

# Yar'adua 7-Point Agenda, the Mdgs and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Dr. Robert Oghenedoro Dode

GJHSS Classification –C (FOR)  
160506,160703,140213

**Abstract**-African leaders toed the initiative of their world counterparts towards the close of the last millennium aimed at addressing issues bordering on poverty and its effects in the world and the opportunity provided by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for solving these problems. This focus formed the rallying cry of global partnership and the cornerstone of international and regional development policy. As soon as he was sworn into office as the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua declared his administration's 7-point agenda, aimed at keying into the objectives of the MDGs. This paper among others, considers the full import of the MDGs. It proceeds to point out the critical factors that constitute the Yar'Adua 7-point agenda. Some of the questions raised in the body of the paper include: if pursued with the vigour it deserves, is this policy thrust likely to herald sustainable development in Nigeria by the envisioned 2020? Does the Yar'Adua administration have the capacity to handle these seven points at a time, or should it have prioritized these items, by taking on them one at a time (incrementally)? These questions are necessary because they raise fundamental issues concerning the declared policy focus of the Yar'Adua administration and the path it has charted for Nigeria. At the end, some empirical conclusions were made, with regard to the workability of this policy thrust. Nigeria is unequivocally in need of a development kick-starter. Is the 7-point agenda going to be the way out of these problems?

## INTRODUCTION

Poverty, hunger, discrimination against women, lack of education opportunities for women, infant and maternal mortality, among other ravaging diseases and social problems has become the lots of many countries of this world. The difference though is that while some continents (indeed countries) have advanced in their efforts at solving some of these teething problems once and for all, some others seem not to have woken up to the reality of the problems on ground. These problems though have rendered citizens extremely poor and nations, crisis prone. In the committee of continents, Africa appears to be the weeping baby when statistics are considered, with regard to how continents have put measures on ground towards the achievement of better lives for their citizens, through the instrumentalities of the MDGs. Africa has for a long time, been faced with these problems mentioned above; with Nigeria's case always topping the chart. Igbuzor (2006) has rightly observed that: The problem of development has occupied the attention of scholars, activists and politicians, development workers, local and international organizations for many years with an increased tempo in the last decade.

Even though there are different perspectives to development, there is a general consensus that development will lead to good change manifested in increased capacity of people to have control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology; and obtain physical necessities of life (food, clothing and shelter), employment, equality, participation in government, political and economic independence, adequate education, gender equality, sustainable development and peace (p.1). These factors indeed, form the crux of the focus of this paper which attempts to assess the connection between Yar'Adua's seven-point agenda and the MDGs, and how these are likely to translate into sustainable development for Nigeria. World economic statistics indicate the fact that many countries have remained underdeveloped for decades, with, in the words of Igbuzor (2006) "precarious development indices" (p.1). To demonstrate how badly the situation has impacted upon nations of the world, analysts have variously posted frightening percentage figures which show a wall of difference between the very poor nations and people and their very rich counterparts. For example, Igbuzor (2006) has again demonstrated in his work that: More than 1.2 billion people or about 20 percent of world population live or survive on less than (sic) US \$1 per day. Wealth is concentrated in the hand (sic) of a few people. The UNDP in its 1998 report documented that the three richest people in the world have assets that exceed the combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the 48 least developed countries. Similarly, the 1000 richest people in the world have personal wealth greater than 500 million people in the least developed countries (p.1). The last section of the quotation above should be of interest to Nigerian leaders. As a matter of fact, the last statistics released by the WHO (2008) about life expectancy in the world at birth, shows that the average life expectancy for Nigeria is 46 years (46 for males and 48 for females). This is a consequence of the cultural, social and economic realities of the country. Most literature on development trends in the African Continent of the 1970s has it that Nigeria was one of the richest 50 in the world. This record was made possible by the discovery, exploitation and export of crude oil in commercial quantity. This trade in oil fetched for the nation, millions of US Dollars. Nigeria became so rich that, for want of development projects to embark upon in its territory, began to look for African countries in deep economic crisis to bail out. However, two decades after the 1970s (Nigeria's oil boom years), how did the country fare and what became its position in world economic rating? By the 1990s, records have it that Nigeria had retrogressed to become a leading member of the 25<sup>th</sup> poorest countries of the world at the

