

## THE ROLE OF PUBLIC POLICY IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*This study examined the role of Public Policy in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria. This study research design employed narrative analysis and to some extent, meta-analysis of secondary data acquired from some specific literary works and government publications. Findings revealed the existence of several Public Policies that is supporting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) economic related activities in Nigeria namely NAPEP, NEEDS, CCT, N-Power and GEEP between the periods 2001 to 2023, that UBE Policy, NHIS Policy, National Youth Policy, National Housing Policy and Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) policy are existing Public Policies supporting SDGs social related activities in Nigeria, that there are existing Public Policies supporting Sustainable Development Goals environmental related activities in Nigeria namely National Forestry Policy, Renewable Energy Policy, Wash Policy, Net Zero Carbon Policy and National clean cooking policy and recommend on five public policy tools that can support Sustainable Development Goals action plan in Nigeria namely Policy Implementation, Institutional Frameworks for Development, Public Awareness and Participation, Multisectoral Collaboration and Monitoring & Evaluation of Development Goals. This study recommends the need to sustain the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), a Medium Term Plan for 2017 – 2020 developed to eliminate the bottlenecks that impede innovation and market-based solutions by leveraging Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) and building a knowledge-based economy that is consistent with the aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) given that the initiatives address its three dimensions of economic, social and environmental sustainability issues.*

**Keywords:** Administration, Development, Goals, Public administration, Public policy, sustainable development goals, Nigeria

### 1. Introduction

Public policy is a vital instrument through which governments address societal issues, shape the behavior of citizens and organizations, and guide the development of communities. It encompasses the laws, regulations, actions, and decisions made by governmental bodies at local, regional, national, and international levels. Public policy is goal-directed course of action taken by government to deal with a public problem. Government's use public policy to solve a social problem, to counter a threat or to pursue an objective. Public policy influences important decisions and offers solution to address the problem. The primary objective of public policy is to promote the well-being of society by addressing challenges such as economic inequality, environmental sustainability, public health and social justice. In the context of sustainable development, public policy serves as a crucial framework for balancing economic growth, social equity and environmental protection. As the world faces increasing challenges related to climate change,

resource depletion and population growth, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were born out of the recognition that dramatic changes were needed to address these intersecting challenges.

Public policies are essential for achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030. These policies are deliberate efforts by governments to address the interconnected social, economic, and environmental challenges inherent in the goals. Examples include regulations for sustainable energy and production, subsidies for green technologies, tariffs on polluting imports, and investments in infrastructure to support economic growth and reduce inequality.

Public policy is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because it provides the frameworks, regulations, and governance mechanisms needed to drive sustainable practices and resource allocation across societies. Governments use public policies to set national strategies aligned with global commitments, foster multi-stakeholder partnerships, and coordinate actions among various sectors to address complex challenges. In essence, public policy translates the universal goals of the SDGs into actionable, country-led plans and programs that can mobilize resources, ensure accountability, and create the necessary conditions for a sustainable future.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) all, directly or indirectly, need an effective public service for successful implementation. This is because all of the Goals (17 SDGs, 169 targets and 231 indicators) require the provision of public goods or the implementation of a public sector policy and, therefore, depend on public service to coordinate, mediate or directly provide. The 2030 Agenda will challenge the capacity of public service in scope, importance and urgency. An effective interface between politicians and public officials will be needed to turn the political vision for SDG implementation into a reality. Innovation and future-oriented mind-sets must strive for better solutions. It is perceived by some public policy analyst that effective public policies can help achieve sustainable development goals of no poverty, zero hunger, good health & wellbeing, quality education, gender equality, clean water & sanitation, affordable & clean energy, decent jobs & economic growth, industry, innovation & infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities & communities, responsible consumption & production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice & strong institutions, and partnerships for the goals. On this note, this study would examine the role of Public Policy in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria.

