

Politics of Budget Appropriation and Development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, 1999 - 2017

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Abstract:-Nigeria's transition from military to civil rule on 29th May, 1999 was greeted with great optimism by the people. However, after about two decades into Nigeria's Fourth Republic, politics and the Nigerian brand of democracy have become very expensive. While there is mass poverty, unemployment, phenomenal inequality and looming insecurity, the Nigerian ruling class in charge of budget appropriation (in the executive and the National Assembly) are more interested in having their salaries and allowances increased in total disregard of the people whose mandate put them in office. The paper is essentially a descriptive and analytical one, focusing on the relationship between politics, budget appropriation and the outcome for development from 1999 to 2017. The theoretical framework adopted is historical materialism. In a democracy, budgeting is a social contract between the people and their elected representatives. As is an authoritative decision on the priorities and policies of government, the budget is both a political and an economic tool. However, a disproportionate component of political factors renders its economic and developmental value worthless. With lack of plan-budget link and the nature of budget politics, budget appropriation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic has not been able to reduce poverty, inequality and deliver democratic dividends. Budgeting has been hijacked by the Nigerian ruling class to under-develop the country at the expense of democracy and development. In spite of operating constitutional federalism, the absence of enabling conditions for democratic participation at the grassroots is the greatest obstacle to democracy and development in Nigeria. Thus, since the power of the purse in a democracy belongs to the people, and politics is mainly about decision-making process for the common good of all members of society, an adapted participatory budgeting process is fundamental.

Key words: Politics, Budget Appropriation, Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

At independence in 1960, Nigeria inherited the parliamentary system of government from the departing colonialists. This was aborted on 16th January, 1966 by a coup d'tat and the military ruled the country for 14 years. On 1st October, 1979, the military handed over power to a civilian government with a presidential system of government modeled after that of the United States of America (USA). However, this Second Republic was also aborted by a coup d'tat on 31st December, 1983 and the military ruled for another 16 years with a truncated Third Republic in between.

With Nigeria's transition from military rule to democratically elected government on 29th May, 1999, a new constitution

ushered in the Fourth Republic. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, establishes a framework for democratic governance on the basis of a presidential system of government, with a two-chamber legislature –the National Assembly (NASS), and organizes Nigeria as a federal republic. Soon after the new constitutional framework came into effect, it was thrown into the spotlight during a dispute between the President and the NASS that caused a four-month delay in passing the 2001 federal budget (Wehner, 2002; Ekeocha, 2012).

The conflict revealed that the executive and legislative branches of government were actively engaging with, and testing, their respective powers and roles in budgetary matters under the new constitution. As the then President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo remarked: "It was perhaps to be expected that at the beginning of our search for the meaning and form of a true republican democracy, mistakes would be made, and extreme positions would be taken by those involved in this search" (Wehner, 2002: 1). The NASS, on the other hand, has insisted that its input is desirable to match the budget more closely with developmental needs of the people. Moreover, the NASS claimed that the executive implemented a mere 30 per cent of the 2000 budget, a figure the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) put at 64 per cent. Despite hopes that the executive and legislative branches would be able to restore a cordial relationship, the budget process continues to attract controversy (Wehner, 2002; Igbuzor, 2016 and 2017).

However, the truth of the matter is that like in most of Africa, politics and democracy in Nigeria are warfare and mere multi-party elections. To think that political parties have the interest of the people and the nation at heart is to assume that wolves go after sheep to take care of them. Irrespective of their self-acclaimed ideological inclinations, all the political parties in Nigeria are siblings of the same parents - Dr. and Dr. (Mrs.) Dictator Oppressor. For instance, the two dominant and opposing political parties in the country are the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressive Congress (APC), and their mottoes are "Justice, Unity and Progress" and "Justice, Peace and Unity" respectively. A tale of birds of the same feathers. This is why one can hardly identify a politician with a particular political party even within one week.

Politics in Nigeria is a warfare of appropriating the national budget for private gains. The critical issue is not necessarily

with the Constitution but with its custodians and practitioners - the NASS and the Executive. Both the NASS and the presidency/executive branch are not interested in the rule of law and sustainable development. They only seek recourse to constitutional battles in order to boost their selfish negotiating powers in the politics of budget appropriation - the scramble and partitioning of state resources for private accumulation. In the name of development, the executive initiates corrupt policies while the NASS add its dose and pass such policies into laws for the executive arm to implement. Thus, the nation is caught in a web of development of corruption - leaving the people thirsty in the abundance of water (Nwaorgu, 2014; Ekekwe, 2009 and 2015; Ndu, 2016; Ohale, 2018).

After about two decades into the Fourth Republic, politics and the Nigerian brand of democracy have become very expensive. While there is mass poverty, looming insecurity, unemployment and phenomenal inequality, the Nigerian legislators are more interested in having their salaries and allowances increased in total disregard of the people whose mandate put them in office. Hardly do they remember that in most states, workers in the primary and secondary schools, local governments and state-owned tertiary institutions have gone without salaries for more than six months, in some cases about a year (Nwaorgu, 2014; Ekekwe, 2015; Ndu, 2016; Ohale, 2018).

The level and rate of official corruption even among legislators and the flamboyant lifestyle of those in government is mind-boggling. It is sad to note the level of rascality among the legislators which often times culminate into physical combat in the respected hallow (or horror) chambers. Since the return of civil rule in 1999, education has only enjoyed some increase in budgetary allocation up to 9%, which is a far cry to the global benchmark of between 25 - 30%. How will the educational system and our universities, for instance, transform the society at less than 15% budgetary allocation? (Nwaorgu, 2014; Ekekwe, 2015; Ohale, 2018).

II. METHODOLOGY

Since the paper is on social and economic change and historical in nature, data were derived mainly from secondary sources to reflect past development. Secondary sources here include government publications (such as Appropriation Acts, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999); reports by national and international organizations; textbooks, journals, articles, magazines, newspapers and internet resources. These were collected from libraries (including e-libraries) and through the Internet. The Content Analysis method was employed to analyze the contents of the data collected in order to identify recurring trends and how those trends lead to discernible patterns of policy/development outcomes. The paper is essentially a descriptive and analytical one, focusing on the relationship between politics, budget appropriation and the outcome for development from 1999 – 2017.

