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## A Case for Multi – Level Development Planning in Nigeria

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### **Abstract:**

*Nigeria's development planning history as evident in several plans reveals lopsidedness in participation by the different regions and tiers of government. While most development plans claim to have a national outlook in design, implementation and execution, the exclusion of local governments in the planning process, particularly after the adoption of rolling plans, affected popular participation in development planning. Effective conceptualization of any plan aimed at national development must adopt the multi-level development planning approach to factor in all critical variables and problems for even and predictable path of growth and development. The Indian development planning experience shows that all planning variables are important in the compilation of a national development plan. In this regard, state development plans in Nigeria should be based on inputs from the local councils which, if properly amalgamated becomes the national development plan.*

**Keywords:** Development planning, multi-level planning, participatory planning, integrated national development plan

### **1. Introduction**

Development through state initiative and planning has been the aim of policy-makers in Nigeria before and after independence in 1960. This was inevitable in the face of low income, investment and production; an under-developed and predominantly agrarian economy; an imperfectly integrated social structure; wide disparities in the levels of internal (regional) development and income distribution; and an inherited colonial administrative and managerial capacity<sup>1</sup>. All these factors made planning a desideratum, which ensured that development was in accordance with national goals and aspirations. Later, however, planning process was initiated at the national and regional (later state) levels. Thus, before the medium term 5-year development planning model was jettisoned in favour of 3-year Rolling Plan and 15–20 years Perspective Plan, Nigeria had developed and implemented four (4) medium term 5-year national development plans<sup>2</sup>. In the northern region and the Lagos City Council, the regional governments made provisions for local bodies to prepare their medium-term plans while in other parts of the country, local governments merely made suggestions on desirable projects, which were included in the sectoral programmes of regional and later state governments and their agencies<sup>3</sup>. However, planning at these two levels after the adoption of the Rolling Plan system led to the exclusion of local government planning programmes from the overall national planning process.

This lacuna represents a serious oversight in the articulation of the planning process and compilation of national plans within the Rolling Plan period. The limitation imposed on proper articulation of a national development plan which excludes an important level of government like local government, in a country as large and diverse as Nigeria, cannot be over-emphasized. Planners and policy-makers are in essential agreement that, multi-level planning is indispensable, if the fruits of development are to reach majority of citizens in a diverse and highly populated country. Moreover, there is always a possibility of losing sight of problems, requirements and potentials of the areas much below the state level, when planning is initiated and concluded from the state capital (headquarters).

In Nigeria, significant amount of national resources has been transferred to local governments as direct funding of local government from the Federation Account, since 1988. The humongous amount transferred to Local Government since 1999 remain unaccounted for in the national development plans, the Rolling Plans and indeed the planning process itself. For instance, allocation to local government was raised from 10% to 15% in 1988 and further increased to 20% in 1992<sup>4</sup>. In terms of volume of money, about ₦47.3billion were transferred from the Federation Account directly to the local governments from 1991–1993. The share of local government allocation dramatically increased in 1999, with the advent of democratic governance, with local governments receiving a whopping ₦197.5billion from the Federation Account in year 2000<sup>5</sup>. Assuming 1991–1993 as a parallel Rolling Plan period, it is inexplicable that such stupendous development funds should escape the Rolling Plan. The magnitude of planning variables usually missed in Nigeria's national plans can further be appreciated by the fact that, the amount indicated above as what local governments received in year 2000, did not include monies realized from Value Added Tax (VAT), internally generated revenue (IGR) and other sources.

A composite view of the huge financial resources usually missed in Nigeria's national plans<sup>6</sup>, with the exclusion of local government in the planning process is presented in tables 1 and 2.

It is clear that the present national planning process, if any, cannot present a complete picture of all planning variables available in the country, with the exclusion of these huge resources. This paper, however, addresses the factors inhibiting the introduction of multi-level development planning approach in Nigeria, effect and benefits of this planning

approach in a country as wide and vast as Nigeria and presents a proposal for the adoption of this planning approach. The paper also shares, in brief, how India successfully introduced this planning method and its resounding impact in that country's dramatic development narrative. The paper is divided into six (6) sections, with this introductory as section one. Section two enumerates factors inhibiting a comprehensive (multi-level or integrated) national planning; while section three discusses the benefits of multi-level or integrated development planning. Section four share India's experience in introducing this planning approach and section five presents a proposal for multi-level development planning in Nigeria. Section six concludes the paper.