threshold of the twenty first century (see Igbuzor, 2006, et al). By 1999, when the Fourth Republic government was sworn into office, rough statistics had it that Nigeria's external debt profile stood at about US \$34 billion. This was exclusive of the internal debts which was in the region of trillion of Naira, mostly owed local contractors. Ironically though, Nigeria has for a while maintained the record of the sixth largest exporter of oil among the OPEC members, it equally houses some of the poorest people in the world.

Igbuzor (2006) like a number of other authors has posted economic indicators about Nigeria, which shows how deep the country has gone into economic crisis. He has observed among others that the incidence of poverty using the rate of US \$1 per day increased from 28.1 percent in 1980 to 46.3 percent in 1985 and declined to 42.7 percent in 1992 but increased again to 65.6 in 1992. The incident increased to 69.2 percent in 1997. If the rate of US \$2 per day is used to measure the poverty level, the percentage of those living below poverty line will jump to 90.8 percent. Nigeria fares very poorly in all development indices (p.1). Nigeria is a country; though oil producing, where the average annual percentage growth between 1990 and 2000 was put at a meager 2.4. Countries like Ghana and Egypt on the other hand however, post 4.3 and 4.6 percentage respectively.

#### I. THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs)

This paper has observed above that the Millennium Development Goals were thought out as a result of the consensus reached by world leaders on the need to jointly tackle the problems caused by poverty, which was ravaging different parts of the globe. The Economic Commission for Africa, Progress Report (2005) had aptly observed that: The urgent need to address poverty around the world and the opportunity provided by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have made them the rallying cry of a global partnership and the cornerstone of international and development policy. For the first time in history, a diverse range of players across the globe has agreed on a common platform of priorities for addressing the many faces of poverty, hunger, joblessness, diseases, lack of shelter, gender inequality and environmental decline (p. 1). The MDGs thus refer to the eight major goals identified by these international leaders, which if pursued with vigour, is likely to lead to better lives for the people of the world. These eight goals have been identified as: reducing extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and women empowerment, reducing child mortality rates, improving maternal health, fighting disease epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and others, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development. As at the year 2000, these international goals had received the consent of 192 United Nations member states and at least 23 international organizations. The leaders set 2015 as the target year for the maximum realization of these goals (Millennium Development Goals-Wikipedia). The MDGs are indeed measurable targets attached to a timeframe aimed at making a positive difference in the lives of billions of people all over the world.

Shortly after its declaration, most African leaders (like Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo) adopted the MDGs as a tool within their wider development planning framework, to, according to the ECA Report (2005), end the tragic conditions in which so many Africans are deprived of their basic human rights, such as health, education, shelter and security. By making the Goals work as tools for coordinating development policy, within broader development priorities, African leaders can tackle extreme poverty that is hobbling their people, make their countries more productive and reduce the risk of conflict (p. 1).

