THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: THE UNIVERSITIES' PERSPECTIVE*

Abstract
The issue of sustainable development has been in the world agenda for several years now. It has occupied the minds of scholars, political activists, local and international civil organizations for years now wiry more vigor since 2015 when the United Nations in collaboration with world leaders officially declared the goals and 169 targets to be met by the year 2030. This, they tagged the global goal agenda 2030. Before this, there has been great concern as to what sustainable development really means. The definition from the World Commission on Environments is widely acclaimed. According to the commission sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This means that tour ability to balance social, economic and environmental objectives when making decisions today ensures the satisfaction of further needs. This paper using doctrinal method, with sources from authors and internet seeks to examine the SDGS framework and the role of the university in achieving these goals. It is found that many countries may require beyond 2030 if ever to attain this and it is recommended that they strive at partnership with better informed societies.

Keywords: Sustainable development goals, Legal framework, Universities, Perspectives

1. Introduction

The 2030 agenda for sustainable development of the United Nations is one of the most important global agreements in recent times. The genesis was the meeting of governments in Stockholm Sweden for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. The basic issue considered in this conference in 1972 was the rights of the family to a healthy and productive environment.[1] The World Commission on Environment and Development also known as the Brundtland Commission was created by the United Nations in 1983 and later defined sustainable development as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their known needs.[2] In 1992, United Nations held its first conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) also called the farth summit in Rio de Janeiro, where Agenda 21 for environment and development was adored. The main United Nations Conference on sustainable development (UNCSD) also known as Rio + 20 was in 2012 which emerged as a 20 year follow up to UNCED and Columbia proposed the idea of the goals at a preparation event for Rio+20 in Indonesia in July 2014.[3] Subsequently, member states reached a resolution known as 'The future we want'[4] and among the key issues were poverty eradication, energy, water and sanitation, health and human settlement. The United Nations did not stop so far rather a 30 member UN General Assembly open Working Group, on sustainable development goals was established to fathom out the specific goals' in January 2013. The group submitted their proposal of 17 SDGS and 169 targets to the 68th session of the General Assembly in September 2014 and this was accepted as a working document on 5th December 2014. The UN led process invoked its 193 member states and the global society. The resolution[5] is an intergovernmental agreement acting as a post 2015 development agenda. Ban Ki – moon, the then Secretary General of the United Nations had statd in a press conference that 'there is no plan B because there is no plan B1' and this thought propelled the development of the sustainable development goals as a follow up to the millennium development goals. This paper again looks at the framework of the SDGS especially from the perspective of the university.

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[1] .the history of sustainable development in the United Nations (https://odeb.archive.org/web/20120618171731) (http://www.uncsc 2012.org/history .html accessed 31/7/19.

[2] . Development, World Commission on Environment and 'our Common furture, chapter 2: Towards Sustainable Development – A/42/427 Annsw chapter 2 - UN Documents: Gathering a body of global agreements ' (http://www.un-documts . net/orf-02.htm) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/suistainable development goals accessed 31/7/19.

[3] . Cabal llano, Paula 'A short history of the s(https://web.archive.org/web/20171118221940 http//deliver 2013 accessed 1/8/10.

[4] .'Future we want' – outcome document …sustainable development knowledge platform' (https://sustainable development. Un.org/future we want.html).sustainable development.un.org accessed on 3/8/19.

[5] . Resolution A/RES/66/288 entitled 'The Future we Want'.

2. The Rationale for the SDGS
The 191 member states of the United Nations agreed to achieve the millennium development goals by 2015. It was signed in September 2000. The eighth goals comprising
- To eradicate poverty
- To achieve Universal Primal Education
- To promote Gender equality and empower women
- To reduce child mortality
- To improve maternal health
- To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- To ensure environmental sustainability
- To develop a global partnership for development

Apparently the MDGS were not achieved competently by 2015. While Malaria may have reduced significantly[6] hunger and disease still ravage Africa and the entire world respectively. HIV/AIDS may have reduced in the developed world, but in Africa, it is still a major source of death, due to a number of peculiar factors. Women empowerment may have improved in a way especially in Nigeria but gender inequality still persists in many spheres due to the endemic cultural acceptances. The millennium development goals ended in 2015. The gaps and the short comings of the MDG 8 led to identifying the problem in the hither to situation of donor-recipient relationships as against the collective action by all countries which the new SDGS offer. This and other reasons expressed above necessitated a follow up of the MDGS with a variation and expansion of the goals and a longer time frame.