## **2. Factors Inhibiting Multi-Level Planning in Nigeria**

In today's world, planning for development is one of the pivotal roles of the state (government). The circumstances of a developing country, like Nigeria, make government intervention in this area inevitable. Accordingly, from colonial times till today, Nigeria can be said to have a fairly long history of compilation of national development plans. But necessary institutional arrangements to bring about planning at all levels of government are lacking. The failure to develop an all-encompassing national development plan, can thus, be attributed to numerous and complex factors, namely: historical, social, psychological, economic, political and administrative, etc. Let us examine some of these factors in detail.

### *2.1. History of Planning in Nigeria*

For, it cannot be said that some form of planning may not have existed in Nigeria's traditional societies before the advent of colonial rule. What is true, however, is that whatever planning that existed was carried out at the clan or village level and not on a national scale.

The first obstacle in the compilation of a comprehensive or integrated national development plan is the history of planning in the country. According to Ayo<sup>7</sup>, the initiative to create a development plan for what is known today as Nigeria was taken by the colonial government at the end of World War II. This implies that it was the effort of the colonial government that gave rise to planning in the country. As would be expected, the first development plan was a national affair, since there were no sub-national or regional governments at the time. Thus, the 'Ten Year Plan of Development and Welfare for Nigeria' from 1946–1956 was a central affair.

The 1954 constitutional changes, which brought the then three (3), later four (4) regions into existence, resulted in the colonial (central) and regional governments preparing their own development plans separately. Thus, from inception, planning in the country has always been compartmentalized with each tier of government preparing its own separately. This is perhaps due to the exotic origin of development planning in its modern sense in the country and the fact that each of the regions fanatically guarded its separateness from the central government. Furthermore, comprehensive or integrated development planning occurs where co-operative federalism is practiced, not where sub-national governments consciously seek separateness from the centre.

### *2.2. Unstable Political System*

Another factor which militates against the development of a comprehensive national development plan is the unstable political environment which the country witnessed since independence in 1960. Shortly after independence, the military took over the reins of government and military rule invites frequent changes in governance, and thus, create an atmosphere of instability, at least, in the political space. This occurs because at no time will the military as an institution agree to take over the reins of government. It is a faction of the military which succeeds in seizing power that creates the impression that the entire rank and file are behind them. This manipulated support of the military quickly gives way as other factions struggle to wrestle power from the one holding the levers of political authority. The internal struggles for power not only make it difficult to establish development priorities and institutionalize planning but also to put in place certain vital structures essential for multi-level planning. For instance, the 1976 Local Government Reform envisaged the setting up of State Economic Planning Boards. The boards were to be the institution through which Local Governments were to participate in the planning process. Although these boards may have been established in some states, but it is doubtful, whether they were not soon abolished and subsumed under Ministry of Finance or Economic Planning of each State, abandoned or their names changed altogether when new leaders (military governors/administrators) assumed responsibility in the states. In several cases, these boards were never established, which meant that Local Governments, whose participation in the planning process was through these boards, were completely left out.

### *2.3. Attitude of Officials to Development Planning*

Planning for development is one of the core responsibilities of the civil service or government officials. In Nigeria, officials charged with this responsibility may do their job but those in the line ministries may not be disposed to implementing the plan as laid down by planners. The reason for this is that plans in the country are not given the kind of wide publicity they deserve. For instance, the Indian Planning Commission (IPC) send draft national plans to all universities, institutes and colleges as well as all professional bodies for input<sup>8</sup>. What follows is a vibrant nation-wide debate which at the end enriches the plan and creates a sense of ownership by all segments of the population.

