



**NATIONAL
YOUTH
POLICY**

**ABUJA
FEBRUARY, 2001**

MESSAGE
FROM
PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO

Youth are the foundation of a society. Their energy, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pace of development and the security of a nation. Through their creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides in economic development and socio-political attainments. In their dreams and hopes, a nation finds her motivation; on their energies, she builds her vitality and purpose. And because of their dreams and aspirations, the future of a nation is assured.

It is for this reason that the formulation and implementation of a viable Youth Development Policy is not only a moral responsibility but also an imperative for any well-meaning Administration. Previous governments in Nigeria attempted to address the issue of how best to harness the creative energies and dynamism of youth for overall national development. However, the strategies for implementation of some of those policies have not been observably effective, due to a variety of well-known reasons. The result is that a significant number of youth have become disillusioned about their future.

It is my conviction that youth constitute Nigeria's only real hope for a great future. I have therefore taken a critical look at the plight of Nigerian youth and caused to be prepared a consensus blue print for their development. Consultations were held nationwide with relevant youth organizations, administrators, and non-governmental organizations through Zonal Youth Summits. Their reconciled views form the basis of this Draft Policy Document which you are all here to deliberate for final adoption.

The policy objectives enunciated in the Document will provide the guidelines for the strategies to be adopted in the systematic implementation and administration of the policy provisions. This revised National Youth Development Policy is aimed at capturing the Spirit, the Essence, the Purpose and the Charisma of our new National Youth Agenda.

Government will muster the political will to implement the Policy and will remain committed to the strategic plan of implementation outlined in this Document. All well-meaning Nigerians and stakeholders in youth affairs are enjoined to support our effort to realize the laudable Policy objectives which are designed to address the needs, problems and aspirations of our youth and, in so doing, build for Nigeria a lasting legacy of consistent development and ensure, for all, the great future of our dreams.

CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO

*President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces
Federal Republic of Nigeria*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Definition of Youth	3
1.3	Youth Profile	3
1.4	Issues Impinging on the Nigerian Youth	6
1.5	Brief History of the Development of Youth in Nigeria	7
1.6	Overview of the National Youth Development Policy	10
2.	VISION, MISSION, VALUES, SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES	
2.1	Vision Statement	12
2.2	Mission Statement	12
2.3	Values	13
2.4	Scope	13
2.5	Objectives	14
3.	RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE NIGERIAN YOUTH	
3.1	Rights of the Youth	16
3.2	Obligations of the Youth	18
3.3	Obligations of Government, Parents and Guardians Towards the Youth	20

4. KEY AREAS FOR POLICY ON YOUTH

4.1	Introduction	22
4.2	Pathways	22
4.2.1	Educational and Vocational Training	22
4.2.2	Gainful Employment and Entrepreneurial Development	24
4.3	Personal Development	26
4.3.1	Health Care	26
4.3.2	Sports and Recreation	26
4.3.3	Arts and Culture	27
4.3.4	Environment	28
4.4	Public Participation Issues	29
4.4.1	Civic and Citizenship Training	29
4.4.2	Participation in Self-help and Community Development	30

5. TARGET GROUPS

5.1	Introduction	32
5.2	Students in Post-primary Schools (Pre-youth)	32
5.3	Students in Tertiary Institutions	34
5.4	Out of School and Unemployed Youth	35
5.5	Female Adolescent – youth	36
5.6	Youth with disabilities and/or Health Problems	37
5.7	Youth in Crime, Delinquency, and Related Problem – areas	39
5.8	Talented/Gifted Youth	40
5.9	Policy Review Process	40

6. CONCLUSION41

APPENDIX I 43

APPENDIX II 44

APPENDIX III 45

REFERENCES 46

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Youth are one of the greatest assets that any nation can have. Not only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country's development. They serve as a good measure of the extent to which a country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. The extent of their vitality, responsible conduct, and roles in society is positively correlated with the development of their country.

Nigeria's population is predominately young. Therefore, the present Administration, having given due consideration to the significance of the youth in socio-economic and political development, has found it most desirable, necessary and urgent to initiate this National Youth Development Policy so that there will be a purposeful, focused, well articulated and well directed effort aimed at tapping the energy and resourcefulness of the youth and harnessing them for the vitality, growth, and development of the country well into the 21st Century. This resolve and commitment to the development of the youth has been reinforced by resolution of various international organizations which draw attention to the need to concretely address the problems of the youth and empower them, (e.g. The Commonwealth Plan to Action for Youth Empowerment approved in May, 1998).

The National Youth Development Policy is an official declaration of the importance of the youth in national development. It is indicative of the readiness of the Federal Government to meet the needs and aspirations of the youth as well as seek solution to their problems. It sets guidelines for all stakeholders to empower the youth to realize their potentialities and take advantage of the opportunities available to make positive contributions of the well-being of their communities and the society as a whole.

The policy takes into account the range of problems faced by the youth, anticipates the challenges that they are likely to confront and outlines appropriate objectives, policies, programmes and implementation plans which will be put in place so as to empower the youth to take charge of their own destiny as well as make them active participants in the shaping of the political and economic destiny of our nation. The policy also recognizes that youth are not a homogeneous category and that differences exist among them. Therefore, the policy contains provisions that address the specific and special needs of each of several identified target groups.

Furthermore, the policy is informed by the provisions of chapters II (Fundamental objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy) and IV (Fundamental Rights) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, provisions which demand the involvement of all Nigerians as equal partners and stakeholders in the task of building and developing our nation.

Finally, the administration recognizes that the youth are a particular segment of the national population, that is sensitive, energetic, active and in the most productive phase of their life as citizens.

Hence, the Government is committed to this progressive, creative and all-inclusive National Youth Development Policy to generate maximum expression of youthful creativity and productivity, ingenuity and freedom in the context of an appropriate environment for self-expression, self-sustenance and self-actualization by the youth.

