

## PHILOSOPHY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

*This paper discussed Philosophy and sustainable development in Nigeria. It x-rayed the needs of Nigeria in reference to sustainable development and investigated what, and how philosophy contributes to meeting these needs in the present while ensuring that the capacity and ability of the nation to meet the future needs of Nigerians is not compromised. It adopted the method of qualitative research; relying on the analysis of available library materials to: (i) critically explicate the notion of sustainable development, (ii) critically analyse the Nigerian situation within the framework of our understanding of sustainable development, (iii) investigate the possible contribution of philosophy to the project of sustainable development in Nigeria. The aim of this paper is to elucidate how philosophy contributes to human development and its sustainability in any nation, with particular reference to Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Philosophy, Sustainable Development, Nigeria

### **Introduction**

Sustainable development is a compound notion that consists of two separable concepts; the concepts of development and sustainability. To some extent, we can consider both concepts as process notions in the sense that they are not projects to be completed but on-going exercises or processes that involve creating and recreating, as there is always room and need to improve on whatever is on ground. In a very broad sense, sustainable development describes a situation where the needs of the present are met without compromising the capacity and ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This implies that development has to do with meeting our present needs and sustainability implies avoiding the closure of the possibility of meeting the needs of future generations. Given this understanding, to discuss Philosophy and sustainable development in Nigeria would require that we x-ray the needs of Nigeria in reference to sustainable development. Investigate what, and how

philosophy contributes to meeting these needs in the present while ensuring that the capacity and ability of the nation to meet the future needs of Nigerians is not compromised. Accordingly, I shall adopt the method of qualitative research; relying on the analysis of available library materials to: (i) critically explicate the notion of sustainable development, (ii) critically analyse the Nigerian situation within the framework of our understanding of sustainable development, (iii) investigate the possible contribution of philosophy to the project of sustainable development in Nigeria. My aim is to elucidate how philosophy contributes to human development and its sustainability in any nation, with particular reference to Nigeria.

### **What is Sustainable Development?**

In the classical economist sense, development implies a rise in per capita income and growth in the economy. The emphasis here is the quantitative aspect of having more in income and infrastructural facilities. This idea has, however, become inadequate and no longer suffices as a plausible description of the concept of development. Its inadequacy is largely because it only accounts for the quantitative aspect, without providing for the broader qualitative perspective of development which is the well-being of people. This is the aspect of “being more” which is closer and more consistent with the French etymological connotation of development. From the French *desvelopper* or *développer*, development means to unwrap, in the sense of “a gradual unfolding, a full working out or disclosure of the details of something.” Thus, in a broad sense, development is the unwrapping of potentials.<sup>1</sup>

Depending on who, and the perspective from which it is defined, development has different meanings. For instance, the political scientist would consider it as political stability and liberation from oppression. The medical scientist would understand it as reduction in mortality rates and diseases. The educationist may describe it as eliminating illiteracy. Engineers and technologists may describe it as designing, fabricating, manufacturing and acquiring sophisticated technology. For sociologists, it is a progressive advancement towards desired social goals.<sup>2</sup> These descriptions, even though they are impaired by their narrowness, somewhat express some truth about what development is.

Development is a process that brings about growth, progress, positive change or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social and demographic components. The aim is to improve the quality of life of the people. Therefore, whether development is technological, political, social or economic advancement, its aim is to improve the life of people. When and where this is not achieved, such advancement cannot be correctly described as development. At the centre of

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<sup>1</sup> Felix Enegho, “Philosophy as a tool for sustainable development in Nigeria,” *Journal of sustainable development in Africa* 14, no. 3 (2012), 156.

<sup>2</sup> Enegho, “Philosophy as a tool for sustainable development in Nigeria,” 156.

development are the values of the individual human person. These values consist in the vital aspects of human needs. Thus, Odera Oruka considers development as a situation where “the people have their economic and socio-cultural needs fully satisfied ... [this implies that] all the social freedoms such as economic, political, cultural, intellectual, religious, sexual freedoms.”<sup>3</sup> If the human person is the central focus of development, it means that development is a perpetual commitment to moving from “the less human conditions of disease, hatred, crime, war, racism, poverty, oppression, injustice, corruption, faithlessness, hopelessness, etc., to the more human conditions of health, of love, peaceful co-existence, equity, justice, community fellow-felling, faith and hope.”<sup>4</sup> It is the enthronement of social justice in human society;<sup>5</sup> a process of emancipation that eliminates or reduces to its barest minimum, the conditions and situations that compromise the value and dignity of the human person. These conditions include; inequality and the neglect of public facilities.

