

## **Corruption as an impediment in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria: A Critical Reflection.**

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### **Abstract**

Since the return of Nigeria to democratically elected government in May, 1999, there has been a continuous and desperate search for solutions to the enormous development problems confronting the country. One of these problems is corruption which has resisted all medications. This menace is practically found everywhere and is carried out by almost every institution in the state, be they political, military, religious, traditional, judicial institutions. This paper investigates the issue of corruption as it affects the achievement of sustainable development goals in Nigerian. Using the Structural Functional approach, the paper shows how Corruption has, to a large extent affected all efforts made in achieving sustainable development goals in Nigeria. Data for this study was sourced through secondary sources and the study found out that if corruption is not checked, the laudable objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals will not be achieved in Nigeria. Since development cannot thrive under corrupt environment, the paper is of the opinion that, to achieve the desired goal of development in Nigeria, we must amongst other things, fight corruption at all levels. To do this the paper strongly recommends corroborative efforts from both leaders and followers. So long as corruption continues to be perpetrated by Nigerians at all levels, the paper reveals that Nigeria will continue to drift further from the Promised Land of Development.

**Keywords:** Corruption, Development, Sustainable Development and Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

Since the return of Nigeria to democratically elected government in 1999, there has been a continuous and desperate search for the solutions to enormous development problems. These problems include among others, high rate of poverty, malnutrition, insecurity, illiteracy, poor health indices, decaying infrastructure, security of lives and property and so on. The solutions so far advanced aimed at solving these problems have remained practically elusive, unserviceable and unrealistic. This situation has, therefore, posed serious challenges to the development strategies in Nigeria. Invariably, the conditions of an average Nigerian, in recent years, have steadily deteriorated as more and more Rural Development Programmes and strategies have been unfolded. It is also in solving these problems and ensuring a sustainable society that the ideal of sustainable development goals were initiated and

transplanted in Africa and Nigeria in particular. The achievement of these goals has remained doubtful.

Nigeria's transition from an autocratic military regime to an elected democracy in May, 1999 indeed marked a remarkable period in the short but chequered history of the post-colonial Nigeria. This transition was significant because it ended sixteen straight years of the authoritarian rule under several military heads of state (George-Genyi, 2011). Even though Nigerians were openly sceptical that the military would genuinely relinquish power and return to the barracks, most people in the country were optimistic that they had finally seen the last of the self-appointed military messiahs. Indeed, despite the fact, that the elections and the entire transition programme that ushered in the civil administration were marred by irregularities and fraudulent processes, the general consensus in the country was that the imperfections were simply the price that Nigeria had to pay for putting an end to military dictatorship that had ruled the nation since the first military coup in January, 1966.

It can, however, be noticed that despite about 20 years of the country's return to democratic rule, Nigerians are yet to see concrete infrastructural development in the country. Also not much has been achieved in terms of poverty reduction, increased food and nutritional security, illiteracy reduction, sound health indices, improved infrastructural development, security of lives and property. Nigerians had hope that this return will put an end to massive looting and stealing public resources that had characterized past military regimes. There is, however, no much improvement in the management of the nation's resources which could have reduce unemployment, insecurity, improve our public institutions such as hospitals, schools, and transportation. It has therefore been observed that corruption has still found its way in the current democratic government which has remind a hindrance to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the country.

This paper is, therefore, an attempt to reflect on the impact of corruption on achieving SDGs in the country especially in the last 20 years, 1999-2019. The paper which begins with introduction is closely followed by conceptual clarification. A theoretical framework is presented in section three. Section four identifies the objectives and the goals of sustainable development while section five looks at some corruptions cases involving our leaders. It is on the basis of this that conclusion and recommendations are made in section six.

## **Definition of Concepts**

### **Corruption**

Salisu (2000) simply defined corruption as the misapplication of public resources to private ends. This among others include the public officials collecting bribes for issuing permits licenses for authorizing passage of goods at sea/airport, passports or visa, for awarding contracts or for enacting regulations designed to create artificial scarcity, awarding undeserved score or grades to students after exam, availing question papers to students

before examination, and at times it may come in the form of sexual or other forms of gratifications.

The World Bank (1996, p.39) defined corruption as “the abuse of public power for private benefit.” The Transparency International (2005, p.3) defined it as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”. Corruption also includes bribery, smuggling, fraud, illegal payments, money laundering, drug trafficking, falsification of documents and records, window dressing, false declaration, evasion, underpayment, deceit, forgery, concealment, aiding and abetting of any kind to the detriment of another person, community, society or nation. Khan (1996) defined corruption as an act which deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in a position of public authority because of private - regarding - motive such as wealth, power or status.

