



Review Article

Good Governance as the “Pivot” for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

*Raheem, S., Peluola, S.B., and Adebayo, M.S.

Centre for Entrepreneurship Development, Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria. *Corresponding author: bestraheems@gmail.com

Abstract

The need to tackle the scourge of poverty, reduction of inequality, protection of the environment and promotion of well-being of citizens has made scholars and researchers to shift attention to good governance. The aim of this paper is to give an overview on the issues of the sustainable development and to outline its link with good governance. The paper adopted a conceptual approach to elucidate how sustainable development in Nigeria could be achieved if good governance is factored into relevance by the leadership of the country at all tiers of government. In a society still in search for solutions for sustainable development, good governance has always been recognized to be a critical tool for advancing sustainable development and a crucial element to be incorporated in sustainable development strategies to cope with the development agenda. Sustainable development argues that the current use of resources should minimize the level of harm to the future use of resources. Governance is capable of common sense and the versatile planning that is required for sustainable development in Nigeria. Good governance' is recognized as a complex and multi-dimensional concept that incorporates a guiding philosophy or set of operating principles, a preferred process or way that people interact with each other, and a desired situation or outcome. The partnership between government, civil society and science offers useful insights into the attributes of good governance and the way that this underpins and facilitates prudent resource management. The success of governance in any organized political system is determined by the quality and quantity of change brought about by such governance, which means that the development of any organized political system is determined by the quality of leadership in government. This paper therefore posits that good governance is a sine qua non of development, and can therefore be the pivot and the vitally needed catalyst for sustainable development in our country.

KEYWORDS: Good Governance, Sustainable Development, Social Progress, Economic Growth.

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)
ISSN: 2251 - 0486 Science and Education Development Inst., Nigeria

Introduction

Governance and sustainable development are children of similar history and parentage. They emerged in the late 1980's, with shared characteristics and overlapping potential. By the mid 1990's they were common terms in popular and professional discourse, along with renewed interest in the role of institutions in societal change. René Kemp *et al*, 2005. The approach of development between 1950s and 1980s, was oriented to achieve high levels of economic growth (Wang *et al*, 2008). Since the end of 1980, the strategy has been oriented to economic growth. In 2000, the United Nations launched the millennium development agenda which contains eight goals. In 2015, this agenda was replaced by the sustainable development agenda (SDGs) or what which is known as the 2030 SDGs Agenda. Many tools, strategies and recommendation have been advocated to achieve those objectives.

Today, the expression good governance has become very popular regardless of profession or discipline or country. However, its definition "varies from one organization [or person/author] to the other (Agere, 2000). There can never be sustainable development without good government (UNDP, 1997). There is a close link between good governance and sustainable development.

According to Brundtland Commission (1987), Sustainable Development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In the light of this, since sustainable development is people-based, the government, true representative of the very people should incarnate sustainability.

While many factors play an important role in development, good governance has always been recognized to be a critical tool for advancing sustainable development and it is also considered a crucial element to be incorporated in development strategies. Good governance promotes accountability, transparency, efficiency and rule of law at all levels and allows efficient management of human, natural, economic and financial resources for equitable and sustainable development, guaranteeing civil society participation in decision-making processes. Good governance and sustainable development are two concepts intimately tied together.

Conceptual Issues

Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development arose from two main sources: increasingly worrisome evidence of ecological degradation and other biophysical damage, both despite and because of the greater wherewithal provided by economic growth, and the largely disappointing record of post-WWII ‘development’ efforts, particularly the persistence, and in some places worsening, of poverty and desperation in a period of huge overall global increases in material wealth. The United Nations and associated agencies worried about these matters separately for some decades before appointing the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) to address them jointly (WECED, 1987).

The concept of sustainable development became a topic of discussion at international level after the publication of the report “Our Common Future” in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development of the United Nations. This report is widely known as the Brundtland report where we find the most famous definition of sustainable development:

“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WECED, 1987).

Todaro and Smith, 2003 define sustainable development as a “Pattern of *development* that permits future generations to live at least as well as the current generation”. This definition is similar to that of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987; Elliot, 1994): – the Brundtland Commission – namely: “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Elliot, 1994 points out that the concept encompasses the interdependent goals of various aspects of development and environmental conservation.