Subsequently, Nigeria's former president, Olusegun Obasanjo, in conjunction with other African leaders came up with the idea of the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which incorporated the major tenets of the MDGs into its framework. At Nigeria's national level, this policy thrust led to the establishment of National Economic Empowerment Strategy (NEEDS) and State Economic Empowerment Strategy (SEEDS) by the federal and state governments respectively. The question though on the lips of many Nigerians after the life span of that administration (1999-2007) is, how many Nigerians had their poverty alleviated? The Yar'Adua administration recently marked its second year in office and with its avowed declaration to make Nigeria become at least the twentieth most prosperous nation of the world, come the year 2020 (vision 20:2020), it became necessary to assess (analyze) the level of success so far recorded in this regard. This analysis is indeed necessary because, among other reasons, Africa seems not to have fared well since the declaration and acceptance of the MDGs, when put in the same scale with other continents. Moreover, the ECA Report (2005) had observed: Despite significant progress by some of its subregions and countries, Africa fared worst among the world's regions. It saw the slowest progress overall and suffered reverses in some crucial areas. In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the number of people living in extreme poverty (on US \$ 1 a day or less) rose from 217 million in 1990 to 290 million in 2000, the majority of whom are women. Adult life expectancy is reckoned to have declined from a little over 50 years to 46 years. Based on the trends of the past 15 years, SSA will not achieve the MDGs on time (p. 1). This paper, on the basis of the ECA Report (2005) cited above, chooses to state hypothetically, that based on the very slow implementation style of the Yar'Adua administration, Nigeria is not likely to achieve the declared goals by 2020. It states further that there is an interconnecting relationship between governments political will to implement what has been stated and the achievement of sustainable development for the country.

#### II. PRESIDENT YAR'ADUA's SEVEN-POINT AGENDA

What then constitutes Yar'Adua's seven-point agenda? The major policy thrust of this administration, otherwise referred to as the 7-point agenda are:

1. Critical Infrastructure: This would involve paying attention to adequate power supply to facilitate industrialization. Development of Rail, Road, Air

and Water transportation to facilitate movement of persons, goods and services.

2. Niger Delta: This would involve complete overhaul of the region to ensure provision of physical infrastructure and empowerment of the people.
3. Food Security: Through this vision, the administration has declared interest in enhancing agricultural and water resources to ensure adequate food supply for local consumption and export.
4. Human Capital Development: This would involve reform of education sector to improve skills and enhance standards.
5. Land Tenure and Home Ownership: Review of the Land use laws to facilitate proper use of the Nation's land assets for socio-economic development; and citizens' access to mortgage facilities.
6. National Security and Intelligence: Through this strategy, the administration intends to give adequate attention to the provision of security to lives and property.
7. Wealth Creation: This aspect would be used to initiate the process of diversification of the nation's revenue base and increased production to provide jobs.

(Source: Federal Ministry of Information and Communications, 2007).

How realizable is this policy thrust by the year 2020? This question will be answered in the body of this work, using the administration's strides so far recorded and considering the statistics posted by the human development index.

To adequately attend to the question raised above, and arrive at some conclusions, this study chooses to adopt a theoretical framework and critically assess these seven points methodically, as much as possible, one after the other.

### III. THERORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper will proceed by adopting the development theory as it's theoretical frame of reference. This theory is deemed necessary because the paper is primarily focusing on how the Yar'Adua administration intends to launch Nigeria into a phase of sustainable development. It should be made clear from this point that the development theory showcases two major schools of thought, which are referred to as the Liberal and Marxists perspectives. The earlier analyse development from the point of view of economic indicators. Development to these scholars, is measured from the perspective of percentage growth in GNP recorded by a country over a period of time. In this vein, Meier (1989) describes development as "the maximization of the growth of the GDP through capital accumulation and industrialization" (p.6). To Todaro (1979), development means the capacity of a national economy, whose initial economic condition has been more or less static to generate and sustain an annual increase in its Gross National Product (GNP) at rates of perhaps 5 to 7 percent or more (p.95).

The Marxist school of thought however, largely disagrees with the explanations of the Liberal scholars who only attempt to equate development with the recorded level of GDP attained by a country. This has been attacked as not only faulty but misleading. Scholars with this Marxist worldview have argued that the entire talk about development should revolve around the welfare of the citizens. They observe further that rather than view development as an abstract economic category, it should be looked at from a multi-dimensional perspective. They argue that any discussion on development should focus squarely on man and his well being. This radical view has been largely summed up in these words of Rodney:Development in human society is a many-sided process. At the level of individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well being. At the level of social groups, it implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relations. In the past development has always meant the increase in the ability to guard the independence of the social group (p.9).It is this perspective of development that this paper intends to borrow a leaf from in attempting to assess the prospects of a sustained development for Nigeria by the year 2020, as declared by the Yar'Adua administration.