The inability of officials of line Ministries in Nigeria to own the plan deprives the country of taking advantage of even the best plan. This is why it is difficult today for many highly placed officials in Nigeria to answer with any degree of certainty whether the country is implementing a medium term 5-year plan, rolling plan or Perspective Plan. Even on the most elementary issue of what should be the priority projects in a national plan; there is no unanimity between the

Ministry of Budget and National Planning, Federal Ministry of Finance and other critical stakeholders. Allocations to each sector and sundry issues are arbitrarily decided in most cases.

#### *2.4. Changing Planning Approach*

Frequent changes in the planning approach have not helped the institutionalization of planning structures in Nigeria. At independence as mentioned earlier, the country adopted the medium term 5-year development plan. During the military in government, planning became a subject for frequent experimentation. Thus, the 3-year Rolling Plan was introduced and quickly followed by the 10–15-year perspective planning. It may be correct to say that since the country jettisoned the medium term 5-year development planning method, it has been difficult to pin-point what planning as an indispensable part of governance has achieved in Nigeria. The realization of this reality compelled the All Progressive Congress (APC) government which came to power in 2015 to introduce the zero-based budgeting System. But there is no country in the world today operating zero-based budgeting as a national method of planning/budgeting. Instead, it is used on specific sectors survey health, transportation, road development and other sectors that are amenable to quantification. Thus, UK, Canada, USA etc. use it for projects in those sectors.

#### *2.5. Lack of Participatory Planning Process*

One of the major drawbacks of centralized planning is the non-involvement of the beneficiaries of plans in the planning process<sup>9</sup>. In Nigeria, since the advent of national planning, the beneficiaries of development have never been involved at any stage of developing the plan. But multi-level development planning entails the involvement of local communities – the beneficiaries of development programmes, in the planning process through properly designed decentralized planning machinery.

#### *2.6. The Administrative Milieu*

Administrative hurdles are just too many in achieving a multi-level development planning process in Nigeria. The first administrative hurdle in introducing multi-level development planning is cadre rivalry. Planning as stated somewhere is central in public administration and so every cadre in the service struggle to take control of it. In Nigeria, this has already played out. After independence, planning was the key function of the Administrative Officers' Cadre. This was the era the country designed and implemented four (4) national development plans. However, during the military interregnum a strange argument developed, that planning was the exclusive preserve of economists. A reform was implemented in which officers with economics background were grouped into 'Planning Officers Cadre'. Since then, it is not clear whether the country is implementing any development plan or not. The argument that planning is only peculiar to economists is absurd in all angularities. Although economists study planning, it is not the peculiarity of economic science. Engineering, medicine, accountancy and other disciplines study planning in equal measure like students of economics. For instance, every freshman in public administration is first initiated into the discipline with the study of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting (POSDCORB)<sup>10</sup>. The initial attempt in planning may have succeeded because even though the initiative was led by economists, it allowed other administrative officers to bring in their varied input into it. The example of other large federations like India and Brazil supports this view. In India, the IPC constitutes various sectoral committees, like metallurgical, health and medical, road development, steel and allied committees to bring up draft for inclusion into the national plan. The job of officials is largely to harmonize and put these drafts together into a cohesive national plan. This approach enables a country to tap the creative knowledge and experience of experts in various sectors in developing a national plan.

The other administrative challenge is the paucity of statistical data for planning purposes. Development planning requires reliable data upon which forecasts could be based. This is because a plan which is not based on data is, in fact, no plan at all. This challenge is gradually reducing with the reform in the statistics sub-sector, which resulted in the creation of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). With the effort of NBS, planning data is now being made available and it is hoped that in future there will be data in all sectors of the national economy. Another problem is inadequacy of manpower resource available for planning in the country. Apart from the NBS, each line ministry is supposed to have trained and experienced planners and statisticians. Presently, this is not the case. In several line ministries, the planning, research and statistics (PRS) are not generally funded and there is a dearth of trained manpower, such as planners, statisticians and others. The matter is much worse at the state and local government levels. In most local government planning, research and statistics (PRS) is a unit or does not exist at all.