Relatedly, Otite (2000) defined corruption as perversion of integrity or state of affairs through bribery, favour or moral depravity. According to Otite, corruption takes place when at least two parties have interacted to change the structure or processes of society or the behaviour of functionaries in order to produce dishonest, unfaithful or defiled situations. In other words - corruption is a systematic vice in an individual, society or a nation which reflects favoritism, nepotism, tribalism, sectionalism, undue enrichment, amassing of wealth, abuse of office, power, position and derivation of undue gains and benefits. Windsor and Getz (2000) broadly defined corruption as socially impermissible deviance from some public duty or more generally some ideal standard of conduct. Corruption also could be youth based among which includes cybercrime (yahooyahoo), thuggery, permutation, pilfering, drug peddling, paid assassins, kidnapping, prostitution, militancy, Boko-haram and 419 syndromes, plagiarisms among others. The definitions of these authors commonly agreed that corruption manifests for personal gratification and therefore it is anti-economic, or political. It erodes the values system of the economy of a nation.

### **Sustainable Development Goals**

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – 17 objectives agreed by all UN member states in September 2015 – provide a way for countries to recognise and meet these challenges to building future prosperity. Converging, interconnected issues have brought the SDGs to the fore as a unifying global agenda for countries, companies, investors and civil society to pursue. They create a framework for building enduring, inclusive prosperity that is fit for the future. The aim is for the SDGs to be fully achieved by 2030: this is the UN’s ‘2030 Agenda’ ([www.accaglobal.com](http://www.accaglobal.com)). For countries, the 17 SDGs propose a new model to adhere to in order to generate prosperity for their citizens.

The 17 SDGs include the eradication of poverty, end hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water,

life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions and partnerships for the goals (<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>). These ambitious and all-encompassing goals are to be met by the year 2030.

Looking at these goals suggests that they can be categorized into three:

- i. Those that require reform, those that require revolution and those that require reversal. The first category assumes that it would take these targets more than half way to achievement by 2030 and these are economic growth (Goal 8) and strengthening domestic resource mobilization for development (Goal 17).
- ii. The second category is those targets where progress needs to speed up by multiples of current rates to meet the target. These include ending extreme poverty (Goal 1), eliminating hunger (Goal 2), reducing maternal mortality (Goal 3), quality education (Goal 4), and gender equality (Goal 5), access to sanitation (Goal 6), access to energy (Goal 7), industrialization in LDCs (Goal 9), reducing inequality (Goal 10) and halting deforestation (Goal 15).
- iii. The third category is where the targets are heading in the wrong direction. They include reducing slum populations (Goal 11), reducing waste (Goal 12), combating climate change (Goal 13), marine conservation (Goal 14) and reducing violent deaths (Goal 16) (Susan, 2016). The goals are interconnected as the effect of one goal has tremendous effect on the others.

A look at these goals suggest again that, African leaders do not lack ideas, they are also aware of the problems the masses are going through probably because, some have also gone through same problems when they were among the masses. What is lacking in African leaders is the medication that will cure the virus they have been infested with, that is corruption.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is built on structural functional approach. Functionalists tend to view social and political units in more holistic, organic terms. Social practices are said to have a functional role in sustaining the system as a whole. Functionalists equate structure to anatomy and functions to the physiology of organisms. The functional approach does not have the same limitations as process and content, it defines government as all those activities that influence "the way in which authoritative decisions are formulated and executed for a society" (Easton, 1957, p. 38a). From this definition, various schemata were developed to study the functions of government. Easton listed five modes of action as elements of all political systems: legislation, administration, adjudication, the development of demands, and the development of support and solidarity. These were grouped as input and output requirements of political systems. According to Almond and Coleman (1960), the required inputs are political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, and political communication. As outputs, he identified rule making, rule application, and rule adjudication.

Political systems have common properties, according to Almond and Coleman (1960). First, all political systems, even the simplest, have political structure. Second, the same functions are

performed in all political systems. Third, all political structure is multifunctional, whether in primitive or in modern societies. Finally, all political systems are "mixed" systems in the cultural sense. No society is strictly modern or only primitive.

