

A SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSFORMATION AGENDA OF PRESIDENT GOODLUCK EBELE JONATHAN

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Abstract

There have been a number of visions and policies pursued by previous Heads of Government of Nigeria from Independence to the present democratic dispensation of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan took oath of office on 29 May, 2011 amidst thunderous expectations of a new dawn, given the mountain of problems that characterized the nation. Realizing the high expectations of the citizens, the President promised Nigerians a policy package tagged the Transformation Agenda. This is a 5-year development plan 2011-2015, driven by a world class team of 28 technocrats under the Chairmanship of the President himself and the coordination of a renowned Economist in person of Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. The Transformation Agenda itself is focused on three key areas which include strong, inclusive and non-inflationary growth; employment generation and poverty alleviation and value re-orientation of the citizenry. Using thirteen key sectors as the spring board, the President hopes to transform the whole economy of Nigeria. The strength of the Transformation Agenda lie in one, a well thought out policy document; two, a world class Economic Management Team to drive the process though; three a potential financial, human and political resource base; four, a growing maturity of major institutions of governance such as the National Assembly, the Judiciary, an electoral umpire and the Armed Forces; and five, the needlessness to ‘re-invent the wheel’ as several strategic plans blue print are already in place. Nevertheless, there are a number of threats and challenges to the realization of the Transformation Agenda. These include, one, absence of good governance and accountability; two, ineffective public service; three, lack of synergy between political office holders and holders of public office; four, the incessant problem of insecurity; five, corruption; six, bankrupt leadership; and seven, a faulty development agenda that is currently driving the Transformation Agenda. In conclusion therefore, there is the need

to take bold steps towards exploiting the maximum benefits of the opportunities and strengths of the Transformation Agenda, while simultaneously reducing, to the barest minimum, the threats and challenges facing it. Most importantly, some fundamental measures need to be taken in the thinking and actions of the leadership of the country. Finally, there is the need for a radical development strategy that will guarantee inclusiveness as opposed to exclusiveness in the Governance of the Transformation Agenda to be in firm place.

Keywords: Transformation, Agenda, Corruption, Insecurity, Prospects, Challenges

Introduction

There have been a number of visions and policies pursued by previous Heads of Governments of Nigeria, either under the Military or Civilian regimes in the recent past. Alhaji Shehu Shagari, who was elected as President of Nigeria in 1979 and ruled up to January, 1984 tagged his policy as the Green Revolution. This policy hoped to transform the agricultural sector and use the gains thereafter to revolutionize other key sectors of the economy. The short period of the leadership of General Muhammadu Buhari was spent in fighting corruption and instilling discipline in the polity. Thereafter General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida took over the mantle of leadership in 1984 and hinged his administrative policy package largely on the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). This he did by opening up the domestic economy to International market forces and institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to play key roles with the hope of using the benefits to transform the whole economy.

General Sani Abacha came into power in 1993 after the controversial annulment of the 1993 Presidential elections with another policy somersault. His policy package radically de-emphasized the influence of International institutions and centered mainly on the exploitation of domestic efforts towards transforming the economy. In 1999, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was elected as the President and Commander -in-chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces. He took yet another radical departure from his predecessors. His first four years in office were focused mainly on consolidating democracy. Thereafter, he concentrated on reforms in Banking and Telecommunication Sectors. He also initiated the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS). These policies, combined together, have been widely acclaimed as successful as they have had some appreciable impact on other sectors of the economy.

Another policy reversal was introduced by Alhaji Umaru Yar'adua following his election and inauguration in May, 2007 as the President and Commander-in-Chief of Nigeria Armed Forces. His policy package was tagged the 7-Point Agenda where he identified seven sectors of the economy as the engine room to the transformation of the entire economy. With his demise in 2009, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the then Vice President, took over as substantive President and maintained the reform agenda of his predecessor up until May 2011.