Finally, there is the issue of lack of communication between the three tiers of government as it pertains to the articulation and preparation of development plans. The three tiers operate in silos when it comes to the issue of planning. It is even worse within a level of government. In most Federal, States and Local governments, there is also lack of communication within ministries, departments, agencies. For instance, there is hardly any interaction between MDAs in the same state in putting together state plan. This is in spite of the fact that states maintain roads which are more often inter-linked with those of neighboring states. The non-existence of communication between two states with an inter-linked road may result in a situation where one end of the road may be in good condition while the other end may be impassable. This situation clearly defeats the efforts of the state which maintained its side of the road.

### **3. Benefits of Multi-Level Planning:**

Countries have at different times adapted, adopted or modified existing planning approach to grow, strengthen and re-direct their national economies. But there is substantial agreement among students of development administration

that multi-level development planning is suitable for diverse or heterogeneous societies. Thus, in most large federations, multi-level development planning had been adopted because of its advantage of 'development dispersal effect' that enables every nook and cranny to benefit from the fruit of planning. Generally multi-level planning method has several salutary effects in the overall growth of a national economy. The main benefits of multi-level development planning may be summarized as follows:

### *3.1. Capturing Total Planning Variables*

Multi-level development planning enables a country to capture all the available planning factors/variables in the articulation and compilation of the final plan. The effect of a plan which takes into consideration all planning factors are twofold. Firstly, it engenders all-round and even development of the country or area the plan is meant for. Secondly, it allows different areas or states/local governments to develop in accordance with its peculiarities and needs. This is because what finally emerges as the plan will take into consideration the planning milieu, resources and special needs of each development area in the country. This not only helps in the rapid development of a country but also in bringing about the even distribution of the fruits of development or dividends of democracy.

### *3.2. Eliminates Duplication and Waste*

There is massive data on development administration literature evidencing the fact that multi-level planning eliminates duplication and waste. Since multi-level development planning entails joint effort abinitio, it follows, that the projects which would be competently handled by a level of government is left to it while other levels concentrate on other areas. In this way, the method compels coordination and collaboration in drawing up a plan.

### *3.3. Institutionalizes Planning*

Another benefit of multi-level planning is that it helps to institutionalize planning procedures and practices, especially at local levels. The dictum 'practice makes perfect' come forcefully into play here. As officials below the state or provincial government constantly engage in compilation and analysis of plans, they develop planning skills quite naturally. Put differently, this planning method routinizes planning procedures and practices. Thus, standardized procedures and practices are essential tools used by planners and policy-makers in developing capacities for planning. Simply put, these set of procedures and practices when codified helps to act as a guide for new initiates in planning.

### *3.4. Ensures More Coordination/Collaboration between Tiers*

Multi-level development planning framework helps in no small measure to develop a strong relationship between different tiers of government and even among agencies of the same government and their planning authorities. As noted elsewhere, to ensure that each tier and agency handles projects which they are best suited to implement, this planning method engenders more collaboration and coordination between tiers and among ministries, extra-ministerial departments and agencies (MDAs). Thus, tiers and agencies come together, not only to share resources but also execution and implementation experiences, leading over time, to the appreciation of the needs and constraints of each level by the other. The close collaboration between and among agencies at various stages of making a plan results into feedback in the planning process. And feedback is of such a crucial importance in planning and implementation of plans, that without it, errors or omission in one plan may continue unabated.

### *3.5. Introduces Accountability in Administration:*

The issue of accountability in public administration can, to a large extent, be resolved through the instrumentality of multi-level planning. A multi-tiered planning ensures that each level understands the resources available and the constraints of other levels. Accordingly, the usage of such resources, in terms of materials and power, will be known by others collaborating in the planning process. For, the only realistic basis by which higher authorities can assess the performance of lower units of administration is the extent planned projects have been successfully executed. At present local plans are completely excluded from the national plans. This situation makes it impossible to ascertain whether local government, are doing what they are supposed to do or not.

