

Communication and the Environment: Nigeria's Image and Reputation Communication for Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

Currently, nations globally are very worried about sustainable development. As a result, three major gatherings were held for international dialogue and co-operation. The first was the Rio Earth Summit on Environmental Degradation in 1992. A decade later, in August and September 2002, Johannesburg, South Africa hosted the world summit on sustainable development. Then, we had the 2006 event in Saudi Arabia. However, the inter-relationship between nations of the world on the concept of development has not been smooth, considering some nations' image and reputation problems. In Nigeria, internal and external diplomatic relations have dwindled since 1970. The nation's image is poor and her reputation low. Economic development has been slow or retarded. Yet, Nigeria finds herself amongst other nations grappling with the tenets of sustainable development. This work introduces Nigeria's image and reputation problems both domestically and internationally and defines key concepts in the study. It also discusses the domestic and foreign conceptions, perceptions and communication of Nigeria's image and reputation. It further observes the implication of the nation's battered image and reputation communication with regard to sustainable development. The essay then advocates a theoretical formula for Nigeria and suggests alternatives for more result-oriented developments based on fresh image and reputation management. Finally, some recommendations are suggested and a conclusion drawn.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

World leaders and delegates numbering about 65,000 gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa, from August 26 to September 4, 2002, for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. This was after the Rio Earth Summit on Environmental Degradation a decade earlier. They rekindled the memory of Marshall McLuhan's "global village" communication-wise idea. Think-tanks and very high level discussions emerged and heads rolled in the brain-storming tussles focusing on which economic or development formulae the world should adopt in the current age and in future. Each attending nation got away with priorities and proposals for fresh blue-prints from the outcome of the summit at both domestic and intra-national settings for each nation. Little did such nations consider that after the summit, the implementation of emerging priorities and proposals would meet their Waterloo as a result of inherent socio-cultural diversities and emergencies of these nations.

Back home in Nigeria, the story is still not different. Sustainable development processes seem to be in disarray at their application stages. For example, communication for sustainable development seems to have taken a new and

dormant dimension, borne out of the attendant image and reputation problems domestically and otherwise. This notwithstanding, the communication implications of the overall bulk of the summit's deliberations are daunting.

Owing to the socio-cultural as well as political maladies that Nigeria is currently saddled with, this essay expresses concern about the nation's present communication status resulting from the damage done by those maladies that border on her image and reputation. This affects the rudimentary fabrics of sustainable development in both foreign and domestic frontiers. Bribery, corruption, the advanced fee fraud or 419 syndrome, mismanagement or misappropriation of public funds, a mixed-grill of emergent foreign and domestic saboteurs in the economic green points of the nation, are now the order of the day. Under this dispensation and coupled with the incredible and suspicious information and business climate, which type of communication does Nigeria need away from the current debacles, to erase the current order and instil a fresh orientation at the foundation of effective, sustainable development?

In structural context, the paper therefore defines key concepts in the study; takes a look at the current communication status about Nigeria's image and reputation within and outside the nation; advocates a theoretical direction and application; assesses how the nation's battered image and reputation has affected sustainable development; suggests workable alternatives for more result-oriented sustainable development based on fresh image and reputation management. It ends with some recommendations and a conclusion.

2.0 CONCEPTS DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION

2.1 NIGERIA'S IMAGE AND REPUTATION COMMUNICATION

Sambo (2001) posits a definition acceptable to this work as follows:

...the reputation or image of a nation or country is the impression or opinion held by other nations, organizations, people or persons about that nation or country.

Nigeria's image or reputation is good, bad or neither. It is either earned or merely an outcome of stereotypes. It is imbued with intangible bidding, linking practical implications or consequence. The word 'communication' according to Akpan (1987:20), "is the sharing of meaning with oneself or with others," and this paper adopts this definition.