1.2 DEFINITION OF YOUTH

The way in which a nation defines its youth is related to the objective conditions and realities that exist on the ground especially historical and contemporary socio-economic and political issues that need to be addressed. That is why nations use different parameters and variables in defining their youth. For the purpose of execution of Nigeria's National Youth Development Policy, the youth comprises of all young persons of ages 18 – 35, who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This category represents the most active, the most volatile, and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population socio-economically, emotionally and in other respects.

1.3 YOUTH PROFILE

The 1991 Population Census puts Nigeria's population at 88.9 million. At a growth rate of 2.8% per annum, this was projected to be around 115 million in the year 2000. The country's population is predominantly young. For instance, six out of every ten Nigerians are under 25 years of age.

The total population of those between the ages of 15 and 34 was about 30 million in 1991, equivalent to one of every three Nigerians; and of these, 14 million (47%) were males while 16

million (53%) were females. It was projected that by the year 2000 the total population of this category of young persons would be about 38 million, with the male/female ratio almost one to one.

The 1991 Census indicates that the total population of those defined as youth in the Policy is 22.5 million, or one out of every four Nigerians and it was estimated to be around 28 million in 2000 (see Appendix I and III). This represents over 70% of all youth and adolescents of the ages 15 – 34. Forty – four percent (44%) of these are male while fifty – six percent (56%) are females. About 17 million of these, or 61% live in the rural areas, while 11 million (or 39%) live in the urban areas, defined as settlements with a population of over 20,000. Of those who live in the rural areas 62% are females while 38% are males in the urban areas, the gender distribution is fifty-fifty (see Appendix II).

However, being a vulnerable group with peculiar but un-met needs and aspirations, a majority of the youth face problems, the highlights of which include the following:-

- Inadequate parental care;
- Non-availability of suitable sports and recreational facilities;
- Moral decadence in the society;
- Lack of appropriate role models;
- Religious fanaticism;
- Cult activities;

- Political manipulation of youth organizations;
- Unemployment and under-employment;
- Poor education;
- Breakdown of family values; and
- Indiscipline.

To these can be added mounting health and social welfare problems. For example, although between 43% and 53% of youth are sexually active, most lack adequate information and services to promote and protect their reproductive health.

There is also the rapid rate of increase of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) HIV and AIDS. Youth are the most vulnerable to infection and no inadequate care and treatment.

Similarly, quite a number of the youth are afflicted by all kinds of disabilities. The 1991 census data indicate that one out of every three disabled persons is a young person. These range from the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the crippled, to the mentally handicapped. Rehabilitation and vocational training centers for the disabled are grossly inadequate and ill-equipped.

In terms of formal education, approximately 33% of all youth have no formal education. When differentiated according to gender, 45% females have no formal education, while 55% of males have no formal education. Many of these youth without formal education are vulnerable to unemployment and under-employment as well as to socio-economic exploitation and

deprivation. About 50% of all those in the age category of 15 to 34 years are not gainfully employed. Most of those with same semblance of gainful employment are involved in informal sector, low-level economic activities e.g street hawking of ware and commission of remuneration. Consequently, they are the pool from which youth labour is exploited, and they are susceptible to crime, Delinquency, and other vices.

The range, extent and magnitude of the problems which confront the Nigerian youth require a committed and determined effort on the part of all stakeholders in order to help them achieve their potentiality and make them appropriate partners in the task of national development. And the problems need to be urgently addressed so that they can be adequately empowered and enabled to play active roles as participants in the shaping of their own destiny as well as in the building and development of the Nigerian nation.

1.4 ISSUES IMPINGING ON THE NIGERIAN YOUTH

It is the responsibility of the Government and other stakeholders to constantly identify and address the needs and problems of the youth with the full participation of the youth themselves. They need to be mobilized, engaged, enlightened, conscientised, reoriented, trained and involved.

In spite of attempts by successive regimes to improve their lot, the condition of the Nigerian youth still leaves a lot to be desired. A lot more needs to be done to empower them, re-energize them and get them seriously involved with the task of nation building

and socio-economic development. Past attempts at addressing the problems of the youth were characterized by much rhetoric and little in terms of concrete action. Even the little that was being done lacked focus such that the result was marginal, when not counter productive.

The nature of the socio-political and economic environment which had prevailed in the country imposed serious constraints in terms of meeting the needs and aspirations of the youth. Indeed, historically, it can be said that Nigerian youth have suffered more neglect than encouragement, and purposeful involvement by the Government. Contemporarily, they suffer from different kinds of socio-economic deprivations and affliction's which have been intensified with prolonged military rule and acute economic crisis. Thus, Government's efforts, when made, have generally tended to be too little, too late. The institutional framework for, and plan implementation mechanisms of public policy have been very weak, inefficient and ineffective, such that they hardly ever facilitated the actualization of desired policy goals.

1.5 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH POLICY IN NIGERIA

Since independence in 1960, successive Nigerian governments have initiated programmes and projects aimed at the youth. These range from in-school education programme for physical and mental development to out-of-school programme aimed at shaping the character and behaviour of the youth, as well as promoting competitive spirit and national unity and integration. In-school programme include the formation of clubs, encouragement of sporting activities and other out-door activities, with discipline instilling organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girls Guide and Man

O' War. Out of school efforts include facilitation of the emergence and development of voluntary self-help associations which contribute to community development, skills and vocational training programmes, competitive activities and cultural festivals.

In the decades of 1970's and 1980's the Federal Government elevated programme of youth development by the establishment of a Ministry of Youth and Sports for instance. Expanded revenue base of the state, arising from increased petroleum export earnings, resulted in the allocation of substantial resources in the funding of such programme. State Governments were encouraged to establish similar Ministries at their own level and to initiate their own youth, sports, cultural and community development programmes.

