

**MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS ACHIEVEMENT IN AFRICA:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA**

**OGHENEMUDIAKEVWE LAWRENCE ODEH,**  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION,  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE, NIGERIA.  
oghenemudia@gmail.com

&

**ESEOSA EBOIGBE AIMUAN**  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION,  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE, NIGERIA.  
+2348036859578.

**Abstract**

The article examined the achievement of MDGs programme in Africa, using a comparative analysis of the two Africa's largest economy; that is, Nigeria and South Africa; in order to ascertain the extent at which these countries attained the goals, and to also, find out their reasons for achievement or failures of the various MDGs. Another objective of the study is to observe the areas where both countries can learn from each other for a more effective developmental capacity building. The article depended on secondary method of data collection, such as: text books, academic journals, government documents and circulars, newspapers and magazines, internet sources and so on. The various media reports on MDGs of both countries, and personal observation of the author has contributed immensely to the background knowledge of this article. The analysis of the study is based on the comparison of various authoritative developmental indices of Nigeria and South Africa. Thereafter, South Africa was found to have achieved the four MDGs target, almost before the 2015 deadline; While, Nigeria was unable to meet up with any of the assessed four Goals by the year 2015. The paper also noted other areas of convergence and divergence between the two countries with respect to the achievement of the MDGs. For example, both countries were observed to have exhibited a very high level of social inequality and unemployment. While, poverty and illiteracy rates vary widely between the two countries with Nigeria having a higher rate of the above stated indices than South Africa. Again, social welfarism was observed to be absent in Nigeria, but present in South Africa. In other for Nigeria to stand up to her challenges, there is the urgent need to cut down her over bloated bureaucracy and strengthen her institutions, entrench due process and accountability, enact social welfare policies, and ensure that there is the availability of reliable data for planning, in order to be well positioned to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Keywords: Development, Participation, Growth, GDP, NEEDS, Poverty, MDGs, Programme, Policy, sustainability, LDC.

**Introduction**

In September, 2000, the 189 member countries of the United Nations adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), committing themselves to bringing to fruition, the eradication of poverty, and achieving human development goals by 2015. The eight goals are stated thus: (i) To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, (ii) Achieve universal primary education, (iii) Promote gender equality and empowerment of women, (iv) Reduction in child mortality, (v) Improvement in maternal health, (vi) Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, (vii) Ensure environmental sustainability, and (viii) Developing a global partnership for development (Todaro & Smith, 2009:22-23). In order to achieve these objectives, MDGs were subdivided into eighteen (18) clear cut targets and forty-eight (48) indicators. The programme was to run from the years 1990-2015. This article examines MDGs Achievement in Africa with a comparative study of Nigeria and South Africa; it is sub-divided into various segments for effective analysis and comparison of both countries MDGs. Such areas include: The analysis of the theoretical framework of the research article, an overview of the background of the study, an insight into the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), and MDGs performance of Nigerian and South Africa.

### **New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)**

Rogers (1967:8-9), defines development as 'a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capita incomes and levels of living through more modern production methods and improved social organization'. Cockrift, Frank and Johnson (1972), viewed development as 'the coincidence of structural change and liberation of men from exploitation and oppression perpetuated by the international capitalist bourgeoisie, and their international collaborators'. Offiong (1980:21) opined that 'development results from people's frontal attack on the oppression, poverty and exploitation that are meted out to them by the dominant classes and their system'. In his view, Seers (1969) emphasized the crux of underdevelopment as indications for measuring development. These are: poverty, unemployment and inequality. He stated that: The questions to ask about a country's development are, what has been happening to poverty, unemployment and inequality. He noted that if these indicators increase, it shows the absence of development. In a similar development, Todaro (1985:85) views development as a holistic phenomenon. Walter Rodney described development at the individual level as: 'increase in skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being' (Rodney, 1972:1).

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is an economic development programme of the African Union (AU). It was enacted in July 2001, in Lusaka, Zambia. It was formulated to provide a vision and policy framework for accelerating economic co-operation and integration (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2009). The policy framework for the project was finalized on 23 October, 2001. NEPAD then became the development programme of the African Union and its secretariat is in South Africa (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2009). The participating states established an African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), "to promote adherence to and fulfillment of its commitments" (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2009:3).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Redistribution with Growth Theory: The redistribution with growth theory has been extensively analyzed by Hollis Chenery et al in redistribution with growth (Chenery, et al, 1976) and (United Nations Publications, 1970). The main thrust of the theory is one of a concern for social equity, and the need to reflect this in development (Iyoha, 1999). Ahluwalia, a contributor to the Chenery Study, presents two approaches to inequality: relative inequality, and the degree of absolute poverty. In relative inequality, the relationship between the size of a population group and their share of national income is measured (Ahluwalia, 1976:7).