2.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Cross, (2002:6) quoting the Brundtland Commission (1987), says: "sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

A concept, perhaps also a process, in which the global challenges of environmental or ecosystem degradation is not allowed in the course of pursuing sustainable livelihood. For example, poorer nations not striving to live above poverty line by being forced to use essential environmental resources unsustainably. Or, richer

nations because of over-production of developed gainful resources destroy the environment through pollution, waste exposure and global warming.

3.0 DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN CONCEPTION, PERCEPTION AND COMMUNICATION OF NIGERIA'S IMAGE AND REPUTATION.

The issue about Nigeria's image and reputation among Nigerians and foreigners, is so glaring that no part of the nation's history can be expressed without thinking first about incredible and suspicious embellishments. Politically in Nigeria, the then Minister of Transport under the Shehu Shagari was almost abducted from England to Nigeria to answer questions on charges of corruption against him. This attempt violated the diplomatic codes, confidence and trust reposed on Nigeria by Britain. At the international level, England did not take this kindly with Nigeria. In the same London in 2006, a former Governor of Bayelsa State, Daprieye Alamieshieya escaped from England where he was standing trial on charges of corruption. Again, this was another exhibition of the Nigeria character detested internationally. In February 2007, some Philippines were abducted and taken hostage by youths of Delta State on grounds of marginalization by the Government of Nigeria of oil resource in the area. The report was carried by the CNN and caused a rift between Nigeria and the world community over the insecurity and human rights abuses. At the American embassy complains by Nigerians travelling to the United States centre on thorough checks imposed on Nigerians by the U.S authorities on arriving at the JFK International Airport in new York. At the nation's economic frontier, saboteurs again exist. Oil bunkering and smuggling activities at the coast lines are very high. Drug peddling as reported by drug law enforcement agents rank very high and the business is often collaborated with foreigners, despite campaigns and advertising to stem it. Some other records involving political killings, including the murder of Nigeria's former Justice Minister- Bola Ige ; oil pipeline vandalization in Lagos in which hundreds of people were burnt to death in 2006 ; mass bribery and corruption in which the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC) are grappling to control.

Among the ethnic groups, the level of suspicion alone that greets an Hausa, Ibo or Yoruba relationship, takes root from economic, political, social and cultural bases. Let alone, the grand national resource owner- the Minority.

It has been on record that Hausas like to rule for too long and are hesitant in relinquishing political and perhaps economic power. As such when they assume political power, the rest of the nation catches cold and becomes suspicious of another turn of hegemony in the rationing of the national cake. When the Minority is dissatisfied with the political or economic scheme of things, it is considered by the majority as complaining, or getting ready to control its vast natural resources through protest and as such must not be given a chance. The Ibos are perhaps considered thrifty, sharp in practices and shady in deals, less trusted, that when given a chance again, may secede or defect politically. The Yoruba's, until the annulment of June 12, 1993 political election result, were considered to be one with the Hausas and Ibos dealing with them must be cautious.

Considering the background above in domestic context, stereotypes in dealings and belief systems exist among Nigerians in most walks of life which influence their image and reputation perception and conception about Nigeria.

Nkwocha (2002) in a paper presented at Abeokuta in June 2002, titled "Leveraging Nigeria in the World Media Market," opined as follows:

...Can we honestly say that the reports about our country in the local media suggest that it has a good image?

...with daily reporting of ethnic, religious and politically motivated clashes and violent crimes that lead to the loss of lives and property worth billions of naira? What about the news of corruption in high places especially in government?

Coupled with ethnocentrism and greed among Nigerians towards domestic national resources, those with access to power cling to the belief system that perhaps cannot blend with the tenets of sustainable development, which holds that tomorrow's generations must not be sapped as a result of today's struggle for sustainability.

Today's Nigerians are a product of Nigeria. Existing domestic resources constitute a whole large national cake that is viciously being rationed. For example the billions of naira carted away by Nigeria's former Presidents-Ibrahim Babangida (the Iraqi war oil windfall) and the Sani Abacha stolen fund from Nigeria. Perhaps for instance, the mono-economic product - crude oil, because the dispensation of it domestically is suspicious, unsustainable and exploitative, Nigerians are shouting marginalization and therefore a move for resource control, as is currently heightened within the Niger-Delta region of southern Nigeria. The result is poor image, low and incredible reputation.