### IV. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SEVEN-POINT AGENDA (2007-2009)

**Critical Infrastructure:** The Yar'Adua administration has as its target, the provision of adequate electricity power to facilitate industrialization. In line with this objective is the development of rail, road, and air and water transportation to facilitate movement of persons, goods and services. Indeed, the issue of adequate power supply has been in the fore in Nigeria's politico-economic discourse for some time. Inadequate public power supply has impacted negatively upon hitherto thriving indigenous industries, factories and companies, thus leading to their winding up in large numbers. When the Yar'Adua administration came up with the idea of improving the power generation and distribution capacity, Nigerians looked forward to a better future. Close to the end of this administration's second year in office however, the power situation to a large extent has not recorded significant improvement, compared to the pre-2007 era. At least, towards the end of the president Obasanjo administration (May 29, 2007), overall power generation was put at more than 3,200 megawatts, MW. About the power generation of the country as at 2009, however, the cover story of the Tell Magazine (December 8, 2008) observes that: This is not the best of times for Nigerians whose businesses depend on electricity. The nation's overall power generation has come down drastically...it is now less than 2000 megawatts, MW. Although the power Holding Company of Nigeria, PHCN...announced that it had generation capacity of 4,000 MW (p. 19).A number of factors have been identified as causative elements of this poor state of affairs. These identified factors include progressive deterioration of aging power stations, incessant shortage of gas supply to plants using gas, and non-

completion of the ongoing National Integrated Power Project (NIPP), started by the last administration. The last factor is of particular significance to this analysis. This is so because the NIPP was designed to cause a revolution in power generation for the country. Records however, have it that since Yar'Adua came into office as the President; the NIPP projects have been completely abandoned, starved of funds. The initial projection was that the NIPP projects would add 7,600MW to the national grid by August, 2008, when the first phase was supposed to have been completed. Rather, the observed under the Yar'Adua administration has in the words of Adekeye (Tell, December 8, 2008) been "the worsening situations (which) force PHCN to announce the loss of 800 MW generation capacity (sic), November 16 complete shutdown of its power station in Sapele, Delta State..." (p19). Consequent upon the above, epileptic power supply under the present administration (2007-2011), to a large extent has run several self-employed individuals and companies out of business. Accessed data have it that as at August 2008, three million people lost their jobs in Kano State (factories) alone. Kano city is known for its chain of industries and factories, especially in the textile industry. However, most of these companies have had to close shop, with the attendant spiral effect on that State's economy.

President Yar'Adua had in the early days of his administration promised to declare a state of emergency in the power sector. Same promise went for rail, road, and air and water transportation. However, not much seem to have been recorded. Instead of declaring the promised state of emergency, the existing power projects have been starved of funds (as observed above). Analysts have argued that availability of power supply is the template (*sine qua non*) for meaningful industrial and economic development of any nation. Thus, the seeming disregard of the Yar'Adua administration of this fact is said to be projecting the President's seven-point agenda as a ruse. As a matter of fact, some critics have placed this policy thrust on a Zero-scale. For example, while commenting on the seven-point agenda and its implementation, one Adamu (in Tell, February 23, 2009) has asked Which seven-point agenda? Ask even the President to articulate his seven-point agenda and in less than a minute you will know that there is nothing like seven-point agenda. The only visible agenda that the President has succeeded in achieving is giving out two of his daughters to governors (p. 20). The views of the analyst above and others, has exposed the fact that the policy thrust of the administration is ill-digested, that even the chief marketer himself, finds it difficult to explain what it is all about. With regard to water transportation, some reports have it that the ports concessioning exercise of the Yar'Adua administration was defective because it was done in a hurry without taking critical issues into consideration and lacks legal backing. Ports services, from investigations have already deteriorated in recent times; little or insignificant change in that sector has not turned the state of affairs around.