## **4. A Proposal for Integrated National Development Plan**

A comprehensive approach to development planning entails decentralization of the planning process and the next step is to clearly articulate unambiguous national planning objectives. Thus, in order to ensure that local, state and national plans are organically linked to each other, planning at the sub-national levels must be based on national planning objectives. It is also important that the national planning machinery (institution) should provide leadership to the tiers below it. Before presenting a proposal for an integrated or multi-level national development planning, it will be in order, to briefly describe the experience of another large federation and how she was able to achieve the articulation and compilation of an integrated national development plan.

### *4.1. The Indian Experience*

Question may be asked as to why the Indian experience? India and Nigeria share a lot in common, as they were former British colonies, with multitude of languages, religions, races or ethnicities and large populations, etc. The economic conditions of both countries were also strikingly similar at independence; low income, high mortality rates, hunger, poverty, illiteracy and other incidences of under-development. However, the Nigerian condition was widely

adjudged to be far better than India's<sup>11</sup>. For instance, Nigeria did not witness the kind of upheaval partition brought to India: displacement of large populations, social unrest and the attendant deaths and diseases, which accompanied them. The Nigerian civil war of 1960 – 70 affected only a region, thus allowing the rest to develop but partition had a devastating impact on the entire Indo-valley- India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Today, India has achieved tremendous progress in terms of development and is accordingly, rightly regarded as a leader at the world stage, to the consternation of her adversaries. Nigeria, on the other hand, with a favourable climate of development at independence, is still struggling to reach the "take-off" stage in development terms. This situation recommends the consideration of the Indian experience in engineering national development and sharing it with Nigerian development planners.

Different methods of achieving planned development have been adopted by various countries, depending on the national values and circumstances. But the method that is commonly used and has been found very suitable for 'federal systems' is the 'bottom-up' development approach. This development approach, as noted earlier, was practiced in some parts of Nigeria before and immediately after independence. It was also the intention of the framers of the 1979 and later 1999 Nigerian Constitutions that this development approach is continued but military intervention in Nigerian politics and administration destroyed any such intention. Development can, however, only take place in a system where all governmental structures are mobilized for it. After all, governance makes sense only to the extent that a government is able to deliver what is called in popular parlance 'democracy dividends'. This invariably means providing development to the governed and to provide development is to plan for it, which supposes that all structures of government, from 'top to bottom' are created and exist for the sole purpose of providing development to the people. It immediately follows that a government that is unable to provide development to her people is completely bereft of the true meaning of the term 'government', even though it may have been constituted in accordance with high sounding democratic norms and principles. The success of a country or government in building governmental structures capable of delivering development to the people makes obvious the difference between high performing' and poor performing' countries. For any planning approach to succeed, development should be carried out from an integrated rather than disparate angle.

The Indian integrated development planning approach owes its origin to the report of the Balwatrai Mehta Study Team set up by the Indian Planning Commission (IPC) in 1957<sup>12</sup>. This was in response to the failure of the community development programme launched in October 1952, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, to elicit widespread enthusiasm among the masses as the sponsors of the programme had desired. The programme was sponsored by the governments of the United States of America (USA) and the Union Government of India, which signed the Indo-American Technical Cooperation Agreement in 1951. Under the Agreement, the USA was to assist India in starting and running fifty-five (55) Pilot Projects in order to develop the areas and communities covered by the projects and also to give some ideas and experience in organizing and working out village development programmes<sup>13</sup>. The focus on village development was to give vent to the philosophy of development espoused by Mahatma Gandhi, which posits that only village focused development was suitable for the people of India.

But the concept of 'village' as a centre of development planning and execution is beset with the question of exactitude of area and the viability of a village for development purposes. For the areas covered by the Indo-American Technical Co-operation, the Indian Planning Commission (IPC) defined an area for the project with two criteria; four hundred and fifty to five hundred thousand (450,000 – 500,000) square miles; 200,000 people; 300 villages encasing about 5000 areas of cultivated land<sup>14</sup>. At the same time, in Afghanistan, a project area covered 100-120 villages; 50,000 – 60,000 people only<sup>15</sup>. The need was not what will be exact but a smaller area unit, where planning and execution of programmes are easier, participation of the people highly possible and where extension services will be effective.