Goodluck Ebele Jonathan took oath of office as the newly elected President and Commander-in-Chief of Nigeria Armed Forces on 29th of May, 2011 amidst thunderous expectations of a new dawn, given his humble background and the mountain of problems and decay that the country has found itself over the years. Realizing the high expectations, the President promised not to let the people down. On that historic day, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan promised Nigerians a policy package tagged the Transformation Agenda when he declared that Together we will unit over our nation and improve the living standard of all our people whether in the North or in the South; in the East or in the West. Our decade of development has begun. The march is on. The day of Transformation begins today. We will not allow anyone to exploit differences in creed or tongue to set us one against another. (Tell Special Edition, June 2012:9)

The President further pledged that his leadership will be decidedly transformative in all critical sectors and that his administration must grow the economy, create jobs and generate enduring happiness for all and sundry. In addition, the President declared on day that he has "great confidence in the ability of Nigerians to transform the country and that the urgent task of his administration is to provide a suitable environment for productive activities to flourish. He went on to appeal all good people of Nigerian to enlist as agents of the great Transformation Agenda (Tell Special Edition, June, 2012:9).

Transformation itself is a development strategy aimed at complete or radical change in the life of an individual, organization, community or even the nation at large. According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, transformation is a complete change in somebody or something. It is a multifaceted and multidimensional change affecting every component of the individual or society. Transformation in the life of a person connotes radical attitudinal change from bad to good or even vice versa. Institutionally, it depicts change that touches on every component of the institution. According to Ajala and Longe (2008), Transformation or reform, particularly in the health institution is a process that seeks changes in the health sector policies, financing and organization of services as well as in the role of government to

reach National health objectives. This include the need to expand and strengthen primary health care services throughout the country, eradicate or eliminate childhood and other preventable diseases through adequate routine immunization; strengthen all disease control efforts and health promotion activities into health care at primary care level, reduce environmental and occupational health related morbidity and mortality; protect the public from the harmful effects of fake drugs, unregistered medicines and processed foods etc. (Ajala and Longe, 2008: 67).

In the life of a nation, transformation involves structural changes in the major institutions of governance and the society at large. It should guarantee improved living standard, Per Capital Income, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and other basic Socio-economic indicators such as food, shelter, clothing and health for the substantial majority of the citizenry. Thus, on the whole, transformation can be said to be a total package that involves every facet of the individual, organization or society. It is meant to be a vehicle for a better society where virtually everyone will be reasonably comfortable.

II Transformation Agenda of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan.

The Transformation Agenda of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan is yet another policy somasault in relation to the 7-Point Agenda of his immediate predecessor, late President Umaru Musa Yar'adua. It is a 5-year development plan, 2011-2015, which also coincides with the life time of his term in office. It arises from the need to re-position the country's drive to development in the critical spheres of the economy hinged on the rule of Law, where equality, peace and justice shall reign (BUSINESSDAY, January, 2012:4). In order to accomplish the daunting task, the President, upon assumption of office, assembled a vibrant team of renowned technocrats called the Economic Management Team to midwife and drive the process through to a successful end.

The Economic Management Team is made up of a 28 member management team headed by the President as` Chairman, the Vice President as Vice Chairman and the Minister of Finance, Dr Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, as Cordinator. The appointment of the Minister of Finance, a reputable Economist, clearly indicates the centrality of the economy as the driving force in the success of the Transformation Agenda. Thus, the Transformation Agenda of Goodluck Jonathan, from all intent and purposes, is largely in pursuance of collective national goals and aspirations towards driving Nigerian into the comity of the 20 largest economies by 2020.

As observed by Itah (2012), the transformation Agenda of Goodluck Jonathan is a policy package that proposes to reposition the economy by addressing issues of poverty, unemployment, insecurity and most particularly, the diversification of the entire economy from total dependence on oil to a significant reliance on non-oil driven economy.

Similarly, the minister of Trade and Investment in the Executive cabinet of the president, Olusegun Aganga, has described the Transformation Agenda as a policy that resolves around good governance, power, security and development of non-oil sector such as manufacturing and solid minerals, investment in infrastructure, education and anti-corruption crusade (IT and TELECOM DIGEST, 7 FEBRUARY, 2012).