Objectives of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has six universal objectives in the realization of the 2030 vision, Griggs *et al.* (2013) which improving individual living conditions in the community, maintaining food safety, maintaining water safety, makes clean energy universally accessible, ensure ecosystems function in a healthy and productive way coupled with a healthy and sustainable ecosystem

Principles of Sustainable Development.

These include stable and long term economic growth, proportionate and balanced economic and social development, active employment policies, reduction of regional differences, growth of personal income and consumption and preservation of the environment for future generations and efficient usage and allocation of natural resources. They are also depicted in Figure 1.

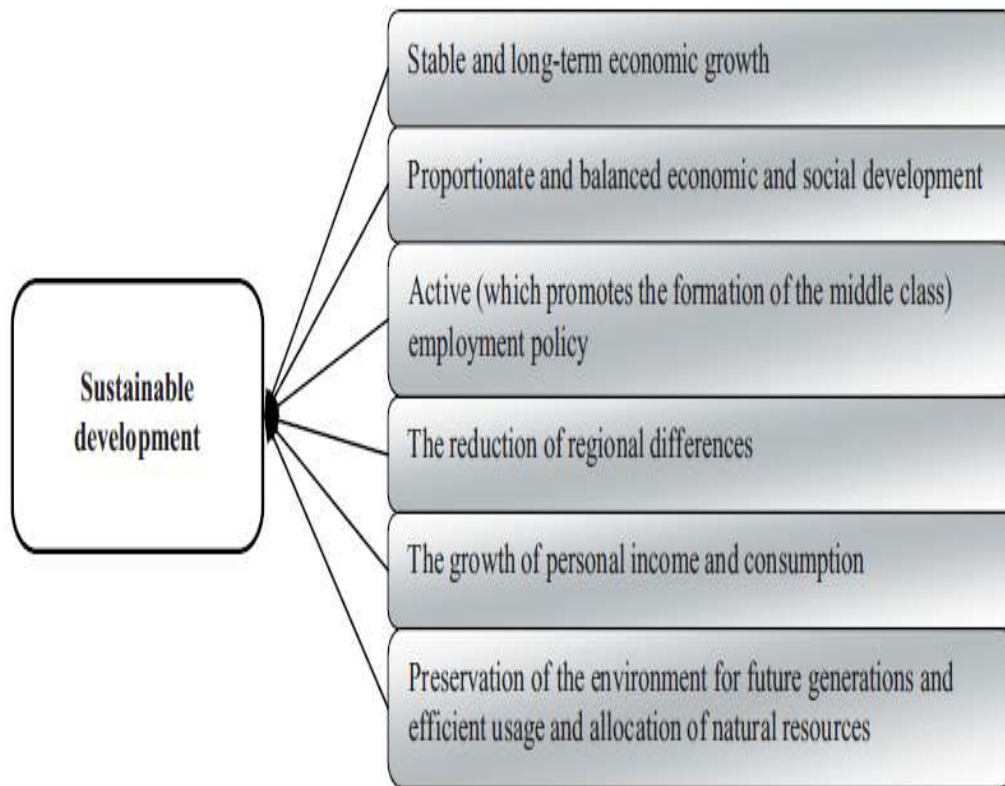


Figure 1: Principles of Sustainable Development.
Source: Vita Juneviciene and Roberta Kareivaite,2012

The Meaning of Good Governance

According to the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) research project, “Good governance is the process and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised; the process by which governments are selected, held accountable, monitored and replaced; the capacity of governments to manage resources efficiently, and to formulate, implement and enforce sound policies and regulation; and, the respect for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them” (cited in Onigbide, 2007).

Khan 1998 refers to Bilney 1994: who sees good governance as "the effective management of a country's social and economic resources in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable and equitable". The UNDP 1997 equates good governance with "democratic forms of governance". These forms "rely on public participation, accountability and transparency". Good governance is the new approach that recognizes the role of the state in the economy where the joint participation of state and non-state actors, civil society and private sector, is essential in the process of public governance. Good governance refers to “a set of qualitative characteristics relating to processes of rulemaking and their institutional foundations. It encapsulates values such as enhanced participation, transparency, accountability, and public access to information. It also helps to combat corruption and secure both basic human rights and the rule of law” (UNU-IAS, 2015).