Ahluwalia and Chenery then advocated for state investment in physical and human capital in order to optimize welfare (Ahluwalia and Chenery, 1976). Then, linking the above theoretical construct with the MDGs, it therefore, follows that the programme is geared towards ensuring a social-economic development of the LDCs, and to ensure the equitable distribution of her common wealth in order to achieve a holistic and sustainable development.

The Basic Needs Approach: The basic needs approach is an extension of the theory of redistribution with growth (Harrison, 1983). Streeten et al in "First Things First: Meeting Basic Human Needs in Developing Countries", published in 1981, by the World Bank presents the most comprehensive statements of the basic needs theory. The evolution of the basic needs, according to Harrison, was as a result of the inability of the growth and redistribution theories to meet the needs of individuals. So, what is required is to strive to achieve basic human needs through the realization of concrete objectives such as elimination of malnutrition, disease and proper attention to the education of girls (Lewis, 1954 in Iyoha, 1999). This article is anchored on the basic needs theory because the overall goal and target of the MDGs is to achieve sustainable development, in human, infrastructural and technological terms.

### **Research Methodology**

This paper relied on secondary sources of data collection, such as textbooks, academic journals, Government documents and circulars, internet sources, and so on. The personal observation by the author and various media reports of developmental problems and prospects of Nigeria and South Africa has also, contributed immensely to the background knowledge of this article.

### **Performance of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Achievement in Nigeria and South Africa**

In the course of examining the MDGs achievement of Nigeria and South Africa in comparative terms, emphases were placed on four out of the eight goals, these are, Goals: 1, 2, 7 and 8. These four goals were chosen because they are the core factors that are responsible for socio-economic development of the African Continent. South Africa and Nigeria were chosen for this analysis because they are the two largest economies of Africa.

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

Target 1A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income are less than one dollar a day: The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) gave an estimate of the prevalence of poverty in Nigeria for 2010, with measurement based on the USD 1 per day to be 61.20 per cent (NBS, 2010b), as against the MDGs target of 21.40 per cent (Nig. MDGs 2013, Report). On the other hand, the South African Government, unlike its Nigerian counterpart has dealt effectively with the goal to half extreme poverty (SA MDGs Report, 2013).

In 2012, Nigeria had a global hunger index of score of 15.7, and was by that score ranked 40th out of 79 countries, and thus positioning her among countries rated as 'seriously' suffering from hunger (Nig. MDGs 2013, Report). Conversely, available statistics in South Africa shows a declining rate of stunting among children from 30.40% to 23.90% in 2008, wasting declines from 7.8% to 4.6%, and underweight decrease from 13.2% to 8.7% between 1993 and 2008 respectively. These three factors are the measurement indicators for hunger. (SA MDGs, 2013 Report).

Halving Unemployment: The poverty situation of Nigeria has been attributed to the high national unemployment rate, estimated at 23.90 per cent in 2011. Specifically, youth unemployment was estimated at 37.70 %, thereby ranking Nigeria among the countries with the worst youth unemployment record in Sub-Saharan Africa. (Nig. MDGs 2013, Report). In the same vein, South Africa faces a similar unemployment challenges. Unemployment rate in South Africa was 25.50 per cent in 2014. (Trading Economics in [www.tradingeconomics.com](http://www.tradingeconomics.com)).

Levels of Inequality: The Gini index is a measurement of the extent to which the distribution of income (or consumption expenditure) among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. So, a Gini index of zero signifies perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality. As at 2006, Nigeria Gini index was put at 50.6, which was one of the highest in the world. (Igbuzor, 2006). But, it is has currently been reduced to 38.8, according to World Bank gini index. While the Gini index of South Africa is currently 63 percent, which is the highest in the world (Creamer, 2018).

Policy Support and Prospects for Achieving MDG 1: The NEEDS continue to be the Policy frame work for implementing MDG 1 policy initiative in Nigeria. That was reinforced by the Transformation agenda of former President Goodluck Jonathan's Administration, under which strategic human development issues, such as health, education and infrastructures were giving utmost consideration (Nig. MDGs 2013, Report). In South Africa, social wages are packaged in various targeted forms, intended to reduce the cost of living of the poor. (SA MDGs Report, 2013).

#### **GOAL 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education.**

Target 2: Ensure that, by 2015, Children Every where, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Net Enrolment in Primary Education Indices: It has been reported that about 42 % of primary-school-age children, or roughly 10.5 million, are out of school in Nigeria (UNESCO, 2012). On the other, the South African 2010 MDG report concluded that the country has attained the goal of universal primary education before the targeted date of 2015. In 2011, it recorded 99.0 % of 7 to 13-year old children who attended primary school. (SA MDGs Report, 2013).