III. THEORETICAL PARADIGM AND CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

3.1 Theoretical Paradigm

The focus of the paper is to examine the politics involved in the federal budget appropriation and their outcome for development from 1999 to 2017. The theoretical paradigm adopted is historical materialism also known as Marxist political economy. As a science of history and social change, historical materialism evolved mainly from the philosophical science of Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels. It is an objective science based on observable and demonstrable phenomena - which gives primacy to material conditions, especially economic factors in analyzing and explaining society. As a science of society, it gives a comprehensive view of society and highlights the relatedness of social phenomena, especially the economic structure, the political structure, the social structure, the legal and belief systems. It allows us to see social phenomena in the context of their development and encourages us to treat problems concretely rather than abstractly. Essentially, historical materialism is practically helpful to understand the relatedness of the historical process and general social phenomena, how any one part gears into the other, but alone is incomplete and incomprehensible without the other (Ake, 1981; Ekekwe, 2009).

Society is a conglomeration of human beings and activities. Clearly, the most vital activity which appears to hold any society together is productive activity. According to historical materialism, this is the activity on which hinge and from which radiate all other activities. This makes productive activity the most important, even though there are other important ones. For this paradigm however, all other activities ultimately relate directly or indirectly, to the ability of man to produce his needs and reproduce himself (Ekekwe, 2009).

Like the productive activity, government budgets are the core of development in contemporary societies. Thus, the outcome of politics or the struggle for who gets what, when and how in government budget appropriation greatly determines the extent to which man can produce his needs with ease and also reproduce himself. The outcome of this struggle also determines the level of poverty and inequality as well as reflects the most famous and most important form of social relation of production - which is between the ruling classes and the subordinate class (Ake, 1981; Ekekwe, 2009 and 2015; International Budget Project, 2017).

The manner of budget appropriation in any society reflects the philosophy and character of the government in power, and by extension, the ideology of the ruling class. Thus, the significance of the budget in the life and development of any society clearly makes the budget document the next most important document after the Constitution in contemporary societies (Igbuzor, 2017). What follows next is clarification of our key concepts, namely, politics, budget appropriation and development.

3.2 Politics

The essence of human existence in society is to guarantee the common good of all members within a peaceful environment. A human society may be described as a large social grouping sharing the same geographical territory, typically subject to the same political authority and dominant social expectations. Human societies are characterized by patterns of social relations between individuals who share a distinctive social class and institutions. In historical materialism or Marxist political economy, a larger society, that is, a class divided society often evinces stratification or dominance patterns in subgroups. On the other hand, as long as the social relations are collaborative, a society can enable its members to benefit in ways that would not otherwise be possible on an individual basis (Alapiki, 2006a and 2006b; Ekekwe, 2009).

One major cause of stratification and dominance in society is the manner in which common resources are appropriated to meet individual and collective goals. Conflicts usually arise when certain group of persons or some sections of society continue to appropriate a disproportionate portion of society's resources to its advantage, and at the detriment of the rest of society. Therefore, a society characterized by stratification, dominance and conflicts portrays a society plagued by imbalanced socio-political and economic relations. One process society has evolved to ensure a collaborative relationship is politics.

Politics here is seen as a process towards compromise and consensus building. Therefore, politics relates to the way in which decisions are made. Specifically, politics is seen as a particular means of resolving conflict: that is, by compromise, conciliation and negotiation, rather than through force and naked power. Politics becomes the process of 'conflict resolution.' In this view, the key to politics is a wide dispersal of power. Accepting that conflict is inevitable in society and that social groups possess and compete for power, they must be conciliated, and not merely be crushed (Ndu, 1998; Nwaorgu, 2014; Ekekwe, 2009 and 2015).

Thus, politics is a process by which groups of people make decisions. The term is generally applied to behaviour within civil governments, but politics has been observed in all human group interactions, including corporate, academic, and religious institutions. It consists of social relations involving authority or power and refers to the regulation of a political unit, and to the methods and tactics used to formulate and apply policy (Ekekwe, 2009 and 2015). Accordingly, for Ekekwe (2015: 27), politics is the process by which individuals as members of a collective, directly or through their agents, act in concert with others to arrive at decisions and take actions concerning what best serves the interest of all parties in the collective.

So, if we are right that politics is the process for deciding on matters that affect members of the collective and if the decisions arrived at must be enforced, it follows that every

individual citizen must have and must exercise his or her free will in contributing to the discussions and decisions or at least in agreeing to the fundamental rules by which each person engages others in the collective. And while it might not be possible to meet every citizen's desire, there must be provided an unencumbered space for citizens to be that which they wish to and can be. This is what the constitution of the country tries to do (Alapiki, 2006a and 2006b; Ekekwe, 2015).

3.3 Budget Appropriation

Budget appropriation involves mainly three groups of people, namely the executive represented by the President who initiates the budget, the legislature (the NASS) who approve and enact the budget and the Nigerian people who are meant to be the ultimate beneficiaries. The philosophical basis that defines the country's budget appropriation is the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy contained in Chapter 2 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution. It affirms in Section 16(2) that "The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring: 16(2) (a). 'The promotion of a planned and balanced economic development' and 16(2) (b). 'That the material resources of the nation are harnessed and distributed as best as possible to serve the common good.' In a nutshell, the budget, is a compendium of "who gets what, when and how"? It involves the allocation and distribution of available resources among competing sectors and demands. Thus, the annual budget is the only legal vehicle for the acquisition, allocation and distribution of resources for socio-economic development of the nation. It is the means through which the government makes and implements critical decisions on developmental objectives and priorities of the nation (Gbajabiamila, 2014; Dogara, 2016; Igbuzor, 2017).

From the above, it is apparent that the budget is a means of organizing decisions into a future annual plan. It is a means of setting a blueprint of a nation's economic and fiscal development for a defined period, usually, a year ahead. Among others, this involves an explanation of revenue-raising measures that the government intends to pursue and disclosure of the government's proposal for public expenditure. It follows therefore that the budget is an authoritative government decision on the priorities identified in the plan and on the policies that it contains (McGee, 2007).

Accordingly, and following from the above, Section 80 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution affirms that: "80. (1) All revenues or other moneys raised or received by the Federation (not being revenues or other moneys payable under this Constitution or any Act of the National Assembly into any other public fund of the Federation established for a specific purpose) shall be paid into and form one Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation;...(4) No moneys shall be withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund or any other public fund of the Federation, except in the manner prescribed by the National Assembly." To this end, Section 81. (1) of the same Constitution stipulates that: "The President shall cause to be prepared and laid before each House of the National

Assembly at any time in each financial year estimates of the revenues and expenditure of the Federation for the next following financial year."