### **Statement of Problems of the Study**

Society continues to be confronted with the deep inadequacies of the current global order. Rampant income inequality between and within countries, dramatic disparities in access to resources, as seen during the COVID pandemic, persistent degradation of the environment, and numerous other problems are tied to existing systems of economy and government. Current global economic systems are implicated in perpetuating these problems. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were born out of the recognition that dramatic changes were needed to address these intersecting challenges. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), was adopted in 2015, as an 'urgent call to action' to address the numerous challenges facing humanity and the planet. Public policy play a crucial role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), yet many countries fall short in implementing transformative policies to attain them. A significant knowledge gap exists in understanding whether public policies support or hinder sustainable development outcomes. To address this gap, this study seeks to examine the role of Public Policy in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria.

**Objectives of the Study**

This study is aimed at investigating the role of Public Policy in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria. Other objectives are as follows;

- Evaluate to what extent Public Policies support Sustainable Development Goals economic related activities in Nigeria.
- Assess to what extent Public Policies support Sustainable Development Goals social related activities in Nigeria.
- Examine to what extent Public Policies support Sustainable Development Goals environmental related activities in Nigeria.
- Recommend on public policy tools that can help contributes to Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

The following research question were sought so as to provide solutions to the problems of the study.

1. Are there Public Policies designed to support Sustainable Development Goals economic related activities in Nigeria?
2. In what ways have Public Policies support Sustainable Development Goals social related activities in Nigeria?
3. Is Public Policies supporting Sustainable Development Goals environmental related activities in Nigeria?
4. What are the public policy tools that can support Sustainable Development Goals action plan in Nigeria?

**2. Review of Literature****2.1 Conceptual Framework****2.1.1 Public Policy**

Public policy is considered one of the central tools relied upon by states to achieve developmental goals. It represents the practical translation of the state's vision in managing resources and directing programs and plans to meet the needs of society, aiming to strike a balance between economic, social, and environmental dimensions. However, such policies are not implemented in an institutional vacuum or within a context free of complexities. Rather, they face a range of interrelated challenges that hinder their effectiveness—whether structural, stemming from institutional weaknesses, lack of coordination, or deficiencies in implementation mechanisms, or circumstantial, linked to economic and social crises and fluctuations in regional and international contexts.

Public policy plays a crucial role in shaping societies and addressing challenges and is essential for achieving the sustainable development goals. Public policy is a deliberate attempt to address various social, economic, and political issues that affect society. It is multifaceted field encompassing a wide range of policies and decision-making processes to achieve specific goals and outcomes. Public policy is important for sustainable development goals because it can help promote sustainable practices and behaviours and the planet. Sustainable development is an approach that aims to meet the needs of the present generation while preserving the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It recognizes the interdependence between economic growth, social well-being and environmental protection. The basic idea of sustainable development is to work for today while keeping in mind the needs of the present generations without compromising on the needs of future generations. Public Policy provides the framework for sustainable development goals to attain its targets.

Public policy is a fundamental driver of sustainable development, providing the structure and incentives needed to balance economic growth, social equity, and environmental stewardship. Through the implementation of regulations, financial incentives, urban planning, and educational initiatives, governments can foster environments where sustainable practices are not only encouraged but also become integral to societal functioning. The role of public policy extends beyond national borders, requiring international cooperation to address global challenges like climate change and resource scarcity. By supporting research and innovation, public policies can stimulate the development of new technologies that offer sustainable solutions to complex problems. Additionally, economic instruments such as carbon pricing and environmental taxes ensure that the true costs of environmental impacts are reflected in economic activities, promoting more responsible behaviors among businesses and individuals. Effective public policies must be dynamic, continuously evolving in response to new challenges and scientific advancements. As the global community seeks to secure a sustainable future, the design and implementation of thoughtful, comprehensive public policies will be essential in guiding the way forward, ensuring that development today does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

### **2.1.2 Sustainable Development Goals**

According to the Brundtland commission's report (1987) "sustainable development refers to meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" ( McManus, 2014). Due to the equivocalness of the standard definition, a range of frantic groups attempted to deliver a clear definition of SD (Robert et al., 2005). For an example, the Board on Sustainable Development of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences defined sustainable development means to identify 'What is to be sustained 'and 'what should be developed'. It refers to sustainability nature, life support system, and community and it necessary to develop people, economy and society (Staff, 1990). In terms of objectives and indicators, SD is in what it particularly looks for to attain, how it is measured (Robert et al., 2005).