The Mehta Study Team in its report, recommended the setting up of elected and organically linked democratic bodies at the village, block and district levels and passing on to these bodies planning and development activities hitherto done at the state level. The National Development Council (NDC) endorsed these recommendations in 1958. The Central Council of Local Self-Government while considering the steps taken by various states to implement the decision of the NDC, warned that the broad pattern and the fundamentals may be uniform but there should be no rigidity in the pattern. This in the Council's view was because the country is so vast and democratic decentralization so complex that there is the fullest scope of trying out various patterns and alternatives. After all, the kernel of the reform, asserted the Council, is genuine transfer of power to the people<sup>16</sup>. Thus, it was the Mehta Study Team report that set-in motion the revolutionary three tier system of rural local government operating in many states in India, popularly known as the 'panchayati raj'. But in deference to the views of the Council, every state was left free to try out varying ways of affecting democratization of grassroots institutions in their domain. The result is that while every state has the 'panchayati raj' institutions, the pattern and location of authority differ from state to state. For instance, in Kerala State, there is a two-tier system of rural local government while Maharashtra State operates a three – tier rural local government structure. What is, however, common in almost all the states is the 'panchayatsamiti'. In Kerala, the samiti is the apex rural local body and in Maharashtra it is the intermediate local authority. In all states, it is the fulcrum around which planning activities revolve. Thus, in the scheme of rural local set up in Maharashtra state, the Zilla Parishad is the supervisory authority. Panchayatsamiti, the intermediate authority is the agency of the Zilla Parishads. The samitis, accordingly, have no corporate financial existence outside the Zilla Parishads. At the bottom of the three-tier structure in the village panchayats. These three units form an organic whole in the rural local government in the state. It should be mentioned that the Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti Act, 1961 passed by the Maharashtra State House of Assembly did not make express provision for the machinery the village panchayats are to use to discharge their duties<sup>17</sup>. The reform of the rural local government did not affect urban local bodies, which continued to function separately. It is pellucid enough that the panchayatsamiti is the instrument of planning and execution or implementation of project in rural India. This is not only for local government

projects, but state and federal (union) projects through a network of carefully crafted grants-in-aid system. In practice, the village panchayats identify projects they feel should be included in the plan and submits to the panchayat samiti. The samiti collates these projects and prioritizes them and submits to the Zilla Parishad. It is the responsibility of the Parishad to decide projects that will be submitted to the State Government. In a nutshell, the district council (a State Government civil administration structure) should function through the block development committee and the block committees through the village panchayats<sup>18</sup>.

There are generally two systems or procedures adopted in drafting the programmes. First, is that the Block Development Officer (BDO) at the samiti level prepares a list of programmes with the assistance of the officers, based on the needs of the localities and with reference to the schematic budget. Second, is that the BDO prepares schemes on the basis of the directives of the State panchayat or gram sevak, is crucial in programme identification<sup>19</sup>. Thus, the system enables planning to commence at the village or gram sevak through the state to the national level. It should be noted that even this system has not elicited the kind of enthusiasm expected by the authors. As Panikkar<sup>20</sup> explained, many are the causes why people are indifferent to the block activities. Firstly, the needs of the area are not assessed on the basis of any surveys or public consultation. Secondly, the needs and benefits are overlooked. Thirdly, the lack of people's contribution is anticipated in advance. Fourthly, the suggestions of the Block Development Committee are not complied with. Fifthly, the selection of location sites at the wishes of the influential local men wards off any possible cooperation from the general public. Lastly, the people resent utilizing the project itself and they consider the project as a government project instead of a people's project. These criticisms have been considered by many as puerile, as they are issues that could be overcome by designing strategies that encourages people participation in governance. What is clear is that this criticism does not in any way diminish the fact that this system encourages multi-level planning and that it has significantly helped to engender massive rural development in India.