The budget is both a political and an economic tool. However, a disproportionate component of political factors or interference renders its economic and developmental value worthless. Wildavsky (1984) and Wildavsky and Caiden (2001) captures this point when they state that the budgetary process should be conceived as a phenomenon of human behaviour in a governmental setting. Thus, a budget or budgeting is both an economic as well as a political tool. Taken as a whole, the federal budget is a representation in monetary terms of governmental activities. If politics is regarded in part as conflict over whose preference shall prevail in the determination of national policy, then the budget records the outcomes of the struggle. If we ask, "who gets what the government has to give?" then the answer for a moment in time (annually) are recorded in the budget. If one looks at politics as a process by which the government mobilize resources to meet pressing problems, then the budget is a focus of these efforts.

Over the years, the size and shape of the federal budget in Nigeria has become a matter of serious contention in our political life. The Presidency, ministers, chief executive officers, the NASS, political parties, interest groups and other interested citizens vie with one another to have their preferences recorded in the budget. The victories and defeats, the compromises and the bargains, the realms of agreements and spheres of conflict in regard to the role of the federal government in our society all appear in the budget. This is why Wildavsky (1984) and Wildavsky and Caiden (2001) emphasized that, in the most integral sense, the budget lies at the heart of the political process.

3.4 Development

There is hardly any one for all definition of development (Alapiki, 2006a and 2006b). Thus, development is often either confused with or deliberately used in place of economic growth (Alapiki, 2006b; Ekekwe, 2009 and 2015; Ohale, 2018). However, while economic growth has to do with the so-called invisible hands of demand and supply as well as associated rise of a nation's gross domestic product (GDP), development on the other hand, is a specific policy intervention by the state/government - for instance, as stipulated in the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy contained in Chapter 2 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution - which among others, stipulates in Section 16 (2) that: "The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring: 16 (2) (a). 'The promotion of a planned and balanced economic development' and 16 (2) (b). 'That the material resources of the nation are harnessed and distributed as best as possible to serve the common good.'"

Since any form of real development is about the ability of people to produce and reproduce themselves (United Nations

Development Programme, UNDP, 2016), our conceptualization of "development is about human capacity building, the empowerment of disadvantaged groups (women, children, the physically challenged, the creation of jobs and generally ameliorating the harsh conditions of daily work) as well as decreasing unemployment and inequality" (Ekekwe, 2015: 60).

From this perspective, the manner of budget appropriation by those in charge among the Nigerian ruling class has contributed little to so-called development. Often, successive administrations since the inception of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999 appears to lack a basic understanding of what constitute development (Ohale, 2018).

What has generally passed for development has done very little to lift the standard of, and outlook on, life of the majority of Nigerians. They have been such development artifacts as building of roads and bridges, markets, stadia, etc; things for which huge contracts that attract kickbacks must be awarded, and which can be abandoned as soon as full payments for them have been made. If there was any doubt that the Nigerian governing class that controls budget appropriation at the federal level has thoroughly trivialized the serious concept of development, it is to be seen in the much-branded about term like "dividends of democracy" - a vacuous phrase that irritate the serious minded and degrade political discourse. Meanwhile, the very things that could help galvanize Nigerians for their development, such as health services, education, agriculture for food sufficiency and food security, as well as rail networks, are severely both under-funded and mis-managed (Ekekwe, 2015).

IV. THE PLAN - BUDGET LINK

As instruments of economic management, development plans and the budget are intimately related. In the public sector, budgeting constitutes an important instrument of plan implementation since it is the only formal process for mobilizing, allocating and using resources for public sector programmes and projects (Ilori, 1995; Alapiki, 2006a and 2006b; International Budget Project, 2017). Seen in this context, planning and budgeting represents a continuous and recurring process in the implementation of development strategy. The two are essentially complementary and companion process for the realization of national goals. Theoretically, the capital (expenditure) programmes/projects of the budget should derive from the underlying development plan. The budget should also reflect specific phases and stages of implementation of the national plan.

A development plan typically covers a period of, say five years (three years for "medium-term" plans) and finds physical expression in an annual plan document called Budget (Killick, 1976; Alapiki, 2006a and 2006b). Normally, a budget describes in detail government fiscal policies and their corresponding annual plans. Therefore, a typical budget consists of revenue estimates, expenditure estimates (recurrent

and capital) and policies. An immediate implication of the fore stated is that the nature of the budget (whether balanced, deficit or surplus) is determined by the relationship between the revenue and expenditure aspects of the budget. To serve effectively as a tool for resource mobilization, economic management and control, a budget is expected to, among others, be derived from the underlying development/medium term plan to ensure systematic approach to development and thus, minimize political interference in its preparation and implementation (Egbon, 1995; International Budget Project, 2017).

In Nigeria, the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) of 2007 legally replaced the executive/administrative 3-year Rolling Plan with another 3-year Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). According to Section 11 (1) and (2) of the FRA, 2007:

(1) The Federal Government after consultation with the States shall – (a) Not later than six months from the commencement of this Act, cause to be prepared and laid before the National Assembly, for their consideration a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework for the next three financial years; and (b) Thereafter, not later than four months before commencement of the next financial year, cause to be prepared a medium-term expenditure Framework for the next three financial years.

(2) The framework so laid shall be considered for approval with such modifications, if any, as the National Assembly finds appropriate by a resolution of each House of the National Assembly.

To ensure the plan - budget link, the FRA (2007) stipulates that the Annual Budget is to be derived from the Medium Term Expenditure Framework. According to Section 18 of the FRA, 2007:

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this Act [sic] any law, the Medium term Expenditure Framework shall: (1) Be the basis for the preparation of the estimates of revenue and expenditure required to be prepared and laid before the National Assembly under section 81 (1) of Constitution.

(2) The sectoral and compositional distribution of the estimates of the expenditure referred to in subsection (1) of this section shall be consistent with the medium term developmental priorities set out in the Medium Term expenditure Framework.

Against this background, the plan and the budget should necessarily be convergent. Nevertheless, in spite of the close link, the degree of harmonization between them has been weak and inadequate as practiced in Nigeria (Gali, 1998; Kelikume, 2015). Thus, it is generally agreed that the lack of appropriate coordination and harmonization of development plans and the budgets is one of the major factors in the failure of development plans. The state (the federal government) in Nigeria plays a very critical role in the socio-economic life of the nation. In specific terms, the state greatly influences what is to be produced, who is to produce what, when to produce society's needs and how goods and services produced will be exchanged and distributed.