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 recognized the limitations of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in achieving their aims completely. As a response, the conference introduced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aimed to establish a comprehensive set of goals balancing the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable development (UN, 2015a). This approach gained unprecedented global consensus in 2015 through the COP21 Paris Agreement by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the adoption of the resolution "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (UN, 2015a; UNFCCC, 2015). These initiatives serve as strategic guidance and present a unique opportunity to achieve inclusive and sustainable development within the boundaries of planetary and social justice constraints (Del Río Castro et al., 2021). Despite the challenges ahead (Osburg, 2017), they offer a viable roadmap for mitigating anthropogenic impacts on the Earth while promoting global governance and policy coherence (Dalby, 2019; Kanie, 2017).

The SDGs consist of 17 goals and 169 targets, collectively depicting a vision of what the world could achieve by 2030 if all targets are met (UN, 2015b). However, in Nigeria, one of the most significant challenges facing the SDGs is the difficulty in reaching the intended demographic. The country still faces extreme poverty, and it has recently surpassed India as the world's poverty capital (Uzoma, 2020). Despite previous efforts made through the MDGs, a considerable number of impoverished individuals remain, while inequalities and social exclusions persist in Nigeria today.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts governance theory, as it offers a compelling theoretical framework for understanding the positive impact of a country governance system on implementing sustainable development goals. This theory emphasizes that a country governance is a means to gauge a company's accountability or conscientiousness toward economic progress, environmental conservation, and social welfare. It is essential to acknowledge that policies are monitored closely to ensure effectiveness. Countries need to recognize their role in contributing to sustainable development and work towards meeting these global targets. According to Kaufmann et al. (2011), country governance is the process through which authority granted by the body of customs, laws, and institutions currently in place is used to manage a nation's social and economic resources for development on behalf of the general population. More robust governance improves the financial sector's soundness. It makes it easier for people to participate in financial markets, which are crucial for investment and development, which is a landmark for implementing the SDGs. One of the first steps taken at the national level was to set up a governance framework for the SDGs and encourage global trends in creating new or upgrading current coordinating platforms (Okitasari et al., 2019).

Kaufmann et al. (2011) define country governance as highlighting how power is exercised on behalf of the public in the management of a country's resources. The following indicators are drawn from a database of several hundred variables spanning over 200 countries and 31 data sources. These indicators capture perceptions of governance as reported by survey respondents, non-governmental organizations, commercial business information providers, and public sector organizations worldwide. The wide range of sources from which the data is obtained suggests that the resulting data is highly comprehensive and provides a comprehensive picture of global governance perceptions. Country-specific governance comprises six dimensions: Control of corruption, regulatory capital, the rule of law, voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, and government effectiveness. The effectiveness of a government's policies can be evaluated through government effectiveness and regulatory quality, which depend on the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies. These indicators follow a normal distribution and value range from approximately +2.5 to -2.5, with higher values indicating stronger governance and lower values indicating poor governance. Njoku & Olayungbo (2021) demonstrated that SDGs performance is correlated with greater government efficacy, accountability, and lack of corruption, while relationships between these factors can be complicated. Stafford-Smith et al. (2017) found that access to better health, education, and gender equality SDGs are significantly driven by governance infrastructure.

Suitable governance mechanisms in each country have a significant positive impact on implementing the SDGs. The UN Assembly's Sustainability Agenda 2030 SDGs are interrelated and dependent on corporate, social, and environmental governance (Zhao et al., 2021; Khaled et al., 2021). Lee & Kim (2020) and Njoku & Olayungbo (2021) showed that effective national government and SDG attainment correlate positively. Moreover, this research indicated that higher-quality governance variables, such as government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and low corruption, relate to more outstanding SDG scores. Consolandi et al. (2020) stated that SDGs are achieved for the nation by combining the efforts of all business organizations, firms, or corporations to prevent pollution, enhance social well-being through positive relationships, work to develop society's members, and boost corporate performance.