Still also within the Nigerian context the spate of robbery attacks are terrible, unemployment ratio, particularly at graduate rating is so high. Our economic reputation is low, with very high inflationary level as reported by the World Bank. The low and depreciating exchange rate of the Naira, according to Olajide (2004:29) in the Guardian newspaper - "Money watch" column of July 7, 2004, will not be enhanced,

...until we have an effective productive sector of the economy, supported by sound physical and legal infrastructure...

(At the time of writing the naira exchange rate ratio for the US dollar was 120:1 Nigerian naira.)

In Nigeria, who does business successfully, using the national electric power supply source - NEPA (Power Holdings)? Even the health institutions of the nation are unsustainable by this public power source. Current investigations and revelations by Nigeria's National Assembly in 2008, show that electrification contract awards gulped 16 billions US dollars, with no contract executed after the

fund disbursement, under President Obasanjo's eight years democratic rule between 1999 and 2007.

Still within the Nigerian perspectives, image and reputation communication as it borders on the nation's eco-system is nothing to write home about. A few years back, in the then Bendel State and now Edo and Delta States, it was not difficult for some Nigerians to accept a bribe to allow a foreign shipping firm to import and dump radio-active and toxic waste in Koko. This waste disposal process was known to have endangered man, animal and agricultural species.

Desert encroachment, uncontrollable annual bush burning, deforestation and gully erosion devastations are spells which up till date, the Nigerian authorities have not adequately addressed. This pattern of environmental communication is counter productive to the tenets that are supportive of sustainable development.

In Jos, the illegal mining of tin and iron ore; in Warri and recently in Igbokoda riverine area of Ondo state, reporting oil spillage and water pollution and contamination; in Imo, Abia Edo Delta and Cross River states, pipelines vandalism and illegal diversion of petroleum resources; at the port terminals – the illegal oil bunkering and lifting to foreign, undisclosed or unknown destinations, are parts of sharp and unsustainable domestic communication that mar sincere effort to attain the so much talked about sustainable development.

A healthy nation can perhaps generate sustainable communication credible enough to protect its citizens. Do Nigerian hospitals and medical centres communicate health, both within and outside the nation in the face of "OS" - out of stock treatment formula? What does AIDS and Polio communication sound like to Nigerians vis-à-vis drug shortages? According to Dr. Bola Olaosebikan, in a paper presented at a health conference in Ibadan, as reported in the March 6, 1987 edition of the Daily Times of Nigeria Newspaper:

There is unhealthy health information order in Nigeria... in the mass media both in placement and allocation.

Mogu,(2004:12-13) quoting from the "Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)", of the Federal Office of Statistics, Abuja in 1999, stated that one in every five Nigerian children dies before attaining the age of five. In the comparison and at average, a baby born in Nigeria is about thirty times more at risk of death before the age of five, than a baby born in the industrialized world. Seven women die from complications in pregnancy and childbirths for every thousand births, leaving Nigeria with the risk of maternal deaths at about 100 times higher than in the developed world. The thinking then, is the reasoning between the great loots of former Nigeria's leader, Sani Abacha and Nigeria's communicated image unsustainability at domestic parlance. Why so rich and yet so poor a nation?

Future ingredients of sustainable development as far as manpower and man hour are concerned, are students. Today's cultism practice is defacing to the Nigerian system. A few years back, B.B.C British Radio in London described the University of Calabar (Nigeria) as the worst University, south of the Sahara, in terms of

cultism killings among students, killings through cultism is a whole Nigerian affair, not just the University of Calabar.

Then, the just concluded so-called national democratic elections. How many of you sitting here had the opportunity of casting your votes? Where was the free and fair elective principle through popular mandate to elect those who could render sustainable development strides to the needy masses? What nature of Nigeria's image and reputation was communicated to you, upon the declaration of election result? Your ovations are as predictable as my oration. Why sustainable development under this dispensation?