So, in spite of the rapid spread of global capitalism - which is the same thing as globalization (Ekekwe, 2009 and 2015), the state in every society still has vital role to play in the economy. Development planning and budgeting are important and central instrumentalities by which the state whether socialist or capitalist, anywhere in the world intervenes to shape and direct the economy. This is especially so for less developed countries (LDCs) because they are convinced that it is the surest and most direct route to economic progress (Kelikume, 2015; Ekekwe, 2015; Ohale, 2018).

V. SOCIAL CONTRACT

As an authoritative decision of government, a budget is a document containing expected revenue and expenditure for certain items and purposes. Usually, costs are attached to the items of expenditure (salaries, equipment, etc) and purposes (improving healthcare services, education, providing low-income housing, etc) in the budget. Presumably, those who prepare the federal budget (in our case, the Federal Government of Nigeria, FGN - particularly the executive and legislative branches) intend that there will be a direct connection between what is written in it and future events. Hence, we might conceive of the budget as intended behavior, as a prediction. If the request for funds (by the executive from the NASS) are granted and if they are spent in accordance with financial regulations, and if the actions involved lead to the desired consequences, then the purposes stated in the budget document will be achieved. The budget thus becomes a link between financial resources and human behaviour to accomplish policy objectives or to bring about a desired state of affairs in society (Wildavsky, 1984; Alapiki, 2006a and 2006b).

According to Wildavsky and Caiden (2001), in the most general definition, budgeting is concerned with the translation of financial resources into human purposes. A budget therefore, may be characterized as a series of goals with price tags attached. Since funds are limited and have to be directed in one way or another, budgeting becomes a mechanism for making choices among (alternative) expenditures.

In a democracy, budgeting may be regarded as a contract between the governed and the governors. At the federal level

in Nigeria, the President and the NASS promised to supply funds/amenities under specified conditions if they are voted into power by the electorate (the people). Thus, to the extent that a budget is carried out by the governors, it imposes a set of mutual obligations and controls upon the contracting parties. The word 'mutual' should be stressed because it is so easy to assume that those who elected them exercise control in a unilateral direction. Therefore, a democratically elected government which misappropriates or diverts stated funds in the budget for private gains is already guilty of violating the contract, and should be voted out of power in the next elections. Budgeting then becomes a web of social as well as legal relationship in which commitments are made by all the parties, and where sanctions may be invoked by all. Democracy thus offers the people a chance to have a say in their governance and development through the electoral process.

Nigeria is a constitutional democracy. That is why any unconstitutional change of government is regarded as an aberration. Thus, military regimes which come to power through coup d'tat and not by the formal expressed will of the people are illegal and dictatorial as the governed are disenfranchised in the budgeting process. As in all democracies, the legislature in Nigeria is constitutionally mandated as the institution through which governments are held to account to the electorate. In doing so, the legislature can use several means, including the questioning of senior government officials, the review and confirmation of executive appointments, impeachment and/or the power to dismiss the government, question period, the establishment of parliamentary committees and the formation of commissions of inquiry (Stapenhurst, 2004; International Budget Project, 2017). The power and authority of the NASS in the approval and control of the federal budget is very clear in the 1999 Nigerian Constitution especially in Sections 80 and 81. No money can be withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation without the approval of the NASS.

VI. THE POWER OF THE PURSE

The power of the purse is the influence that legislatures have over public policy because of their power to vote money for public purposes. Thus, the authority to grant appropriations, popularly known as the power of the purse, gives legislatures a powerful check over executive and judicial branches, for no public money can be spent without legislative approval. For instance, in the USA, the Congress (legislature), for example, can approve or reject the annual budget requests of the executive branch for its agencies and programmes, thereby influencing both domestic and foreign policy (McGee, 2007). The power of the purse is an incontestable democratic fundamental. This also means that there is an obligation on the legislature to ensure that the revenue and spending measures it authorizes are fiscally sound, match the needs of the population with available resources, and that they are implemented properly and efficiently. When legislatures fail

to meet this obligation, a lengthy but ultimately ineffective legislative budget process (as is the case in Nigeria's Fourth Republic) is merely a total waste of time. Thus, a token involvement in the budget process relegates the legislative power of the purse to the realm of constitutional fiction (Wehner, 2004; McGee, 2007).

Also, checks and balances are necessary to ensure good governance in budgeting in the medium to long term, which requires the answerability of the executive to the legislature, and the ability of the latter to take appropriate action in cases of poor performance. This is because the legislature is the distinctive mark of a country's sovereignty, the index of its status as a state and the source of much of the power exercised by the executive in the administration of government. The sovereign power of the state is therefore identified in the organ that has power to make laws by legislation, and to issue 'commands' in the form of legislation binding on the society. The legislature at the federal level in Nigeria is the National Assembly (NASS), which is the institutional expression of our popular sovereignty (Wehner, 2004; Sagay, 2010).

Therefore, legislative oversight is nowhere more important than over the budget. The role of the legislature in most countries is to scrutinize and authorize revenues and expenditures, and to ensure that the national budget is properly implemented. How governance affects the wellbeing of the populace depends on tax levels, spending patterns, the impact of policies on investment and on interest rates, as well as on the ways that domestic priorities and choices interact with international economic and financial trends (Stapenhurst, 2004; Ekekwe, 2009 and 2015; Ohale, 2018).

In a nutshell, the power of the purse is the mandate the people give to their representatives to ensure that resources are appropriated for the overall well-being of society. The power of the purse belongs to the people, and that is where it is vested. It is vested in the branch of government that represents the people, elected by the people – the legislature.

According to Amaze Guobadia quoted in Sagay (2010), of particular importance is the legislature's role in respect of the budget and appropriations. The Appropriation Bill is the basis of the executive's plans for the running of government within the relevant fiscal year. The Constitution provides that the budget must be considered by the legislature and the Appropriation Bill passed before money can be withdrawn from the relevant funds to run government. Consequently, Sagay (2010) poses the following questions: "What does a legislature actually do with its power over appropriations? Can it give conditions and place limitation on spending and how funds are to be used (such as details on what may be spent under specific items e.g. travel, purchase of cars and general spending under different heads)? After all, the Constitution provides that the estimates and heads of expenditure for the financial year shall be included in the Appropriation Bill laid before the legislature. Can the

legislature introduce issues outside the subject under consideration in the Appropriation bill presented to it?