As stated previously, Almond and Coleman (1960) listed seven functions of all political systems: political socialization, interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication, rulemaking, rule application, and rule adjudication. The first four belong to the input side of a system's functioning, and the last three to its policy outputs. Political communication links inputs to out-puts in a way that provides the function of a feedback loop. Whereas Easton's systems analysis deals primarily with "demands and supports," Almond and Coleman's categorization of inputs and outputs in the political system is much more extensive and in fact has led to a multifaceted approach to the study of politics. In their study of political systems, Almond and Powell (1966) considered the activities or functions from three points of view: the conversion functions of interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication, rulemaking, rule application, and rule adjudication; the operation and capabilities of the political system in its environments; and the way in which political systems maintain or adapt themselves to pressures for change over the long term. These latter functions referred to the maintenance and adaptation functions of political recruitment and political socialization.

What is important is that, Almond and Powell (1966) emphasized that all the structures must perform their function effectively for the survival of the political system. In Nigeria, the structure charge with the responsibility of performing these functions has been corrupted. Corruption hinders the ability of the executive, the legislature and the judiciary to perform their function effectively for the survival of the Nigerian political system. That is why there is high rate of poverty, death rate, hunger, insecurity etc and little hope for the attainment of the sustainable development goals.

### **The Trend of Corruption in Nigeria's fourth Republic**

Cases of corruption in the Nigeria's nation-state have in the past three decades assumed frightening proportion. In spite of the attempts by successive governments of checking it, the incidence has not abated. Nigeria's history since the return to democratic governance in 1999 is replete with myriads of incidence of corruption. This appears to have almost enveloped all sectors of the Nigerian society-ministries and agencies of government. Most disheartening was the legislative probe of the Aviation sector in which \$6.5 billion scams was unveiled. There is also, the probe of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) that has revealed heart-throbbing facts from the Senate probe. How could it for instance, be imagined that an oil block worth billions of dollars was knowingly sold by officials of the Department of Petroleum Resources? (The Vanguard, 2012, p. 49).

The recent recoveries made by anti-corruption agencies now clearly show that something is basically wrong with those in charge of managing our common wealth. According to

Minister of information, Lai Mohammed (Premium Times, 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2016, p.36) the following statement was made about recovered loots under Goodluck Jonathan:

The Federal Government made cash recoveries totaling N78,325,354,631.82 (Seventy eight billion, three hundred and twenty-five million, three hundred and fifty-four thousand, six hundred and thirty one Naira and eighty two kobo); \$185,119,584.61 (One hundred and eight five million, one hundred and nineteen thousand, five hundred and eighty four US dollars, sixty one cents); 3,508,355.46 Pounds Sterling (Three million, five hundred and eight thousand, three hundred and fifty-five Pounds and 46 Pence) and 11, 250 Euros (Eleven thousand, two hundred and fifty Euros) from 29 May 2015 to 25 May 2016. In a statement in Lagos on Saturday, the Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, also disclosed that recoveries under interim forfeiture (cash and assets) during the period total N126,563,481,095.43 (One hundred and twenty six billion, five hundred and sixty three million, four hundred and eighty one thousand, and ninety five Naira, forty three Kobo; \$9,090,243,920.15 (Nine billion, ninety million, two hundred and forty three thousand, nine hundred and twenty Dollars, fifteen cents; 2,484,447.55 Pounds Sterling (Two million, four hundred and eighty four thousand, four hundred and forty seven Pounds, fifty five Pence) and 303,399.17 Euros (Three hundred and three thousand, three hundred and ninety-nine Euros, 17 cents). According to the statement, which is based on the interim report on the financial and assets recoveries made by the various government agencies from 29 May 2015 to 25 May 2016, the funds awaiting return from foreign jurisdictions total \$321,316,726.1 (Three hundred and twenty one million, three hundred and sixteen thousand, seven hundred and twenty six Dollars, one cent); 6,900,000 Pounds (Six million, nine hundred thousand Pounds) and 11,826.11 Euros (Eleven thousand, eight hundred and twenty six Euros, 11 cents).It showed that non-cash recoveries (Farmlands, Plots of Land, Uncompleted Buildings, Completed Buildings, Vehicles and Maritime Vessels) during the period totalled 239.

Corruption is a widespread phenomenon and its effects are immeasurable. It leaves an economy with an untold hardship. However, the effects of corruption are felt in the economic, political and social spheres either directly or indirectly. Although the direct costs of corruption may be high in terms of lost revenue or funds diverted from their intended use, the indirect costs in terms of the economic distortions; inefficiencies and waste resulting from corrupt practices are more problematic over the long-term and thus make it more difficult to address (Gbenga, 2007).