A nation's sustainable development strides must imbibe both foreign and domestic support resource-wise, politically, culturally and technologically. Let us turn to the foreign scene and see how Nigeria's image and reputation communication tastes like over the years.

After the demise of the Shehu Shagari administration in Nigeria, the media report on the political saga which beset the subsequent regimes of Buhari and Babangida, hinged on the looting made by the Transport Minister under Shagari's government – Umaru Dikko. Steps were taken to get him back from self exile in London to clear the air on the fraud issue. Little did one think that attempts would be made to transfer Dikko upon sedation, in a diplomatic casket to Nigeria. This sharp practice embarrassed not just the Bush House in London but the entire British government.

In a paper presented at a Communication Conference in the elsewhere Polytechnic, Calabar, Vincent Mogu (1998), stated as follows:

In England, the steps taken within the year by Nigeria's government to launder the nation's image failed. An international firm of British Public Relations consultants was contacted to create a new image for Nigeria as could be accepted internationally. The contract amounted to some millions of dollars but the firm not only rejected the contract offer, by the regime but said the nation's image was so bad and odious that repairs could only begin from within Nigeria.

Nigeria today opts for sustainable development urging for assistance and debts relief from her Colonial master, Britain, whose faith in Nigeria has crippled in her image and reputation communication.

It is still not better, considering Nigeria's image in the world media market.

Lindiger, (2000), reported by Dutch newspaper about Lagos in May and the Guardian, 7th May, 2000 put a lot of mud on Nigeria's image, stating as follows:

Nowhere else in Africa is there a country with so much violence ruling, without there being a war. Nigeria is an insane nation, ill because of an overdose of materialism...

There is nowhere else you will find so many black penises swinging in the open air, and so many people

Shitting and pissing so openly and without shame, than in Lagos, a filthy city-jungle.

This is Nigeria, oil rich and leading in Africa.

Still on Nigeria's image and reputation overseas, on December 11, 1994, an American TV station (CBS) in its programme "60 minutes", told the whole world how "419", bribery and corruption had taken over Nigeria, titling the report "Corruption Incorporated" and with Nigeria's Code of Arms at the background. Lagos city became "one big school of fraud." The CBS team was on an espionage and facts finding mission. Indeed where lies sustainable development?

Perhaps the Nigerian and his idea for now about sustainability in national context, is wholly anachronistic. Top policy makers and implementers for the masses are more often trapped in corruption, making a mess out of the essence of governance. In April 15, 2002, the TIME magazine reported about the Nigerian government in an article titled "the whole Truth". It was on the invitation of foreign journalists to Abuja by the Information and National Orientation Minister "for a lecture on honest and accurate reporting" of events and issues in Nigeria. After the briefing, each journalist was served with a brown envelop containing about \$400. The report insisted, "Nigeria's culture of bribery threatens freedom of the press." The government was engulfed in the scandal and had since been trying to extricate itself.

Maier, (2002), an American journalist gave what may be called a verdict about Nigeria in his text titled "this House has Fallen". Note the following, culled from the text and also recorded by Okunna (2003):

- ...the most intractable crisis points are the ethnic and regional tensions threatening the survival of what is perhaps the largest failed state in the Third World.
- In May, 1999, after a sixteen year stretch of military rule, Nigeria appeared ready to turn a new page... but much damage had been done. Obasanjo assumed the helm of an ailing ship of state almost totally lacking in morality and legitimacy.
- ... abused by army rule for three quarters of its brief life span, the Nigerian state is like a battered and bruised elephant staggering towards an abyss with the ground crumbling beneath its feet.
- Ethnic and religious prejudices have found fertile grounds in Nigeria, where there is neither a national consensus nor a binding ideology.