In explanation to the above, Sagay (2010) states that the answer to the above questions is yes in all respects, with the exception of the introduction of matters or issues outside those contained in the Appropriation Bill presented to the NASS. The 1999 Nigerian Constitution makes it clear that the initiative for the preparation and presentation of the Appropriation Bill is that of the President. It is he/she as the executive, who will execute and administer the contents of the budget and not the NASS. Nothing however prevents consultation between the executive and legislature on the contents of an Appropriation Bill (which was made clear by the FRA of 2007). The importance attached by the legislature over its role in budgetary matters was demonstrated by the fact that non-implementation of the budget was a major ground for the proposed impeachment of the President in 2003 (Sagay, 2010:9).

So what has been the extent of budget policy impact by the NASS from 1999 to 2017?

According to Wehner (2004), legislatures can be distinguished in terms of the extent of their budget policy impact. On their part, Posner and Park (2007) state that a legislature's capacity to influence budget decisions is a function of both its authority over executive budget recommendations and its internal processes for decision making. However, with regard to the scope of legislative authority, Wehner (2004) places legislatures into three categories of influence over budgeting:

- 1) Budget-making legislatures have the capacity to amend or reject the budget proposals of the executive and to substitute one of their own (e.g. Sweden, United States).
- 2) Budget-influencing legislatures can amend or reject executive budget proposals but lack the capacity to formulate their own independent budgets (e.g. Italy, Netherlands). The amending power is often constrained as well: many legislatures may cut but not add to executive budgets, while others may add as long as they find offsetting cuts.
- 3) Legislatures with little or no budget role lack the capacity to reject or amend executive proposals in any substantive way, largely for fear of prompting the fall of the government (e.g. United Kingdom).

From the above typology of the budget policy impact of legislatures, where can one place the NASS? Going by its character and activities since 1999, it is difficult to neatly place the NASS in any of the three categories. Perhaps, a fourth category unique to Africa can be added to the typology to attempt to categorize the NASS: *the politically active legislatures with tremendous constitutional authority to influence the budget for the private interest of legislators, at the expense of the people they represent*. This is not to suggest that the NASS lacks the structure and capacity to make proactive contributions to the budget. It is rather a reflection

of the character of democratization and politics in Africa. Our politics is not a lawful competition to select those to manage our common concerns but a fight to capture and privatize an enormous power resource (Nwaorgu, 2014; Ekekwe 2009 and 2015; Ndu, 2016; Ohale, 2018).

The NASS works through the committee system. Both the Senate and the House of Representatives have its own standing committee on budget/finance matters as well as appropriate sectoral committees to consider the budget. According to Posner and Park (2007), the committee structure is the heart of legislative influence. Given the sheer complexity and technical details involved with modern budgets, legislatures have found it essential to divide the task of reviewing the budget into committees. The relationship between the overarching budget committee and sectoral committees is important in determining legislative budgetary outcomes. Schick (2002) notes that some legislatures assign full responsibility to a budget committee while others disperse jurisdiction among sectoral committees. The first method makes it easy to co-ordinate and promotes consistency in legislative budget action, particularly facilitating fiscal discipline. The second method helps the sectoral interests reflected in the final budget, whereas it may complicate the task of maintaining discipline.

However, an emerging pattern empowers sectoral committees to review relevant portions of the budget and recommend legislative action within an overall fiscal framework maintained by the budget (appropriation) committee (Schick, 2002). This has been the practice in the NASS in line with the principle of separation of power/ checks and balances of the presidential system of government. But contrary to the benefits of the committee system what do we get from the system? Perverse consistent systematic sectoral misappropriation of funds by the NASS and the executive since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1999. The situation is unfortunate because the misappropriations are easily detectible but very difficult to substantiate as they have been "legalized" through the Appropriation Act of the NASS. It can become only a known scandal when the sharing formula of misappropriated funds are not adhered to or when the collaborating persons (in both NASS and executive) are out of alignment. No committee of the NASS or executive agency can be said to be innocent of this. However, one case in point that characterizes the politics of budget appropriation in the Fourth Republic was the N10 million (ten million naira) allowance appropriated in the budget of the Federal Ministry of Health in 2007 for Senator Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello (who was then the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health) and her members.

VII. DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

After about two decades into Nigeria's Fourth Republic, is Nigeria actually democratizing? How inclusive is the decision making process of the state? Has there been any dividend of democracy? What is the condition of the economy? The

questions are in fact endless but the answers are nowhere to be found. Today the prospect of democratizing the post-colonial Nigerian state structure is still the most decisive issue in the country. As Ake (1996) emphasized, democracy is not simply desirable, it is indispensable. It will not solve all the problems of Nigeria but none of the key and structural problems can be solved without it. Democracy carries the prospect of the independence struggle begun in colonial times and the possibility of Nigeria's rescue from a ruling class which has dishonoured our past and fashioned a present that promises no future except more pain and shame and even more precarious existence. Democracy will empower the good people of Nigeria and create the political conditions for the much desired people-oriented development (human development) to germinate.

7.1 Challenge of the Decision Making Process

Politics since the inception of Nigeria's Fourth Republic is exclusionary. It is mainly about the control of state power. That is obvious. However, what is not so obvious is the extent to which the nature of the state, including its powers, determines politics. Much of what is exclusively negative about politics in Nigeria arises from the character of the state, particularly its lack of autonomy, the immensity of its power, its proneness to abuse and the lack of immunity against it. The character of the state rules out a politics of moderation and mandates a politics of lawlessness and extremism for the simple reason that the nature of the state makes the capture of state power, irresistibly attractive (Ake, 1996; Ekeke, 2009 and 2015).

Therefore, rather than serving as a process for decision making, negotiation and resolution of conflicting interests, politics becomes a zero-sum game, a warfare in Nigeria. The winners in the competition for power win everything, the losers lose everything. Nothing can be worse than losing, nothing, better than winning. Thus, everyone seeks power by every means, legal or otherwise and those who already control state power try to keep it by every means. What emerges from this is a politics which does not know legitimacy or legality, only expediency. This kind of politics is not conducive to political stability, the rule of law or to democracy, and cannot generate any form of human development, because it is constituted as warfare (Ake, 1996; Ekeke, 2015).

Nigeria's politics in the Fourth Republic is also exclusionary because it is not a lawful competition to select those to manage our common concerns as enshrined in the 1999 Nigerian Constitution but a fight to capture and privatize an enormous power resource. There is no public realm, strictly speaking, no state. There is only a contested terrain, where interest groups and communities go to fight for appropriation. There is no space which incarnates a collective identity; there is only a battlefield where the act of doing battle constitutes us as a purely negative unity. We are a polity of takers rather than givers. What we dearly love to take is power, and being

strangers to one another and adversaries, we necessarily take it as private property (Ake, 1996; Ekeke, 2015).