Good Governance

A system of good governance would consist of a set of rules and institutions, a legal framework for development and a system of public administration which is open, transparent, efficient and accountable. It is devoid of corruption, nepotism, and discrimination. Good governance is measured by the level of its performance, its ability to effectively deliver most crucial socio-political goods, beginning with security to citizens, especially human security within which people are able to resolve and manage their differences without resorting to arms or other forms of aggression. It can also be measured through the provision of political and civil freedom i.e the right to compete for political office, tolerance of dissent and difference, fundamental human rights. These in turn create conducive environment for sustainable development.

Good governance according to UNDP among other things is participatory, transparent, and accountable. It is also effective and equitable and promotes the Rule of Law. It ensures that the voices of poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision making over the allocation of development resources, and that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus among the three stakeholders i.e the states, private sector and civil society. The three, according to UNDP, are important for

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)
ISSN: 2251 - 0486 Science and Education Development Inst., Nigeria

development in the sense that the state creates a conducive political and legal atmosphere; the private sector creates jobs and incomes, while the civil societies facilitate political and social interaction.

Requirements of Good Governance

These include Effective, responsive and accountable state institutions, openness and transparency - public access to information, addressing corruption and curbing illicit financial flows, Justices and the Rule of Law, Participation in decision-making and curbing violence and combating transnational organized crime

Why Good Governance?

Good Governance has become increasingly important because poor countries are faced with the challenges to make transition to the market economy and therefore they concentrated their efforts to modernize institutions and decision making process (Hout, 2007). Also, the increase of economic problems such as the raising level of external debt, many developing countries launched what we call structural adjustment program. The attention nowadays is about good governance which refers widely to institutional issues, social justice and inclusiveness.

The SDG Agenda clearly has a great commitment to good governance and its vital role. Goal 16 indicates “effective governance institutions and systems that are responsive to public needs deliver essential services and promote inclusive growth”. Institutions are the basics for good governance. In addition, good governance includes relations between state and people.

Eight Principles of Good Governance

Table 1 shows the eight principles of good governance. They are: participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus oriented, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, and transparency.

S/No	The Eight Good Governance Principles	The Principles and related text on which they are based
1	Participation	All men and women should have a voice in decision making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their institutions. Such broad participation is built on freedom of association and speech and capacities to participate constructively.
2	Rule of Law	This involves legal frameworks that are enforced impartially; protection of human rights, especially those of minorities; impartial enforcement of laws, independent judiciary, impartial and incorruptible police force.
3	Transparency	Decisions taken and their enforcement follows rules and regulations; information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement; information is provided in easily understandable forms.
4	Responsiveness	Entails responding to the needs of all stakeholders and serving them with a reasonable time frame.
5	Consensus oriented	Involves mediation of the different interest groups in the society to reach a broad consensus on what is the best of the whole community and how this can be achieved, broad and long time perspectives on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goal of such development.
6	Equity and inclusiveness	Here all members of society feel that they have stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society; all groups, but particularly the most vulnerable, have opportunities to improve or maintain their wellbeing.
7	Effectiveness and Efficiency	The process and institutions produce results that meet the needs of the society while making the best use of society resources at their disposal; the concept of efficiency covers the sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment.
8	Accountability	Governmental institutions, private sector and civil organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law.

Table 1: Eight Principles of Good Governance

Source: ESCAP 2000 - Human Settlement, a Society's Wellbeing

<http://www.unescap.org/husel/gg/governance.htm>

Contrasting Good Governance with Bad Governance

Bad governance can be described as a situation where the relationship between the government, private sector and the civil society is not in order. It is a state where government fails to manage the resources (material and human) and the institutions of

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)

ISSN: 2251 - 0486

Science and Education Development Inst., Nigeria

the nation for the optimum benefit of the generality of the populace. It is where the rule of law does not take its course; a state where the socio-political atmosphere is not stimulating economic activities that would advance the country. The World Bank Report (2010) summarized the major symptoms of bad governance as follows: Failure to make clear separation between what is public and what is private, Failure to establish a predictable framework of law and government behavior conducive to development or arbitrariness in the application of rules and laws, Executive rules, regulations, licensing requirements and so forth, which impede functioning of markets and encourage rent seeking, Priorities inconsistent with development, resulting in a misallocation of resources and excessively narrowly based or non-decision making.

