

*Implementation of Millennium Development Goals (MDGS)*



## **Implementation of Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) and National Security in Nigeria: A Strategic Thinking**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the year 2000, Nigeria joined the 189 member states at the United Nations Millennium Summit to set the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which were related to various aspects of development targeted for realization in year 2015. This paper is a strategic thought on the implications the implementation of the goals holds out for national security in Nigeria. The paper, which is based on the study of literature, reveals that genuine commitment to the implementation of the goals is strategically related to effective national security. However, in Nigeria the progress that thus far has been made in the implementation of the goals is yet inadequate to guarantee effective national security.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The closing decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed an increase in the practice of global development agenda setting. During this period, several international summits and conferences were held around the world on the need for countries to evolve strategies to achieve certain benchmarks on various aspects of development. These international summits and conferences included the Children Summit held in New York in 1990, the Education Summit held in Jomiten, Thailand, the Summit of the Earth held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the International Population Conference held in Egypt, the Women's Conference held in Beijing, China in 1995 and the Copenhagen Summit held in 1995. These conferences prompted and climaxed with the United Nations Millennium Summit held in September 2000 by 189 member states including Nigeria, in which the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) were set. The eight time-bound goals that were set relate to poverty

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alleviation, education, gender equality, environmental protection, maternal health care, child health care, and global partnership. The goals and targets that are to be achieved by the year 2015 were set on the basis of the global situation in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In particular, this decade for Nigeria was low, volatile and turbulent. The nation degenerated into a theatre of complex civil strife and political violence in the forms of demonstrations, riots, strikes, coups, and inters – group conflicts. According to Rondos exhibits the symptoms of millennial disaster: the phenomenon of collapsing states and its systemic manifestations is civil disorder and humanitarian tragedies of incalculable proportion. The symptom of civil disorder is a manifestation of an aggravating trend anchored to the visceral ties of ethnicity and religion that transcend boundaries.....and compelling government to seek new form of activism when civil conflicts occur (Bassey 2005:49)

Nigerian government adopted various measures to contain these threats to national security but recorded only marginal success. This paper therefore seeks to examine the imperative for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in order to promote effective national security in Nigeria. For convenience of analysis this paper is structured into five sections. The first introduces, the second examines the major concepts central to the subject matter of the discourse. Then, the third is a strategic overview on background of Nigeria. The fourth strategically relates the importance of MDG implementation to Nigeria's national security. The fifth section concludes.

#### **Conceptual Expositions**

To easily appreciate the subject matter of this discourse it is imperative to operationally define the central concepts. The necessity is informed by the fact that the meanings of most concepts are imprecise, ambiguous, vague and nebulous in meanings. Operational definition involves articulation of the specific meaning that concepts represent in the context of application. In this context, the central concepts that of necessity require explication are strategy, thinking (thought) and national security.

#### **National Security**

There are broad spectrums of definition on national security. In a simple connotation, security means the peace of mind or the absence of fear and an absence of threat to acquired value. In a broad term, security is viewed at the levels of the state and the individual. At the level of the state, security connotes measures in the protection and preservation of the state against external aggression with aim of securing and safeguarding its sovereignty. In this case, the military might of the state constitute the unit of analysis. At the individual level security is multidimensional; its most common referent

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objects are job security, social security, food security, security against natural disaster (Atoyebi 2001).

The conceptual value of the conception of security at the levels of the state and the individual is that they lay emphasis on the various aspects that constitute national security. Although there are various spheres from which national security has been conceived a common base for all the conceptions is the protection, preservation and safeguard of human life, health, justice and liberty. According to Imobighe (national) security means the freedom or the absence of these tendencies, which could undermine internal cohesion, and the corporate existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and the socio-political and economic objectives, as well as meet the legitimate aspiration of the people (Ogba 2001:76-77)

This notion of national security means making positive improvement on the condition of life of the individuals within the state and providing all inhabitants with right atmosphere of their self-improvement and actualization. It includes elimination of poverty, reduction of diseases, child and maternal mortality and morbidity through access good health care system and pipe borne water, improvement in the standard of education, promotion of social justice among others, which are essentially the basis of MDG.

### ***Strategic Thinking***

Strategic thinking here is a conjunction of two words. Thus, in order to appreciate their conjunction in this discourse, it is necessary to first clarify each of the words, in turns. The term strategy has attracted a number of definitions. It is essentially a plan of action aimed at achieving set goal. According to Osisoma and Osisoma (1999) strategy is defined as a proposed action or sequence of actions intended to have a far-reaching effect on the organization's ability to achieve its objective. To Alfred Chandler strategy is the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise and the allocation of resource necessary carrying out these goals (Osisoma and Osisoma 1999). On another plane, strategy is referred to as a unified comprehensive and integrated plan designed to ensure that basic objectives of the enterprise are achieved. As it were, the MDG policy here is thought of as a strategy aimed at achieving socio-economic that can lead to effective national security.

