrest, economic instability and general deprivation are experienced on daily basis subsist and functional strategies to address radically the challenges of the young Nigerians are not in place, migration with its attendant consequences like the development of human capital will continue and Nigeria may not develop. Meanwhile, the sustainable development paradigm as engine of development must be subjected to a critical review, hope for a better society

for Nigeria must be kept alive and confronting headlong the challenges of the young Nigerians' migration, legal or illegal, skilled and professional, educated or illiterate must take a central stage in the politics of the Nation. Lastly, the government must cut down drastically the cost of governance by 50 percent and the salaries of political appointees by 50 percent and follow the example of Ghana, its counterpart and neighbour in this respect.

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