The Transformation agenda of President Goodluck Jonathan seeks to hopefully transform the Nigerian people into a catalyst for growth and national development. Under the transformation drive, government is expected to guide Nigerians to build an industrialized modern state that will launch the nation into the first 20 economies of the world by the year 2020. According to the president himself, in the presentation of the 2012 budget to the national assembly, he said: As we collectively resolve to create a brighter and enduring future for all Nigerians, a future of hope and prosperity not lack, fear or hatred, we must prepare to overcome any adversity that may arise. Accordingly, we must all be determined and committed to follow through the difficult but balance choices that we make in piloting the affairs of the great nation. (Jonathan Goodluck, 2011).

The Honourable Minister and Deputy Chairman of the National Planning Commission, and also a member of the Economic Management Team provided details of the Transformation Agenda of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. According to the Minister, the Transformation Agenda is focused on three key areas. One, strong, inclusive, non-inflationary growth. This includes efforts on the part of government to encourage large-scale industries and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMES), revitalize ailing industries, promote agriculture and agro businesses, encourage local content strategy and develop Information Technology and Communication (ICT) to be the major driver of the agenda. Two, employment generation and poverty alleviation. This includes effort to expand tourism and entertainment industry, exploit private sector potentials for employment creation, focus investment in construction industry and public works, using labor intensive techniques and provide safety nets for vulnerable groups.

Three, value re-orientation to re-organize the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to develop campaigns aimed at fighting corruptions, punish acts of corruption and reward exemplary behavior, support groups and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) that are

involved in the fight against corruption. In addition, efforts will be made to include moral instruction and civic education in school curricular, institute incentives that reward hardworking and sanction poor performance. Similarly, efforts will be made to engender a culture of leadership by example and ensure compliance by all citizens with the law, rules and regulations guiding their conduct.

In addition,. the Minister went ahead to inform the public that the Transformation Agenda will address key areas such as one, good governance which include security of lives and property, law and order, anti-corruption crusade, public service reform and the provision of enabling environment for all and sundry to realize their full potentials. Two, the provision of infrastructure such as power, roads, railway, water ways and water for irrigation and industry. Three, human capital development, which will include education, healthcare delivery, skills acquisition, capacity building and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In order to realize all of these, effort will be made to fast track constitutional and electoral reforms to provide the necessary legal framework for the policy packages; overcome security challenges, create the enabling environment for private sector participation; encourage coordination and collaboration of policies, and not competition, among sectors. Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government. (National Planning Commission, 2011).

III Key Sectors of the Transformation Agenda

Even though, the Transformation Agenda of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan is meant to touch on every aspect of the socio-economic and political life of the citizenry, certain key areas have however been selected as spring board of the entire exercise. These key areas of focus have been summarized by the National Planning Commission blue print (NPC 2011) as follows:

Job Creation

The transformation agenda will assiduously pursue policies that will promote youth employment programme in both public and private sectors. This will include conditional cash transfer and vocational training; development of industrial clusters; reviewing of university curriculum with industry job requirements and promotion of apprenticeship/work experience programmes and joint ventures; enforcement of compulsory sub-contracting and partnering

with locals by foreign construction companies and implementation of skill transfer to Nigerians by foreign owned enterprises.

Education

The agenda is focused on educating Nigerians as it is seen as the only way of securing the development of the country. The Transformation Agenda is geared to promoting primary enrolment of all Nigerian children of school-going age, irrespective of income profile of the parents, engage in the provision of infrastructure such as classrooms across all levels, so as to ease over-crowding, increase access and reduce pupil/teacher ratio; and enhance the efficiency, resourcefulness and competence of teachers and other educational personnel through adequate and functional training, capacity building and motivation.

Health

Health is wealth and as such the Agenda will invest greatly on health to reduce infant and maternal mortality. It is based on this that the health policy is to achieve human capital development goal of the vision 20:2020 strategy which is captured in the National Strategic Health Development Plan (NSHDP). The NSHDP is the vehicle for actions at all levels of the health care delivery system which seeks to foster the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other national and international targets and declaration commitments. It is hoped that by the end of 2015, Nigeria should have a well functional health system that help in the reduction of childhood and maternal mortality.

Power

The importance of power for industrialization can neither be over emphasized nor underrated. To this end, government under this policy has proposed investment of N1, 896 trillion. This will cover areas of power generation, transmission, distribution and alternative energy. It is aimed at providing adequate and sustainable power, intensifying rural electrification to reduce rural-urban drift and achieving optimal energy mix using the most appropriate technology.