Behind any strategy there are a lot of thought (thinking). Thought here denotes human cognition and reflection of objective reality. Thought enables man to gain understanding about objects, properties and relations of the real world, which cannot be immediately perceived at the sensory stage of cognition. The forms and laws of thought are studied by logical reasoning (Krapivin 1985:323). Thoughts do not emanate from vacuum. They are products of cumulative factors of human experience in time and space (Aghemelo and Osumah 2006:4). Thus, strategic thinking is a reflection on proposed plan of actions, about objects, properties and relations in the real

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world based on analysis of socio-historical and practical facts and events. This conception presupposes that the analysis of the subject matter of this discourse will be based on deep thoughts about the MDG and how genuine or phony commitment to its implementation would impact on national security in Nigeria by the consideration of socio-historical and practical developments.

### **Background of Nigeria**

The area of Nigeria is 913, 072.64 square kilometres. It is almost twice the size of France and four times the size of the United Kingdom (Idahosa 1997, Okhaide 1996), twice the size of Cameroun with 475, 425 square kilometre, nearly three times the sizes of Benin Republic with 113, 619 square kilometre, Togo with 56,780 square kilometers and Cote 'd Ivoire with 322,463 square kilometres put together. The latitudinal stretch of Nigeria is between 4<sup>0</sup>N & 1.4N and longitude 3<sup>0</sup>E & 1.5E meridian. The country shares land boundaries of 773 kilometres with Republic of Benin in the West, 1,690 kilometres with Cameroun in the East, 1497 kilometres with Niger Republic in the South and 87 kilometres with Chad Republic in the South East. The Atlantic Ocean lies in the southern flank of Nigeria. Nigeria has a coastline stretch of 853 kilometres (Aghemelo and Osumah 2009). Due to coastal erosion, it is estimated that Nigeria loses about 23,000 hectares of officially gazette forest per annum (Fagbohun 2008:A4).

Nigeria has three major environmental regions; savannah, tropical forest and coastal wetland. These environmental regions hugely influence the occupation of the people. In the northern region, the people essentially rear cattle and grow food and cash crops such as yam, rice, guinea corn, millet, groundnut and cotton. In the southeastern region, the people grow food and cash crops such cassava, yam, palm produce and rubber. In the southwest, the people grow crops such as cassava, yam, cocoyam, plantain, banana, pineapples, rice, kola nut and cocoa. In the coastal region, the people are engaged in fishing and trading because of their difficult terrain. Also, the various parts of Nigeria are endowed with natural resources such as petroleum, tin, columbite, iron, ore, coal, limestone, lead, zinc and natural gas. In fact, Nigeria is regarded as the hope of Africa because of her rich resource endowment (Idahosa 1997, Imobighe 2003). However, some of these resource endowments are being threatened by environmental problems such as dwindling forest, water pollution, air pollution, nuclear wastes, and unplanned and encroaching urbanization.

Nigeria has two major inland water drainage, Niger and Benue Rivers and smaller rivers and creeks such as rivers Ogun, Anambra, Imo etc. The two major inland water drainages spilt the people into three major geographical regions, the North, East and West. The inland waters have been useful for domestic, industrial agricultural and navigational purposes. They have also provided habitats for aquatics, which are indispensable to humanity in terms of food. However, in the face of coastal erosion these animals suffer

the results of reproduction problems and immunity suppression (Fagbohun 2008:A4).

Nigeria is the most populous country in the continent of Africa, with a population figure estimated as over 144million based on the 2006 census report. Nearly one in every five African is a Nigerian. A significant percentage of the Nigerian population particularly women ekes out living from subsistence agricultural activities such as farming, fishing and animal husbandry. In Nigeria, women farm especially for family subsistence and assist in cash cropping. It is claimed that women produced about 70% of the nations food supply. About 90% of the labour involve in food processing, fetching of water and fire wood are women while huge number of them are involved in unskilled, craft and service sector in metropolitan cities (Ikelegbe Manuscript).

There are numerous ethnic groups in Nigeria. The number though not unanimously agreed on by scholars is put between 250 and 450 (Idahosa 1997). Of the numerous ethnic groups, there are three dominant ones. These are the Hausa/Fulani in the North, the Igbo in the South East and the Yoruba in the South West. Other minority ethnic groups include Afemai, Esan, Bini, Isoko, Ijaw, Itsekiri, Urhobo, Nupe, Tiv, Igbira, Jukun, Idoma, Kanuri, Gwari, and Ibibio and so on. The three big ethnic groups have been the net beneficiaries of the political power at the centre.