The report from the country's road transportation sector is not very different from the power and water sectors experiences narrated above. Most of the federal roads are in bad, dilapidated shape. Typical examples to demonstrate this

discovery are the Benin-Shagamu-Ore, Lagos-Ibadan and Gombe-Numan-Yola road projects. In the down stream oil sector, the nation's refineries have not done well, as a matter of fact; almost all of them have gone comatose; despite huge amounts spent to get them working. Yet the administration seems not to have any proposed solution(s) to this teething problem. Rather, what the nation has experienced is the recycling of some of the very old hands that have been fingered as part of the petroleum industry problem, as key government officials by the Yar'Adua administration. Alhaji Rilwanu Lukeman (73 years old), for example, who had been Minister for Petroleum for three times in this country's history, has again been appointed into that office, to help realize the seven-point agenda from that end. This is a question of doing some thing in a particular way and expecting a different result. It was the expectation of analysts that this administration would include, revamping the country's refineries (Kaduna, Port Harcourt and Warri) and the building of new refineries, in its emergency plans. Nigeria rather imports a quantum of its petroleum needs, with the resultant capital flight. Recently (last days of February, 2009), government has declared its intention to withdraw subsidy on petroleum products before the end of the year. The fact to emphasize from majority of the analysis made so far is that, to a large extent, the critical infrastructures under the Yar'Adua administration have been in worse state, compared to the previous administration's records. This poor state of affairs has according to Onwuamaeze (in Newswatch, February 9, 2009) led to a situation where: The private sector has continued to spend huge sums of money to privately provide these infrastructures, thereby making the cost of production high and less competitive at home and abroad. All these have adverse effects on production and employment and negate government claim of high growth rates that is not accompanied with corresponding significant growth in employment and poverty reduction in the economy (p. 47). It can thus be inferred from the above that inadequate attention so far accorded the provision of critical infrastructure by the Yar'Adua administration, has negatively impacted on other areas that will be identified in the body of this work, like food security, human capital development, land tenure and home ownership, national security and wealth creation.

**The Niger Delta:** President Yar'Adua, on coming into office, identified the Niger Delta crisis as a factor that will attract a lot of attention from his administration. He promised to declare a state of emergency on the Niger Delta problem. However, about two years on and with the creation of a Niger Delta Ministry, with Ufot Ekaette as the pioneer Minister, no state of emergency has been declared. There is no serious effort on the part of the administration, either, to demonstrate the fact that the Niger Delta problem has attracted the attention it deserves from the Yar'Adua administration. A major yardstick worth adopting in testing the validity of this assertion is the 2009 budgetary allocation to that region. The Niger Delta region, made up of nine oil-producing states was allocated Fifty Billion Naira (N50b) from the budget figures, while the NDDC (Niger Delta

Development Authority) got Twenty Seven Billion, Twelve thousand Naira (N27.12b) for its operations. These two figures combined, gives a total amount of Seventy Seven Billion, Twelve thousand Naira (N77.12b). These joint budgetary allocation is about Two Billion Naira (N2b) less than the Seventy Nine Billion Naira (N79b) allocated to the NDDC alone in 2008 (Tell, December 22, 2008).

In line with the position taken by a number of analysts, we raise a question with regard to the propriety of the establishment of a Niger Delta Ministry that will be starved of funds as has been the case with the NDDC. Even if the government argument has been that of misappropriation of funds by the officials of that Commission and other intervention agencies; what measures have been taken against Ministry of Works and NDDC staff and state governors who divert the funds meant for the development of the Niger Delta region? This study observes here that the existing cabals with their government officials' collaborators will most likely; hijack the funds that will be channeled through the newly established Ministry for the development of that region.

