

Nigeria's statement on Achieving Sustainable Development: Integrating the Social, Economic and Environmental Dimensions

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to express the appreciation of my delegation to Your Excellency for convening this important meeting. Also, I wish to commend the panelists for their insightful presentations.

Mr. President,

The integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development- Social, Economic and Environmental has generated a lot of interest at the national, regional and global levels since the Rio Summit held last June. The issue remains complex because of the divergent opinions on what sustainable development is and how it can be achieved.

In my delegation's opinion, sustainable development must encompass four broad objectives. These are; social progress which recognizes the needs of everyone, the effective protection of the environment, prudent use of natural resources, and maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment. We therefore believe that the three dimensions of sustainable development overlap and none of them can exist alone.

Mr. President,

While we acknowledged the significant contributions of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to global efforts aimed at addressing developmental gaps between developed and developing countries, we are of the view that energy represents one of the critical issues left out in the global goals.

We believe that energy has a crucial role to play in development since it has a bearing on challenges relating to poverty, food security, clean water, health, education, economic growth, youth's and women's rights, and climate change. For many developing countries the lack of access to clean, affordable and reliable energy hinders human, social and economic development and is a major impediment to achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Availability of renewable energy in developing countries would contribute significantly to poverty alleviation including the creation of employment though they should be in the right mix as per national circumstances and capacity. In line with its obligation to the African Strategy on Emission Reduction, Nigeria developed a National Renewable Energy Masterplan Project. The objectives of the Masterplan include: addressing the challenges of moving towards a clean, reliable, secure, competitive energy supply based on international best practices; and setting up and implementing integrated renewable programme that feed the national development agenda such as those on emission reductions, MDGs, alternative sources of energy, augmentation of income and rural poverty eradication.

Also, Nigeria has effectively engaged Science, Technology and Innovation to facilitate socio-economic transformation including energy accessibility and affordability. This includes the use of solar and renewable energy to provide amenities for poverty alleviation. Our national investment in energy could be equated with reaping “multiple benefits from a single cost.” These benefits are economic, environmental, social, and political.

We commend the United Nations Secretary-General for launching the global initiatives that pronounced the year 2012 as the year for Sustainable Energy for All, and 2014-2024 as the Decade of Sustainable Energy for All. To demonstrate our commitment to this initiative, the Government of Nigeria in collaboration with UNIDO, the UN Foundation and the UN Secretary-General's Office launched its national SE4ALL in Abuja in August 2012. We believe that the UN Decade for SE4All and the SG's SE4All are sound frameworks to further build on as the post-2015 dialogue continues.

Mr. President,

With regards to Agriculture, we believe that the essence of sustainable agriculture is to address many environmental and social concerns as well as offers innovative and economically viable opportunities for growers, laborers, consumers, policymakers. Thus, we are of the view that

sustainable agriculture must integrate three main goals namely environmental health, economic profitability, and social and economic equity.

In Nigeria, the use of Science, Technology and Innovation has led to improved seedlings, better harvest and climate/pest resistant crops. Also, new technologies have been used to provide small dams, irrigation, and silos to enhance all-season farming as well as improve post-harvest management and employment generation.

We would like to stress that the achievement of sustainable agriculture is the responsibility of all participants in the system, including farmers, laborers, policymakers, researchers, retailers, and consumers.

Mr. President,

Nigeria has made concerted and conscious efforts to mainstream sustainable development into its national development strategies including the Vision 20: 2020. Our National Implementation Plan (NIP) for the Vision focused on improving social advancement and fostering accelerated, sustainable environmental and economic development. Integration of these three pillars has improved advocacy, policy focus and implementation commitment.