- ... independent (Nigeria) services as a tool of plunder by the country's modern rulers. Nigerians spend a good part of their lives trying to get the better of the government for their own benefit or that of their family, their village, or their religion.
- ...Nigeria is known as a "developing nation," a phrase that conjures up images of economic progress... Nigeria, like so many other countries in Africa, is patently not a developing nation. It is "underdeveloping".

This is Nigeria's image and reputation position from fellow countries we many want to rely on for debts relief or rescheduling, to grapple with economic sustainability. Perhaps Nigerians should behave themselves, so that when they travel to America, they don't first get subjected to thorough and humiliating checks at the JFK Airport, in New York.

4.0 IMPLICATION OF NIGERIA'S BATTERED IMAGE AND REPUTATION IN COMMUNICATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is a multi-faced concept and propagating ideas about it in domestic fora means a lot of understanding, co-operation and sincerity on the part of the rulers and the ruled. A situation where the socio-cultural and political divisions of a nation comes to affect the economic resources, results in hazards of developmental dichotomy. In which case mass scramble and greed, results in the rationing of the national resources to sustain either tribal or sectional groups loyal to the emerging political divisions. Resources of yesterday did not last till today. Neither would the resources of today see the light of the tomorrow. The result is either counter production or apathy, particularly among regions where such resources are localized.

In Nigeria, this is perhaps the case. National resources, which ought to conform to the strides of sustainable development, are not equitably distributed. To enhance equity nationally, has always bred ill winds between the socio-cultural and political retail shops.

Within Nigeria, there is perhaps no business in governance without first pegging the price of traded crude oil and predicating it on the budget or annual fiscal policies. States where oil is derived think that they are being grossly marginalized for national development and because they think the oil wells may soon dry-up, makes them join forces to fight for resource control unsustainably. To advocate sustainability, is oil product for tomorrow's generation?

Currently, are Nigerians satisfied with their living standards at least at the expense and level of the minimum economic standards? The answer is, high cost of living, no faith in governance, poor electricity supply, no reliable sources of drinking water, poor roads and, other infrastructures, etc. That is the image on the Nigerian photograph. The rationale behind low productivity is sequel to listlessness among Nigerian workers both at the public and private sectors. Wage reviews only exist in theory and the Naira has lost its vigour of sustainability. Top civil servants are

now petit traders and those in the rurality do everything to plunder the eco-system for survival unsustainably. According to Hochleitner, (2000):

Humanity's future will only be secured when we are more careful with nature and we shape our interaction with it in a more sustainable way. This will require not only doing everything to increase the efficiency of how we use resources; it also implies sustainable lifestyles which will entail giving some things up.

Domestically, illiteracy is high and image and reputation communication is poor, on the basis of poor citizenry education. The fallen standards of education and the lack in field researches have always shown that citizens are not there to help create, in the long run, equality of opportunity and contribute to dismantling dangerous inequalities affecting sustainable development.

At the foreign scene, the socio-cultural and political dilemma of Nigeria has been scaring to foreign donors and investors. The "419" syndrome for example by some Nigerian categories; the bloodshed and inter-tribal clashes; the killing of the expatriates in Warri oil-rich region; the political image of Nigeria in terms of quasi-democratic governance; etc, are cases in point.

In reality, it was maddening to hear about the outcome of political election results from the world monitoring groups. Foreign reports abstractly refused to recognize the election results and the first to do so were the conglomerates of the European Union. From the United States, the confusion caused President George Bush to tarry a while before congratulating Chief Olusegun Obasanjo on his victory at the polls.

Nigeria's image and reputations has been faulted in both domestic and foreign communications. Domestically, Nigerians may perhaps find it very difficult to understand the concept of sustainable development, particularly when everyone thinks government to be the purse and treasure of the nation. How many ruralites and even the working class in the urban can afford, kerosene, gas or electric cookers in place of firewood (razing the ecosystem through deforestation) for their subsistence; let alone the thought on sustainability. Also how many multi-national companies doing business in Nigeria really take time to manage or treat their industrial waste that constitutes environmental hazards? Crude and cheap waste management methods rather abound. In the Niger-Delta development region, including Calabar – the Cross River State Capital, the waste management scheme of NDDC (Nigeria Delta Development Commission) and the CUDA (Calabar Urban Development Authority) appear most embarrassing and worst in history, in their decompositions, or, can we name one city in Nigeria where you find steady flow of pipe borne water or electricity within a reasonable period?

