

The Challenges and Implications of Sustainable Development in Africa: Policy Options for Nigeria

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The sustainable development debate is based on the assumption that societies need to manage three types of capital (economic, social and natural) which may be non-substitutable and whose consumption might be irreversible. Nonetheless, the problem of social and natural capital deterioration in Sub-Saharan Africa is quite alarming without sufficient response mechanisms. The paper examines the challenges and implications of sustainable development in Africa with a special focus on Nigeria. Using descriptive and analytical approaches, the paper posits that the prominent challenges which hamper the achievement of sustainable development in Africa include; extreme poverty, rapid population growth rate, rapid urbanization, deforestation, environmental impact of extractive industries, rate of economic growth, rural development, climatic variability and natural environmental hazard. The paper considers the implications of these challenges on post 2015 agenda in Africa and suggests plausible policy options to address social, economic and environmental sustainability. Since it was discovered that inconsistency in government policies among others things have impacted adversely on the sustainability of Nigerian development, the paper furthermore recommends the establishment of the Sustainable Development Trust Fund (SDF) saddled with the responsibility of enforcing economic, social and environmental sustainability.

1. Introduction

While Africa maintained positive growth rates during the 2000, very few countries have achieved and maintained the growth rates necessary to reduce poverty. African countries still face the critical challenge of raising the rate of GDP growth and sustaining high growth rates over an extended period in order to accelerate progress towards meeting the MDGs (ECA, 2007). Indeed, annual economic growth for 1990-2000

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