Thus, the development crisis which has left many in Nigeria impoverished, undernourished, starving, with decaying infrastructure, irredeemably fractured social consensus - unleashing stress, conflict and violence everywhere is precisely a crisis of politics, especially a crisis of anti-democratic practices. It is often said that development has failed in Nigeria. The fact however is that it just never started in the first place because of inclement political conditions. More than anything else, it is politics-of-budget-appropriation that is under developing Nigeria (Ake, 1996; Nwaorgu, 2014; Ekeke, 2015; Ohale, 2018).

The relation between the crisis of under-development and anti-democratic practices in Nigeria was apparent since independence in 1960. Since then, the form and function of the state in post-colonial Nigeria has not changed. State power remains the same: immense, arbitrary, often violent, and always threatening. Politics remains a zero-sum contest; power is sought by all means and maintained by all means, in a legacy of lawless political competition amidst an ideological void. This power struggle is so totally absorbing that the pursuit of development is all but impossible. Not surprisingly, what has been developing since 1999 in Nigeria is underdevelopment (Ake, 1996; Ekeke, 2015, Ndu, 2016; Ohale, 2018).

7.2 Budgeting And Underdevelopment

Since the return of civil rule in Nigeria in 1999, budgeting has been hijacked and used by the ruling class to under-develop the country at the expense of democracy and human development. Successive administrations by both the PDP and APC have appropriated huge sums of money through the budget for one democratic or developmental purpose which was neither real nor accountable. Consequently, budgeting is now used by this group of people to corruptly enrich and reproduce themselves in successive governments. The same set of people who looted the state treasury with past administrations are usually recycled as presidents or governors, ministers, members of the NASS, etc. This group may split into opposing factions or political parties but their interest is the same and permanent: continuous and intensify looting of public funds meant for development through the budgetary process. Thus, budgeting has more than any other singular factor become the major tool of underdevelopment (general poverty, poor state of infrastructures, diseases, etc) in Nigeria since 1999. It is indeed, a pathetic tale of *'how Nigerians underdevelop Nigeria.'*

This partly (perhaps largely) explains why electoral processes are characterized by violence and election into any public office is seen as an internal warfare. The politics of budget appropriation also offers useful insight into the perennial conflicts between the executive arm and the NASS since the commencement of the Fourth Republic in 1999 (although both

the PDP which ruled from 1999 – 2015; and the APC from 2015 - 2019 controlled the executive and a majority in the NASS). The bone of contention was that: all members of the NASS won elections while apart from the President and his Vice, all ministers and all other political appointees were politicians who had lost at the polls but are given appointments as "settlement". Ironically, because of the nature of their portfolios, the ministers have more distributive power and thus, possess more control over appropriated funds than their legislative counterparts. However, to conceal their fight over the control of state resources from public view, members of the executive and the NASS have sacrificed democracy and development and forged a working cooperation in their scramble over the partitioning of the "national cake" through horse trading such as Constituency Projects to the NASS since 2004 (Ekeocha, 2012).

7.3 Policy of Capital Expenditure

To buttress the nature of politics of private accumulation since 1999, the current self-seeking interest and corrupt practices being exhibited by the NASS is perhaps a direct play out to the way and manner the budget is designed by the executive branch. Besides the top secrecy that surrounds its formulation, the budget has often been framed mainly to mobilize the support of the clientele groups who benefit from and propagate the government of the day or by pursuing 'white-elephant' projects that do not complement present development aspirations of the people. Nowhere has the politics of budget appropriation been so used against the people by the Nigerian ruling class than in the preference given to so-called capital projects (manufactured capital) over the basic economic needs of the people. There is no argument about the need to develop relevant infrastructures to aid socio-economic progress. Such development of infrastructures should be well articulated and where necessary, phased and inter-linked with other sectors of the economy to reflect present realities and aspirations of the people. This is because infrastructures are not primary capitals - infrastructures are secondary capitals. The environment and the people are indeed the primary capitals.

As a result of the preference given to manufactured capital, the socio-economic landscape of the country has been littered with white-elephant projects or stand-alone projects which do not have any organic linkages nor serve as a means to solving the developmental needs of the people. In most cases such white elephant or stand-alone projects are directed essentially to mobilize the support of the clientele groups who benefit from and propagate the government of the day. One of such cases was when the leadership of Bonny Kingdom in Rivers State paid a solidarity visit to the President on 24th February, 2014 in the midst of the propaganda war between the ruling PDP at the federal level and the main opposition party, APC in that state. As a parting gift, the President announced that a polytechnic will be established in Bonny Kingdom later in the year (2014). Ironically, the President made this announcement

at a time when the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnic were on strike demanding for better welfare.

With the collaboration of the NASS, on 1st July, 2014, the President approved the sum of N1 billion as take-off grant and the appointment of principal officers for the polytechnic to commence operations in September (2014). Accordingly, the establishment of the federal polytechnic at Bonny Island was politically incorporated into the 2015 budget of the Federal Ministry of Education. Apart from the fact that the establishment of a federal polytechnic at Bonny Island (Rivers State) was not originally in the country's development/medium-term plan, some unanswered questions have been: why was the announcement to establish a polytechnic made when the elite of the host community visited the President? Is the establishment of a polytechnic the immediate need of the people? Is the establishment of another polytechnic a solution when the existing ones are poorly catered for? Do federal projects belong to host communities or to all Nigerians? Who are the real beneficiaries of establishing a polytechnic in Bonny Island?

According to the Forum for the Future (1994), there are five types of sustainable capital from where we derive the goods and services we need to improve the quality of our lives. They are as follows in their order of importance: 1) Natural Capital – the environment – which is the basis not only of production but of life itself; 2) Human Capital - consists of people's health, knowledge, skills and motivation; 3) Social Capital - concerns the institutions that help us maintain and develop human capital in partnership with others: e.g. families, communities, businesses, trade unions, schools, and voluntary organizations; 4) Manufactured Capital - comprises material goods or fixed assets which contribute to the production process rather than being the output itself – e.g. tools, machines and buildings, roads, bridges, etc; 5) Financial Capital – which has no real value itself but enabling the other types of Capital to be owned and traded. It is the responsibility of every society to manage these capital assets sustainably. But what has been happening in Nigeria can be described as a sustainability crisis because we have been neglecting to improve and develop our stocks of natural, human and social capital at the expense of politically-induced manufactured projects. It is obvious that the critical capitals for development are the natural, human and social capitals which collectively will determine and shape the character of the kind of manufactured (infrastructure) capital to develop in a given society. Thus, to assume that mere uncoordinated proliferation of manufactured capital (infrastructure) is development or democratic dividend is not only misleading but a disservice to the people.