In Akwa Ibom State, farming activities have become difficult, in some locations where oil business and gas flaring takes place. Corrugated iron roofs in some homes get easily rusted as a result of the environmental hazard, posed by oil drilling and refining. Yet, no reasonable compensation at least satisfactory enough, has been paid to these inhabitants.

At foreign dimension, the image and reputation problem Nigeria has, had not stopped market terms in international trade. Globalization may not be better here. Sustainable development does not mean that foreign manufacturers like Japan, America and Germany must re-cycle and cheapen their industrial defects, only to see Nigeria as terminal dumping ground. Nor can Nigerian domestic production compete favorably internationally, to ensure gains for domestic fiscal development apart from crude oil resource.

The issue is the importation of fairly used cars, vehicles, fridges, etc that no longer find abode in such countries. The saturation of industrial product in cities like Tokyo and Osaka in Japan, would require one purchasing a car, to obtain licenses requiring and authorizing that you have a parking space before you are sold. Perhaps exporting unusable product to Nigeria to occupy the greater landmass to allow more space in Asia, Europe and America, means sustainable development and globalization. The question by implication is, what would Nigeria produce in return to occupy space in such nations in the context of sustainability?

Using Nigeria's image and reputation to communicate sustainable livelihood to the rest of the world is counter productive, so long as there is need to turn the mirror inwards and effect domestic and structural changes socio-culturally and geographically. Or, is sustainable development illusionary?

5.0 ADVOCATING A THEORETICAL DIRECTION AND APPLICATION FOR NIGERIA.

Nigeria's image and reputation communication on general issues can be made more attractive to the world and not just in the face of sustainable development. This can be done through domestic and national reconciliation and re-orientation, beginning from government circles. Popular politics which favour popular opinion and participation must not be left out. Nigerians must first accept Nigeria in full swing before being patriotic to Nigeria. Through this, an image and reputation structure will be created and presented to the rest of the world.

For now, no man is an island. Nigeria is not an Island. She still finds herself among people and group of nations she must relate with. To be hailed once more, let us use the theory of communication and mutual understanding in the model below as possible solution.

5.1 THE CONVERGENCE MODEL OF COMMUNICATION AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING.

The model given by Kincaid (1979:34) in Unoh (1987:92-94), implies that what happens during communication and information propagation is a meeting of minds, is a mutual interaction in a situation where various meanings and points of view are possible, (in the Nigerian contexts, these points of view link image and reputation). The model assumes that:

- (a) the common goal of communicators (here Nigeria authorities, Nigerians and foreign nations) is mutual understanding;

- b) That communication is a process which two or more individuals or groups share information in order to reach a mutual understanding of each other and the world in which they live;
- c) and that the process of convergence towards mutual understanding subsumes divergence at certain points, and implies that mutual understanding can be approached in a manner through information sharing or feedback, but can never be perfectly achieved.

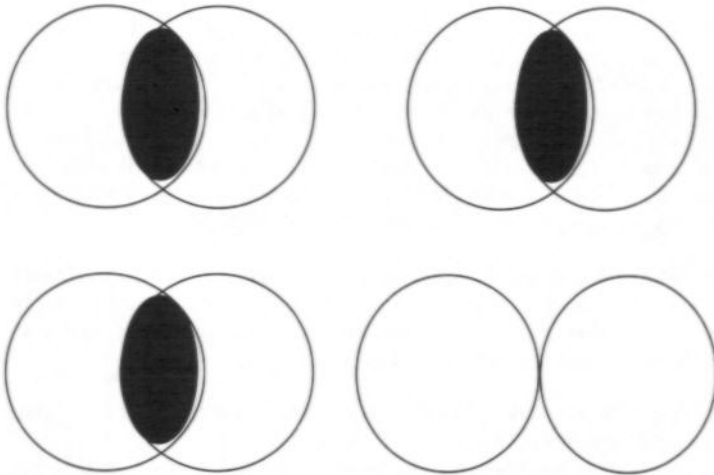


FIG.1. A DIAGRAMMATIC ILLUSTRATION OF THE CONVERGENCE OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING - KINCAID (1979:34)