As there are numerous ethnic groups in Nigeria so are there different languages and traditions. The number of languages spoken by the indigenous people of Nigeria has been variously put at 248, 374 and 395 and so on (Idahosa 1997). This ethnic and linguistic pluralism have often been manipulated to pursue ends that threaten national security. However, there are several other exacerbating factors that pose grave threat to national security in Nigeria. Essentially, the structure and character of the Nigerian state as a classic case of resource curse and great paradox of development poses grave threat to its security. It is a resource curse and paradox because though the exploitation of her rich natural resource endowments that should translate into affluence and economic growth, majority of the Nigerian citizens are like people residing near the riverside but yet wash their hands with spittle.

This scenario directly or indirectly endangers national security. The despicable condition of living has fed into infectious diseases and malnutrition leading to many premature deaths. Also, the poor condition of living induces numbing frustration, disappointment, and psycho-moral dislocation, which rebound in resort and engagement in criminalities and risky behaviour as source of survival. There has been heightened insurgency and criminality in the Niger Delta region arising from sordid living condition and poor environmental protection. New challenges have emerged with upsurge in communal and ethno-religious conflicts across the country leading to displacement and huge human carnage. Besides, Nigeria remains a leading producer of million of migrants essentially economic refugees reside throughout Africa, Europe, and the United States of America (International

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Crisis Group 2006:1). However, to address the problem of insecurity since the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century government has been implementing various reform programmes, which have not changed the security situation due to lack of sharp policy focus and commitment to social services and public goods. However, the MDG has given the nation a sharper policy direction in terms of setting target goals that can lay the foundation for the achievement of effective national security.

#### ***4.0 Strategic Importance of Commitment to the Goals and National Security in Nigeria***

Before we begin to strategically relate the MDG to national security, it is pertinent to make certain averments on the unique nature of the goals. The goals are essentially interrelated in nature. They are people-oriented and time bound. Also, they enjoy the support of broad spectrum of governments and non-governmental agencies across the world. More so, they are built around global synergy in recognition of the interdependent nature of the world economy. Finally, with genuine commitment, the goals are attainable (MDG Report 2005). Any success recorded in one of the goals creates an in-road to the realization of the others. Strategically, both at the individual and collective terms, the attainment of each goal is vital to national security. For the sake of convenience, each goal in turns is strategically related to national security in order to appreciate their importance in Nigeria and the need to be committed to their implementation

#### **Goal 1: Eradication of Extreme Poverty**

Nigeria is a chronically poor nation. The poverty level in the country deteriorated since the introduction of SAP in the mid-1980s. In recent times, about 67% of the Nigerian populace survive on less than \$1 per day. Many suffer want, hunger, malnourishment, unemployment, under employment and lack of access to the basic needs of live such as food, good health care system, drinkable water, decent housing, quality education and social justice (Ekpu 2009: 5). Some particularly, children have died due to malnutrition, lack of access to functional health care, modern amenities, clean water, sanitary and decent housing. Reversing this trend is strategic to national security. In a country where majority of the populace live under difficult condition, the people are abound to learn new strategies of survival such as fraud, armed robbery, political violence, kidnapping and hostage taking for ransom.

Eradication of extreme poverty is at the heart of the MDG. Although the Nigerian government has shown signs of appreciation of the strategic importance of eradication of extreme poverty, its policy reforms and commitment aimed at reversing the trend have not translated into concrete reality. Poverty is still high as evident in high infant mortality rate,

unemployment, low access to social infrastructure and health care services (Nwankwo 2009:A9).

### **Goal 2: Achieving Universal Primary Education**

Achieving universal primary education is critical to national security. Education offers the people alternative options pertaining to the kind of lives they want to lead. It enables the people to interact and relate meaningfully in the community. It also helps to foster in the members of the community values such as hard work, integrity, honesty, selflessness and tolerance, all of which provide enabling environment from which national security can be guaranteed.

In Nigeria, reports on the MDG indicate that a reasonable degree of success has been recorded in the area of universal primary education as manifest in increase primary schools, pupil enrolment and training of teachers. About 84% of school age children are reported to attend school. This success has been due to the introduction of the UBE (MDG Report 2006).