To say that Nigeria is developing because a civilian administration uses the people's money to build a stadium in Abuja or rehabilitate roads at unimaginable inflated costs while the masses suffer in poverty is an insult on the integrity of the people. Also, to say that Nigeria is democratizing since

1999 to date because we have an elected President and a NASS is to assume that we do not understand the meaning of democracy. What Nigeria has witnessed since May 1999 by way of democratization is that self-appointed military dictators gave way to civilian dictators who are returned or replaced by other dictators after every four years. We are witnessing a Presidency and a NASS that pays only lip-service to the welfare and livelihood of the people but who collude to misappropriate our common resources and impose capital projects on us that do not aid our collective aspirations (Ekekwe, 2015; Ohale, 2018).

The environment, human empowerment and poverty reduction are deliberately politicized and relegated to the background in preference for politically induced capital projects. Another pertinent and pathetic case is the non implementation of the UNEP Ogoniland report since it was presented to the FGN on 4th August, 2011. Obviously, because the clean-up involves the reactivation of natural, human and social capitals that will empower the people, with less provision for manufactured capital, the effective clean-up of Ogoniland has been politicized and delayed for close to a decade now.

7.4 Dividends of Democracy

One pertinent question here is what constitutes democratic dividends often parroted by the Nigerian ruling political class? The phrase 'Dividends of Democracy' has become a household slogan since the return to civilian rule in Nigeria in 1999. However, one gets confused when every positive action of government is called dividend of democracy. We have seen from experience in Nigeria that government (whether civilian or military administration) is expected to perform certain functions. Why then do Nigerian politicians refer to all activities of government under the present civil rule (Fourth Republic) as dividend of democracy? Does governance under a democracy not supposed to be characterized by certain specific ideals, which are not realizable under a military regime? It can be argued that only positive ideals that are realizable exclusively under a democracy qualify to be called dividends of democracy. If a military government can also do (or actually did) the same thing, maybe we should refer to such as 'dividend of good governance.' There are certain ideals that are exclusive to a democracy, such as people's sovereignty, respect for the rule of law, free choice, freedom of speech, respect for fundamental human rights, etc. Where a democratic government observes these ideals very sincerely, then, people can be said to be reaping dividends of democracy. Where any government builds roads, schools, hospitals, those should be called dividends of good governance (Sandan, 2010).

The clear picture of democratization in Nigeria's Fourth Republic so far is that the Nigerian ruling political class has never appropriated state resources to build the people's value, rather their misappropriation and frivolous use of state resources have led to the destruction of societal value (Nwaorgu, 2014; Ekekwe, 2015; Ndu, 2016, Ohale, 2018).In

the real sense of the word, there have been no dividends of democracy in Nigeria since 1999 to date. The Nigerian ruling class support democracy only as a means to power. The version of liberal democracy practiced in Nigeria and other parts of Africa has been reduced to the crude simplicity of multi-party elections. This type of democracy is not in the least emancipatory especially in African conditions because it offers the people rights they cannot exercise, voting that never amounts to choosing, freedom which is patently spurious, and political equality which disguises highly unequal power relations (Ake, 1996; Ekekwe, 2009 and 2015).

One of the most remarkable features of democratization in Nigeria is that it is totally indifferent to the character of the state. Democratic elections are being held to determine who will exercise the powers of the state with no questions asked about the character of the state as if it has no implications for democracy. But its implications are so serious that elections in Nigeria give the voter only a choice between oppressors. For example, contrary to the presidential system of government that encourages checks and balances, since 1999 Nigeria democratizes with no separation of powers, all powers having been vested in an imperial presidency. There is hardly any rule of law, no plausible system of justice, no transparency. The coercive institutions of the state are above the law, civil society is below it, the people are out of sight, far beyond its protection. The judiciary is dissociated from justice, and the bureaucracy is oppressive and arbitrary. The Nigerian state like the colonial state before it, turns on the calculus of strength (Ake, 1996; Nwaorgu, 2014; Ekekwe, 2009 and 2015).

Thus, it matters little which political party is in power (PDP or APC), Nigeria since the return to civil rule in 1999 appears to be spawning a unique historical experience, a self-absorbed ruling political class with no national project whatever, not even an inadequate one. They are totally absorbed in the quest for absolute and eternal power. They know only their interests. It is the only morality they have and their only religion. They hear only echoes of their own voices and see only images of themselves looming to fill every space and every consciousness (Ake, 1996; Nwaorgu, 2014; Ekekwe, 2015).

Accordingly, where every leader wants absolute power, society is at war, war without end, because amidst the defeats and victories of particular battles, the underlying social dynamics remains the same. There is no development in a state of war. What there is, is regression and that is what Nigeria has had since 1999. There is no democracy in war. What there is, is power and the contestation for power - power supplanting rights, permitting the strong to take what they can, leaving the rest to suffer what they must (Ekekwe, 2015; Ohale, 2018).

7.5 Disarticulation and Incoherence of the Economy

Interestingly, civilian administrations in the Nigeria’s Fourth Republic have not shown that they are better than the military or the colonial state. Like the colonial state, the post-colonial Nigerian state is merely obsessed with the construction of roads, railways and other monuments for the private agenda of those in power. Thus, like the colonial economy, the post-colonial Nigerian economy is still characterized by disarticulation and incoherence - an economy whose parts or sectors are not complementary. In a coherent economy there is regional and/or sectoral complementarities and reciprocity (Ekekwe, 2015; Ohale, 2018).

7.6 Costs of Governance and Legislative Salaries and Allowances

Costs of governance have been rising since the return of civil rule in 1999. The nation has been devoting over 60% of its revenue to sustaining recurrent and overhead expenditures (costs of governance) to the detriment of human development (Ekekwe, 2015; Ohale, 2018). Political corruption is commonplace. Political corruption is not just about election rigging. It has led Nigerian politicians in office to steer away from good government. Their decisions now benefit themselves and those who fund them. The public interest comes second. With weak institutions, political corruption through budget appropriation has enabled public officials to divert scarce resources from poor and disadvantaged people. Private rather than public interests dictate policy (Ndu, 2016).