At the Federal level, the National Youth Service Corps programme was launched in 1973, to promote national unity and integration and expose graduates of tertiary institutions to leadership roles and community development projects before joining the job market. The Citizenship and Leadership Training Centre, Shere Hills, Jos, was developed and made to intensify its short-duration programmes and courses for youth with potentials for leadership. National sports and cultural festival were also organized in the 1970's and 1980's as fora for the research, identification and encouragement of talent amongst the youth.

However, the first attempt to introduce a National Youth Policy was in 1983. This was followed with the drafting of an inclusive Social Development Policy for Nigeria in 1989, providing the basis for a review of the first policy on Youth. Regrettably, by the early 1990's, these commendable efforts aimed at Youth Development started to suffer tremendous neglect. Besides, the

policy attempts hardly provided a concrete framework for addressing the heightened problems confronting the youth. This was partly because the implementation mechanisms of the policy were weak and ineffective, and also partly because the macro-economic and socio-political environment was not conducive.

Thus, in the 1990's youth development came to be increasingly equated with sporting activities and competitions. Even then, these were not given the necessary policy and material support that they required. Programmes for civil education and leadership training suffered a serious setback.. The issue of empowerment was hardly ever addressed. The Federal Government dismantled the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and many State Government followed suit. Consequently, by the late 1990's it had become evident that Nigerian youth are probably the most neglected by their government. This gave rise to heightened involvement of youth in crimes and delinquency, an increase of preventable diseases and other health related problems among the youth, declining school enrolment and drop-out rates and so on.

Clearly, the prevailing situation should not, and cannot, be allowed to continue, as a nation can only afford to neglect the growth and development of its youth at its own peril. With the return of power to a democratically elected civilian government, some of the constraining factors which have prevented a serious effort at policy formulation and implementation have been reduced and a conducive atmosphere now exists for the development of a new policy for our youth. Hence the Administration embarked on a review of the previous policies, and the development of this new National Youth Development Policy.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT POLICY

In causing to be prepared a consensus blue print for youth development, the administration recognizes the youth of the nation as constituting the most vital resources for national development. If correctly guided, adequately mobilized and fully integrated into the fabric of society, they will bring to national development a great reservoir of energy, resourcefulness, creativity and dynamism; they can also constitute a threat to national stability and even survival, if left to drift, remain unemployed and misguided.

The administration also recognizes that the ability and capacity of the youth to derive benefits from, and contribute to national development depend essentially on the political will of Government, the legitimacy and credibility of its National Youth Development Policy, as well as the appropriateness and adequacy of the institutional arrangements it puts in place to administer the policy and programmes.

Thus, this policy recognizes the inadequacies and failure of previous youth policies; benefits from far-reaching consultations and studies involving a wide spectrum of the youth, their organizations, administrators, non-governmental bodies, and other stakeholders nationwide; and attempts to fundamentally address the needs of all Nigerian youth.

With definitive vision and mission statements, the policy outlines the guiding values and clearly specifies the objectives to be achieved. The rights and obligations of the youth, as well as the obligations of government and parents, are enumerated. Also

stated are key strategic areas of thrust of the Policy, such as youth empowerment, youth socialization/education/training, youth recreation/sports, youth employment, and youth organizations. Priority target groups of youth are identified and appropriate priority programme areas firmly indicated.

Finally, unlike in previous attempts, this policy provides for appropriate enabling legislative, institutional, budgetary/funding and monitoring and evaluation framework for its effective implementation.

CHAPTER TWO

2. VISION, MISSION, VALUES, SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 VISION STATEMENT

The vision of this policy is one of a positive future role of the youth in National socio-economic development. It is the vision of empowered Nigerian youth to fully realize their potentialities and positively contribute to the overall development of Nigeria.

2.2 MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the policy is to build a youth with a sense of hope, self-confidence, imagination, creativity and pride in the nation's heritage; youth who represent hope in the future of Nigeria; youth who are disciplined, well focused, law abiding and good citizens; youth full of the spirit of entrepreneurship, self reliance, mutual cooperation, understanding, and respect; youth who are not corrupt and self-serving; youth with equality of opportunity; free from gender and other forms of discrimination, exploitation and abuse, youth who imbibe culture of democracy and good governance; youth who take pride in our diverse cultural heritage and geographic conditions; and youth committed to the ideal of national unity and development as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

2.3 VALUES

The national Youth Development Policy is guided by the following value systems which are enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

- Social Justice
- Equality of Opportunity
- Transparency and Accountability
- Self-reliance and Selflessness
- Hard-work and Entrepreneurship
- Unity and Cooperation
- Respect for Human Rights
- Democracy and Good Governance.

2.4 SCOPE

A set of clear, firm and formal statements of objectives, targets, programmes and plans of action on the general status, role, well-being, growth and development of the youth as a distinct socio-economic category in contemporary Nigerian society, this policy encompasses the processes of continuous improvement of the structures, institutions and programmes designed to create conditions for the propagation, protection and advancement of the rights of the youth, the enhancement of their welfare, and the provision of opportunities for their self-actualization.

2.5 OBJECTIVES

The National Youth Development Policy will pursue and seek to fulfill the following objectives:

- Ensure that all youth are given equal opportunities and guided to reach their full potentials.
- Recognise the right of the youth to choose, to make decision and accept the consequences of their actions.
- Foster appropriate values and positive attitudes among youth
- Inculcate in the Nigerian youth the virtues of patriotism, discipline, selfless service, honesty and integrity.
- Inculcate in the youth leadership and followership values and make them socially responsible and accountable.
- Involve youth in decision making at all levels of government in all matters affecting them.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive programme for youth socialization so that they can become good and productive citizens
- Provide opportunities for youth whether in, or out of school, for vocational training geared towards self-employment and self-reliance.
- Seek and offer solutions to youth problems such as drug abuses and addiction, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, cultism, examination malpractices. etc.