These developments have largely left the Niger Delta indigenes and dwellers, disappointed, over the insensitivity of this administration to their age-long plight. The implication of the observed is that instead of solving the already identified problems of the Niger Delta region, the actions and or inaction of the Yar'Adua administration is likely to escalate the problems, at the detriment of national development. This is so because, crude oil presently accounts for more than 85% of the nation's foreign exchange earners, and the source of this resource is the Niger Delta region. Sonmonu (Tell, November 10, 2008) has observed among others that the major factor that fuels the Niger Delta problem is poverty. This factor has equally resulted into serious security problems where a great number of weapons have been illegally imported into the country and are been used by the youths of that region to engage members of Nigerian Armed Forces in battle; especially along the creeks. Thus, a number of analysts have argued thus; solve the poverty and environmental problems and you succeed in solving the Niger Delta problem or crisis.

The Yar'Adua administration however, seem not to have come to terms with the logical presentation made above. It has rather shown more interest in increasing the number of security armed personnel posted to the Niger Delta region. These personnel, unfortunately, have been identified as major beneficiaries of the illegal bunkering of the nation's petroleum products along the creeks of the Niger Delta. This analyst had in the last quarter of 2008 witnessed a scene where along the Mbiamia creeks, bunkered PMS (Premium Motor Spirit-condensate) were being siphoned from the badges (boats) into all sorts of containers. The irony was that this illegality took place under the full glee (supervision) of a truck load of members of the Joint Task Force (JTF) (see Newswatch Magazine, September 29, 2008).

**Food Security:** The President has included food security among the items to be given adequate attention under the seven-point agenda. Through this focus, the administration, it is stated, intends to enhance agricultural production that would lead to enough food production for local consumption and export. The question that begs for answer however, is, what strategy has been proposed for the realization of this objective? Is it the encouragement of farmers through easy access to loans, mechanization of that sector of the economy or making land easily accessible to willing investors?

In the area of fertilizer supply to farmers, for example, investigations have revealed a number of irregularities in recent times. One of these has to do with the appointment of contractors by the government to take charge of the purchase and distribution of the commodity to end users. The lackluster attitude of this government towards ensuring sufficiency in food production under the declared seven-point agenda has been painted by Adamu (Tell, February 23, 2009):

Farmers come under cooperatives to get loans from banks. But that is not available here. Then they talk about food security and I laugh. This is the same government that appointed three contractors to supply fertilizer. Before (Yar'Adua), there were more than 60 contractors. They reduced it to three saying that it will be better. But more than 20 percent of the fertilizer meant for farmers last year was not supplied. And one person from Katsina State handled that contract... There is no direct or deliberate measure for the poor farmers (pp. 20-21).

Consequently, if a programme targeted at massive food production does not carry the peasant farmers along, then it is an incontrovertible fact that it is likely to fail and go the way of previous agricultural policies in the country. Such past programmes include Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), and Green Revolution, among others.

**Human Capital Development:** This aspect of the policy thrust is targeted at reforming the education sector of the economy, to improve skills and enhance standards. Again, there are some questions to be asked here. What improvement has been recorded in that sector during the period under review has been at the helm of affairs, positive or negative? If we attempt to tie the answers to the above to the development of critical infrastructure, x-rayed above, the likely answer would appear in the negative; the country has not recorded significant growth.

The government seems not to have come up with specific programmes aimed at bringing the education sector out of the woods. The state of infrastructural decay of educational facilities runs from the primary, secondary, to the tertiary levels. In the absence of enabling infrastructure necessary for enhanced performance of these educational institutions, it would be very difficult to achieve enhanced skills and standards by the envisioned 2020. Most federal universities, for example have to access loans from banks on a monthly basis to augment the funds they get from the federal government for payment of staff salary. These same institutions have to on a daily basis; spend so much on independent power generation, because the public power

source is largely unreliable. Hence, universities, polytechnics and colleges of education have to acquire power generating plants which cost much to run and maintain. The salary scale of Nigerian tertiary institutions has been identified as one of the poorest in the world. It is note worthy that psychologists have proved beyond reasonable doubts that sufficient motivation is directly related to growth and productivity.