## **3. Methodology**

The methodology adopted for the study is purely review of relevant literature. The kind of research design employed includes narrative analysis, and to some extent, meta-analysis of

secondary data. Using this kind of research design, information was easily acquired from some specific literary works and government publications, which were all reviewed and analysed.

The SDGs came into effect in January, 2016 and it is a (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) policy guideline and funding programme for the next fifteen years. The goals are to be accomplished by all member nations (189 countries) by 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also known as the Global Goals (CGs) are structured to end poverty, protect the environment and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The goals, 17 in number are fashioned out from the earlier Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and are presented in the diagram below:

**Figure 3.1: SDGs Goals**



**Source: WHO (2025)**

- (i) End poverty in all its forms everywhere;
- (ii) End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
- (iii) Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all of all ages;
- (iv) Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
- (v) Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
- (vi) Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;
- (vii) Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable management of water and modern energy for all;
- (viii) Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;
- (ix) Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;
- (x) Reduce inequality within and among countries;
- (xi) Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
- (xii) Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;
- (xiii) Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;
- (xiv) Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;
- (xv) Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;

(xvi) Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and

(xvii) Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

#### **4. Result and Data Analysis**

##### **Presentation of Data:**

##### **Research Questions:**

1. Are there Public Policies designed to support Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) economic related activities in Nigeria?

**Table 4.1: Existing Public Policies supporting SDGs economic related activities in Nigeria**

| Public Policies | Year | Objective/Results                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NAPEP           | 2001 | This was a poverty reduction programme launched in 2001 to empower the poor and vulnerable segments of the population. The programme provided microcredit loans, skill acquisition training, and other forms of support to small-scale entrepreneurs and farmers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| NEEDS           | 2004 | The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), which was launched in 2004 as a poverty reduction strategy. NEEDS seeks to promote economic growth and development through the creation of an enabling environment for private sector investment, the development of infrastructure, and the promotion of human capital development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| CCT             | 2016 | The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme was designed to transfer monthly stipends of N5000 (Five thousand Naira) cash to the most vulnerable households in poverty-stricken communities, with the long-term goal of lifting millions out of poverty. An additional N5000 was to be given to families designated as priorities or extreme cases. As of November 2022, the number of beneficiaries of the CCT programme stood at 2 million, reaching 609 LGAs, 6,272 wards and 48,789 communities (NCTO, 2022). This achievement towards the goal of lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty within 10 years is also very slow and poor |
| N-Power         | 2016 | The N-Power programme was designed to address the issue of youth unemployment and help increase social development. The Program targeted graduate and non-graduate Nigerians between the ages of 18 and 35 years, to help them acquire and develop life-long skills and become change-makers in education, agriculture, health, and vocational training, communities. According to NSIP (2023), N-Power had over 1.3million beneficiaries across the country.                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| GEEP            | 2016 | Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) was established to provide capital support and training to businesses and entrepreneurs at the bottom of the financial ladder, by providing low-cost micro-lending to one million women, 200,000 artisans and MSMEs, 260,000 youth businesses, and 200,000 farmers and agricultural workers. A federal government grant of N140billion Naira was invested in the programme, and loans of between N50,000 and N300,000 Naira were given to women under the marketmoni program, farmers under the farmermoni program, and enterprising youths under the tradermoni program.                 |