3. The SDGS Framework
The 2030 agenda for sustainable development is one of the most important global agreements in recent history. The agenda with the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGS at cuts core, is a guide to tackling the world's most pressing challenges including poverty, bringing economic prosperity, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, peace and good governance in all countries and peoples by the year 2030. The sustainable development goals which form the 2030 agenda for sustainable development adopted by all United Nation member states in 2015, provides a shared blue print for peace and prosperity for all now and into the future. This agenda is not for the people but also their planet. At the heart of the agenda are the 17 goals which form the urgent call for action by both developing and already developed countries in a global partnership. They believe that ending poverty has a cause and effect with other depravations and strategies must be developed to reduce inequalities, health situation and economic growth while still tackling the environmental issues like climate change, preservation of the forests and oceans. In response to the accusation that the MDGS were too narrow in focus, the SDGS set out to tackle a whole range of issues from gender inequality to climate change. The unifying thread throughout the 17 goals and their 169 targets is the commitment to ending poverty. Ending poverty in all its ramification is the greatest global challenge and is key to sustainable development. As well as being more all encompassing than the MDGS the consultation process was also much more inclusive. Banki-moon called it the most transparent and inclusive process in United Nations' history.[7] A lot of effort was made at involving as many people as possible especially those who normally would not be involved in such and international agreement. This is different from the development and implementation of the MDGS which one expert described as an internal UN bureaucratic creation'[8]. The Sustainable Development Goals are broad based and interdependent. The 17 goals each have a list of targets that are measured with indicators and various tools exist to track and visualize progress towards the goals.[9]

The goals are as follows:
1. **No Poverty**: This goal says 'End poverty in all its forms everywhere'[10].It is believed that extreme poverty has been cut down since 1990 but still one out of ten people do not meet the target figure living on S1.90 per day.[11] A

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[6] . http//malaria journal. Biomed central.Com accessed 6/8/19.
[7] . Stephanie Thomson 'What are the Sustainable Development Goals? World Economic Forum at http://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/09/what -are-the-sustainable-development-goals/
[8] Ibid.
[9]17 Goals – The SDG Tracker: Charts, graphs and data at your fingertips' http://17goals.org/the -sdg-tracker accessed 0n 19/8/19.
[10]Goal 1: No Poverty '(http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en home/sustainable-development-global-1-no-poverty.htmlundp accessed on 10/8/19.
[11] 'Pov Callet' (http://iresearch.worldbank.org/povcalnet/povduplicate WB.aspxiressaanctworld.org accessed on 8/8/19.

better index may be obtained by exposing the need of those who are worst off, such as women and   children. In essence goal no 1 intends to end extreme poverty in all states globally by the year 2030**.**

2. **Zero Hunge**r: This goals demands that hunger be reduced, food security achieved, nutrition improved and sustainable agriculture promoted. This would be accomplished by   doubling agricultural productivity and incomes of small scale producers. This could   be achieved by ensuring sustainable fool production systems and improving land and   soil quality. Other targets seek to maintain genetic diversity of seeds, increasing access to land and even ending malnutrition and under nutrition of children.