The Effect of Good Governance on Development

Good governance is widely acknowledged as a foundation for sustainable development, including sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty and hunger. Three dimensions have to be assessed in order to ascertain whether governance is good or bad. These include: mechanisms that promote it, the process used, and the outcomes achieved.

Graphical Depiction of the Relationship Between Governance and Sustainable Development.

Based on the graph in Figure 2, it could be inferred that there is a positive correlation between Good Governance and Sustainable Development.

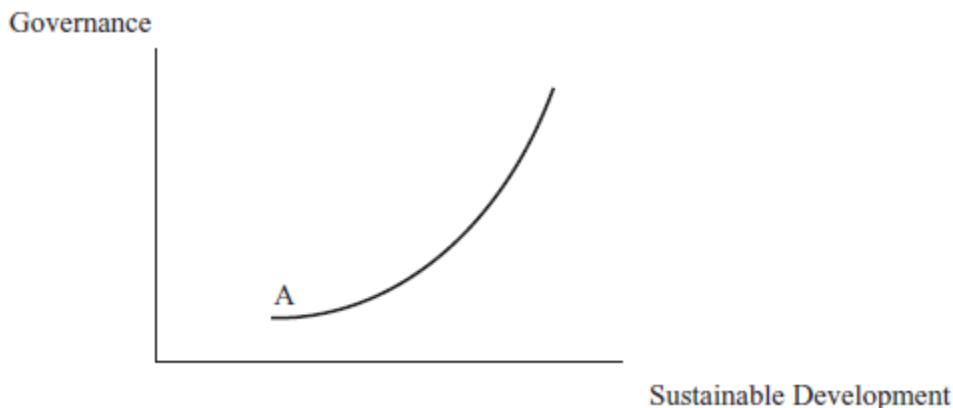


Figure 2: Graphical depiction of the relationship between governance and sustainable development. Source: Taner Güney (2017).

Good Governance and Sustainable Development

Major developmental benefits often delivered by good governance include: Stable political and economic environment which will encourage investments and flourishing business; sustainable development of a country's resources both human and material; Improvement and development of infrastructure, related to basic living standard e.g sanitation, housing, water and light; development of health and educational facilities which are accessible to all; The protection of human rights. It's only through good governance that a community can guarantee the basic needs of its citizens such as the right to food, security, shelter, health care and to fair, equitable and accessible justice system. The security of life and property will be ensured and people will go about their daily functions without fear with good governance. This will enhance the productivity level of the nation. Besides, the human capital often lost due to crisis will be saved. An attractive and conducive business environment will be created and sustained. This will in turn not only encourage local investors to invest in any part of the nation but will attract foreign investors into the nation with good governance. With encouraging political and economic policies, with the assurance of the security of their investments, and with a sure large market in Nigeria, investors will pull their resources to invest. There will be peaceful co-existence within and between communities, within and between political parties, in and between religious groups, in and between the different arms of government with good governance. Justice will be administered in Nigeria without fear or favour with good governance. Bribery and corruption, embezzlement of public funds will become strangers in. With good governance, an enabling environment will be created for effective participation in governance by the entire population.

Governance for Sustainability: Key Components

Governance for sustainability has certain key features and components. In the following we identify four of these components and elaborate on some of their main features. Policy integration: An important 'interrelations' issue is the coordination of government policies and the corresponding and complementary positions and initiatives of other governance actors. Common objectives, criteria, trade-off rules and indicator smulti-stakeholder decision making, co-management, advisory round tables and other mechanisms engaging multiple governance institutions can contribute to effective integration (Berkes *et al.*, 1991; Cormick *et al.*, 1996; Hemmati, 2002; Abaza and Baranzini, 2002; Dorsey, 2004). Information and incentives for practical implementation: Governance for sustainability also needs means of spurring and guiding appropriate action. Policy instruments of many kinds are available – tax reforms regulations, procurement rules, liability laws, education programmes, product labelling, tenure arrangements, power-sharing processes, etc., and many combinations are possible. Programmes for system innovation. Governance for

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)
ISSN: 2251 - 0486 Science and Education Development Inst., Nigeria

sustainability requires policymaking frameworks that actively seek to identify, nurture, and coordinate action for more sustainable technological niches. And since technological innovations promise only some of the needed improvements, governance initiatives must ensure that they are accompanied by co-evolving societal processes characterised by continuous changes in formal and informal institutions. For this, governance for sustainability has to be more anticipatory, oriented towards the long-term, using visions of sustainability, and concerned with learning, innovation and adaptation.

