

Outcomes of the 6th Annual Ibadan Sustainable Development Summit (ISDS) 2015 held at the University of Ibadan Centre for Sustainable Development during 23-28 August, 2015

Preamble

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the world has been pursuing Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) which will be rounded off in 2015. The year 2015 is another critical year as the world transits to a similar development paradigm which seeks to address many of the shortcomings of the MDGs. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will replace the MDGs after 2015. It is therefore apposite to consider promises that the SDGs hold for overcoming the various development challenges in Africa. Similarly, Africa cannot afford to be left behind in the on-going global development agenda setting. The ensuing SDGs, therefore, offer another opportunity for Africa to be more proactive to ensuring sustainable development in the continent as well as progressive transformation of economies and societies. In addition to the specific goals and targets, the post-2015 SDGs aim at integrating six essential elements (dignity, people, prosperity, planet, justice, and partnership), which are germane in the African context. Considering the disparate achievements of many African countries in the soon to be concluded MDGs, the organisers of the 6th annual Ibadan Sustainable Development Summit (ISDS) considered it apt to bring to the fore the level of preparedness or otherwise of the continent and what lessons it has learnt from the MDGs, as well as the expected roles from numerous stakeholders in the sustainable development spectrum.

The Organization of the Summit, Participation, Paper Presentations and Publications

It is on basis of ensuing sustainable development goals that the 6th annual Ibadan Sustainable Development Summit (ISDS) was organized to discuss the issues and prospects in the context of the role for the African continent. The summit was organised by the University of Ibadan Centre for Sustainable Development (UI-CESDEV) in collaboration with the African Sustainable Development Network (ASUDNET) and Sustainable Development Solutions Network- Nigeria (NSDSN). It was held during 23 – 28 August, 2015. *Theme for the summit was **The Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: Whither Africa?***

About 230 persons from 10 countries in Africa (Ghana, The Gambia, Kenya, Ethiopia, South Africa, Nigeria) and Europe (Italy, France, Netherlands, United Kingdom) participated at the summit. There were also representatives of Governments (including high-level delegation from the Gambia) as well as Non-Governmental Organisations (including the Nigerian Network of NGOs), Students and Alumni Associations. Young scholars and researchers presented papers on a range of sustainable development issues at the summit. There were two keynote addresses by Professor Godwell Nhamo of the University of South Africa (UNISA), South Africa, and Ambassador Oluseyi Onafowokan who is the Nigerian High Commissioner to Ghana. Also, 11 plenary sessions based on the sub-themes of the summit were led by seasoned scholars. A total

of 67 technical paper presentations were made. The plenary papers would be published in the summit proceedings while authors of the technical papers are advised to send the revised papers for consideration and publication in the African Journal of Sustainable Development (AJSD) (<http://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajsd>).

Formation of Research and Working Groups

Even though, the SDSN hinges its focus on six pillars (dignity, people, prosperity, planet, justice, and partnership) for the implementation of the SDGs, the meeting grouped the SDGs by similarity and complementarity, and thus proposed the following five research and working groups for the purpose of driving research, advocacy and implementation of the goals. The summit therefore, set up five research and working groups around the Sustainable Development Goals as follows:

Group 1: Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; and Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Group 2: Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all; and Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Group 3: Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Group 4: Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all; Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable; Development; Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Group 5: Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries; Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Membership of the research and working groups comprises persons from the academia, government representatives and non-governmental organisations and they cut across institutions,

disciplines and universities. Interested persons may join. The groups will be expected to compete for grants, do advocacy and enlightenment, regarding the SDGs.

Need for Collaboration

Participants emphasized the need to actualize the important goal of partnership/collaboration as key to achieving the other goals. It therefore, resolved to sustain the unity of purpose demonstrated at the meeting by the key stakeholders from the civil service, universities, research centres, NGOs, students, and the private sector. The universities in particular, were challenged to take the leadership position in the implementation process, with government, providing the needed support. The meeting also recognized the steps taken towards actualizing a pan-Africa partnership and approach towards achieving the SDGs by President Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh of the Gambia for his Pan-African commitment to Sustainable Development and Support for annual Ibadan Sustainable Development Summit. The Gambia President sent a powerful delegation of nine senior members in his government comprising a junior minister, permanent secretaries, Director General, and Special Assistants in the Presidency. This was viewed as exemplary, for which other African heads of government should emulate in subsequent summits.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The theme of the summit was very timely, as the summit offered a veritable platform on current debates on the sustainable development goals and underscored the role of Africa the processes and expectations on implementation frameworks. The research and working groups would develop proposals and strategies for domesticating the Sustainable Development Goals for Africa, especially the ECOWAS region. They would also sustain the collaboration among the academia, NGOs, PSOs and governments in Africa. International support and collaboration were also emphasized as germane to achieving the SDGs. The seventh ISDS will take place in August 2016 and the theme will be determined in due course.

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