**Land Tenure and Home Ownership:** This aspect of the seven-point agenda is aimed at reviewing the Land Use Laws, to enable citizens' access mortgage facilities. This aspect is directly related to food production in Nigeria. By the existing Land Use Act and other related laws in Nigeria presently, all land belong to the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Consequently, when President Yar'Adua included this issue as one of the areas his administration would act on quickly, it was expected that it would be accorded the urgency it deserves.

It is however on record that it took this administration about two years (February, 2009) to present before the national legislature, a bill seeking for the amendment of sections of the land use laws of Nigeria. This proposal, it must be observed here, has to undergo the constitutional requirements of two-thirds majority acceptance at the federal, state and local government legislatures. The observation here is that, based on hind sight, it is observable that as most attempts at constitution review or amendment by civilian administrations have gone, it is unlikely that this one will achieve the set objective(s) in set time. It is equally worth observing that the acquisition of Certificates of occupancy (C of O) by Nigerian farmers is not the primary problem in this area. What the government rather should have focused on for now was to think of how to encourage the formation of cooperative societies, fund and monitor their activities, to the advantage of genuine farmers whose capacities have been hindered by the absence of enough funds. Through such cooperatives, enterprises will access funds and spring up again, to the benefit of the national economy and development.

**National Security:** Threat to lives and property seem to have assumed an unprecedented scale under the Yar'Adua administration. The available statistics informed the President's decision to include national security and intelligence among the seven-point agenda. Some observers have argued however, that equipping the security agencies and getting them battle ready is not the likely solution for this problem. Most have observed that a strong relationship exist between extreme poverty, hunger, joblessness and increased crime wave.

This paper thus submits that to tackle security problems seriously in Nigeria is to attend to the problems of poverty and joblessness.

**Wealth Creation:** This administration intends to diversify the nation's revenue base, from oil to the non-oil sectors. This focus is closely tied to food security, land reforms, human capital development and critical infrastructure.

Nigeria is a country, which for many years has depended on a mono-product (oil) for its foreign exchange earnings. As at date, crude oil accounts for more than 85% of externally

generated revenue for the country. This has for some time impacted negatively on the nation's economy, especially in these days of drastic fall in the price of crude oil at the international market. The country has not shown enough commitment towards economic diversification. The events of the last eight months (July, 2008-February, 2009) would be used to buttress our observation here. For more than six months in 2008, Nigeria recorded an all time high in its foreign exchange earning (excess crude account), and consequently huge reserves (as much as \$60 billion was declared at some point). This was as a result of the unprecedented increase in the price of crude oil, which went as high as \$145 per barrel. Analysts projected that that would serve as an opportunity for the diversification programme of the country to be kick-started.

Instead of investing the excess crude money into the development of the vital sectors of the economy, the politicians fought for and succeeded in getting the money shared among the three levels of government, upon which they preside. Majority of such funds unfortunately, found their way into private accounts owned by the politicians and their collaborators. Akpan (Newswatch, February 16, 2009), writing about the huge revenue which accrued to the nation that period has observed:

From reliable sources, we learn that out of the N2.9 trillion shared from the excess crude oil account between May and October 2008, more than #100 billion went into the accounts of some greedy public officers. Now the country is looking for #4 trillion to stabilize the economy. What an irony? (p. 7).

This observation is indeed a tragedy caused by visionless leadership which the country presently parades. Politicians seem to have a poor memory of history. After the oil boom of the 1970s, came the economic doom of the 1980s, which effect the nation still grapples with. Presently, after the oil boom of 2008, Nigeria is again suffering from the effects of the current global economic meltdown (with oil selling at \$34 per barrel). It must be observed here that the 2009 budget was passed on the projection of \$45 per barrel of oil. Nigerian politicians have repeated the ugly history of the 1970s. This development automatically portends danger for the administration, as funds may not be available to execute the projects already outlined under the seven-point agenda.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The President Yar'Adua administration set out to incorporate the MDGs into the major policy focus of the administration for the next couple of years. To achieve this objective, the administration floated the seven-point agenda as the major policy thrust of the government.

