GOOD GOVERNANCE, A PANACEA FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN NIGERIAN NAT

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ABSTRACT

Governance is the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented. Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance. In this paper, emphasis is laid on national governance. It is an approach or perspective which focuses on state and societal institutions and the relationships between them as well as on how rules are made in the society which are accepted as legitimate and enhances values that are sought by individuals and groups within the society. Eight characteristics of good governance were examined in this paper as applied to other advanced nations of the world. Bad governance as a bane of underdevelopment and poverty in Nigeria were highlighted, touching the various aspects which contributed to the underdevelopment of the nation. Finally ways of ensuring good governance in Nigeria were discussed with the resultant effects of creating national security for the nation and stable political system.

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are born into this world with the opportunity of making themselves live better in their va communities. Better condition of living for citizens, has been achieved in the developed nations o world, like Britain, United States of America, Germany, Japan, China etc. In these countries, ther evidences of well-run educational system, good organization of industrial sectors, provisions of affor shelters for the citizens, good national security and political stability. There are also explicitl interdependence between growth, poverty reduction and sustainable development which acknowledgec development rests on the foundations of democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human r and peace and security. The developed nations have put in place some measures such as ensuring sec and stability in the politics through actualization of national economic empowerment, making govern more efficient and effective through public service reforms, monetization and pension refo Oromareghake (2009) reported that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time-b and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions – income poverty, hu disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion while promoting gender equality, education, environmental sustainability. They are also basic human rights – the rights of each person on the plane health, education, shelter and security. But here in Nigeria, the nation is the epicenter of crisis and poli instability, with continuing food insecurity, a rise of extreme poverty, stunningly high child and mate mortality, large numbers of people living in slums, and a widespread shortfall for most of the millenn Development Goals. All these are due to bad governance. Therefore in this paper, the concept of g governance will be discussed along with the indexes of good and bad governance in the country. Fin attempts will be made to proffer solutions to the incidence of bad governance in the country so that nation can move forward.

The Concept of Good Governance

The concept of governance is not new. It is as old as human civilization. Simply put, by Coleman (19 governance means the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented not implemented). Governance has been described as an approach or perspective that focuses on st societal institutions and the relationship between them as well as on how rules are made in a society wh are accepted as legitimate to enhances values that are sought by individuals and groups within the soci Governance has also been identified with the founding values and constitutional policies that constitute nature of governing institutions, guide their actions, and shape the complex relations between them and society. Public management based on principles of good governance as one that attempts to improve system of government, to emphasize efficiency and responsibility for all institutions, to promote democra principles and to establish a new relationship between government and civil society. Good governar

...ance is the degree to which it delivers on the promise of human rights, civil, cultural, economic, ...ral and social rights. Conable (1997) was of the view that good governance is the exercise of power or ...ority, political, economic, administrative or otherwise – to manage a country's processes and institutions ...ough which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations ...t harmonise their differences. The UN Human Development Report (2004) pointed out that governance ...s two faces: first, the leadership which has responsibilities derived from the principles of effective ...ernmental organizations, second, the governed, that is the citizens, who are responsible for making ...evant inputs to the socio-economic and political affairs of their society. In other words, governance is a ...lationship between rulers and the ruled, the state and society, the governors, and the governed. It is ...portant that the two principal actors be as close as possible to ensure the legitimacy, accountability, ...edibility and responsiveness of the rulers and the effective participation, corruption and responsiveness of ...e ruled is achieved. An important aspect of the relationships within and between the two components of ...ernance is the change that usually occurs. For instance, laws regulating certain behaviours and activities ...ay change after sometime. Where these changes become too frequent, without well thought out appraisals, ...stability results and this may paralyze operations. Governance, as it applies to waste management, change ...ries over time, but most often it incorporates not only formal structures of government but also the ...formal structures created by society, such as community-based organizations (CBOs), institutions and ...sociations as well as the ways formal and informal structures interact in the collection, transportation, and ...sposal of waste. It involves intergovernmental relations, fiscal mobilization and allocations, planning and ...dividual participation, the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery depend most importantly on managerial ...d organizational efficiency, accountability, legitimacy, responsiveness to the public transparency in ...cision making, and pluralism of policy options and choices. Good governance is an essential ...econdition for sustainable development. Various countries that are quite similar in terms of their natural ...sources and social structure have shown strikingly different performance in improving the welfare of their ...ople. Much of this is attributable to standards of governance. Poor governance stifles and impedes ...velopment. In countries, where there is corruption, poor control of public funds, lack of accountability, ...uses of human rights and excessive military influence, development inevitably suffers. Michels (1962) ...ated that government is one of the actors in governance. Other actors involved in governance vary ...pending on the level of government that is under discussion. In rural areas for example, other actors may ...clude influential landlords, associations of peasant farmers, co-operatives, NGOs, research institutes, ...ligious leaders, financial institutions, political parties, the military etc. Similarly Odion-Akhaine (2008) ...ated that formal government structures are one means by which decisions are arrived at and implemented. ...t the national level, informal decision-making structures such as "Kitchen Cabinets" or formal advisors ...ay exist. In some rural areas, powerful families may make or influence decision making. Such informal ...cision making is often the results of corrupt practices or leads to bad governance. Unescape (2008) stated ...at good governance has eight major characteristics. They are, participatory by both men and women ...hich is the key to good governance. The next is the rule of law which requires fair legal frameworks that ...re enforced impartially. It also requires full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. ...mpartial enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary and incorruptible police force. The third ...oint, is transparency which means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that ...llows rules and regulations. The fourth is responsiveness which means that good governance requires that ...stitutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe. The fifth ...haracteristics is consensus orientated. Good governance requires mediation of the different interests in ...ociety to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how ...his can be achieved. It also requires a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable ...uman development and how to achieve the goals of such development. The sixth characteristics is equity ...nd inclusiveness. A society's well being depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a ...stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. This requires all groups, but particularly ...the most vulnerable, have opportunities to improve or maintain their well being. The seventh characteristics ...is effectiveness and efficiency. Good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that ...meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. The concept of efficiency ...in the context of good governance also covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of ...the environment. The last characteristics of good governance is accountability. It is a key requirement of ...good governance, not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society ...organisations. Conclusively good governance is an ideal which is difficult to achieve in its totality. Very