A society is developed if the members of the society are free to pursue the objectives they set by themselves for their collective interest, using their own resources because development enables people to create and recreate themselves.<sup>6</sup> It is about the “availability of adequate and proper education, good healthcare, decent and affordable housing, adequate transport facilities and infrastructure, with the complementation of industrialisation and technology.”<sup>7</sup> Amartya Sen developed this notion of development in his *Development as Freedom*.<sup>8</sup> According to him, “freedom is constitutive of, and instrumental to development. by freedom, he refers to political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency, and security; [which] are all different but inter-connected.”<sup>9</sup> Development, therefore, is about the capabilities that empower and enable people to do and be what they value.

Development, as I have conceptualised it, is an unrelenting process that must be kept going; hence, the idea of sustainable development. Sustainability is the “capacity to maintain some entity, outcome, or process over time.”<sup>10</sup> If prefixed to development,

<sup>3</sup> Henry O. Oruka, “Freedom and independence in development: The African case,” in *The idea of development between its past and future*, vol. 1, ed. Ioanna Kucuradi, 177-130 (Ankara: Meteksan Co. Ltd., 1993), 128.

<sup>4</sup> George E. Ehusani, *An Afro-Christian vision “QZQVEHE!” Towards a more humanised world* (New York: University Press of America, 1991), 243.

<sup>5</sup> Anselm Kole Jimoh, “Peace for development and development for peace: A philosophy for integral and national development in Nigeria,” *PACEM: Journal of peace and development* 1, no. 1 (2018), 14.

<sup>6</sup> See Walter Rodney, *How Europe underdeveloped Africa* (London: Bogle-Louverture, 1972) and Claude Ake, *Social science as imperialism: Theory of political development* (Ibadan: University Press 1979).

<sup>7</sup> Jimoh, “Peace for development,” 15.

<sup>8</sup> Amartya Sen, *Development as freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> Anselm Kole Jimoh, “Humanised development: Integrating cultural values and norms in our efforts towards sustainable development,” *Iroro: Journal of arts* 17, nos. 1 & 2 (2017), 489.

<sup>10</sup> W. Jenkins, *Berkshire encyclopaedia of sustainability: the spirit of sustainability*, vol. 1 (Berkshire: Berkshire Publishing Group, 2009), 380.

as we have in sustainable development, it implies ensuring that we do not carry out activities that would exhaust the resources on which the capacity of sustainability depends. Therefore, sustainable development is “about a harmonious, long-lasting ... pursuit of prosperity for all people.”<sup>11</sup> It is about meeting basic human needs “without destroying or irrevocably degrading the natural systems on which we all depend.”<sup>12</sup> The effort to ensure sustainability of development requires a consistent growth of all the aspects of society; namely, cultural, economic, socio-political, technological and environmental.<sup>13</sup> Thus, sustainable development can be conceived as “a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investment, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with the future as well as present needs.”<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, sustainable development requires that the present generation meets its needs without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs. This requires a consistent increment in skills and capacities, creativity, responsibility and discipline which cuts across all aspects of society. It is a continuous effort to keep improving on what is on ground; increasing what is available materially, maintaining political stability, creating and improving the economic and physical security of the members of the society.

### **Nigeria, Development and Sustainable Development**

According to conventional categorisation, Nigeria is a developing country based on its gross domestic product (GDP) or gross national income per capita (GNI). The parameters of GDP and/or GNI measure a country's economic development which does not include our established paradigm of development. Other important factors necessary to account for development include the human development index (HDI), the general standard of living, level of industrialisation and the level of technological infrastructure. Although, not too long ago, Nigeria was described as the poverty capital of the world, it would be incorrect to group her among the least developed countries of the world. We do certainly have access to some level of industrialisation, technological infrastructure and social facilities and amenities in comparison to some other countries of the world. However, considering the countless difficulties and challenges facing Nigerians, we cannot correctly claim that Nigeria is a developed country. In a paper titled: “Common good, legislations, and socio-economic policies: Salvaging a country ravaged by the dictatorship of corruption” I published in 2017, I sized up Nigeria's problem thus:

<sup>11</sup> Ernesta Molotekiene, “A philosophical analysis of the concept of sustainable development,” *Development studies* 31, no. 2 (2020), 149.