The methodology to be adopted by a country to achieve development is plenty in development literature. No country, therefore, need to reinvent the wheel in terms of choosing the approach, type or design of a planning method to achieve national development. At best, a country may modify, adjust or redesign a particular approach to meet its national purpose and experience. Based on this, the Indian approach has been modified here to suit Nigeria's national development experience and challenges. The proposal marshaled below, it is hoped, will enable the country not only to achieve an integrated or multi-level development planning but also help to catalyze rapid development of the country starting from rural areas. It is important to stress the fact that this proposal utilizes existing political divisions in the country. Furthermore, it will significantly eradicate the present doldrums in the local government system in the country. It will also reduce the misplaced agitation for local government autonomy. This is because local governments will have projects to execute annually, thus, eliminating the practice of sharing federal allocation by politicians at the state and LGA level instead of creating new ones.

#### 4.2. Ward Planning Committees

Planning in Nigeria should start from the ward level. Accordingly, Ward Planning Committees (WPCs) should be created across the country. The role of the WPCs is to identify projects/programmes which are desirable in each Ward. These may be projects which in their opinion are desired by their people or projects which the State Government has indicated to execute in their ward. After extensive debate of the appropriateness of these projects, decision is made on the ones to be transmitted to the higher authority by voting. Only those selected by voting should be forwarded to the higher authority.

- Membership of the WPC will include:
- Councilor representing the Ward at the Legislative Assembly of the Local Government Area;
- Chairmen of two prominent political parties in the area;
- An influential person within the Ward;
- A representative of Civil Society Organization (CSO) within the Ward;
- A representative of the Community Development Committee of the Villages that make-up the Ward;
- A representative of faith-based organization; and
- A Secretary appointed by the District Development Committees;
- Youths Representative?
- Women Representative?

#### 4.3. Ward Development Area Committees:

Ward Development Area Committees (WDACs) should be created as intermediate authority. The projects identified by WPCs are submitted to the WDACs, which will prioritize projects and select those that meet three (3) requirements, namely: admitted by the State Government; wider applicability; and value for the local communities. Projects selected by the WDACs are transmitted to the Local Government Area for inclusion into the local government plan. Members of the WDACs will include:

- House of Assembly member representing the Wards in the State House of Assembly;
- Councilors representing the Wards in the Legislative Assembly of the Local Government Area;
- A representative of the Civil Society Organizations in the district;
- A representative of faith-based organization;
- A representative of the traditional institutions;
- A representative of organized private sector; and

- A Secretary appointed by the LGA.

#### 4.4. Local Government Area Planning Board

The Local Government Area Planning Board (LGAPB) is the apex planning authority at the local government level. The Board will be chaired by the Local Government Chairman. Other members of the board will include:

- All the Councilors,
- 2 representatives of traditional institutions,
- 1 Women representative,
- 2 representatives of Community Development Committees,
- 1 Youth representative,
- A representative of the State Planning Board,
- The Secretary/Director, Personnel Management of the local government to act as Secretary.

The role of the LGAPB is to consolidate projects submitted by the DDCs into a local government plan. The projects will be in three categories, namely; projects to be funded from the LGA budget, projects to be funded jointly with the State Government and projects that will be executed through grants from the Federal Government.

#### 4.5. The System in Actual Operation

A sketch of the proposed system in Emohua local government in Rivers State will be appropriate here. The LGA has 14 Wards which will be divided into two (2); i.e. 7 wards each. The 7 wards will be grouped under a Ward Development Area (WDA). The WDA will be the programme/project monitoring agency. The implementation of projects should remain with the LGA. All the functionaries from WDC to WADC will be volunteers. Accordingly, no remuneration or allowance will be paid to them.

#### 4.6. Integration of Local Plans into State Plans:

Rivers State has 23 LGAs. The task of the State Planning Board will be to integrate the 23 LGA plans into a consolidated State Plan. In this way, the State plan becomes an amalgam of the projects/programmes of all the communities in the state. The state plan will also be integrated with the national plan. It is this intricate planning process that is characterized as multi-level development plan.

### 5. Conclusion

Nigeria has had one plan or the other since independence. However, planning as a governmental activity is yet to be institutionalized in the country. Whatever plan there are, only takes place at the centre and practically nothing is done at the grassroots level. And this is where planning should start in a country as large and diverse as Nigeria. Other federations have surmounted this problem by designing appropriate planning machinery from local government level to the national or central government. This is the case with India and Brazil. It is for this reason that these countries have achieved rapid development in almost every sector of their national economies. This planning approach enables a country to harness all available development variables to propel even development.