The power policy is also targeted at deregulating the sector in order to promote and attract foreign local investment to bring about competitiveness. It also includes tariff regime that promotes transparency, guarantees security of investments and a reasonable rate of returns on investments; ensuring the transmission capacity and providing redundancies in the transmission losses while strengthening grid security.

Transportation

Governments expect total investment for the transport sector during the period 2011-2015 to be approximately ₦4. 465 billion. The investment would cover roads, railways, inland waterways, ports and airports development. The main policy is to evolve a multimodal, integrated and sustainable transport system, with greater emphasis on rail and inland waterways transportation. An enabling environment for public –private partnership (PPP) is being created by designing new policies, legislation and institutional framework that would support the envisaged transformation of the sector.

A modern means of transformation system will be procured and installed. This will include modern rail system, revitalization of in-land waterways system among others. The dredging of River Niger is expected to be completed and as such create alternative means of transportation to people particularly in the riverside and coastal area.

Niger Delta

One area that has become a national and global concern is the Niger Delta region, the economic power house of the nation. It is a paradoxical region in that, it is blessed with precious resources and yet the people live in pains of poverty, underdevelopment etc. the consequences of this have been youth restiveness and violent behavior in the region. This situation has led to low economic productivity and fear of insecurity. To address this, the government in its transformation agenda has proposal for the region. Government has proposed investment in the Niger Delta for the period under review to be ₦333. 05 billion. The main policy thrust will be to entrench peace and stability in order to drive and secure socio-economic development in the area. This is aimed at reducing the regional poverty, high rate of unemployment and insecurity.

Labour and Productivity

Here, the agenda is to focus on the implementation of the National Action on Employment Creation (NAPEC) targeted at creating five million new jobs annually within the next three years, establishment of more skills acquisition centres; implementation of local content policy in all the sectors, especially in the oil and gas industry in order to boost job creation in the country.

In the manufacturing sector, transformation agenda seeks to promote private sector investment via the creation of an enabling environment that allows for substantial improvement in efficiency, productivity and profitability, chiefly increase local

manufacturing, local content and linkages with other sectors of the economy, ensure global competitiveness for manufactured goods, make Nigerian manufactured goods major foreign exchange earners and achieve rapid and sustained economic growth through broadening of the nation's productive base.

In Oil and gas, the agenda focuses on promotion of private sector investment in both the upstream and the downstream activities of the oil and gas, deregulation of the industry and promotion of environmentally friendly oil and gas exploration and exploitations methods; strengthening capacity building programmes particularly in core technical areas; provision of finding mechanisms for pre-bidding geosciences and surveys of deepwater offshore, gas flare-down to reduce pollutions and increase supplies for domestic use and power generation, and local content development.

Foreign Policy and Economic Diplomacy

Nigerian's foreign missions are to be properly focused and well funded so that they will meet the foreign policy goals of the country. Government may rationalize missions and appoint honorary consuls to deal with consular issues in the areas where Nigerian's interest does not loom large as practiced by other countries. It is also the intention of the policy to ensure Nigerians living in the diaspora are treated with dignity and respect. Every Nigerian blood that is illegal or unjustly shed will be accounted for by the government of such country. In addition, the policy will strengthen the global status of Nigeria in the comity of nations through quality leadership provision in Africa and beyond. Africa still remains the centre-piece of her foreign policy.

Legislature

Under the planned period, the thrust of the policy will be to facilitate the creation of a dynamic, constitutionally effective and public responsive legislature that is proactive in its legislative duties and independent but aware of its Constitutional partnership with the Executive and Judicial arms of government. Other policy measures include regular auditing of the activities and publication of annual reports of the national and state legislatures to promote greater transparency and accountability in the use of public funds; promote greater public interest in the scrutiny of legislative actions; and informed public debate. To these end, attentions will be paid to human capital development policies, programmes and projects because of government's belief that investing in human capital development is critical.