In the model, the relationship between Nigeria and foreign nations can be emphatically balanced. In the application, X represents Nigeria with its own complete bad image, reputation and frame of reference Y represents foreign nations (absorbing every good or bad shock from the behaviour of X. Y may often be an open and admmissive world, rich with reputation and good intentions). Nigerians and citizens of foreign nations which ought to be the third factor Z but is absent in the model, is latent but common to the world of X and Y. If therefore the latent Z chooses to employ the services of Y as it should be, then Y will not hesitate to work with X to strike a balance in communication of good image or relationship, as is shown in the diagrams. In ABC the levels of interaction are on, like dialogues between X, Y and latent Z. In this process, any significant beneficial orientation struck between X and Y automatically benefits Z (at this point X's level of acceptability becomes noticed, meaning high image and reputation) In A, X and Y have some percentage level of mutual attention. The shaded column is the degree of attention X and Y need, to secure a balance of understanding. This shaded region is significant because, in the event of an image or reputation

problem, Y works on X and the frame of reference of X changes positively towards Y attitudinally and with maximum understanding. This is partly because X who had suffered devastating image and reputation problem, may perhaps be reluctant or hesitant to remain in the original problems state. Y is the wide, wide world rich with experiences and uses symbols and strategies to influence X to assume new image and reputation. A, B and C are dialogue zones, while D is a free and balanced region. X and Y at D are Nigeria and other nations, richly united, giving rise to a very high image and reputation position for Nigeria domestically and the world over.

In the model, four hypothetical situations arise:

- (i.) Mutual understanding with agreement;
- (ii.) Mutual understanding with disagreement;
- (iii.) Mutual misunderstanding with agreement;
- (iv.) Mutual misunderstanding with disagreement;

At this point, result-oriented communication on sustainable development can be enhanced, taking advantage of the fresh image and reputation position of Nigeria. This can be more significantly explained considering the theoretical postulations under this work:

- (a) If Nigerians and their foreign neighbours attain mutual understanding with agreement on the bases of the free play of public opinion, it will go onto support the ideas of convergence latent in the model, within which practice, a conducive climate will emerge even at the level sustainable relationship. This can incur co-operation, the ultimate basis for sustainable development.
- (b) When mutual understanding with disagreement occurs both parties on the bases of interconnected relationships can define or arrive at available impediments to sustainable development indices. According to the theory, people who grow within realities of good relationships will likely avoid decisions, actions or commitments that are likely going to run down these relationships, at least, for the sake of sustainable and beneficial development strides. One level of disagreement from one environment, may not after all communicate any form of rancour to inhibit cooperation generated by another environment because of the already existing mutual understanding of the frame of reference of each of the parties. Nigeria can tell Japan, not to dump toxic wastes in the Nigerian territory, yet this will not offend Japan from further contributing to sustainable development in Nigeria.
- (c) Image and reputation management of nations, groups or individuals on the basis of sustainable development may involve mutual misunderstanding with agreements between and among such development propagators. National development recipients perhaps find it difficult to forego certain things they enjoy, in favour of Government's policies on sustainability. In Nigeria and indeed parts of Africa, complaints by Governments often border on the rural people burning bushes to hunt for rodents, polluting rivers and streams to fish, deforestation for new farmlands and lumbering. This is often generating conflicts between law enforcement agencies and

the rural people on the basis of environmental control and sustainable development moves. Misunderstanding of the rural people is age – long and breeds suspicion on why government wants stereotypes of age – long traditions e.g. (hunting of some animal species or forms of ecological control) to be stopped. The convergence model therefore advocates a form of agreement in the face of mutual misunderstanding.