For too long, Nigeria has developed plans that present a partial picture of available planning factors. This is by the exclusion of critical levels of government from the articulation and compilation of national plans. The only way to obviate a situation where only a fraction of planning variables is captured in the national plan, is to develop a multi-level planning framework. This will address the lackluster performance of local institutions in the country and make local government a viable tier of government. This is because, this planning approach, ensures that a local government cannot plead that it has no money to implement any project in a financial year. The proposed multi-level approach will introduce the implementation of three-types of projects at the local government level, namely, projects to be executed from the LGA Annual budget; projects which will be jointly executed with the state government and those that will be executed from grants from the federal government.

A corollary to the new proposal is that local governments will henceforth face multiple controls. The first one is internal control of its finances which is carried out perfunctorily now. Second is external control from state and federal governments, to ascertain how projects executed jointly had seen carried out and how grants given to LGAs had been managed. Thus, the new proposal introduces a more vibrant and strong local government system in the country, which will along with states and federal government; act as real agents of development.

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### Appendix

S/No	Year	Amount in Billion
1	2007	831,239,460,721.79
2	2008	1,172,158,029,689.08
3	2009	983,389,500,041.06
4	2010	1,260,369,697,535.33
5	2011	1,513,493,126,602.38
6	2012	1,586,761,609,440.52
7	2013	1,684,727,396,147.26
8	2014	1,434,578,205,892.82
9	2015	1,175,014,332,678.81
10	2016	647,421,210,289.74
11	2017	1,177,986,231,613.10
Grand Total:		13,467,138,800,651.90

*Table 1: Local Government Areas Allocation from 2007 to 2017 in Nigeria*

*Source: FAAC Reports, OAGF and Federal Ministry of Finance Websites.*

*The Figures for August, 2014, August, September, October & November, 2016, December, 2017 Are Not Included*

Year	Federal Government	State Government	Local Government	Total
2007	1,900,735,768,349.67	1,092,086,403,990.30	831,239,460,721.79	3,824,061,633,061.76
2008	2,710,197,307,120.41	1,538,139,566,849.39	1,172,158,029,689.08	5,420,494,903,649.88
2009	2,119,041,943,198.04	1,376,815,942,578.78	983,389,500,041.06	4,479,247,385,817.88
2010	2,434,887,758,919.96	1,549,087,250,509.50	1,260,369,697,535.33	5,244,344,706,964.79
2011	3,361,197,133,326.98	1,992,257,401,103.72	1,513,493,126,602.38	6,866,947,661,033.08
2012	3,461,049,475,966.08	2,089,568,320,959.83	1,586,761,609,440.52	7,137,379,406,366.43
2013	3,645,604,351,636.20	2,220,713,351,361.13	1,684,727,396,147.26	7,551,045,099,144.59
2014	3,127,106,278,379.13	1,893,531,746,085.46	1,434,578,205,892.82	6,455,216,230,357.41
2015	2,531,974,575,092.60	1,557,996,008,418.17	1,175,014,332,678.81	5,264,984,916,189.58
2016	1,318,065,831,203.87	863,740,797,816.02	647,421,210,289.74	2,829,227,839,309.63
2017	2,396,019,615,651.30	1,567,198,694,813.52	1,177,986,231,613.10	5,141,204,542,077.92
Grand Total	29,005,880,038,844.20	17,741,135,484,476.80	13,467,138,800,651.90	60,214,154,323,973.00

*Table 2: Federal Allocations to the Three Tiers of Government 2007 to 2017 in Nigeria*

*Source: FAAC Reports, OAGF and Federal Ministry of Finance Websites.*

*The Figure for August 2014 for Federal, State and Local Government Not Included*

*The Figure for August, September, October and November 2016 for Federal, State and Local Government Not Included*

*The Figure for December, 2017 for Federal, State and Local Government Not Included*