This article examined the full import of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It equally listed the contents of the seven-point agenda and raised a number of questions.

The paper observed that for a long time, Nigeria has suffered as a result of the absence of the critical issues raised in the President's seven-point agenda. It equally observed strongly that from available indices, the present administration lacks the political and administrative will to implement the seven-point agenda with the zeal it deserves,

to make the country the 20<sup>th</sup> largest economy by the year 2020. The paper thus ends on a note that Yar'Adua's vision 20:2020 may end up as another catchphrase, like vision 2010, education for all by the year 2000, housing for all by the year 2000, health for all by the year 2000 and others before it, which did not solve the problems that necessitated those policy pronouncements.

The following recommendations, if applied are expected to help the Yar'Adua administration achieve the desired goals by the year 2020. Nigeria should forge ahead with the MDG goals, objectives and programmes, as there could be some development benefits derivable from the programme at the end. The Yar'Adua administration should rethink the seven-point agenda and opt for at most two, for which it could summon the capacity to start and finish successfully, than go full scale for important strategies that it lacks capacity to pursue to a logical conclusion. For now, the administration could decide to channel majority of the country's resources into the critical infrastructure sector of the economy, which to a large extent appears to be a catalyst for the achievement of the other six goals. After recording success in that angle, other issues could then be attended to appropriately.

The country should accord diversification of the economy, a primary attention.

#### VI. REFERENCES

- 1) Dode, R. O. 2007. "Incidents of Hostage Taking and the Niger Delta Crisis in Nigeria", South-South Journal of Culture and Development, Vol. 9 No. 1.
- 2) Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Report: The Millennium Development Goals in Africa: progress and Challenges. Accessed from the Wikipedia, www, 02/02/09
- 3) Federal Republic of Nigeria. Yar'Adua's 7-Point Agenda: Federal Ministry of Information and Communications, 2007.
- 4) Humphrey, M. 2005. "Natural Resources, Conflicts, and Conflict Resolution: Uncovering the Mechanisms". Journal of Conflict Resolution. Vol. 49. No. 4. August.
- 5) Igbuzor, I. 2006. The Millennium Development Goals: Can Nigeria Meet the Goals in 2015. Abuja: A Paper presented at a Symposium on Millennium Development Goals and Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects, organized by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), 27th July.
- 6) Meier, G. 1989. Leading Issues in Economic Development. New York: Oxford University Press.
- 7) Nna, N. J. 2001. The Niger Delta State Legislation and Disempowerment. Owerri: Springfield Publishers Ltd.
- 8) Rodney, W. 1972. How Europe Underdeveloped Africa. London: Bogle-Louverture Publication
- 9) Todaro, M. P. 1979. Economics for a Developing World. London: Longman Group Limited
- 10) Okoko, K. A. B. & Nna, N. J. 1991. "Revenue Allocation and the Oil Producing States in Nigeria". In H. E. Alapiki. Ed. Perspectives in Socio-Political and Economic Development in Nigeria. Owerri Amythst Publishers.
- 11) Newswatch Weekly Magazine. September 29, 2008
- 12) Newswatch Weekly Magazine. February 9, 2009
- 13) Newswatch Weekly Magazine. February 16, 2009
- 14) Tell Magazine. September 15, 2008.
- 15) Tell Magazine. November 3, 2008.
- 16) Tell Magazine. November 10, 2008.
- 17) Tell Magazine. November 17, 2008.
- 18) Tell Magazine. December 8, 2008.
- 19) Tell Magazine. December 22, 2008.
- 20) Tell Magazine. January 19, 2009.
- 21) Tell Magazine. February 23, 2009.
- 22) The News Weekly Magazine. February 16, 2009.
- 23) The Punch Newspaper. June 4, 2009
- 24) United Nations Expert Group meeting on Natural Resources and Conflict in Africa: Transforming a Peace Liability into a Peace Asset. Cairo, Egypt, 17 to 19 June, 2006.