##### **Source: National Social Investment Programme (2025)**

Table 4.1 shows the results of Public Policies that are supporting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) economic related activities in Nigeria namely NAPEP, NEEDS, CCT, N-Power and GEEP between the periods 2001 to 2023. The result is consistent with literature work as posited by Ogbuabor and Anyanwu (2017) public policies that promote economic diversification, infrastructure development, education and skills development, good governance and anti-

corruption measures, and social protection programmes can help promote prosperity in Nigeria. There have been several public policies in Nigeria aimed at promoting prosperity and equality namely National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), a policy framework developed in 2004 to promote economic growth, poverty reduction, and job creation in Nigeria, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), this was a poverty reduction programme launched in 2001 to empower the poor and vulnerable segments of the population. The programme provided microcredit loans, skill acquisition training, and other forms of support to small-scale entrepreneurs and farmers, National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). this is a more recent policy initiative launched in 2016 to tackle poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion in Nigeria, the programme includes initiatives such as the N-Power youth employment scheme, the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, and the Conditional Cash Transfer Programme. Further supported by Ademola Ariyo & Adeolu Adewuyi (2014) report that Socioeconomic policies play a critical role in promoting prosperity and equality in Nigeria. However, Nigeria faces many challenges in its efforts to promote socioeconomic development, including high levels of poverty, income inequality, and unemployment. To address these challenges, the Nigerian government has implemented several socioeconomic policies aimed at promoting prosperity and equality. One example is the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), which was launched in 2004 as a poverty reduction strategy. Another policy initiative aimed at promoting prosperity and equality is the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP), which was launched in 2017. The NSPP seeks to reduce poverty and inequality by providing social protection to vulnerable groups, including the elderly, children, and people with disabilities. The policy includes initiatives such as cash transfers, N-power programmes and GEEP programmes (Olumide & Adeyemi, 2015).

2. In what ways have Public Policies support Sustainable Development Goals social related activities in Nigeria?

**Table 4.2: Existing Public Policies supporting SDGs social related activities in Nigeria**

| Public Policies        | Year | Objective/Results                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| UBE                    | 1999 | Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a policy initiative aimed at providing basic education to all children in Nigeria, regardless of their socio-economic background. The programme was launched in 1999 and has since been implemented across the country.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| NHIS                   | 2005 | The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) was established in 2005 to provide affordable and accessible healthcare to all Nigerians, irrespective of their socio-economic status. The scheme operates through a pool of funds contributed by individuals, employers, and the government. The NHIS has had a significant impact on reducing inequalities in access to healthcare, particularly for low-income earners and the rural population                                                                                                  |
| National Gender Policy | 2006 | In 2006, Nigeria adopted the National Gender Policy, aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women in all sectors of the economy. The policy provides a framework for the mainstreaming of gender issues into national development plans, policies, and programmes. It also seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls. The policy has had a significant impact on promoting gender equality in Nigeria, with increased participation of women in political, economic, and social activities |
| National Youth Policy  | 2009 | The National Youth Policy was launched in 2009, aimed at promoting the participation of young people in the development process. The policy provides a framework for the mainstreaming of youth issues into national development plans, policies, and programmes. It also seeks to address youth unemployment and promote entrepreneurship. The policy has had a significant impact on                                                                                                                                                          |

|                         |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                         |      | promoting youth empowerment and reducing inequality among the youth population                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| National Housing Policy | 2012 | The National Housing Policy was first introduced in 1991 and updated in 2012 to provide a framework for the development of affordable housing for Nigerians. The policy seeks to address the housing deficit in the country, particularly for low-income earners. The policy has had a significant impact on reducing inequality in access to housing, although more needs to be done to improve implementation and address the housing deficit. |
| HGSFP                   | 2016 | Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) was designed to provide nutritious and balanced meals to 5.5 million school children in primary 1 to 3, to improve the enrollment of primary school children and reduce the out-of-school rate, which the 2018 UNICEF-DHS report had shown was increasing. Over 44,000 cooks were engaged on the programme, to feed over 4 million students in 26 Nigerian States.                                   |