- Inculcate in the youth the spirit of adventure, resourcefulness and inventiveness.
- Promote the development to individual talents and infuse the youth with a keen sense of inquiry and achievement
- Organise and harness the energies of the youth in the service of their neighbourhoods and communities.
- Encourage youth to join voluntary, community oriented youth organizations and participate actively in their programmes.
- Facilitate interaction between Nigerian youth organizations and similar regional and international organizations.
- Establish and sustain the operations of appropriate structures that will create a healthy and responsible youth fora.
- Advocate, provide and protect the legal, constitutional and legislative instruments as well as the framework for the implementation of the policy's programmes.

CHAPTER THREE

3 RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE NIGERIAN YOUTH

The policy recognises that Nigerian youth have rights as well as obligations, just as the government and parents have obligations towards their youth, all of which need to be taken together, nurtured and promoted in the overall interest of national development.

3.1 RIGHTS OF THE YOUTH

The rights, responsibilities and obligations of Nigerian youth are contextualised in the provisions of chapter four of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which itemises the fundamental human rights of Nigerian citizens as well as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights. This policy subscribes to all the rights guaranteed by the 1999 Nigerian Constitution and other International Charters, Covenants, and/or Conventions to which Nigeria is a signatory.

Among the most important of these rights which the youth shall equally enjoy are the following:-

- Freedom of opinion and expression
- Freedom of thought and religion
- Freedom of association.

- Freedom of movement.
- Right to security of life and property.
- Right to proper education and training.
- Right to leisure, cultural and sporting activities.
- Right to equal opportunities in employment and access to social services
- Right to adequate shelter, health care, social and food security.
- Right to be protected from any harassment and degrading, cruel and inhuman treatment, and torture.
- Right to protection against the dangers of substance abuse, alcoholism, sexual harassment and exploitation, HIV/AIDS, secret cults and gender discrimination.
- Right to participate in decision making in matters that affect them.
- Right to privacy, family life and non-interference in personal matters such as correspondence.
- Right to a good and clean environment.
- Right to equal protection under the law.
- Right to participate in National Development including matters that affect them.

- Right to be protected against harmful traditional practices.
- Right to survival and social, economic and cultural development.
- In the case of the disabled, the right to be provided with the special treatment which his/her condition requires.

3.2 OBLIGATIONS OF THE YOUTH

Every set rights that a person enjoys has corresponding set of obligations. In order to make Nigerian youth tolerant, caring, responsible and productive citizens, the policy outlines the following set of obligations to define participation of the youth in the collective task of improving the living and working conditions of the Nigerian people.

- Promotion and defense of democracy and civility in the governance of the country and in interpersonal relations with fellow citizens
- Eschewing ethnic and religious bigotry
- Eschewing all acts of violence and crimes, such as cultism, armed robbery, street violence, alcoholism, substance abuse, prostitution and so on.
- Promotion of the principles of gender equality.
- Active involvement in the promotion of national unity, national reconciliation, peaceful co-existence and good neighbourliness.

- Promotion of self-help, self-responsibility, cooperation and community development.
- Promotion of values of tolerance and responsible conduct.
- Conservation and promotion of the environment against pollution and degradation.
- Respect for and promotion of all symbols of National unity, such as the flag, the national pledge and the national anthem.
- Promotion of a healthy, responsible and respectable life-style free from communicable diseases, alcohol and drugs.
- Strive to be law abiding and respectable and enlightened citizens, knowledgeable about their rights as well as duties and obligations.
- Active involvement in the promotion of national unity and national development.
- Strive to be actively involved in decision making on matters that affect them.
- Be good ambassadors of Nigeria abroad, and promote international peace and harmony.

3.3 OBLIGATIONS OF GOVERNMENT, PARENTS AND GUARDIANS TOWARD THE YOUTH.

The government, parent and guardians have obligations to ensure that Youth are empowered to discharge their obligations to society. The Policy accepts that they have a responsibility to create the enabling Environment for the right kind of orientation, education and Psychological conditioning for the youth. Their obligations include the following:-

- Provide conducive atmosphere for the mental, emotional and physical development of the young persons.
- Nurture the youth in warmth and affection in an atmosphere of peace and harmony.
- Constantly provide counseling, support and guidance in accordance with their specific and peculiar needs.
- Provide shining role models for the youth through responsible and ethical conduct and leadership by example.
- Create opportunities for the youth to be involved in making decisions that affect them, the environment and society
- Teach human rights values, social justice, equity, fairness and gender equality.

- Recognise their capacities, their individualities, according to age maturity, and allow whenever possible their choice of educational field and careers.
- Provide adequate funding for education and equal opportunities to be educated.
- Provide adequate funding for sustainable youth development projects.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. KEY AREAS FOR POLICY ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The formulation of this National Youth Development Policy is predicated upon a proper identification of priority areas of concern which would remedy the peculiar problems that the youth face satisfying their needs as well as, empower them to achieve self-realisation, positively contribute to national development and be patriotic. These priority areas of policy concern are categorized in to three:

- Pathways (i.e issue that prepare the youth to become useful and active citizens in adulthood);
- Personal Development (i.e issues that pertain to personal well-being of the youth); and
- Public Participation (i.e issues that relate to the empowerment of youth for active participation in national decision making process).

4.2 PATHWAYS

4.2.1 EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The provision of educational opportunities for youth is a fundamental pre-requisite for building a strong, just, equitable, state, viable and vibrant nation. This is in respect of both formal

and non-formal education, basic, as well as technical and vocational education, as learning take place in and out of school environments. A significant percentage of Nigerian youth is illiterate, and their educational needs should be adequately and urgently catered for, particularly in the Educationally Less Developed States.