Governance

The Transformation Agenda's policies on governance are motivated by Nigeria's inability to decisively tackle most development challenges such as poverty, unemployment, security and deplorable state of infrastructure. These include political governance, economic governance, corporate governance and effectiveness of institutions. During the life of this administration, the policies and programmes directed at addressing governance challenges, will focus on the public services, security, law and order, the legislature; anti-corruption measures and institution; the judiciary; economic coordination and support for private investment. The critical policy thrust of governance will be maximizing the benefits the citizenry derive from governance through more effective and efficient use of public resources, proper financial management and fiscal prudence. This entails adequate emphasis on the attainment of law and order, guarantee of safety of lives and property and the provision of an environment in which people find happiness and fulfillment.

Judiciary and Justice Delivery

The policy thrusts of the justice and judiciary sector will be to achieve greater independence for the judiciary in terms of funding, improving capital and efficiency in judicial service delivery, eliminating all forms of corruption in the administration of justice in Nigeria, enhancing the capital of the justice ministry to superintend prosecution and improving professionalism in legal practice for better service delivery. The Judiciary will be repositioned to serve its purpose as the last hope of the common man and without executive interference. In other words, the principle of due process will be the watch word till the end of the administration. It is therefore hoped to see a new system of adjudication and dispensation of justice in Nigeria through unbiased empires.

Public Expenditure Management

Government is concerned that the sub-optimality of the expenditure profile of the Federal Government of Nigeria since 1999 has been recurrent spending consistently de-emphasising capital expenditure thus, exacerbating the already abysmal state of infrastructure. It is the intention of the administration to achieve the budget that the capital expenditure will be greater than the recurrent spending. As it stands now, recurrent expenditure has fluctuated between 47.5% in 1999 to 80.29 per cent in 2003, while capital expenditure accounted for only 19.71 per cent of total government expenditure. It notes that it has since increased continually to high of 38.37 per cent of total expenditure in 2009. It has grown much worse in

2011 with government borrowing to finance recurrent expenditures. To remedy the situation, under the Transformation Agenda, government will entrench a culture of accountability by beginning to sanction and prosecute officers that breach established financial management rules and regulations. The monetization policy will also be strictly enforced and monitored in order to reduce unnecessary government spending.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The proposed investment for the ICT sector between 2011 and 2015 is ₦22.2billion. The agenda will focus on the development of national Knowledge Based Economy (KBE) 10-years Strategy Plan, sustained human capacity development in ICT; creation of a favorable and friendly investment and enterprise environment through transparency in tax systems, anti-trust laws, incentives and trade policies that would stimulate local and foreign investment in ICT, as well as development of infrastructure, particularly global connectivity as a prerequisite to leveraging the benefits of the global economy ,improving domestic productivity and attracting foreign investments. Other strategies are creation of an enabling environment through appropriate policies, legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks and enhancing Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in project funding, financing and management.

Investment size for the 5-year period of the Transformation Agenda Year (In Trillions of Naira)

Sector	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Private	1, 755. 49	2, 158. 50	2, 953. 83	3, 708. 59	4, 657. 16	15, 233.57
Public	2,633. 23	3, 237.76	3, 759. 42	4, 720.02	5, 927. 29	20, 277. 72
Total	4, 388. 72	5, 396. 26	6, 713. 25	8, 428. 61	10, 584. 45	35, 511. 29

Source: National Planning Commission (NPC)

The Projected financial burden of the Transformation Agenda presented by the Honourable Minister of National Planning as presented in the table above shows that the total projected investment for the 5 years is ₦35. 511.29 trillion. Out of this, government will contribute 57.10% or ₦20. 277.72 trillion, while the private sector share will be 42. 9% or ₦15. 233.57 trillion

IV Prospects for the Realization of the Transformation Agenda

The Transformation Agenda from the above sectoral breakdown is, in all intent and purposes, a welcome idea intended to spur the developmental drive of the Nigerian economy and move the nation towards the realization of the vision 20:2020. That the president and his team are able to put together a policy document of this nature, demonstrates some level of creativity that is required of any visionary and focused leadership. More so, the policy package is being driven by the president himself with a world class team of highly reputable technocrats and coordinated by a former Managing Director of the World Bank, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. That she was able to get the support of the entire African Continent and even beyond, for her ambition to become the first black African and a woman, to occupy the exalted position of the president of the World Bank further lends credence to the quality of the coordination of the Economic Monitoring Team of the Transformation Agenda.