**Source: Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs (2025)**

Table 4.2 provides us with existing Public Policies supporting SDGs social related activities in Nigeria namely UBE Policy, NHIS Policy, National Youth Policy, National Housing Policy and Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) policy. The above data showed that UBE policy is an educational policy for increase access to education by all in Nigeria. Nigeria has made significant progress in increasing access to education, with the government implementing various policies to improve the quality of education and increase enrollment rates. However, there is still a significant education gap between the North and South of the country, with girls and children from poor families being disproportionately affected. NHIS policy is an health care policy tailored to provide all citizens affordable health care services in Nigeria. Nigeria has also implemented various policies aimed at improving access to healthcare, such as the National Health Insurance Scheme, which aims to provide affordable healthcare to all Nigerians. However, healthcare in Nigeria remains inadequate, particularly in rural areas, and many Nigerians still lack access to basic healthcare services. The National Gender Policy promote Gender Equality and is part of the steps taken by Nigerian government to promote gender equality, such as passing the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in 2015, which criminalizes various forms of violence against women, including rape, female genital mutilation, and domestic violence. However, gender-based violence remains a significant problem, and women continue to face discrimination in various aspects of life. But in spite of all these efforts, a review of over 100 scientific studies on the SDGs revealed that the SDGs have only had a limited impact on governmental policies (Biermann et al. 2022). This finding raises concerns about the potential of the SDG agenda to advance sustainable development (Hickmann et al. 2024). Moreover, it reveals a need for monitoring whether governments are implementing policies that support the SDGs. Along these lines, researchers recently argued that 'more empirical analysis of SDG policies and their implementation is needed to assess the extent, nature and effectiveness of national implementation and integration efforts, and for comparative analysis across countries' (Hickmann et al. 2024).

3. Is Public Policies supporting Sustainable Development Goals environmental related activities in Nigeria?

**Table 4.3: Existing Public Policies supporting SDGs environmental related activities in Nigeria**

| Public Policies          | Year | Objective/Results                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NATIONAL FORESTRY Policy | 2006 | The National Forest Policy primarily refers to Nigeria's policy, aiming for sustainable forest management (SFM) to increase forest cover from 6% to 25% by 2030, focusing on conservation, community participation, economic benefits (like non-timber products), and climate change mitigation. The overall objective of the |

|                               |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                               |      | national forest policy is to achieve sustainable management of forests and forest resources that would ensure sustainable increase in the economic, social and environmental benefits for the present and future generation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| RENEWABLE ENERGY Policy       | 2015 | Renewable energy policies are ongoing, evolving frameworks, not single-year events, with key Nigerian examples including the 2003 National Energy Policy, the 2015 National Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Policy (NREEEP), and the 2022 Revised National Energy Policy, all setting goals towards 2030/2060 net-zero targets, focusing on solar, hydro, and grid integration.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| WASH Policy                   | 2018 | Nigeria's WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) policy evolved, with key milestones including a National Water Supply and Sanitation Policy in 2000, a revised draft in 2004, the National Policy on Water Resources in 2016, and the significant launch of the National Action Plan (NAP) in 2018, after declaring a state of emergency, aiming for universal access by 2030. The WASH programme is designed to strengthening systems and ensuring sustainable management of our water resources using national, international and non-governmental collaborative instruments and end open defecation in Nigeria. |
| NET ZERO CARBON Policy        | 2022 | The Net Zero Carbon Policy is a Climate Change Act that seeks to achieve low greenhouse gas emissions, green and sustainable growth by providing the framework to set a target to reach net zero between 2050 and 2070. The Climate Change Act 2021, supported by the data-driven Energy Transition Plan (ETP), focusing on sectors like power, transport, and oil/gas, and aims to balance climate goals with energy access, using frameworks like carbon budgets and initiatives such as the Presidential CNG Initiative.                                                                                        |
| NATIONAL CLEAN COOKING Policy | 2024 | Nigeria's National Clean Cooking Policy, approved in 2024, aims for universal access to clean cooking by 2030, promoting LPG, electric cooking, biogas, and efficient biomass stoves to boost health, create jobs (10M+), cut emissions, and fight deforestation, aligning with national climate goals (NDC, Net Zero 2060) through partnerships and incentives for local production, with implementation strategies involving states, private sector, and development partners.                                                                                                                                   |