Furthermore, there is the need to expand enrollment, and significantly increase the percentage of transition from primary to secondary, as well as from secondary to tertiary levels of education sectors. Given the importance of education, the policy places emphasis on quality and relevance of education, as well as, on accessibility and equity in educational provision. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme will actualise these and make it possible for education to be compulsory and free for all youth up to secondary school level. Other important areas of youth education which the policy addresses include the following:-

- Provision of specialised educational programmes and institutions to cater for the needs of those with disabilities.
- Provision of qualitative education in schools, which should enhance creativity, self-development and prospects for self and gainful employment for the youth.
- Provision of vocational training for the youth to make them self-reliant and employable citizens.
- Expansion of non-formal literacy programmes to capture young persons as well as adults.

- Guarantee of equitable access to educational opportunities irrespective of sex, ethnic background, religious belief, geographical location or social and economic circumstances.
- Reform of the curricula of secondary schools and tertiary institutions with a view to establishing an appropriate symmetry between formal education and the requirement of the job market, as well as establishing appropriate linkage between tertiary institutions and industries.
- Introduction and/or expansion of career guidance and counselling in both secondary schools and tertiary institutions.
- Promotion of health education and family planning techniques.
- Elimination of child labour and early parenthood.
- Promotion of basic and compulsory literacy programmes at all levels.

4.2.2 GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

Empowering the capacity of youth for gainful employment is another area that is given priority by the Policy. Gainful employment is one of the most important avenues through which the youth add value to the development of their country. The transition from adolescence to youth and to full adulthood will be circumscribed by the principle of creating job opportunities for them, so that they can become productive and useful adults.

Thus, the policy is anchored on the efficacy of preparing the youth for accessibility to gainful and sustainable self-employment and other employment opportunities in the country.

The policy recognises the societal problems associated with unemployment and under-employment, and strives to create conditions and opportunities for creativity, addressing these problems. Specifically, it will actualise the following with regard to employment generation and the development of entrepreneurial skills through training:

- Strengthening the capacity of existing institutions that provide training for skills and entrepreneurial development
- Empowering civil society groups to complement government institutions in the area of training and skill development for gainful employment.
- Creating avenues for providing work experience for youth with a view to promoting and developing desirable work ethics and culture for national development.
- Creating and equipping additional institutions that can provide special training for youth with disabilities, as well as soft credit facilities for trained ones to enable them start off on their own.
- Creating social security programme that would enable youth of the ages from 18 – 35 years who cannot find gainful employment for no fault of theirs to get government financial assistance for a specified period during which they are looking for employment.

4.3 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

There are issues that pertain to individual well-being of youth and to which the Policy attaches great importance. They include healthcare, sports and recreation, arts and culture and the environment.

4.3.1 HEALTHCARE

Healthy mind and body are basic requirements of the survival of the youth and their positive contribution to national endeavours. The main objective of the health component of the policy on Youth is to enhance youth accessibility to basic hygiene, healthcare and health education. It is aimed at providing information, education and safeguards against preventable and communicable diseases such as Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), HIV and AIDS to which youth are most vulnerable. Encouragement of healthy recreation activities and the improvement of recreational facilities will be aimed at developing the mind and expanding its horizon in terms of intelligence, experience and creativity. Specifically, the policy provides for the following:-

- Establishment of Health Education Clubs
- Establishment of Drug-free Clubs
- Establishment of HIV/AIDS Awareness Clubs.

4.3.2 SPORTS AND RECREATION

Sports and recreation greatly facilitate and enhance both physical and mental growth and development of the youth. The objective of the policy on these issues is to develop and promote a mentally

fit, alert and physically strong and agile Nigerian youth that can favourably compare with any group of youth in the world; it is also aimed at promoting competitive spirit and the value of team work, through sporting competitions. Therefore, the policy places emphasis on the development of team work, through sporting competitions, the development of sports and other recreational activities, the provision of infrastructure and facilities for these, and the creation of a conducive environment for healthy competitive sports both within the country and abroad. In particular, the policy will pursue the following:-

- Expansion and development of sporting and recreational facilities and related infrastructure in educational institutions and in the community
- Promotion of sporting competitions to motivate the youth with and drive them towards excellence in educational institutions and in the community.
- Encouragement of sporting events and facilities for youth with disabilities.
- Inculcation of the value of sports and leisure as productive alternatives to aimlessness, idleness, drug abuse and crimes.

4.3.3 ARTS AND CULTURE

The promotion of arts and culture is an important vehicle for appreciating and respecting the good aspect of our heritage since no society could afford to discard its cherished past and traditional values; they represent the sense of identity, self-respect and path through which generations learn the skills and techniques of social relations, survival and societal regeneration. On this issues, the

policy will introduce programmes aimed at inculcating in our young ones the need to appreciate and respect the good aspects of our cultural heritage, such as respect and concern for the elderly, being our brothers' keeper, concern for the disabled, the disadvantaged and the less fortunate in the society, as well as the values of self-help, hard work, cooperation and respect for one another. In this respect, the policy seeks to do the following:-

- Promote the teaching of our cultural heritage in schools.
- Encourage artistic and cultural activities among the youth of Nigeria and other countries.
- Promote understanding of, and respect for our diverse cultural differences.
- Encourage the utilisation of the good aspects of our cultural values to serve as the ingredients for national integration and unity.
- Promote competition among the youths so that their artistic talents can be nurtured and developed.
- Encourage the establishment of schools of music and theatre arts.