<sup>12</sup> Robert W. Kates, Thomas M. Parris, and Anthony A. Leiserowitz. “What is sustainable development? Goals, indicators, values, and practices,” *Environment* 47 no. 39 (2005), 20.

<sup>13</sup> Gregory E. Chinwuba, “Philosophy and sustainable development in Nigeria: A critical analysis,” *Nnamdi Azikiwe journal of philosophy* 11 no. 1 (2019), 44.

<sup>14</sup> M. Izunwa and K. C. Ehujuo, “Environmental protection laws: Critical index for sustainable development in Nigeria,” in *The humanities and sustainable development*, 2-14 (Nimo: Rex Charles & Patrick, 2011), 6.

Nigeria's problem is not the unavailability of leaders, but the ineffectiveness of her leaders to protect the common interest of her citizens. Nigerian leaders and leadership are driven by inordinate self-centred ambitions. They assemble under different guises, like political parties and associations to protect their private and selfish interests. They enact laws that facilitate, protect and enable their “bulldozaic” embezzlement of the nation's wealth. They embark on shadow chasing and propaganda to confuse, manipulate, and divert attention from their financial misdeeds, which also paves the way for their uninterrupted syphoning of the common wealth. The citizens daily dissipate their energy battling and killing themselves over politically and religiously sponsored insignificant issues that do not build a healthy nation. Today, Nigeria is notorious for negativities like; social crisis and insurgencies: the carnage of *Boko haram* terrorism, Fulani herdsmen massacres, kidnappings, Niger-Delta militancy, etc. These are mostly fallouts of the treacherous politicking of the cabals that make puppets of the nation's leaders.

Consequent upon the above is the sorry story of the common man who finds it difficult to afford one square meal a day. His story tells the intensity of his helplessness, which scares and confuses the observer. His woes are multiple; all of them, strands of the fact that he lacks a means of livelihood as there are no jobs, no conducive environment to setup businesses, no assurance of security. The powers that be, continuously drain whatever is left in him through purported revenue-drive programmes and policies meant to only further enrich the pockets of the leaders. The socio-economic structure of the nation gives no ray of hope; the interest of the common man is not on the agenda of the nation's leadership; he is not included in the distribution of the nation's resources. It is a shameless tale of hopelessness.<sup>15</sup>

Five years after, my position has not changed; if anything, it has been confirmed by the worsened situation of the scenarios I described. Virtually every sector of the Nigerian society; perhaps, with the exemption of the entertainment industry, is grinding down. Meanwhile, endemic corruption which is the primary militating force against our development is thriving. The massive continuous looting of the nation's treasury by agents of government and our politicians has made a caricature of the infamous lootings of Umaru Dikko, Tarfa Balogun and Sanni Abacha, to mention just a few names in the past. Fresh in our minds is the alleged N80 billion loot of Ahmed Idris, the suspended Accountant General of the Federation (AGF). Also is the recent zero remittance of NNPC for the month of April, 2022 which makes it the fourth in a roll; meaning that between January and April, 2022, nothing has

<sup>15</sup>Anselm Kole Jimoh, “Common good, legislations, and socio-economic policies: Salvaging a country ravaged by the dictatorship of corruption,” *Encounter: Journal of African life and religion* 12 (2017), 88-89.

accrued from Nigeria's crude oil to the government purse. Yet the country has spent trillions of naira in fuel subsidy within the same period under consideration. As at 2021, Nigeria was ranked 154th among the 180 countries listed in the world, in the corruption index of Transparency International.<sup>16</sup>

Even though corruption is the primary cause for our lack of development in Nigeria, it is not the only factor responsible for the country's retrogression. Other factors include: unfavourable business conditions, dependence on oil, unemployment, poor government policies and implementations, poor supervision of projects, insecurity/insurgency, religious and ethnic misunderstandings, high level of illiteracy and misconceived educational curriculum. These factors which are self-evident and explanatory, in one way or another interface, and all of them are proximately and/or remotely linked with the pervasive corruption that has left us crawling as a nation, nearly sixty-two years after juridical and territorial independence.