**Source: Federal Ministry of Environment (2025)**

Table 4.3 revealed that there are existing Public Policies supporting Sustainable Development Goals environmental related activities in Nigeria namely National Forestry Policy, Renewable Energy Policy, Wash Policy, Net Zero Carbon Policy and National Clean Cooking Policy. In recognition of the acute challenges hampering clean water availability and sanitation access for millions of citizens, the Nigerian government instituted dedicated policies and programs to expand coverage and improve infrastructure nationwide since the turn of the century. The foremost development was the ratification of the National Water Supply and Sanitation Policy in 2000 which ambitiously outlined plans to extend piped water schemes and modern toilet facilities to underserved groups, especially across neglected rural areas. By providing binding targets, guidelines and accountabilities, this policy signaled Nigeria's commitment to water, sanitation and hygiene sector reforms. Additionally, to catalyze action, the launch of national vision plans like the Nigeria Vision 20:2020 in 2009 also embedded ambitious targets around raising basic water and sanitation access to 75% and 90% respectively before the end of this decade. Additionally, Nigeria's vulnerability to climate change-fueled extreme weather events threatens sustainability of water availability for consumption, agriculture and sanitation needs of economically disadvantaged groups. Intensifying droughts and floods damage water catchment and storage infrastructures. This particularly endangers remote villages dependent on season rainfall and natural sources like lakes, rivers and streams. Undeniably, Nigeria cannot genuinely combat preventable WASH-related diseases, achieve human capital development targets or manage its water resources sustainably without surmounting these systemic deficits impeding universal clean water availability and

sanitation access. This finding is consistent with the assertion in Mutalib (2024) report that Nigeria environmental sustainability is addressed through the Climate Change Act 2021, National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency Act 2006, National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) Act 2007, and the Environmental Impact Assessment Act 1992. The NESREA Act provides a framework for environmental protection, enforcing regulations to reduce pollution and environmental degradation. The 2023 Electricity Act seeks to promote clean and sustainable energy sources by not only increasing the share of power supply but also promoting renewable energy in the national energy mix. These efforts support SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

4. What are the public policy tools that can support Sustainable Development Goals action plan in Nigeria?

**Table 4.4: Public Policy Tools that can Support Sustainable Development Goals Action Plan in Nigeria**

| Public Policy Tools                          | Objective/Results                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Policy Implementation                        | The effectiveness of policy implementation significantly determines whether a policy will achieve its intended impact or fail to deliver. Several models have been developed to explain the implementation process.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Institutional Frameworks for Development     | This encompass government agencies, ministries, regulatory bodies, and other public institutions responsible for policy formulation, implementation, and oversight. They also include mechanisms for inter-agency collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and accountability.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Public Awareness and Participation           | It is a foundational principle of democratic governance and an essential component of sustainable development, ensuring that development efforts are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all societal groups. The importance of public awareness and participation lies in its capacity to enhance transparency, legitimacy, and effectiveness of development policies. When citizens are well-informed and actively engaged, they are more likely to support and contribute to national development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) |
| Multisectoral Collaboration                  | The importance of multisectoral collaboration lies in its potential to create synergy and avoid duplication of efforts. Sustainable development challenges are multifaceted, demanding comprehensive solutions that no single actor can provide independently. Such partnerships enhance efficiency, ensure resource optimization, and promote inclusive decision-making, all of which are essential for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)                                                                                                           |
| Monitoring & Evaluation of Development Goals | M&E serves as a vital mechanism for ensuring accountability, transparency, and informed decision-making throughout the implementation process. Effective M&E enables stakeholders to measure performance, identify gaps, and make necessary adjustments to strategies, thereby improving the likelihood of achieving desired development outcomes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