The Impediments to Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

These include: Impatience on the part of the governed and, in some cases, the rulers, greed, corruption, the nature of politics, poverty, insufficient innovation and so over dependence on foreign systems, methods and models in the way African affairs are managed and Internal weakness of the various African states particularly in the face of globalization

Strategies Towards Achievement of Sustainable Development Through Good Governance in Nigeria.

The Federal Government Strategies

These partners should work together to: devise ways and means of sharing national wealth – however little it may be - transparently and equitably; devise ways and means of increasing national wealth to facilitate the sharing; and increase the amount and quality of what is to be shared; avoid weak or failed states; ensure discipline and organization; encourage a culture of competition – with win-win but also win-lose situations; try and innovate as much as possible so as to find solutions that are adapted to African problems and issues; and fight corruption by making it very costly to indulge in corrupt practices.

The Civil Societies Strategies

These organizations should: reduce dependency on foreign aid since such tends to make governments justifiably suspicious of their agendas and intentions; strengthen transparency and accountability in financial matters; strengthen internal democracy; and increase their capacity to monitor public policy management so as to check actual or potential abuse of power by governments.

Strategies to be Adopted by Nigerians

For their part, individuals themselves should: be patriotic and self-less, despite problems in African countries, including some shortcomings on the part of the leaders; work very

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)
ISSN: 2251 - 0486 Science and Education Development Inst., Nigeria

hard/ avoid laziness – instead of hoping that “government will do everything for them”, [adopt a culture of systematic saving for the future; learn to participate actively in the affairs of their countries through debating the issues of the day and voting when elections are due; refuse to be bought by prospective representatives to legislative bodies; challenge representatives to deliver or quit; avoid making unrealistic demands on the government (such as, for public servants, demanding remuneration similar to that payable in developed countries); be patient when dealing with their representatives and officials; and if elected leaders, stop making politics their source of livelihood but, instead have an exit strategy [in case the people get tired of them (Nkuuhe, 2005).

Development Partners and Friends of Nigeria (Both State and Non-State). Strategies

These partners should: encourage Nigeria to be self-reliant; insist that grants and loans be used for purposes for which they were given and lent; and be consistent and principled regarding the policies adopted – by, for instance, avoiding supporting governments that obviously and needlessly practice bad governance, or which threaten durable development simply because such support is in the national interests of the foreign country.

Conclusions

Nigeria’s constitution guarantees good governance which is based on eight fundamental principles of participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus oriented, equity, effectiveness and efficiency and accountability. Good governance and sustainable development are important but complex phenomena. Citizens cannot eat or drink good governance. They require food, drinks, etc- which are associated with development. However, with patience, good governance is likely to bring about the kind of development that is durable. But government in Nigeria must not corrupt, inefficient, not responsive and must be able to deliver the benefits of good governance to Nigerians.

There is no single best form of governance for sustainability. The details must vary, respecting the specifics of context from case to case. Nevertheless, the deliberations on governance for sustainability so far, do point to a basic foundational outline and strategy, and there is reason to believe that we can clarify and specify much more without compromising respect for particular circumstances.

In a society still in search for solutions for sustainable development, good governance has always been recognized to be a critical tool for advancing sustainable development and a crucial element to be incorporated in sustainable development strategies to cope with

the development agenda. Sustainable development argues that the current use of resources should minimize the level of harm to the future use of resources. Governance is capable of common sense and the versatile planning that is required for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Good governance' is recognized as a complex and multi-dimensional concept that incorporates a guiding philosophy or set of operating principles, a preferred process or way that people interact with each other, and a desired situation or outcome. The partnership between government, civil society and science offers useful insights into the attributes of good governance and the way that this underpins and facilitates prudent resource management.

The success of governance in any organized political system is determined by the quality and quantity of change brought about by such governance, which means that the development of any organized political system is determined by the quality of leadership in government. This paper therefore posits that good governance is a sine qua non of development, and can therefore be the pivot and the vitally needed catalyst for sustainable development in our country.