Primary School Completion Rate: The successful completion rate of primary schooling in South Africa is put at 94.7 %. This is at par with the world average of primary school completion rate for high income countries put at 90.3 % and 100 % in 2011, respectively. On the other hand, the Nigeria's primary school completion rate increased from 67.50 % in 2007 to 87.70 % in 2012. This is less than the MDGs Primary School completion target of 100.0 % by 2015 (Nig. MDGs 2013, Report).

Literacy Rate of 15 to 24 Year olds: The above indicator measures the proportion of youths aged 15-24 who can both read and write with understanding in any language (Nig. MDGs 2013, Report). A Nigerian National Literacy Survey (2010) conducted by the NBS estimated the adult literacy rate at 56.9 per cent (UNESCO, 2012). Similarly, the total adult literacy rate in Nigeria between 2008 and 2012 was estimated at 51.1 per cent (UNICEF, 2013). Conversely, South Africa has almost achieved universal literacy for youth aged 15 to 24 with an overall literacy rate of 92.7 % in 2011. Literacy rates were higher for female youth than male youth for the period 2002 to 2011.

Ratio of Girls to Boys in Primary Education: 'At 90.0 % in 2012, Nigeria is, without doubt, on track to meet the target in 2015' (Nig. MDGs 2013, Report). Nigeria eventually met this target by 2015. On the other hand, 'ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education (%) in South Africa was last measured at 99.28 in 2009, according to the World Bank.' (Trading Economics in [www.tradingeconomics.com](http://www.tradingeconomics.com)). Both Nigeria and South Africa met the global target of bridging the gap between girls and boys in primary education.

Policy Support and Prospects for Achieving MDG 2: The Nigerian Government has embarked on various programmes and projects aimed at achieving MDG 2. 'One notable driver is the Federal Teachers Scheme (FTS). State Governments are required to establish early childhood centres in all public primary schools. With effect from 2010, the Almajiri Education Programme was directed at mainstreaming the Almajiri/Quranic System into basic education model (FME, 2010; FRN, 2013). Almajiri refers to children in Northern Nigeria, who are living a life of absolute poverty with many of them no longer with their poor parents but at the mercy of their Islamic teachers. Also, the nomadic education programme has, since 2012, established model nomadic education centres in Bauchi, Benue and Edo States (Nig. MDGs 2013, Report). The establishment of the Universal basic Education Programme by the Nigerian Government has also contributed immensely to the achievement of this goal.

In related development, South Africa, since her first democratic election that took place in 1994, made concerted effort towards the achievement of basic education for all citizens. (SA MDGs Report, 2013).

#### **GOAL 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability**

Target 7a: Integrate the Principles of sustainable Development into country Policies and Programme, and Reverse the Loss of Environmental Resources Proportion of Land Area Covered by Forest: In Nigeria, the proportion of land area covered by forest has consistently fallen over the past 20 years, and

no reasonable measure has been put in place to counteract this trend. However, South Africa is not endowed with abundant natural forests like Nigeria (SA MDGs Report, 2013). According to the World Bank, the forest area (% of land area) in South Africa was last measured at 4.67 in 2010 (Trading Economics in the above, therefore, implies that despite the fast depleting nature of Nigeria forest areas, it is still larger than that of South Africa.

**Ecological Disasters:** An estimate was given that the flooded area of Nigeria was about 1.4 million ha, while the estimated area of crop loss was about 467,000 ha (about 33.30 %). (Punch News in On the other hand, flooding in South Africa has killed over 100 people, forced at least 8, 400 from their homes and prompted the government to declare 33 disaster areas. (Smith, 2011).

**Target 7b: halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation:** In Nigeria, access to water sanitation and hygiene is a daily challenge to many people. The problem is more acute in rural northern Nigeria, where only about 30 % of the population has access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. (Nig. MDGs 2013, Report). The proportion of the population accessing safe water is 58.9 per cent. (UNDP in Nigeria in web.ng.undp.org). South Africa, on the contrary has 'achieved the MDG target of 88.3 % in relation to access to an improved water source in 2005. (SA MDGs Report, 2013).

**Gas Emissions and Ozone-Depleting Substances (ODS):** South Africa has been recognized as a major emitter of carbon (IV) oxide, and accounts for 65 % of Africa's emissions. (SA MDGs Report, 2013). On the contrary, data are not readily available for assessing gas emissions and ODS in Nigeria. (Nig. MDGs 2013, Report).