- (d) Mutual misunderstanding with disagreement is also a postulate that is also applicable in sustainable development communication dimensions. Like conflict and its management, people and nations disagree with themselves and policies in order to end modify or regenerate ideas or new policies. When they do this, and to the greater degree of their benefit, they still maintain a cordial climate conducive to any level of sustainability they may be involved in. Thus, the convergence model as it is, can re-define the image and reputation status or position of nations, create or modify understanding and provide a climate that further developments strides, up to the extent to which life and sustainability become worthwhile.

6.0 ALTERNATIVES FOR MORE RESULT-ORIENTED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT UPON FRESH IMAGE AND REPUTATION MANAGEMENT.

A new national outlook for Nigeria on the basis of fresh image and reputation management will constitute an only option or bedrock, for a more result-oriented sustainable development. Nigeria has for now, attendant image problems detested both within and internationally. Application of the theoretical model in discussion may perhaps effect a re-ordering in both foreign and domestic contexts. People's perceptions and conceptions about this country have done lots of damages economically and otherwise. When an acceptable image and reputation results, the following may occur:

- (i.) Nigeria will once more be reckoned with by Nigerians and a new national re-orientation void of bribery and corruption will result. An alternative reward here is national discipline and government can educate the citizenry to accept that the national resources can be used to develop Nigeria, rather than feeding individual pockets.
- (ii.) Foreign nations will be ready to come in, stay and do business with Nigeria without attendant suspicion, fears and listlessness. This is time for a new alternative, where the economic standards of Nigeria can gain new inputs from foreign economic deals and bargains that are freely mated. The result is improved sustainability levels for Nigerians. Only then can we think of a result- oriented sustainable development.
- (iii.) Environmental problems must be checked particularly when these threatens the ecosystem. Communication must also be sustained to enhance afforestation and reforestation after deforestation. Multi-national companies should as well be checked from dumping industrial wastes on Nigerian soil.
- (iv.) If generations of the future will be sustained, existing scope and level of legislations must be invigorated and enhanced to protect the endangered species of plants and animals. A reputable communication climate coupled

with co-operation with the laws under the World Wide Life Foundation, (WWF) is one direction of attention to be considered.

- (v.) Sustainability means long term investments by both government and the private sectors, through cheap housing policies, conservation or preservation of national resources without wastage. Training the citizenry means training the nation. The fallen standards of education must be addressed formally and officially. Only a disciplined national image and reputation can instil this faith for a far reaching sustainable advancement.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Nigeria's image and reputation communication for sustainable development for now, is poor and unacceptable both in domestic and foreign circles. Government through national re-orientation must ensure national discipline.
- b. Any of such national discipline and re-orientation should not be temporary or passive in order to instil a long lasting faith and to cultivate the spirit of national acceptance and growth, through public opinion acceptance.
- c. Image and reputation communication matters, are better handled by communication experts, trained on the job, not charlatans
- d. sustainable development, is not a concept to be tackled in isolation by one nation. Nigeria should therefore formulate policies agreeable internationally, like those of sustainable development conventions.

8.0 CONCLUSION

Communication and the environment are not two concepts that exist in isolation of each other. Communication has patterns which are set to convey messages on the environment. When the environmental managers present signals about the ecosystem for example, communication merely comes in with ready patterns to assess the implication of such emerging signals as they affect the environment. That is what this work has done.

The Nigerian environment is in conflict with itself and with its neighbours. So she is affected by this development communicatively. As a result of that scenario, this work has traced inherent problems which exist and should be addressed methodically. Following this, ensuing solutions will be tailored into appropriate channels to benefit the management of sustainable development as it affects Nigeria. Only then, can we say according to Babangida (1992), "For Their Tomorrow We Give Our Today".

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