few countries and societies have come close to achieving good governance in its totality. Howeve
ensure sustainable, human development and actions must be taken to work towards this ideal with the a
making it a reality.

BAD GOVERNANCE AS A BANE OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY IN NIGERIA

Nigeria as a country is rich in natural and human resources, but the inhabitants remain perpetually poo
to mismanagement of resources and corruption which has eaten deep into the fabrics of the nationhoo
Nigeria, there is widespread poverty with about 70% of the population living below the poverty line (Fl
Niger Delta Regional Development master plan 2008). The following are the evidences of poverty in
being witnessed in Nigeria as a result of bad governance.

1. The exploration and exploitation of oil and other mineral resources in the country. These invo
   number of activities that directly affect the lives of the oil-producing communities. The adverse in
   is not only limited to the physical environment with its sensitive and fragile ecosystem, but als
   socio-economic life of the communities. It touches for instance, their relationship with their lar
   farmers, fishermen their swamps, rivers, creeks and their cultural as well as spiritual life.
2. In Nigeria, there are rampant cases of conflicts, kidnappings, random killings and general disorder.
3. There is weak, inefficient and dilapidated institutional capacity, lack of adequate trained manpower
   transparent working systems and lack of established institutional norms and values. Corruption is
   and societal institutions have decayed to a very large extent.
4. Traditional small-scale agriculture, which stands as a mainstay of the majority of the rural populatic
   characterized by low productivity, low income levels, minimal domestic savings and lack of invest
   capital.
5. There is high mortality rates of children, coupled with malaria and the rapidly increasing incidenc
   HIV/AIDS in addition to other dreaded infectious diseases.
6. Social welfare as a public responsibility is largely absent in the country. Care for persons in need is
   mainly an issue of family responsibility with support of the extended family members and the la
   community in severe cases. In the rural areas, welfare of the seriously ill, the old persons, the men
   and physically challenged, remains the families and community responsibilities.
7. There remains a great challenge of creating conditions in the educational system to enable the valu
   human resources of the region to be used to their full potential, particularly capacity buil
   programmes to empower women and youths, improve the health of the people, and strengthen
   education and enterprise capabilities, especially in the ICT driven economy.
8. There is general agreement that the working conditions and service provision for the vast majorit
   people living in Nigeria are inadequate. Problems due to poor condition or absence of infrastruc
   continue to increase with rapid growth of urban areas due to soaring levels of natural population gr
   and the increasing numbers of migrants from rural areas.
9. Nigeria still remains one of the underdeveloped countries in the   Sub-Saharan region with low
   capita income (66% of the US$75) per month and 76.6% earn less than ₦20,000.00). The incidenc
   poverty is very high with over 70% living at subsistence level in rural areas. (FRN – Niger D
   Regional Development master plan 2008).
10. Life expectancy in the country is low with 46.8 years it is even lower in some of the remote areas w
    access to health care is difficult. In fact child mortality is particularly high (20% die by the age o
    This also includes a high degree of adult morbidity emanating from a wide variety of diseases
    undermine individual employment and initiative. The quality of life is further affected by social ur
    and threats to peaceful co-existence among ethnic groups in Nigeria (FRN – Niger Delta Regi
    Development master plan 2008).