**Source: The Author (2025)**

Table 4.4 presents us with five public policy tools that can support Sustainable Development Goals action plan in Nigeria namely Policy Implementation, Institutional Frameworks for Development, Public Awareness and Participation, Multisectoral Collaboration and Monitoring & Evaluation of Development Goals. This findings is consistent with Adedeji et al (2025) reviewed literature that reveals several notable public policy tools that limit a comprehensive understanding of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation in Nigeria. First, there is an insufficient focus on localized implementation strategies tailored to Nigeria's diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts. Most studies tend to address SDG policies at a national or broad level without examining how these policies translate into practical, community-level actions. This gap is critical because the success of SDG initiatives often depends on the ability to adapt frameworks to local realities. Additionally, there is a scarcity of empirical data on grassroots participation in SDG programmes, which undermines insights into the role and effectiveness of community engagement in driving sustainable development. Without robust data from the grassroots, it remains difficult to assess how inclusive and participatory the SDG implementation processes are, particularly in rural and marginalized areas. Another significant gap in the literature concerns the lack of consistent monitoring and evaluation studies focusing on Nigerian development agencies and their SDG-related projects. Effective monitoring and evaluation are essential to track progress, identify challenges, and improve interventions; however, existing research seldom provides detailed evaluations specific to institutional performance in Nigeria. Furthermore, many studies lack the integration of context-sensitive theoretical frameworks that consider Nigeria's unique political, economic, and cultural environment. This theoretical gap restricts the ability to understand the complex dynamics influencing SDG implementation locally. Finally, there is a pronounced need for comparative analyses that benchmark Nigerian strategies against international best practices. Such comparative research could illuminate effective approaches and lessons learned globally, enabling Nigeria to refine its SDG policies and achieve better development outcomes.

## **5. Conclusions and Recommendations**

This study analyzed the role of Public Policy in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria. Findings revealed the existence of several Public Policies that is supporting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) economic related activities in Nigeria namely NAPEP, NEEDS, CCT, N-Power and GEEP between the periods 2001 to 2023, that UBE Policy, NHIS Policy, National Youth Policy, National Housing Policy and Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) policy are existing Public Policies supporting SDGs social related activities in Nigeria, that there are existing Public Policies supporting Sustainable Development Goals environmental related activities in Nigeria namely National Forestry Policy, Renewable Energy Policy, Wash Policy, Net Zero Carbon Policy and National clean cooking policy and recommend on five public policy tools that can support Sustainable Development Goals action plan in Nigeria namely Policy Implementation, Institutional Frameworks for Development, Public Awareness and Participation, Multisectoral Collaboration and Monitoring & Evaluation of Development Goals. This paper has given rise to the following recommendations.

- Firstly, there is a need to sustain the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), a Medium Term Plan for 2017 – 2020 developed to eliminate the bottlenecks that impede innovation and market-based solutions by leveraging Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) and building a knowledge-based economy that is consistent with the aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) given that the initiatives address its three dimensions of economic, social and environmental sustainability issues.
- Sustainable development should emanate from the process in which the people participate in all stages of decision-making from problem identification and programme formulation, resources mobilization and implementation, to monitoring and evaluation. Participatory

development contributes local knowledge to the process and ensures that the problems addressed are the priorities of the target community-led initiative. This local capacity should only be supported by the organizations such as the civil societies, community-based organizations, national and international non-governmental organizations.

- Strengthening institutional capacity through training, fostering inclusive partnerships among public, private, and civil society actors, and enhancing public awareness through education and media campaigns emerged as key recommendations. These strategies, if adopted and sustained, can enhance ownership, responsiveness, and the long-term viability of SDG interventions in Nigeria. In conclusion, realizing the SDGs in Nigeria by 2030 is an ambitious but not unattainable goal.
- There is a need for a further research to be carried out to assess the results of public policy on sustainable development goals in Nigeria.
- Finally, Policy implementation should be built up from formulation stage through appropriate planning and realistic goal setting that is implementable. Implementation management and appropriate technology should be employed. These will include: proper planning process, organizing less, communicating more, thereby carrying along stakeholders of the policy, etc. It will close the gap between policy conception and implementation and reduce confusion and criticisms that may trail implementation change.

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