In addition, Nigeria possesses enough financial, human and political resources to be able to drive the process through with a projected population of over one hundred and sixty million, the fourth largest producer of petroleum in the world and the largest political party in Africa in government, the president has enough capacity to drive the Transformation Agenda to the desired conclusion. An added strength to the success of the Agenda is the fact that, major institutions of governance are becoming mature in their structure and operation. For the first time in the life of a civilian regime, in the recent past, the National Assembly was able to successfully carry out constitutional amendments, the Judiciary was able to deliver judgment on contested political offices in good enough time to allow such office holders enough time to focus on the business of governance; the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) was able to carry out a fairly credible election with international acceptability; the Armed Forces have come to accept civilian supremacy and no more “fellow countrymen” characteristic of the military coups and counter corps of the era of military dictatorship; the needlessness to re-invent the wheel as several strategic blueprints such as the Vision 20:2020, National Implementation plan 2010-2013 and the several sectoral strategic plans as well as the NEEDS document are already in place. Consequently, it can then be said that because the president and his team have articulated, put to print and verbalized a “will “for transformation, it can then be anticipated that there will be a “way” to its realization. More so, it has been said that “most Nigerians and the International community attest that Nigeria is on course” on the Transformation Agenda (Tell Special Edition, June, 2012:8).

V Challenges to the Attainment of the Transformation Agenda

There is no doubt that a major policy package of this magnitude is bound to face challenges. This fact has already been acknowledged by those directly in charge of pulling the agenda through to the extent that some of the members of the Economic Monitoring Team have expressed some level of pessimism. For example, the Minister of Power has informed Nigerians of a significant drop in the water level at the dams supplying water to some strategic hydro stations as well as the non-availability of gas to fire some thermal stations. These bottlenecks are by far serious challenges, given the centrality of power and gas to the success of the Transformation Agenda.

Similarly, the major actors of the Agenda have admitted limited financing from the Federal and State government as well as the private sector. This development will no doubt affect the effective take-off of the Agenda as has been attested to by some of the Minister themselves. Even the coordinating minister of the Transformation Agenda, DR. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has admitted that shortage of funding arising from the inefficient and corrupt handling of the fuel subsidy regime as well as bureaucratic bottlenecks are serious enough challenges to the realization of the Transformation Agenda. Beyond the pessimism expressed by those directly piloting the Agenda, there are other obvious challenges. The first one is ineffective and corrupt public service. Important and strategic to the success of the Transformation Agenda is the public service, which is the engine room of governance. Over the years, the public service has been battered by corruption, undue bureaucratic bottlenecks leading to delays, leakages and inefficiency in accomplishing its purpose. The public service has over the years lost its vital attributes of neutrality, anonymity and security of tenure. These negative tendencies will no doubt limit the capacity of the public service to serve as the necessary vehicle to deliver the gains of the Transformation Agenda.

A related point to the above is the lack of desired synergy between political office holders, whose terms of office is usually much shorter, but are majorly the architects of government policies and public servants, whose term of office is much longer and are mainly the executors. There seem to be sour relationship between the two most of the time. On the one hand, public servants perceive political office holders as largely opportunist, uneducated and uninformed in the act of public service. On the other, political office holders see public servant as exercising, considerable, but underserved influence and power in governance. This ‘cat and mouse’ relationship is certainly inimical to the success of the Transformation Agenda.