Not only has these challenges truncated Nigeria's development, they also encroach into the capacity of the future generation of Nigerians to achieve reasonable developmental progress. To drain the nation's natural and human resources as it is the case with Nigeria now, is to incapacitate the future generation of Nigerians to develop. If we must end this trend and begin a genuine effort towards sustainable development in Nigeria, we need a reorientation. By this, I mean we must refocus and redirect our efforts towards building a new Nigeria devoid of ethnic and religious intolerance; a new Nigeria with a diversified economy, conducive and secured environment for small and large scaled businesses. This is a Nigeria that would be educational progressive, socially egalitarian and vibrant, political stable and territorially secured. Foundational to all these is proper education, and this is where we begin to count on philosophy as an indispensable tool to facilitate the required reorientation.

### **Philosophy and the Re-engineering of a New Nigeria.**

Apparent in the various definitions of philosophy that we can consider, either from its etymological conception as the love of wisdom or its academic understanding as “the study of the fundamental problems connected with reality, existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind and language,”<sup>17</sup> is the fact that it is a critical inquiry that privileges reason as its primary tool. The act of philosophizing, which is the business of philosophy, involves seeking to understand fundamental truths about oneself, the world we live in and the relationship between human persons and the world. It is an

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<sup>16</sup> See, “Corruption Perception Index 2021 for Nigeria.” [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org) (Accessed 25 May 2022).

<sup>17</sup> Anselm Kole Jimoh, *Philosophy: A guide for beginners*, Revd ed. (Ibadan: Ebony Books and

activity of thought that makes one philosophical, as well as, a pursuit that makes one a philosopher. It is the most developed critical and comprehensive manner of thinking with analytic and synthetic modes of operation, so far devised by the human species.

As an analytic mode of operation, philosophy provides the avenue for us to divide or break down complexities into their minutest elements for easier comprehension. And as a synthetic mode of operation, it is directed towards “resolving confusions, unmasking assumptions, revealing presuppositions, distinguishing importance, testing positions, correcting distortions, looking for reasons, examining worldviews and questioning conceptual frameworks.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, it helps us to “dispel ignorance, enrich understanding, broaden experience, expand horizons, develop imagination, control emotions, explore values, fix beliefs by rational enquiry, establish habits of acting, widen considerations, synthesize knowledge and [the] quest for wisdom.”<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, philosophy has the capacity to respond to societal demands for the wisdom to navigate through difficult and complicated situations. It does this by bringing together knowledges from various fields of inquiry, synergise them and pull out of them value for human lives. Thus, we can rightly claim that philosophy enables human growth as an essential part of human education.

The primary goal of education is to develop the human intellect towards the full realization of the human potential in the society. Genuine philosophizing requires: (i) Freedom to question and investigate phenomena. (ii) Openness to truth wherever it is found, this involves willingness to admit error and the readiness to accept corrections. (iii) Objectivity towards other perspectives and views which enables us to explore all possibilities and derive therefrom clear discernment of the truth. (iv) Courage to express oneself, and to take the risk to question unexplained assumptions in the search for wisdom and truth. Courage comes with determination, commitment and perseverance. (v) Humility to accept the fact that there is limitation to human knowledge; thus, a philosopher must realize that what he considers and accepts to be justified knowledge may not be acceptable to others.<sup>20</sup>

The speculative character of philosophy that “fosters a logical movement beyond empirical investigations in the search for answers to human predicament,”<sup>21</sup> makes it central in human existence. While empirical investigations, as we see with the physical sciences, produce truths that are valid within the experiential, through its critical rationality, philosophy produces results that are valid within and beyond the

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<sup>18</sup> Kreation, (2021), 21.

<sup>19</sup> Jimoh, *Philosophy*, 22.

<sup>20</sup> Jimoh, *Philosophy*, 36-37.

<sup>21</sup> Chinwuba, “Philosophy and sustainable development in Nigeria,” 43.

realm of experience. Citing Plato, Martin Asiegbu avers that when states are bad, it is because of the ineffectiveness of their resolution to provide remedies with radical measures to enhance the true view of public and private rights that would end human troubles.<sup>22</sup> This can be remedied only by philosophy which has the ability to provide a good way of life and to determine the course of life for humanity.<sup>23</sup> In this sense, we appreciate Joseph Omoregbe's simplistic but very true conception of philosophy as "a rational search for answers to the questions that arise in the mind when we reflect on human experience."<sup>24</sup>