The ranking of effects of corruption varies from nation to nation. While the degree is high in some nations, it is found to be low in some countries depending on their corruption check and balancing mechanism. Nigeria is ranked among the most corrupt countries of the world

by the Transparency International (2005). Ades and DiTella (1996) and Gupta *et al* (1998), Rose-Ackerman (1999), Della- Porta (2000) and Adsera *et al* (2003) observe that corruption portends negative effects on democracy in terms of decreasing government effectiveness and political legitimacy and increase in stability. Mauro (1997a) observed that corruption affects investment.

Table 1. Level of corruption in Nigeria (Some Suspected Corruption Cases in Nigeria).

S/No	Suspects	Amount	Source
01	Aviation Probe by senate	\$6.5 billion	<i>The vanguard</i> , 2012
	Department of Petroleum Resources	oil block worth billions of dollars was sold to Chinese Petroleum Company for \$6million	<i>The vanguard</i> , 2012
2	Alhaji Maina	N195 Billion, Pension Scam	<a href="https://www.legit.ng/402850-top-12-corruption-cases.html">https://www.legit.ng/402850-top-12-corruption-cases.html</a>
3	Mamman Ali and Mahmud Tukur were fingered	\$6bn (£4bn)	<a href="https://www.legit.ng/402850-top-12-corruption-cases.html">https://www.legit.ng/402850-top-12-corruption-cases.html</a>
4	Stephen Oronsaye	123bn Naira	<a href="https://www.legit.ng/402850-top-12-corruption-cases.html">https://www.legit.ng/402850-top-12-corruption-cases.html</a>
5	Atiku Abubakar Kigo; Mrs. Uzoma Cyril Attang, and others	N32.8 billion police pension	<a href="https://www.legit.ng/402850-top-12-corruption-cases.html">https://www.legit.ng/402850-top-12-corruption-cases.html</a>
5	Stella Oduah car purchase scandal	N255m	<a href="https://www.legit.ng/402850-top-12-corruption-cases.html">https://www.legit.ng/402850-top-12-corruption-cases.html</a>
6	NNPC missing money	NNPC missing \$20billion	<a href="https://www.legit.ng/402850-top-12-corruption-cases.html">https://www.legit.ng/402850-top-12-corruption-cases.html</a>

7	Mohammed Abacha	N446 Billion	<a href="https://www.legit.ng/402850-top-12-corruption-cases.html">https://www.legit.ng/402850-top-12-corruption-cases.html</a>
8	Abdullahi Adamu	N15bn	Punch, <a href="#">September 1, 2018</a>
9	Godswill Akpabio	N100 bn	Punch, <a href="#">September 1, 2018</a>
10	Babachir Lawal	N223m	Punch, <a href="#">September 1, 2018</a>
11	Rotimi Amaechi	N97bn	Punch, <a href="#">September 1, 2018</a>
12	Abdul'aziz Yari	N680m	Punch, <a href="#">September 1, 2018</a>
13	Philomina Chieshe(Snake scandal)	N36 million	Daily Post, February 10, 2018
14	Gabriel Suswam, Omadachi Oklobia, Mrs Janet Aluga.	N9.7 billion	Punch, <a href="#">September 26, 2018</a>
15	Chimaroke Nnamani	N5BN	Pulse, 27/2/2019
16	Ifeanyi Ubah	N42b	Pulse, 27/2/2019
17	Stella Oduah	N12b	Pulse, 27/2/2019
18	Danjuma Goje	N25b	Pulse, 27/2/2019
19	Nduka Obaigbena	N650 million Dasukigate	Premium Times,October5, 2019
20	Iyorchia Ayu	N350 million Dasukigate	Premium Times,October5, 2019
21	Olisah Metuh,	N400 million Dasukigate	Premium Times,October5, 2019
22	Raymond Dokpesi	N2.1 Billion Dasukigate	Premium Times,October5, 2019
23	Colonel Sambo Dasuki	\$2 billion arms deal	<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/\$2_billion_arms_deal">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/\$2_billion_arms_deal</a>

Source; Authors compilation 2021.

