

## **Concept Note on SDG Evaluation in Nigeria:**

### **OSSAP-SDGs/MBNP/UNICEF Technical Working Group on SDG Evaluation**

#### **Background:**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisions a present and a future that is economically sustainable, socially inclusive and environmentally resilient. This is expressed through the framing of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs, also known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, safeguard the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by the year 2030. The SDGs build on the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), while embracing new areas such as economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption and production, climate action, blue economy and peace, justice and strong institutions. The SDGs are inter-connected, inter-related and indivisible - often to succeed in one goal entails tackling challenges associated with another goal. They provide clear guidelines and 169 targets for all countries to adopt in accordance with their national development priorities. The SDGs work in the spirit of partnership and pragmatism to make the necessary choices to improve livelihood in a sustainable way.

Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs by World leaders in September 2015, Nigeria acted quickly in the overall implementation of the SDGs. Our strategic approaches can be seen at two different levels – national and sub-national. At the national level, as a first key step towards national ownership, integration and coordination, the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on the SDGs (OSSAP-SDGs) was established within the Presidency. The OSSAP-SDGs is headed by a Senior Special Assistant to the President and is charged with the responsibility for planning; horizontal and vertical inter-governmental coordination; multi-stakeholder partnership and resource mobilization, as well as robust advocacy and strategic communications for the SDGs in Nigeria. As a further demonstration of Nigeria's commitment to the SDGs, a Presidential Council on the SDGs was inaugurated to provide high-level policy guidance and leadership.

In pursuant of this mandate, OSSAP-SDGs is working closely with Federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to integrate the relevant SDGs into their respective sectoral policies and programmes. Various trainings and capacity building have been conducted for SDG Focal Persons in all the relevant MDAs. At the sub-national level, similar institutional structures have been adopted by the 36 states and the Federal

Capital Territory (FCT) and OSSAP-SDGs is supporting the state and local governments to mainstream the SDGs into their policies and Medium-term Development Plans.

In recognition of the need to have credible baseline indicators, OSSAP-SDGs in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) published a ***Nigeria SDGs-Indicators Baseline Report in 2017***. The Baseline report provides a benchmark of the statistical information required for monitoring progress in the implementation of SDGs in Nigeria. It underscores the need for timely, accessible, reliable and disaggregated data to measure progress, inform decision-making and ensure that everyone is involved. However, gaps still exist. Thus, to ensure adequate tracking and reporting for the SDGs, OSSAP-SDGs is working closely with the MBNP- NM&E Department and the NBS to realign the National Statistical System with the requirements and indicators of the SDGs.

Relatedly, Nigeria was among the few countries that submitted a ***National Voluntary Review*** (NVR) on SDGs to the UN's High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2017. The NVR enabled Nigeria to rapidly review its SDGs implementation context, institutional framework put in place and the partnerships needed to deliver on the SDGs.

### **The Technical Working Group on SDG Evaluation:**

To strengthen the NVR process and reporting based on rigorous evidence<sup>1</sup>, the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) is committed to work closely with countries to build their capacities and support the country-led impact evaluation of specific SDGs. Three officials from the Ministry of Budget and National Planning and OSSAP-SDGs were invited by UNICEF to participate at the Pan African SDG Evaluation Capacity Building Forum held in Addis Ababa in 10-12 December 2018. The Forum observed a general challenge of NVRs focussing more on reporting of progress against targets by most countries without assessing and reporting on the 'why and how' against the set of reported indicators, which can only be generated through 'an evaluation process'. The Forum therefore calls for countries to re-focus and emphasize on the use of evaluation studies to support their SDG reporting.

Subsequently, a meeting was held on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018, between the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs (SSAP-SDGs), Director of National Monitoring and Evaluation at the MBNP and the UNICEF's Evaluation Manager, including senior staff of OSSAP-SDGs on the potential for SDG Evaluation in Nigeria. The SSAP-SDGs appreciated

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<sup>1</sup> IIED, EvalSDG, UNDP, EvalPartners (2018): Briefing Paper Number 8: "VNR Reporting needs evaluation: a call for global guidance and national action", UNDP, January 2018

the joint advocacy and recommendation made by the MBNP and UNICEF on SDG evaluation in Nigeria. She agreed that Nigeria should in 2019 undertake an independent evaluation of priority SDGs in order to generate robust evidence that will reinforce the credibility of Nigeria's participation at the 2020 Global High-Level Political Forum on SDGs. Thus, a second SDG VNR Report for Nigeria will then be developed in 2020 based on objective SDG-evaluation and inclusive large participatory process similar to the 2017 VNR.

The Purpose of the independent evaluation of SDG is to ensure solid evidence-based Learning/Reporting by Government, States, Development Partners and Private Sectors on SDG Progress, and to enhance the credibility of Nigeria in global fora vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This strategic evaluation will inform adequate evidence-based policy-decision making and advocacy by valuing results achieved so far by Nigeria on economic and social development, documenting and sharing success stories of innovative national flagship policies, strategies, programmes and public/private investments. It aims to provide solid analytical answers to the WHY and HOW of challenges against key priority SDGs to be addressed within large strategic debate and consensual agreement.

Subsequently, the SSAP-SDGs approved the establishment of a Technical Working Group on SDG Evaluation (TWG-E) with the following Terms of Reference:

- 1) To work closely with the NBS during the review and validation of SDGs Indicators as part of the ongoing re-alignment of the National Statistical System with the requirements and indicators of the SDGs.
- 2) To identify and recommend 1-2 priority SDGs for UNICEF-funded Impact Evaluation that will strengthen Nigeria's 2020 NVR report.
- 3) Work with and mobilise other stakeholders and partners in support of evaluation and reporting of the SDGs in Nigeria.

The TWG-E has the following members:

- 1) Dr. Lawal Zakari - Director, National Monitoring and Evaluation, MBNP
- 2) Dr. Robert Ndamobissi - Evaluation Manager, UNICEF
- 3) Engr. Ahmad Kawu - Director, Monitoring and Evaluation, OSSAP-SDGs
- 4) Dr. Bala Yunusa - Senior Technical Advisor, OSSAP-SDGs
- 5) Dr. Ify Ukaegbu - Education/Special Assistant on Programmes, OSSAP-SDGs
- 6) Rose Keffas - Special Assistant MDAs, OSSAP-SDGs.
- 7) Representative of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

Additionally, the SSAP-SDGs recommended Five (5) priority SDGs among the 17 SDGs for discussions by the Technical Working Group and recommendation of 1-2 top priority SDGs to be considered for the final SDG-Evaluation:

- Goal 1: End Poverty and all its forms (National Social Investment Programme);
- Goal 3: Ensure Health Lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for All;
- Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls;
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

It is expected that the TWG-E will meet periodically to plan and implement activities in the discharge of its mandate.

Sector Line Ministries, UN agencies, academic institutions and development partners will be involved to the operationalization of the SDG evaluation and the integration of findings, lessons learned and recommendations into SDG Reporting/VNR in Nigeria.