Philosophy engages in self-criticism by studying and questioning its own methods, aims and contents, just as it enquires into the possibility of other sciences to arrive at valid conclusions that could advance the growth of the human society.<sup>25</sup> This positions philosophy to examine and propose plausible recommendations towards resolving problems in the society, charting the path of growth and development through viable and sustainable socio-economic policies. To this end, Obi Oguejiofor argues that progress and development in human society is the product of adequate rationality and the ability to think critically, which is the hallmark of philosophy.<sup>26</sup> Gregory E. Chinwuba agrees with him claiming that "in the midst of scientific exploits, methods and results which are applicable in human and societal development, philosophy remains relevant and indispensable."<sup>27</sup> It broadens our mind to understand and view reality from its different perspectives, helps us to push aside our fears, misconceptions and prejudices. It informs and guides scientific researches, provides us insight about the approaches of great men to various problems of life and therefore, equips us to "solve the pervading and prevailing political, economic, social, ethnic and religious problems which constitute formidable obstacles to national development."<sup>28</sup>

Human beings are the source and primary motive force for development. Thus, a society that seeks advancement and growth must first develop her members to realize and express their higher potentials. The processes of development in any given society depends on "the extent of [the] people's education, the intensity of their aspirations and energy, the quality of their attitudes, beliefs, ideas, values, skills and information [in relation] to the environmental conditions available."<sup>29</sup> Given that

<sup>22</sup> Martin F. Asiegbu, "Philosophy and sustainable development." In *The humanities and sustainable development*, 101-114 (Nimo: Rex Charles and Patrick, 2011), 107.

<sup>23</sup> P. C. Ejeh, *Philosophy and logic made easy* (Enugu: Computer Edge Publishers, 2009), 44.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph Omoregbe, *Knowing philosophy* (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers, 1990), 2.

<sup>25</sup> Chinwuba, "Philosophy and sustainable development in Nigeria," 43.

<sup>26</sup> Obi J. Oguejiofor, "Welcome address," in *Philosophy and praxis in Africa*, 1-9 (Ibadan: Hope Publications, 2006).

<sup>27</sup> Chinwuba, "Philosophy and sustainable development in Nigeria," 43.

<sup>28</sup> Chinwuba, "Philosophy and sustainable development in Nigeria," 45.

<sup>29</sup> Maura Striano, "Philosophical inquiry as a practice of social development," *Childhood & philosophy* 6, no. 11 (2010), 59.

development is a qualitative upward movement to higher levels of performance and a qualitative change in how a society is organized, it requires progressive and more reflective attitudes and behaviour from the members of the society. This is only possible when the human energies, material resources and knowledge at society's disposal are organized to fulfil its aspiration of developing. Therefore, if Nigeria is to be re-engineered into a developed nation, close attention must be paid to her human capacity development. This means that individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies must grow their abilities, individually and collectively. There is nothing that builds the human being better than philosophy.

According to Maura Striano, "Philosophical inquiry is a powerful means of spreading intelligence in all contexts of associated life; ... it enhances human intellectual potential through sound reflection both on human experiences as well as on the beliefs, understandings, values which frame and give meaning to these experiences."<sup>30</sup> He argues further that philosophical inquiry promotes shared meanings and social development by clarifying ideas, constructing new meanings and developing new interpretative perspectives of reality. In this way, philosophical inquiry guides society along new developmental directions.<sup>31</sup> Since education is a leading instrument for development, and philosophical study and inquiry can be considered the most powerful and effective educational practice; it means philosophy provides the appropriate and adequate tool for human and social development. The implication of this for our study is that Nigeria needs philosophy and philosophers to re-engineer it on the path of sustainable development.

The role of philosophy in the formulation of education policies is very significant and cannot be ignored. Philosophy enables the socio-political ideology of a particular society to be captured in its education policies. If this is not the case, there will inevitably be a mismatch that will prove counterproductive to the society. If the policy on education of a nation is well formulated on strong philosophical footing, the development of the nation is more likely to be assured. This is why the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) inaugurated the World Philosophy Day in 2002 to be celebrated every 3rd Thursday of November. By this, UNESCO underscores the enduring value of philosophy for the development of human thought, which in turn, enables the development of each culture and society. According to the declaration claim, "philosophy is a discipline that encourages critical and independent thought and is capable of working towards a better understanding of the world and promoting tolerance and peace."<sup>32</sup> Nigeria is certainly in need of tolerance and peace. The nation has been polarised by religious and ethnic differences, and peace has become a mirage in the face of widespread

<sup>30</sup> Striano, "Philosophical inquiry as a practice of social development," 63.

<sup>31</sup> Striano, "Philosophical inquiry as a practice of social development," 64.