Though significant progress has been made, so much needs to be done to enhance universal education. Several Nigerian children still have no formal education. It is claimed that over 90% of children employed as domestic servants in Lagos have never attended a formal education. According to the UNICEF nearly, 800 million adults in Nigeria are still illiterate (Chukuwike 2005:6). Even the quality of those who had formal education is egregiously low. The Minister of Education, Sam Egwu recently held that about 80% of Nigerian graduates are not employable (Ajibade 2009:41-42, Abati 2009:51). In a country where majority of the citizens are deficient of quality education, there is the possibility of grave threats to national security. This because majority of them can readily be manipulated as cannon fodders to fight communal and ethno-religious conflicts as it has been the case in some parts of Nigeria.

### **Goal 3: Promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment**

Promoting gender equality and women empowerment are human right issues that are of strategic importance for national security. Gender equality is essential for socio-economic development, poverty reduction and disease prevention. Quite unfortunately, the commitment to the implementation of this goal has not been very impressive. Women still suffer so many inequalities in political participation and control of household resources. Girl child education compare to the male-child education is yet unparallel. Poverty is yet largely feminized. Several cultural norms are manipulated to ensure continue subordination of women to men. Genital mutilation, harmful widowhood practices and other human rights violations against women are still commonplace.



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### **Goal 4: Reduction of Child Mortality**

Reduction of child mortality is of central concern to national security. High child mortality is a huge loss and a serious threat to national security. It is an acknowledged fact that children are the prestige of parenthood and heritage as well as future of any nation. Any nation therefore which suffers high child mortality has its future and by extension its national security endangered. Unfortunately, the child mortality rate in Nigeria remains high. According to the MDG Report in 2006 “as against the global target of 30/1000 live births in 2015, Nigeria had 110/1000 live birth... wide disparities subsist between rural and urban centers and among geographical zones” (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2006). Indeed, with high child mortality and morbidity the nation will be drain off of the human capital needed in the future. When a nation enters a downward spiral as concerns human capital and compounded by a synergistic factors that undermine social development the result will ultimately threaten national security.

There are indications that the three tiers of government, federal, state, and local have shown signs of appreciation of the danger of high child mortality for national security. They have through collaboration provided health services such as immunization and enlightenment on sound health tips. However, a lot needs to be done to lower the child mortality so as to promote national security.

### **Goal 5: Reducing Maternal Mortality**

The moment of childbirth should be a period of happiness. This has not been the case for several women who have lost their lives during pregnancy and childbirth due to complications. According to the UN reports Nigeria has the second highest number of maternal deaths in the World after India (Ogbu 2008:iv) Also, the Centre For Reproductive Rights (CRR), a New York based international non-governmental organization stated that over 59,000 Nigerian women die annually during childbirth. The CRR further stated that a woman in Nigeria has a 1-in-18 risk of dying in childbirth or from pregnancy related causes during her lifetime. The risk differs for women in rural, low income and none formal education groups. Majority of these maternal deaths are said to be preventable but for the actions or inactions of governments (Nwankwo 2009:A9). Increasing maternal deaths deplete the nation of human capital, increase the ranks of orphans and poverty-stricken children and increase the risk that more of Nigeria’s youth will be at the mercy of charitable organizations and others will be forced to learn new strategies such as prostitutions, street begging, hawking, and pickpocket for survival.

Though the Nigerian government has often identified maternal mortality and morbidity as a fundamental challenge and in response enacted laws and policies, these efforts are too little to behold throughout the country (Nwankwo 2009:A9). Thus, more commitment is required to lower maternal

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mortality and by extension the consequent security threats it is most likely to engender.

The reduction in the death of women, which are the life bearers, represents an in-road for guaranteeing national security. Improvement in maternal health care services including access to skilled services, women education, and overhauling of basic health facilities, which is at the heart of the MDG, can therefore results in effective national security.

**Goal: 6 Combating HIV / AIDS, Malaria, Tuberculosis and Other Deadly Diseases**

Combating HIV / AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other deadly diseases, which is at the heart of the MDG, has been one of the major challenges of Nigeria. According to the United Nation Reports, Nigeria ranks third in the league of nation with people living with HIV/AIDS pandemic (Ogbu 2008:iv). Though there are no exact statistical figures on the number of deaths arising from these deadly diseases, the number is no doubt considerably large. The number of orphans due to these diseases is also on the increase. More so, a large proportion of the population is suffering from the killer diseases and many more are at the risk of being victims. Thus, as the deadly diseases degrade human capital so too will the nation's ability to formulate rational decisions, and its fiscal capacity from lost of tax revenues. As Price Smith contended there is link between AIDS-related deaths among the youth, the most infested and productive segment of the population, the commensurate loss of human capital, and resultant falling GDP levels in Africa. He stated that as AIDS skims off the doctors, teachers, parents, lawyers, entrepreneurs, judges, and policymakers, it leads to institutional and societal fragility (USIP 2001:7). This point presupposes that these killer diseases place so much stress on the social system. The net effect of these deadly diseases depleted population is the hollowing out of the state and social networks that are already under pressure from poverty and other sundry concomitant variables. Accordingly the macroeconomic costs of AIDS and other associated infectious diseases posed an extra burden on societies. As the sickness strikes at the labour force it takes a toll on productivity, profitability, and foreign investment in the future (USIP 2001:6). As signs of appreciation of the implications of these killer diseases for national security efforts have been and are being made to stem the scourge of the diseases. The Nigerian government through collaboration with local and international nongovernmental organizations is addressing the problem of stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV, and sustained awareness creation among youth on the prevalence and consequences of HIV/AIDS. Also there has been continuous public education on malaria and tuberculosis management and control (federal Republic of Nigeria, 2006). These efforts should be sustained, while seeking more lasting solution.