WAYS OF ENSURING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

The negative factors affecting the potential for sustainable development in Nigeria have been x-rayed
discussed as seen above. However, for the nation to witness good governance, security and stability,
following points are to be noted and worked for.

1. The determination of governments and other stakeholders to partner in the rapid development of
   country, must be complemented by effectiveness, accountability and transparency at all levels. The
   urgent need to rebuild largely eroded faith in the integrity, intents and capability of governments am
   the populace and global community.

Development Goals (MDGs) and fulfill her turbulent, underdeveloped, and environmentally degraded past to Africa's most peaceful, most prosperous and most pleasant nation thus contributing to the vision of making Nigeria Africa's strongest economy.

- The general perception of Nigeria as a nation rife with violent conflicts, kidnappings, random killings and general disorder should stop so as to attract private sector investments.
- Public bodies and financial institutions must be sensitive to the special needs and aspirations of the communities of the region in a complementary relationship with the government and the people, through an effective institutional framework, including cross sector partnership that encourage collaboration and consultation.
- The development of transportation infrastructure, telephone, waste management system and electricity in the nation are all crucial to the upliftment of Nigeria as a nation.
- The creation of opportunities for youths is also crucial. The participation of both the youths and women in the democratic decision making processes and the development of civil societies is a very reliable instrument of national development.
- The development challenge is not only the need to reform the economy for enhanced economic growth, but also to empower citizens and revitalize the social fabric of Nigerian society.
- Promoting development, reducing poverty and strengthening democracy and good governance practices cannot be achieved by government and its institutions alone. It requires the full participation of the people of Nigeria. It is only in the process of active participation of ordinary people, and broadly based collaboration of the public/private sector and civil society, that the problems of Nigeria can be adequately addressed and eventually resolved.

CREATING NATIONAL SECURITY AND STABILITY
There is no doubt that, following the various ways of ensuring good governance in Nigeria as discussed above, national security and political stability would have been ensured in the country. National security in a broad sense implies the absence of threat to life, property and socio-economic well being of the people. A proper understanding of security is important for an adequate explanation of the remote causes of breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, civic, ethnic, economic, social, political etc that have contributed to the recurring conflicts, which the nation has witnessed over the years resulting in wanton destruction and loss of lives and property. Security has implication for individuals, communities, and the nation and must be analysed at these various levels. Niger Delta crisis would have been avoided in the region if there was adequate provision of infrastructures and good governance. Therefore, good governance is the antedote for relative peace and security in any country including Nigeria. Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. Inter-communal and inter-ethnic clashes, religious violence, armed robbery, assassination, murder, gender-based violence and bomb explosion have been on the increase leading to enormous loss of life and property and general atmosphere of siege and social tension for the people. All these violence are due to mis-rule or bad governance by the people at the corridor of power both at the state and national levels (Ogunbawo, 1997).

CONCLUSION
This work has been able to examine the concept of good governance which is very essential as a precondition for sustainable development. The work also traced bad governance as a bane of underdevelopment and poverty in Nigeria. The evidences of poverty indices as being witnessed in Nigeria as a result of bad governance was also highlighted. The ways of ensuring good governance in Nigeria was enumerated in this work; which will help to create National Security and Stability. And finally, the work made some recommendations which if adopted will help to ensure good governance in Nigeria for the purpose of sustainable security and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS
From the above discussions, it is obvious that Nigerians need a change of attitude to governance if we as a nation must develop and move forward. Our first point of call, is the electoral machinery which bring people to power in Nigeria must be totally overhauled in order to produce dedicated, enlightened and God-fearing individuals at the helm of affairs in this nation. Corruption must be brought to the barest minimum in this country if we are to progress. Most of the God-giving wealth of this nation are in the hands of the few individuals who corruptly acquired these wealth. Lastly, what constitute good governance have been

extensively discussed in this paper as can be seen above. Let Nigerian leaders follow these points religiously and at the end, there will be light at the end of it tunnel for the Nigerians and indeed the Nigeria nation.

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