<sup>32</sup> See, World Philosophy Day.

insecurity; kidnapping for ransom, killings and terrorism motivated by religious and political reasons. And sometimes ritual killings for money making purposes, a fallout from the pervasive poverty that now ravages the country. The poverty itself is a result of the endemic corruption in all the facets and sectors of the nation that has seen Nigeria rise on the ladder of shame to the position of the world capital of poverty despite the enormous natural resources of the country.

To pilot Nigeria to a more advanced cultural, economic, political, scientific, educational and technological level, the Nigerian society and mentality of greed, mediocrity and short-cut/fire brigade methods must change. This change can only be facilitated by Nigerians because they are the human beings that make up the Nigerian society. What I mean here is that Nigerians themselves must change if they must develop and grow the country. Philosophy provides the veritable tool to effect this needed change in Nigerians because philosophy provides the moral and intellectual enrichment required to engineer the change.

As Omoregbe rightly claims, the “authentic development in any nation can only mean primarily the development of the human person, and this consists mainly in the development of his mind and will.”<sup>33</sup> Philosophy's irreplaceable contribution to the development of the human person is that it trains the human mind to be critical, coherent, comprehensive and profound. Nigerians need all of these to enable them see beyond the parochialism of the greed and self-centredness that lure them to corruption and intolerance. Philosophy will redirect Nigerians from the sentimentality that characterize her governance and policy formulations.

One major obstacle that militates against sustainable development in Nigeria (and the African continent as a whole) is our colonial mentality that makes us overly dependent on the Western world. This is the direct result of our educational system whose curriculum is highly westernized. Our educational curriculum reflects more of western situations, and applying paradigms that are suited to such situations, propose problem solving models that are more western than indigenous. Trained within such curriculum, we are gradually removed from our cultures, languages and ways, because our cognitive processes, evaluative paradigms and preferred solutions are remote from our lived experiences. We are educated and socialized to prefer anything western and foreign, including clothes, furniture, food and academic certificates, hence, our markets are flooded with all sorts of foreign products that encourage us to be more of consumers than producers and manufacturers. The implication of this, is that we finance western economies while our own economy continues to melt.

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<sup>33</sup> Omoregbe, *Knowing philosophy*, 197.

Our educational environment bequeaths to us some form of *a priori* inferiority that explains why we seek western support, advice and reassurance, even when they prove detrimental to our growth and development. When we seek external solutions to internally generated problems, we are more likely to address such problems with solutions that hardly address their root causes. In the process, as we have seen from our history, we open our doors to borrowing that makes us indebted to institutions like IMF, World Bank, Paris Club and rich Euromerican and Asian countries. Our economy and people only become more impoverished by these borrowings.

For the sustainable development of Nigeria, we need to deconstruct our western mind-set by rethinking our educational curriculum to reflect our African culture and experiences.<sup>34</sup> This is where the call of Kwasi Wiredu for conceptual decolonization becomes relevant.<sup>35</sup> Conceptual decolonization invites us to a critical self-awareness that enables us to avoid the gullibility of assimilating unexamined western categories, concepts and theories. To theorize this further would lead us to matters of decoloniality, epistemic decolonization and the Africanization of knowledge which I consider a deviation that is not necessary in this paper.

## Conclusion

My aim in this paper was to inquire into how philosophy contributes to the sustainable development of a nation with particular attention to Nigeria. Understanding sustainable development as a progressive growth in the various sectors of a society with the aim of ensuring the well-being and prosperity of its members, I have claimed and attempted to establish that Nigeria is not developed because of the following: endemic corruption, poor government policies and implementation, dependence on oil, unemployment, insecurity/insurgency, religious and ethnic intolerance, unconducive business environment and high level of illiteracy coupled with a misleading educational environment. Thereof, I explicated philosophy as a viable tool necessary for national development because it develops the mind of the human being who is the source and agent of development. I maintain, therefore, that for the sustainable development of Nigeria, we need to rethink and adapt our educational curriculum to focus on our lived experiences. We must encourage the wide spread study of philosophy across the three-tiers of our educational system to develop and critically orientate the minds of Nigerians. Also, our philosophers must investigate and propose plausible, viable and indigenous solutions to our problems.

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<sup>34</sup> Chinwuba, "Philosophy and sustainable development in Nigeria," 51.

<sup>35</sup> Kwasi Wiredu, *Conceptual decolonization in African philosophy* (Ibadan: Hope Publications, 1995).

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