4.3.4 ENVIRONMENT

The National Youth development Policy is environment friendly. It provides for the inculcating of the virtues of environmental preservation, protection and conservation among the youth. The aim is to encourage them to play active leadership roles in improving the environment and the ecosystem. The policy will:

- Promote programmes and projects that create awareness among the youth of the dangers of population and environmental degradation.
- Encourage the participation of the youth in programmes that are aimed at cleaning the environment of pollutants such as polythene bags and rubbish dumps.
- Encourage the participation of youth in dealing with the problem of desert encroachment and soil erosion, through tree planting and other effective and creative methods.
- Encourage the establishment of environment protection clubs by the youth.

4.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ISSUES

4.4.1 CIVIC AND CITIZENSHIP TRAINING

The need for civil and law abiding citizens as a necessary condition for societal development cannot be over-emphasised. Such citizens are not only aware of their rights and obligations, they also became actively engaged in the political affairs of their country, both in building and in national economic development. This National Youth Development Policy places emphasis on the training of youth for leadership and citizenship, responsibilities for national unity and development. Specifically, the objectives of the policy with regard to civics, citizenship and leadership training are to:

- Produce a purposeful and well focused youth who internalize the virtues of the positive aspects of our societal values, ethics and culture.

- Nurture youth that will have a deep sense of responsibility, civility and discipline, and the capacity for self-sacrifice, hard work, creativity and originality and dealing with public and national issues.
- Promote the emergence, growth and development of youth with good leadership qualities, sense of equity and social justice, and a disposition towards active participation and cooperation with respect to public and national issues.
- Inculcate the universal values of democracy and good governance among the youth, in order to systematically undo the damaging impact of militarism on their psyche arising from prolonged military rule.
- Devote a significant proportion of the period of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme to leadership and citizenship training and community development activities.

involving them in the task of national development, promoting national unity and community development using voluntary self-help associations.

4.4.2 PARTICIPATION IN SELF-HELP AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

One of the good pillars of our traditional societies have a long and cherished tradition of mass participation in decision making and implementation on matters that affect our collective well-being. The youth have occupied a unique position in this endeavour.

As the youth clearly represent a core asset in our effort to improve the living and working condition of our people; this policy will promote the spirit of youth involvement and participation in decision making in all matters that affect their well-being as well as encourage and support all programmes that are aimed at

CHAPTER FIVE

5. TARGET GROUPS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Nigerian youth broadly experience similar problems and share similar aspirations and concerns. However, it is also a fact that there are different categories of youth with different and peculiar sets of concerns and problems. Similarly, there are some categories of youth with special circumstance or problems, which require concerted, focused, and well targeted attention.

Accordingly, and having due regard to current socio-economic and political realities, the policy identifies target groups for particular attention: students in post-primary schools; students in tertiary institutions; out of school, unemployed youth, female adolescent youth with disabilities, youth with the health problems; youth engaged in substance abuse, cultism, crime and delinquency.

5.2 STUDENTS IN POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS (THE PRE-YOUTH)

The focus of the policy with respect to those who are of the age category of 12 – 17 years, is to provide equitable access to relevant and qualitative education for them so that by the time they attain the age of 18 years, they would have been adequately prepared for face the challenges of youth proper. This entails expansion of enrolment and adequate provision of classrooms, trained teachers, instructional materials and curricula that can produce well-informed, enlightened, responsible, intellectually able,

vocationally skilled, mentally sound and physically competent young citizens. It also entails, in the short and medium term, compulsory and free educational opportunities at this level, to prepare them adequately for entry into tertiary institutions and/or for gainful employment. Additionally, there is recognition of the need to create an enabling environment to facilitate and enhance the learning process in the critical fields of humanities, science and technology and the environment. For this pre-youth group, the Policy will achieve the following:

- Promotion of extra-curricular activities through voluntary associations and clubs, such as societies for Debating, Current Affairs, Historical and Cultural Affairs and established organisations such as Boy Scouts, Red Cross and Crescent, Girls Guide, Boys Brigade, etc.
- Promotion of games and sports, both recreational and competitive, for healthy mental and physical development.
- Re-introduction of moral instructions, civics and civility in the curricula.
- Promotion of the teaching of science and technology, as well as the teaching of vocational skill in agriculture and technical trades.
- Promotion of the career guidance and counselling.
- Promotion of quality education and discipline for both staff and students with the involvement of parents.
- Enforcement of enrolment and retention of girls in schools.

- Introduction of reproductive and health education, especially for female students who have to cope with problems peculiar to them.
- Encouragement and promotion of gender sensitive curricula for the achievement of national goals, especially in a rapidly changing world in the context of globalization.
- Establishment of HIV/AIDS Awareness Clubs and encouragement of membership therein.

5.3 STUDENTS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

With respect to this category of youth, who are predominantly in the age category of 18-35 years, the policy seeks to prepare them for gainful employment and significant and citizenship roles in social, political and economic development.

The current state of tertiary education is a matter of major concern, which the policy addresses. The absence of a conducive teaching and learning environment has to some extent compromised the standard of education in our tertiary institutions.. Thus the policy focuses on improving the quality of education and existence for this category of students. Highly skilled and well educated and trained manpower in all fields of human endeavour is an important asset that no nation can do without. Hence the curricula must keep pace with the ever-changing modern information technology in this era of globalisation to enable the country gain a competitive advantage in the global economy. Hence, the following policy provisions:

- Provision of assistance to indigent students.

- Promotion of the use of new information technology in all aspects of teaching and learning in tertiary institutions.
- Development of critical fields of knowledge in basic and applied science and technology;
- Reforming the teaching of General Studies programmes so that they place necessary emphasis on imparting good citizenship and leadership values and skills.
- Introduction of effective schemes to deal with the problems of cultism, gang-related violence and other vices in these institutions on a continuous basis.
- Promotion of democratic student unionism to serve as launching grounds for the training of youth in leadership roles and democratic culture.