### Effects of Corruption on Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals

The recent statistics released by the Federal Ministry of Education showed that the country has 10,193,918 out-of-school children (Punch April, 19, 2019, p.32). The Minister of



Education, Adamu Adamu, who revealed this at a press conference in Abuja, said the audit was part of the 2018/2019 Annual School Census, which was carried out by the Universal Basic Education Commission, National Population Commission, National Bureau of Statistics and other stakeholders.

Those that are in school are under bad conditions due to poor facilities in public schools. Most class rooms are overcrowded and managed by inadequate teachers. Arisi (2002) stressed that inadequate classroom spaces have resulted in over-crowding in schools. Many primary and secondary schools were built long time ago by both government and church missionaries. Hence, most of the buildings, roof-tops, desks, chairs, tables, floors, etc., have become extremely bad. Many village schools which were built with self-help efforts have been damaged due to long neglect especially blown roof-tops, damaged floors, destroyed windows/doors, and have been occupied by reptiles, while the children take lessons under the trees or shades. Government ought to have put some efforts to renovate them so as to accommodate more pupils but this was not done. While this has remained so is not far from the evils of corruption. In most cases money budgeted for education ends up in private pockets. If this trend is not checked, achieving goal four of sustainable development goal which is enhancing quality education will remind a millage

Corruption also affects the quality of life of man. Dike (2005) observed that corruption occurs in many forms and it has contributed immensely to the poverty and misery of a large segment of the Nigeria's population. Mauro (1997b) observed that high rate of corruption creates a situation where investment returns are difficult to predict. Their conclusion showed that the effects of corruption are to limit investment, which is critical to the long-run sustainable economic growth. They further argue that corrupt behaviors have the tendency of scaring away foreign and local investors with significant adverse effect on the economy. Corruption wastes the limited resources of an economy, increases the costs of doing business thus signalling inflation, hence radically reduce revenues accruing to the state. It also results in poor service delivery, "moonlighting" or multiple concurrent sources of employment and refusal to perform normal functions without additional payment. Gbenga (2007) asserted that corruption deepens poverty and makes it difficult for ordinary people to get ahead as the result of their own efforts. There is increasing evidence that the social and economic cost of corruption disproportionately affects the poor, who do not only suffer from the lack of services and efficient government, but who are also powerless to resist the demands of corrupt officials (Lawal & Tobi, 2001).

Corruption has also affected the health sector in no small major. *The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), a Scheme that has the tendency to enable Nigeria make progress towards achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC)* recently experienced *what can better be described as pandemonium* (Leadership, November 4, 2018. p.16). The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission has grilled a few managers and invited some contractors of the National Health Insurance Scheme to explain their role in the N919m fraud allegedly

perpetrated by the recently sacked Executive Secretary of the NHIS, Prof. Usman Yusuf. Some officials of the NHIS were also said to have accepted bribes from contractors. For instance, in a report submitted to the EFCC by a panel set up by the Minister of Health, Prof. Isaac Adewole, it was alleged that a contractor, GK Kanki Foundation, was directed by one of the managers at the NHIS to pay N2.8m into a Skye Bank account with number 1040569204 belonging to one Magaji Garba (Leadership, November 4, 2018. p.16).

Furthermore, according to statistics as presented by David in The Cable, May 5, 2019, p.24. stated that:

there are roughly 35,000 practicing resident doctors in Nigeria (aside other health workers), with a population of 180m people, that translates to one doctor to 5,143 persons. The world health organization's (WHO) standard is 1:1000, which means that the Nigerian doctor is over burdened by extra 4,143 persons. The problem is not even the number of resident doctors we have in the country, the blood cuddling problem is the issue of massive brain drain in the health sector. Each day there are doctors who leave this country or are planning to. The sector is no longer healthy for them as their welfare and safety is no longer guaranteed. Funding and the judicious use of these funds is a snag to the growth and development of the health sector. In spite of the funds budgeted for the state house clinic, the wife of the President once said there were no drugs there. This is a scary reality. Now if the state house clinic whose budget is more than that of any teaching hospital can suffer this fate, ordinary hospitals will just be a sorry case, a death trap even. The poor woman in Kaura nemoda stands the risk of losing her child to malaria, the poor farmer in Lokoja will probably go blind with river blindness, the helpless Fisherman in Brass stands the risk of dying from fever all because they can't access good and affordable healthcare on time. One so called leader somewhere on the evil food chain of corruption must have appropriated funds meant for primary health care centers to himself and his cronies leaving the poor masses at the mercy of the elements. As a direct fall out of the dilapidated and almost comatose health sector, there has been a massive brain drain, an unfortunate but booming medical tourism industry and sadly, needless deaths of Nigerians occasioned by this ugly reality that we live in, a reality that we as a people have resigned to. Isn't it particularly embarrassing that the number one citizen of our nation has become a regular customer of this booming medical tourism business? Isn't it sad that our political leaders (both appointed and elected) and the elites are the one fueling this raging inferno of a business? Having super-intended on the common patrimony of Nigerians for years, overseeing all sectors especially HEALTH, they still don't patronize our health centers. They ran the health sector aground by