References

- Abaza, H. and Baranzini, A. (2002): *Implementing Sustainable Development: Integrated*.
- Agere, Sam (2000): *Promoting Good Governance: Principles, Practices and Perspectives*, London, Management and Training Services Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Berkes, F. and Folke, C. (1993): 'A systems perspective on the interrelationships between natural, human-made and cultural capital', *Ecological Economics*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp.1-8.
- Berkes, F., George P. and Preston R.J. (1991) 'Co-management: the evolution in theory and practice of the joint administration of living resources', *Alternatives*, Vol. 18, No. 2, pp.12-18.
- Bilney, G. (1994): "Good Governance and Participatory Development in Australia's Aid Programme", *Development Bulletin*, Vol. 32, [October] 16 -19.

Brundtland Report, (1987): Our Common Future, Brundtland Report, 1987 (PDF, 1 MB, 14.03.2013)

Cormick, G., Dale, N., Emond, P., Sigurdson, S.G. and Stuart, B.D. (1996): 'Consensus processes, a new road to sustainability', *Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: Putting Principles into Practice*, National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, Ottawa, pp.3-14.

Dorcey, A.H.J. (2004): 'Sustainability governance: surfing the waves of transformation', in Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) (2000). *Economic Issues*, 39(1): 21-52.

Elliot, Jennifer (1994): *An Introduction to Sustainable Development: The Developing World*. London and New York, Routledge.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) (2000). Human Settlement, a Society's Wellbeing

Hemmati, M. (2002): Multi-Stakeholder Processes for Governance and Sustainability, Earthscan.

Khan, M.M. (1998): "Good Governance: The Case of Bangladesh". *African Journal of Public Administration and Management*. 10(2); 44- 57.

Nkuuhe, Johnson, (2005): Remarks made in an interview with Tumusiime, Kabwende Deo – "At last a politician with a difference". The Weekly Observer [Kampala]; 26 May- 1 June; p.13

Onigbinde, A. (2007): *Governance and Leadership in Nigeria*, Ibadan, Hope Publications Ltd.

René Kemp *et al.* (2005): *Governance for sustainable development: moving from theory to practice*.

Taner Güney. (2015): *Governance and sustainable development: How effective is governance?* Department of Economics, Karamanoglu Mehmetbey University, Karaman, Turkey.

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)
ISSN: 2251 - 0486 Science and Education Development Inst., Nigeria

Ukaegbu, C. (2010): “Nigeria; Beyond Good Governance at 50.”

UNDP (1997): Governance for Sustainable Human Development. *UNDP Policy Paper*.

UNDP. (2014): Governance for sustainable development integrating governance in the post-2015 development framework. Report.

UNDP. (2014): Governance for sustainable development integrating governance in the post-2015 development framework. Report. United Nations Development Programme Report (2010).

UNDP (1997): *Governance and Sustainable Human Development*. United Nations Development Programme. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], (1997): Governance for sustainable human development. New York; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP].

United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] (1997): *Reconceptualising Governance. Discussion Paper 2*. New York, Management Development and Governance Division, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, United Nations Development Programme [UNDP].

UNU-IAS. (2015): Integrating the governance into the sustainable development goals. UNU-IAS Policy Brief n°3.

UNWCED. (1987): *Our common future: World Commission on Environment and Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wang, Greg G.; Korte, Russell F.; Sun, Judy Y. (2008): *Development Economics: A Foundation for HRD Policy Studies in Developing Countries*. SAGE Publications: *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, Vol. 10(6), p. 848-862.

Wang, Greg G.; Korte, Russell F.; Sun, Judy Y. (2008): *Development Economics: A* Washington DC.

WCED (1987): *Our Common Future. The World Commission on Environment and Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)
ISSN: 2251 - 0486 Science and Education Development Inst., Nigeria

World Bank (1983): *World Development Report*, New York: Oxford University Press.

World Bank (1992): *Governance and Development*, World Bank, Washington.

World Bank (2011). World bank development indicators database. July 2011. World Bank Report 2010.

World Bank, The (1992): *Governance and Development*. Washington, D.C., The World Bank.

World Bank (1991): *Managing Development: The Governance Dimension*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED] The (1987): *Our Common Future*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.