For instance, in 2010, the former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mallam Sanusi Lamido Sanusi exposed the existing corrupt pact between the executive and the NASS on the appropriation of state resources. He informed a nation that is not surprised that besides its capital projects, the NASS alone (made up of 109 Senators and 360 Representatives and their supporting aids and staff) appropriates 25% of the recurrent expenditure of the federal budget. He disclosed that the overhead costs of the NASS as a percentage of the Federal Government budget in 2008 and 2009 was 14.19% and 19.87% respectively (Zagaina, 2010; Nigeria Exchange News 2010). According to Sagay (2010) the foregoing amounts to negative values and breach of public trust. He added that, the legislature in any democratic system of government is supposed to be the watch dog of the people against the authoritarian and indeed predatory tendencies of the executive, which is the most powerful arm of government, given its capacity to control and deploy state funds and coercive forces. The legislature is supposed to check these tendencies and to generally operate to protect the interest of the people. They are supposed to be the grass-roots arm of government.

But this has not been the case in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic. On the contrary, at least at the national level, the NASS has jettisoned the interest of the nation for self interest. Instead of serving the good people of Nigeria, they are engaged in the

pursuit of self-interest, to a degree that can only be regarded as shocking. This can be demonstrated by a quick examination of legislative activity at the national level with regard to self-awarded salaries and allowances. In spite of the dismal standard of living, high poverty of the country and low income per capita of Nigeria, Nigerian legislators in Abuja (the NASS), have awarded themselves the highest salaries and allowances in the world. In other words, the Nigerian law makers in Abuja are the highest paid in the world (Sagay, 2010).

In 2009, a Senator earned N240,000,000.00 in salaries and allowances, whilst his House of Representative counter-part earned N203,760,000.00. In other words, a Senator earned about \$1.7 Million, and a member of the House of Representative earned \$1.45 million, per annum. By contrast, an American Senator earned \$174,000.00 and a U.K. Parliamentarian earned about \$64,000 US, per annum. The cruel anomaly of the situation is revealed when the income per capita of these countries is juxtaposed with their Parliamentary pay as follows:

Country	Income Per Capita	Legislator's Pay
U.S.A	\$46,350.00	\$174,000.00
U.K	\$35,468.00	\$64,000.00
NIGERIA	\$2,249.00	\$1,700,000.00

Source:(Sagay, 2010).

Cumulatively, in 2009, the Federal legislators received a total of N102.8 billion comprising N11.8 billion as salaries and N90.96 billion (non-taxable) as allowances. Is the tax payer getting value for this colossal sum in the current democratic dispensation? Should 25% of Nigeria's annual budget be spent on 109 Senators and 360 House of Representative members? In other words, should 469 Nigerians gulp 25% of our Budget leaving the remaining over 170 million of us to receive about N1000 each? The US President - President of the richest country in the world earns \$400,000 per annum. The British Prime Minister earns 190,000 Pounds. A Senator, in Nigeria, one of the poorest countries in the world, earns \$1,700,000 per annum (Sagay, 2010). It is absurd. It is indeed a feeding frenzy. This tragic state of affairs is clearly unsustainable. Those engaged in this feeding frenzy – the Power, Parties and Principalities (Ekekwe, 2015) - are endangering our democracy (Sagay, 2010; Nwaorgu, 2014; Ndu, 2016; Ohale, 2018).

VIII. CONCLUSION

Administratively, Nigeria is a Federal Republic with 36 States and a Federal Capital Territory (FCT-Abuja) which is sub-divided into 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs). Each State is further divided into 3 Senatorial Districts – represented by three Senators with one Senator for the FCT-Abuja making a total of 109 elected Senators representing the people in the Upper Chamber of the NASS. For the House of Representatives, a State is sub-divided into Constituencies (a

group of LGAs based on population) and each Constituency is represented by an elected member; on the whole, there are 360 elected members representing the people in the Lower Chamber of the NASS. However, with 469 elected representatives in the NASS, the absence of enabling conditions for democratic participation at the grassroots is the greatest obstacle to democracy and development in Nigeria. It is apparent that the transformation of society for the empowerment of citizens is the greatest challenge of democratization - far more important than the transformation of the state, for without it, the state cannot be democratized.

Political corruption especially as evident through budget appropriation can feel daunting and remote with serious negative implications for democracy and human development. Nigerians need to speak out about how they are governed. Nigerians need to call on their politicians and public officials to be accountable for their actions. Nigerians must demand that they put in place regulations which will force politicians to act openly. Then corruption cannot hide. And our trust in the political process will improve. When leaders act transparently, showing us clearly what they do, we can make informed choices when we vote. And we can hold them to account once elected. Otherwise, how can we trust them if we do not know what they are doing?

Democracy is essentially about people and human development. Politics is made possible by democracy. From grassroots groups to big organizations, civil society (and especially the Media) has a crucial role to play. We can monitor electoral campaigns and parties' activities. If state resources are abused, we must report it. And if regulations to prevent corruption in the budgetary process are not in place, we must demand them. For example, we must demand for rules about politicians' conflicts of interest and regulations to stop corporate lobbying and political funding from distorting the democratic and budgetary processes. By speaking out, we can show that everyone (even politicians) gains from honest elections, open budget decision-making and sustainable human development. This is, perhaps, the spirit of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution that ushered in the Fourth Republic.

IX. RECOMMENDATION

Since democracy and development is about people, and politics is mainly about decision-making process for the common good of all members of society, an all inclusive robust citizen engagement of the state is critical and essential. And since the power of the purse belongs to the people, an adapted participatory budgeting process can be a starting point for citizen engagement in the governance and sustainable development of the nation. Participatory Budgeting (PB) is simply an inclusive and transparent way to manage public money, and to engage people in government. It is a democratic process in which citizens (directly or indirectly through their elected representatives) decide how to spend part of a public budget. It enables citizens/taxpayers to work

with government to make the budget decisions that affect their lives.

The PB process will certainly enrich the nation's development planning by reversing the present trend of top-down approach to that of bottom-up approach. It will also lead to transparent appropriation of resources, enhance the effectiveness of the budgeting process and ensure the sustainability of projects. Government should become more popular in outlook and less elitist. Prompt attention and responsiveness to the people's needs will reduce, to a large extent, the feeling of alienation and aggression in the people. If the people are encouraged to be more involved in decision-making processes about issues that concern them, they will be more active and receptive of government's policies.

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