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### **Goal 7: Environmental Sustainability**

Environmental sustainability means the prudent use of natural resources and protection of the ecosystem, which sustain lives from despoliation and degradation. Nigeria's rich environmental base is currently undermined by unsustainable practices such as unrestrained deforestation encouraged by the use of fuel wood for cooking, climate change and pollution arising from industrial waste, gas flaring, and oil spillages. In particular the Niger Delta has been suffer severe depletion of the environment. On account of severe ecological despoliations and pollution arising from oil production in the Niger Delta about 10 million of the people are destitute, with 14 million struggling to eke out a living. Only about 30 % of the population of the region has access to safe drinking water while the rest of the people depend on water from often contaminated lake, streams, stagnant ponds and hand dug wells (Emuedo 2006, Osumah 2009). In other parts of the country, the consumption of fossil fuels oil, coal and natural gas results in carbon dioxide, emissions that are contributing to gradual warming of the atmospheric conditions. The expected repercussion is climate change. Also, there has been severe depletion of the environment in some parts of the country due to coastal erosion and flooding. In particular many parts of the country such as Lagos, Anambra, Imo, Benue, Edo, and Akwa Ibom states erosion and flooding have ruined farmlands, residential quarters, and highways thus imposing adverse economic calamities and many environmental refugees. Many of the environmental refugees who are not fortunate to benefit from rehabilitation end up as destitute. Even those who are rehabilitated end up having to contend with violation of their rights, which usually come in the form of loss of property and violence of armed conflict from hostile host (Fagbohun 2008:A4).

Environmental disruption results in environmental scarcities. This spawns adverse consequences on the inhabitants of the affected areas especially those who depend on the natural environment for source of livelihood. According to Homer-Dixon (1994) there is a strong correlation between environmental stress and conflict. He established a relationship between conflicts and decreasing levels of water, fuel wood, food and arable land. He held that stress on the environment leads to a series of intermediate social effects that have an indirect causal relationship with conflict. These include declining agricultural and economic production throughout the society, weakened state capacity to deal institutionally with internal divisions, increasing migration rates, and deepening social cleavages and exacerbating ethnic/class divisions.

Nigeria has not shown so much commitment to environmental pollution. The repeated shift in the terminal date for gas flaring indicates this. Poor environmental management has engendered environmental scarcities that have fed into violence in various part of the country. The recurring conflicts in the Niger Delta are linked to poor environmental management.

### **Goal 8: Evolving Global Partnership**

The MDG revolves round an interdependent world economy in the understanding that human needs can best be met through synergy. Global synergy is critical particularly for the countries such as Nigeria that have been both low and highly volatile. Nigeria has enjoyed the benefits of progressive partnership with the international community. Nigeria got debt relief worth US \$18 billion from the Paris Club of Creditors and increased foreign private investment due to global partnership (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2006). However, more progressive partnership needs to be extended to other areas such as infrastructure technology, industrial development, macroeconomic management and good governance, which are the pillars of development that can promote national security. Through global partnership diseases, illiteracy, lack of infrastructure and synergistic factors that can feed into forces that will pose grave threat to national security can be solved.

### **CONCLUSION**

This paper is a strategic thought on the implementation of the MDG and national security in Nigeria. The analysis of the discourse is based on the conception of national security, as revolving around human welfare calculus of the individuals within the state and provision of all inhabitants with right atmosphere of their self-improvement, and actualization, which is at the heart of the MDG. The paper reveals that, Nigeria has been both low and volatile prior to the setting of the MDG agenda in the year 2000. Furthermore, the paper reveals that as signs of appreciation of the strategic importance of the MDG to national development and security, that the Nigerian government has made commitments in the implementation of the policy focus. However, the efforts are yet to translate into reality to guarantee effective national security.

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