The second major challenge to the success of the Transformation Agenda is the near absence of a purposeful, trusted, respected and focused leadership in Nigerian. There is a general agreement among Nigerians that the nation lacks the desired leadership to pull the country out of its present predicament in spite of its abundant human and material resources. Nkom (2005) has for instance likened Nigeria, the “Giant of Africa” to the proverbial decaying fish which usually starts getting rotten from the head (Leadership). Gradually, the rottenness proceeds to the rest of the body (citizens). Infact, the present political leadership in Nigeria has of recent come under serious changes of incompetence and insensitivity to the plight of the people. For example, Dr. Joe Okei-Odumakin, a public commentator has recently accused the present leadership of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of lack of a clear idea on how to use power for the benefit of the people. He further said that the President has demonstrated sheer incompetence and palpable cluelessness and that the wicked act of increasing the pump price of petroleum by over one hundred and twelve per cent on the first of January, 2012, will go down in history as the most insensitive act ever perpetrated against the people of Nigerian since the amalgamation of 1914(Sunday Mirror, June, 2012:16). Moreover, Femi Otedola, a member of the Economy Management Team that is suppose to drive the Transformation Agenda, has recently been linked to the giving of bribe of 620,000 dollars to Farouk Lawan,a member of the House of Representatives and Chairman Adhoc committee on the Petroleum subsidy Probe. This and many other alleged and confirmed cases are remiscent of the level of rottenness of the Nation’s Leadership.

A third major challenge capable of arresting the success and gains of the Transformation Agenda is the weak participation of the citizens beyond election. In most of the time, citizens at various levels of governance are either ignorant of the need to, or clearly unable to effectively, monitored their leaders and demand accountability. Nigerian leaders at various levels of governance have been accused of failure to deliver on people’s needs and demands not only in the delivery of services, but also in the provision of information. Since Independence Nigeria has gone through numerous policies and policy reversals, with very little to show for it. Citizens have not been able to exert enough pressure on the leadership to account for this abysmal success. The European Union (EU) observed that, in Uganda, which is not very different from other African countries, including Nigeria, civil society actors who are ideally expected to play a central role in the aggregation of citizens’ interest, promoting and monitoring democratic accountability have not been able to do so successfully. (Gyong, 2011).

The fourth major challenge to the successful delivery of the gains of the Transformation Agenda is the cancer worm called corruption. Corruption is a social malaise that has permeated every facet of the life of Nigeria.

In the words of Gyong, 2011:23 It cuts across religion, ethnic, class and geo-political boundaries. The point of difference could be the magnitude, type and manifestation---. There are many cases of highly placed Nigerians who were entrusted with power and resources, but eventually diverted such to their personal gains (Gyong, 2011:).

The above observation has earlier been made by Human Rights Watch (2007) as thus Nigeria political elites, almost without exception, have insatiable capacity to steal from the common wealth and live the people more impoverished. Unrestrained by any real accountability to the electorate, many of those elected officials who came to power in fraudulent elections have committed abuses against their constituencies and engaged in large-scale looting of public resources (cf Ilufoye, 2010).

Of recent, it has been alleged that prominent Nigerian leaders are involved in one form of corrupt scandal or the other. There is the alleged case of diversion of 2.6 trillion naira of the fuel subsidy regime by some stakeholders in the system. The Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) is equally involved in the web of corruption and even the Adhoc Committee of the House of Representatives to investigate the scandal is equally said to have soiled its hands. The case of Femi Otedola, a member of the President Goodluck Jonathan Economic Team and a respected leader of the House of Representatives Committee on the oil subsidy regime, Mr. Farouk Lawan are also alleged to be involved in Three Million Dollar scandal. Similarly, there is the pension scam involving about ₦273 billion. These cases of corruption are only the few known ones that are alleged to have been perpetrated of recent. Consequently, Jim Unah, a public commentator in the Sunday Mirror of June 17, 2012 observed that with every one accusing everyone else of mind-blowing official graft and complicity in corruption-from Auta to Farida Waziri, from Salami to Katsina-Alu, from Hembe to Oteh, from Otedola to Lawan, and from Tambuwal to Jonathan; and with no manifest punishment of the corrupt and the corrupters, how could a socio-judicial engineering of the Nigerian State be ever possible?

The above illustrations clearly attest to the fact that the Transformation Agenda of President Goodluck Jonathan is most likely going to be bedeviled by similar scandals of corruption. This is against the backdrop that corruption in Nigeria is endemic and has permeated every individual and sector. It has the tendency to increase leakages and wastages in government expenditure; poverty in both absolute and relative terms; insecurity of lives

and property; hindrance to both local and foreign investments and finally loss of faith and confidence in government operators, institutions and policies including the Transformation Agenda.