misappropriation, embezzlement and outright stealing of funds meant for this sector. The truth is they don't care, public office to them is a means to plunge their hands into the till and help themselves with monies not theirs. As far as they have access to foreign medical care, the Nigerian health sector can burn to ashes.

This quotation expresses a clear picture of what is happening in the health sector in Nigeria. With this development one doubts if the sustainable development goal will be achieved in this sector.

The security sector of the country has not also been free from corruption, making Nigerians live at the mercy of criminals. The activities of Boko Haram insurgency, Kidnapping, Farmers/ Herders crisis, banditry, arm robbery etc have all become fashionable in Nigeria. The inability of government to control this criminality is against the primary responsibility of government in protecting lives and properties. Senior security officers have been fingered and are being prosecuted while some have been convicted of corruption related charges. This means that resources meant for fighting criminality have been at times diverted for private use. This act if not checked will hinder the achievement of the sustainable development goals in this direction.

## **Conclusion**

The notion of democratic governance is people - centered. It epitomizes the most fundamental principle of democracy—that people should govern themselves through the systems they choose through open and transparent participatory processes. Democratic governance means that people have a say in the decisions that affect their lives and that they can hold decision-makers accountable. It further entails that the rules, institutions and practices that govern social interactions are inclusive and fair; that women are equal partners with men in private and public spheres of life; that people are free from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, class, gender or any other similar factor; and that the needs of future generations are reflected in current policies. Corruption has, however, hindered the ability of majority of Nigeria to live a sustainable life. There is clear wealth discrimination between those who are corrupt and those who are not.

Government policy implementation does not reflect the yearnings and aspirations of the common man. This means that economic and social policies are not responsive to people's needs and their aspirations, that these policies do not aim at eradicating poverty and expanding the choices that all people have in their lives, and that human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected. Despite the democratic values enshrined and recognized by almost every nation today, regardless of the country's context, evidence from across Africa confirms that corruption has emerged as the engine to an anti-democratic environment characterized by uncertainty, unpredictability and declining moral values and disrespect for constitutional institutions and authority. Corruption, therefore, reflects a

democracy, human rights and governance deficit that negatively impacts on poverty and human security. It hurts the poor disproportionately and hinders economic development, reduces social services and diverts investment in infrastructure, institutions and social services.

Similarly, it is evident that corruption has also contributed to state failure. It has contributed to instability, poverty and the eruption of civil wars over resources in several African countries. Experience from many countries which are undergoing or have emerged from conflict show that corruption is a dominant factor in driving fragile countries to state failure (UNDP, 2004). Corruption can lead to, and sustain, violent conflict, in the context of patrimonial regimes that are degenerating under local or international shocks and pressures for market reform. Philippe Le Billon argues that corruption is part of the social and political fabric of society, and thus, 'conflict may be engendered more by changes in the pattern of corruption than by the existence of corruption itself'—for example, by appeasing belligerents to buy peace. This leads to forms of competitive corruption between different factions, which can result in prolonged violence. With this, we can conveniently conclude that if corruption is not controlled, the laudable goals of sustainable development will not be achieved in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the paper recommends the following;

- i. The masses should involve themselves in the fight against corruption since they are the ones that are directly affected by its evils. They can do this by rejecting the elites that have been involved in any corruption case. The attitude of allowing those who are involved in corruption to fight corruption will not work since it has become a business for them.
- ii. There should be a focus on putting in place preventive and control mechanism and tools to reduce incidences of corruption; while at the same time strengthening Anticorruption Commissions and the overall institutional framework so that the checks and balances mechanism can be effective.
- iii. Relatedly, religious leaders should be involved in discouraging corruption in the Nigeria. They can do this by discouraging thanksgivings with suspected corrupt money in religious houses.
- iv. In addition, giving of awards and chieftaincy titles to those who have suddenly become rich at the expense of the society by the traditional institutions should also be discouraged.

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