#### GOAL 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

**Target 8d: deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries.**

**Per Capita Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Nigeria and South Africa (in USD):**

ODA refers to grants or loans to developing countries at little or no interest rates. There has been a steady increase of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Nigeria over the years. Nigeria received a total ODA of USD 1, 502.080, 645.79, in 2011. The bulk (78.0 %) is directed towards human capital and social development, while 10.0 % goes to servicing governance and general administration. (Nig. MDGs 2013, Report). Similarly, South Africa received US 1.3 billion in official development assistance (ODA) in 2012, which was equivalent to 0.2 % of national income (Development Initiatives in devinit.org).

**International Relations:** At a global level, South Africa has embarked on important strategic linkages with other major developing countries through the BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) partnership. (SA MDGs Report, 2013). Similarly, Nigeria collaborates with some southern multilateral groups in negotiating for better terms of engagement with the developed world. Such collaboration includes, her Membership of the Developing Eight (D - 8), consisting of Nigeria, Iran Indonesia, Turkey, Egypt, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Malaysia. (Agbu, 2006).

**Debt Service as a Proportion of the Exports of Goods and Services:** In 2005, the Paris Club wrote off USD 18 billion of Nigeria's debt. As a result, Nigeria has been able to dedicate at least USD 1 billion yearly towards additional spending for the achievement of the MDGs (Nig. MDGs 2013, Report). On the other hand, the economic slow down in South Africa has increased government borrowing since 2008. (SA MDGs Report, 2013).

**Information and Communication:** in Nigeria presently, there are 0.4 fixed telephone lines per 100 persons, with most of them concentrated in cities. In contrast, mobile telecommunications in Nigeria has witnessed an astronomical growth with 59 cellular subscribers for every 100 inhabitants (Nig. MDGs 2013, Report). Similar trend also exists in South Africa, where fixed telephone line subscription by the people is failing from 25.8 % in 2002 to 15.3 % in 2011. (SA MDGs Report, 2013).

According to the statistics released by market research and statistics specialist, digitXplus in 2013, the internet penetration rate in Nigeria was about 41.6 % (i.e. 62.4 million subscribers). On the other hand, the internet penetration rate is slightly lower in South Africa than Nigeria, with South Africa having a penetration rate of 41 % in 2013. (www.southafrica.info).

Global Economic Crisis: In 2011, South Africa's labour absorption rate was just below 41 %, declining from around 45 % in 2008. (SA MDGs Report, 2013). On the other hand, similar trend occurred in Nigeria, where negative economic shocks have had critical damaging consequences for poverty reduction and sustainable development. Nigeria was, also, affected by the global economic and financial crises (Eboh and Ogbu, 2010).

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

This article examines eight MDGs achievement in Africa, in comparative analysis between Nigeria and South Africa. From the comparative study, it was observed that South Africa recorded far better achievements than Nigeria with respect to the four MDGs stated above, and also in terms of meeting the MDGs target. For example, South Africa has met the MDGs target of halving poverty and hunger, as well as the attainment of universal primary education (i.e. Goals 1 & 2) before the 2015 deadline. It has also made a giant stride in the other two goals, that is, 7 and 8. In other words, South Africa achieved the four MDGs investigated in this article. On the other hand, Nigeria did not achieve the targets of any of the four MDGs. Although, she made certain progress in Goal 8 with respect to debt cancellation, international relations, information and communication revolution through wide coverage of internet connections and telecommunication. But, these activities did not in any way assist the country in achieving real development, hence, the failure in the achievement of the goals.

In order for Nigeria to rectify the above stated developmental challenges, and to be better repositioned towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, there is the urgent need for the establishment of appropriate developmental framework, and strengthening of the institutions of the state. There should be zero tolerance to breach of due process and accountability, bribery and corruption should be drastically reduced at all levels. It has also been observed that most of the resources that would have been channeled to developmental programmes in Nigeria, ended up being used to service administration. It is in this regard that the World Bank lamented that 80 percent of Nigeria's oil wealth belongs to just 1 percent of Nigerians (Odeh, 2011). Therefore, a limited bureaucracy and technological advancement is a prerequisite to achieving developmental objectives in Nigeria. The country needs to learn from South Africa the enactment of social welfare programmes for the poor masses in order to cushion the effects of poverty. Like, South Africa, Nigerian Local Governments should organize a statistical data base of every household in each local government as well as their respective socio-economic backgrounds.

On the other hand, South Africa needs to drastically reduce its high level of inequality, which has been a factor responsible for its present high crime rate. The government of South Africa needs to accrue more revenue to the areas of public education and health, as well as create more jobs, so as to cushion the effects of inequality. The South Africa unemployment rate like that of Nigeria (23.90 %) was put at 25.50 percent as at 2013 (Nig. MDGs 2013, Report; Trading Economics in [www.Tradingeconomics.com](http://www.Tradingeconomics.com)). This socio-economic distortions need to be urgently corrected so as to give South Africa and Africa in general a pride of place in global history.

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