The upsurge of insecurity of lives and properties across the country is another major challenge to the success of the Transformation Agenda. Even though democracy remains the most potent vehicle for the delivery of human rights, rule of law, justice and equity for all and sundry, its new wave in Nigeria has nevertheless introduced monumental changes that seem to challenge the security operatives. The new wave of democracy has become a source of concern as hopes of the majority have not been met, while human rights are largely misconstrued and exercised without restraint. In this regard, Jemibeun observes that “views which were considered anti-government and hitherto suppressed out of fear--- are now freely expressed and often times, violently too” (cf Shettima and Chukwuma, 2002:3). This observation is true, given the emergence and deadly activities of the Niger Delta and Boko Haram militants. It is also true, given the incessant ethno-religious violence in several parts of the North. Of recent, in the Federal Capital Territory, Plateau, Niger, Kaduna, Borno, Yobe and Bauchi States, the state of insecurity has seriously degenerated. In most parts of these states, private and public activities are now carried out in constant fear of insecurity, characterized by spate of bomb blast and ethno-religious conflict. Even the Headquarters of the Nigerian Police Force, the United Nations building in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and many security formations as well as churches have not been spared of the spate of bomb blast. The above state of affairs will no doubt affect the success of the Transformation Agenda as it can retard investments and increase poverty and unemployment, among other ills.

By far, the most fundamental challenge to the Transformation Agenda is the faulty development strategy driving the policy, which is founded on modernization paradigm. This development strategy has been described in some quarters as a ‘top-bottom’ approach, which emphasized the dominance of ideas of the elites, particularly the leadership along with their western counter parts, in the conception, design and implementation of economy policies to the exclusion of the masses and civil society groups (Esteva, 1995; Haynes, 2005; Kato, 2011).

The origin of this development strategy can be traced to the historical unequal relations with the west. In this development strategy, capital penetration, commercialization, privatization and industrialization are modeled along western models, which will hopefully transform the economy of developing countries, including Nigeria, into their western

counterparts and enlist them into active participants in the modern economy of the world as it is envisioned in the Vision 20:2020 (Nelson and Write, 1994:2). This development strategy has been assessed and the conclusion is that it has failed to bring the desired benefits in most economies of the 3rd world countries. In the words of Kato (2011). Among other things, it has fostered over dependence on the States, alienated beneficiaries and prevented them from developing a sense of ownership and commitment to the projects. It has also led to the exclusion of people such as rural non-literates, minorities, indigenous peoples, the poor, the very poor, women as well as children.

Thus, this western model of development strategy denies the masses a sense of participation at the points of conception, planning, implementation, sustenance and monitoring.

This development strategy also creates the insatiable desire and aspirations for everybody to want to acquire wealth, yet inherently limits the opportunities to only a few. This development strategy also encourages, respect, glorifies and even rewards those that are able to ‘make it’, yet it does not attempt to question the ‘when’ and ‘how’ they made it. Faced with a system that caters for only the fittest and the inherent insatiable desire for everyone within it to survive at all cost, majority are forced, as it were, to engage in different kinds of illegalities according to the opportunities available to them. Given these inherent realities of the development agenda that under pins the Transformation Agenda, the outcome is not likely, as it has never happened elsewhere, to lead to good governance, provide infrastructure, increase human capital development, strong, inclusive and non-inflationary growth, increase employment generation and value re-orientation as envisioned by the Transformation Agenda.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the Transformation Agenda of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan is a bold step towards revamping the ailing socio-economy life of the country. However, the challenges pointed out will no doubt significantly limit the attainment of this laudable desired ends. There is therefore the need to consciously, deliberately and boldly exploit the opportunities and strengths available to the government, while simultaneously reduce the threats and challenges that have been identified. Most importantly, some fundamental measures need to be taken in the thinking and actions of the leadership of the country. This, in essence involves looking inward into the value orientation of the people to reduce to the barest limit, elements of greed, materialism, opportunism and exploitation.

Finally, there is the need for a radical development strategy that guarantees inclusiveness as opposed to exclusiveness in governance and that is people-driven from conception to implementation. This development strategy must be sustainable with the genuine desire to end poverty, provide productive employment, and satisfy basic needs of all categories of citizens and fair sharing of surplus value. This is the sure way to a realistic Transformation Agenda.

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