5.4 OUT-OF-SCHOOL, UNEMPLOYED AND UNDER-EMPLOYED YOUTH

For this category of youth, regardless of age, the policy provides the opportunity to acquire skills needed for gainful employment and be productive persons, who will add value to the development of the society. It will also introduce programmes and projects that can empower this category of youth, for both self-employment and other modes of gainful occupation. Specifically, the Policy will:

- Establish data bank of all out-of-school, unemployed and under-employed youth
- Promote programmes for skill acquisition for the unemployed youth, organised by such government institutions as the

National Directorate for Employment, as well as by voluntary non-governmental organisations.

- Promote programmes that provide financial and/or material assistance to trained but unemployed/under-employed youth so that they can become gainfully self-employed.
- Create public works programmes through which the government can provide work experience and skills training, as well as temporary employment opportunities for youth.
- Create a social security programme to assist unemployed youth, lessen their burden of meeting basic needs for a specified period, as well as prevent them from resorting to activities to cope with the burden of unemployment and under-employment.

5.5 FEMALE ADOLESCENT – YOUTH

The right of the girl-child had long been a major problem of concern and deserve priority attention. Many of this category of young persons have been victims of sexual harassment, physical violence and abuse, labour exploitation, gender discrimination, as well as negative attitudes and cultural practices. The Policy therefore seeks to protect and promote the interest and aspiration of the female adolescent-youth so as to restore their dignity and motivate them to contribute as equal partners in the task of national development. Specifically, the Policy will achieve the following:

- Establishment, improvement and promotion of both in-school and out-of-school programmes that are aimed at ending gender-based discrimination and promoting the rights and dignity of the female adolescent-youth.

- Promotion of programmes that are aimed at addressing the peculiar social, educational, health and reproductive problems of women in general.
- Elimination of harmful traditional practices that affect women generally and in particular, the female adolescent youth.
- Encouragement of female enrolment and education, especially in science and technology, using a scheme of incentive and rewards, as well as legally punitive measures for non-compliance by parents or guardians
- Promotion of skills and leadership training aimed specifically at empowering female youth for self and gainful employment as well as greater participation in, and contribution to community and national development.
- Provision of packages of financial and/or material assistance to female youth, who have undergone training and have acquired skills for self and sustainable employment.
- Elimination of all forms of discriminatory practices against employment for females in all sectors of the national economy.

5.6 YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR HEALTH PROBLEMS

All persons with disabilities have fundamental rights that need to be protected by government and the society. The society owes a special responsibility towards those with mental and physical disabilities but particularly to youth with such disabilities or with

chronic, terminal, and communicable diseases. The policy creates opportunities for taking care of the special needs of this category of youth, so that they may not feel left out, abandoned, useless, and hopeless. The opportunities are to be provided in the following ways:

- Provision and adequate funding of programmes.
- Promotion and adequate funding of programmes
- Promotion of programmes that can empower the youth with disabilities to positively contribute to national development.
- Promotion and adequate funding of programmes to provide the healthcare needs of youth with serious health problems, such as TB, WF, STD, HIV/AIDS and cancer.
- Establishment of healthcare institutions and rehabilitation centres to provide for the needs of this category of youth and the encouragement of such establishment of non-governmental organisations.
- Promotion of public enlightenment programmes which provide knowledge and awareness about the dangers of STDs and HIV/AIDS.
- Encouragement of indigenous researchers to come out with creative solutions aimed at addressing the problems of this category.
- Encouraging avenues for the marketing of products for the disabled youth.

5.7 YOUTH IN CRIME AND RELATED PROBLEM AREAS

The increasing involvement of the youth in substance abuse, violent crimes, cultism and armed robbery, is a disturbing phenomenon. These social vices are, to a considerable extent, products of our depressed economy, political repression and instability under military rule, and the systematic abandonment of the positive aspects of our cherished cultural values and traditions. To reverse this trend, the policy provides opportunities and incentives which can discourage and dissuade the youth concerned from such social vices and criminal conduct and motivate them towards law-abiding conduct and greater responsibility.

Thus, the policy provides for the following:

- Enlightenment programmes on the dangers of chronic substance abuses, cultism, other forms of crime and delinquency.
- Establishment of rehabilitation centres for chronic substance abuses and drug addicts, as well as for juvenile offenders.
- Promotion of guidance and counselling for the youth especially using Youth Development Centres to address the needs of out-of-school youth.
- Provision of education, skill-training and gainful employment opportunities for youth in juvenile correctional institutions.

- Provision of after care facilities for ex-inmates of correctional institutions.
- Observers of the UN standard minimum rules for the treatment of offenders.
- Ensuring speedy trials for youth offenders.

5.8 TALENTED/GIFTED YOUTH

There are many creative, gifted and talented youth, whose vast potentialities are not being adequately harnessed and utilised for national development. The policy therefore, provides encouragement for this category of youth:

- Development of an effective process of identifying talented youth.
- Encouragement of all talented youth through adequate incentives and facilities to assist them actualise their potentials.

5.9 POLICY REVIEW PROCESS

The National Youth Development Policy will be reviewed every five years with a view to making necessary improvements. The review process will be democratic and inclusive, and involve wide-range consultations and discussions with all the stakeholders, especially the youth.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 CONCLUSION

Nigeria youth have great aspirations and expectations. They also have great frustrations with the ineffective manner with which the successive governments they looked up to with anticipation have mishandled the actualization of their aspirations. Indeed, the Nigerian youth have been experiencing profound crisis of rising expectations.

A depressed and oppressive socio-economic and political environment engendered by prolonged military rule have greatly contributed to poor policy formulation and execution in all aspects of national life, particularly as it concerns the youth.

With a new democratically elected civilian government and a liberalized political context, the necessity for designing concrete policies and implementing them has become a matter of urgent concern. It has particularly become necessary to consciously and systematically address the serious problems, that have bedeviled, disoriented and dis-empowered our youth. It is in this context that the administration conceived and designed this National Youth Development Policy.

The policy has attempted to set broad guidelines as well as general and specific objectives for meeting the needs of the Youth, resolving the problems affecting them, and empowering them to become active participants in the task of socio-economic development and national unity. It has also designed programmes and set out appropriate institutional mechanisms for their implementation.

It has taken a long time for the problems to pile up and become compounded and for the condition of our youth to deteriorate to the present observable level. It will thus take time, patience and a lot of hard work before all the constraints can be removed and the problems solved. But, this time around, with this National Youth Development Policy in place, the government is taking its obligations to the youth, and to the Nigerian people with regard to the general improvement of the living and working conditions of all Nigerians very seriously. The administration is especially mindful of the critical role of an empowered and contented youth in national development and will therefore, strive to bring the objectives of this policy to fruition.

APPENDIX I

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY SINGLE YEAR AGE 18 – 30 YEARS AND SEX (1991 CENSUS)

Age	Male	Female	Total
18	1,113,204 (2.50%)	1,338,325 (0.01%)	2,451,565
19	552,167 (1.24%)	600,245 (1.35%)	1,152,412
20	1,447,212 (3.25%)	2,236,469 (5.03%)	3,683,681
21	454,202 (1.02%)	480,196 (1.08%)	934,398
22	565,521 (1.27%)	702,509 (1.58%)	1,268,035
23	467,561 (1.05%)	520,213 (1.17%)	987,774
24	378,502 (0.85%)	417,949 (0.94%)	796,451
25	1,416,042 (3.18%)	2,045,280 (4.6%)	3,461,322
26	405,219 (0.91%)	449,072 (1.01%)	854,291
27	525,449 (1.18%)	520,213 (1.17%)	1,045,662
28	636,773 (1.43%)	715,848 (1.11%)	1,352,621
29	320,613 (0.72%)	275,668 (0.62%)	596,281
30	1,678,766 (3.77%)	2,214,238 (4.98%)	3,893,004
TOTAL	9,961,272 (22%)	12,516,225 (28%)	22,477,497

APPENDIX II
DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY AGE, SEX, AND RURAL/URBAN

AGE YEARS	URBAN				RURAL				SUM TOTAL		
	PERCENTAGE		NUMBER		PERCENTAGE		NUMBER				
	%	%			%	%					
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL		
18	2.73	3.05	449,550	482,553	2.37	2.99	665,083	856,372	1,521,455	2,453,558	
19	1.63	1.66	26,413	262,636	1.01	1.18	283,432	337,432	621,398	1,152,447	
20	3.07	4.25	505,538	672,410	3.50	5.45	982,190	982,190	2,542,135	3,721,083	
21	1.54	1.44	238,772	227,828	0.77	0.88	216,082	216,082	468,125	934,725	
22	1.70	2.00	270,940	316,428	1.02	1.35	286,238	286,238	672,894	1,260,262	
23	1.47	1.60	242,065	253,143	0.81	0.94	227,307	227,307	496,534	991,742	
24	1.25	1.28	205,838	202,514	0.62	0.75	173,988	173,988	388,797	797,149	
25	3.11	4.29	512,125	678,739	3.21	4.77	900,808	900,808	2,266,993	3,457,857	
26	1.28	1.33	210,778	210,425	0.70	0.84	196,438	196,438	437,024	858,227	
27	1.54	1.41	253,592	223,082	0.97	1.04	272,207	272,207	570,075	1,046,749	
28	1.81	1.87	298,053	295,860	1.20	1.46	336,751	336,751	754,912	1,348,825	
29	1.03	0.76	169,611	120,243	0.54	0.54	151,538	151,538	306,200	596,054	
30	3.03	4.20	243,412	664,499	4.05	5.42	1,136,534	1,552,353	2,688,887	3,896,798	
			4,177,687	4,610,360			5,828,596	7,907,833	13,736,429	22,524,476	
Total Male	10,006,283								Total National Population		88,992,220
Total Female	12,518,193								Total Youth Population		22,524,467
Total Population	22,524,476								% of Total Youth Population		25.32

Source: National Population Commission, 1998, P. 51

APPENDIX III

NATIONAL POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTION

2010			2015		
MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
8,232.817	7,916.136	16,147.953	9,645.551	9,287.393	18,932.944
6,806.927	6,803.616	13,610.543	8,086.614	7,804.918	15,891.532
5,609.656	5,552.328	11,161.984	6,661.966	6,689.089	13,531.055
5,080.379	5,055.015	10,135.394	5,483.689	5,483.689	10,928.892
26M (33%)	25M (32%)	51M (33%)	30M (33%)	30M (33%)	59M (33%)
77,731.228	77,070.097	154,801.325	89,736.161	88,839.490	178,575.651

2000			
	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
15 - 19	5.9	5.8	11.6
20 - 24	5.3	5.3	10.6
25 - 29	4.4	4.5	8.9
30 - 34	3.4	3.8	7.2
TOTAL	19	19	38
ALL AGES	57.8	57.5	115.2

Source: NPC, 1998 P. 334 & 336

REFERENCES:

- * Commonwealth Secretariat, Formulating and Implementing National Youth Policies: A Commonwealth Handbook, London, 1996
- * Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999
- * FGN, National Youth Development Policy, Programmes and Implementation Strategies, 1999 (Draft)
- * FGN, National Youth Policy for Nigeria, Lagos, 1989
- * National Population Commission, 1991 Population Census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: Analytical Report at the National Level, Abuja, 1998
- * Reports of the Zonal Youth Summits, 2000