3. **Good Health and Well being for People:** Ensure health lives and promote well being for all at all ages. A lot of progress has been made in increasing life expectancy and reducing common killers associated with   child and maternal mortality. From year 2000 to 2016 under five mortality rate decreased by 47% (from 78 deaths per 1000 live births to 41 deaths per 1000 live births.[12]However the number of children dying is still very high with about 5.6 million in 2016 alone[13]. SDG Goal 3 expects to reduce under-five mortality to at least as low as 25 per 100 live births but if current trend is anything to go by, many countries will miss this target by 2030. The goal also targets to reduce maternal deaths and increase access to clean water and sanitation, reduce malaria, tuberculosis, polio and the spread of HIV?AIDS. it also targets to achieve universal health coverage including access to essential medicines and vaccines.[14]   Attention to health and well being also includes attention on prevention and treatment of substance abuse, deaths and injuries from traffic accidents, and hazardous chemicals eg air, water, soil pollution and contamination.[15]

4. **Quality Education**: The goal aims at 'Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.[16] Some progress has been made in access to education. Number of children out of school has decreased from 112 million in 1997 to 60 million in 2014.[17] It should be noted that access to education does not always mean quality education or completion of primary school. Target 1 of goal 4 is to ensure that all girls and boys complete free equitable and quality primary and secondary education.

5. **Gender Equality:** 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'[18]The United Nations view gender equality as not only a fundamental human right but also the fabric upon which a peaceful, progressives and sustainable world could be built. Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work and representation in the public sector and decision making processes will make for sustainable economies' and benefit societies and humanity at large. Gender discrimination still forms the basis of legal systems and laws in many countries, Nigeria inclusive. Issues like Child marriage, FGM**,** Women friendly legislation**,** Secondary schools for all gills, must be addressed.

6. **Clean Water and Sanitation**: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.[19] It has eight targets and eleven indicators that will be used to monitor the targets. First three targets relate to drinking water supp0ly and sanitation. Toilets in schools and work places are specifically mention as target to measure. Water scores are better preserved if open defecation is avoided completely. The main indicator is the proportion of the population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand washing facility with soap and water.

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[12]Progress for Every Child in the SDGS Era' (https://data.unicef.org/op-content/uploads/2018/03/progress-for-every-child-v4.pdf)(PDF)UNICEF accessed on 28/7/19.
[13]Ibid.
[14]'WHO-UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015' (http://www.who.int/mediacountrey/events/metings/2015 UN-sustainable-development -summit/en).who accessed on 20/8/19
[15] Ibid.
[16] 'Goal 4 Quality Education' (http://www.undop.org/
[17]education : Number of out of school children of primary school age (http://data.ws.unesco.org/?query:d=121) data.uis.unesco.org accessed on 20/8/19.
[18]'Goal 5: Gender equality' (http://www.undp.org/content/undp/enhome/sustainable-development-gender /goal 5-gender equality.htm 1) uNDP accessed on 10/6/19.
[19]. Goal 6 clean water and sanitation (htlp://www.undpiorg/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-6-water and sanitation.Html). UNDP accessed on 10/6/19.

7. **Affordable and clean Energy:**
Ensure access to affordable and reliable energy while increasing the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix. Reliability sho9uld be removed from polluting fuels and investing in solar, wind and thermal power should be encouraged. Upgrading technology for clean energy sources is crucial especially in developing countries.

8. **Decent Work and Economic Growth:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth full and productive employment and decent work for all. For the least developed countries the economic target is to attain at least 7 percent annual growth in gross domestic product (GDP). This requires diversification and upgraded technology, innovation, entrepreneurships and growth of small and medium sized enterprises.

9. **Industry, Innovation and Infrastructures:** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation[20]. Manufacture is a major spruce of employment. Manufacturing of high products contributes 80 percent of total manufacturing output in industrialized economies but barely 10 percent in the least developed countries[21]. For example mobile cellular signal coverage has improved a great deal in the so called unconnected parts of the world 85 percent of people now live in covered areas and 95 percent of the world population are covered.[22]

10. **Reducing Inequalities**: Reduce income inequalities within and among countries.The targets here are 1) sustain income growth of the bottom 40 percent of the population at a rate higher than the national average'. This is shared prosperity and complements SDG 1. (Eradication of extreme poverty) (ii) Reduce the transaction costs for migrant remittances to below 3 percent. (cost of international migrants sending money home known as remittances). Different costs even exists for post offices and money transfer companies (6%) commercial banks charge 11%, prepaid cards and mobile money companies charge 2 to 4 % but these were not widely available by 2017 in typical remittance issues.[23]

11. **Sustainable Cities and Communities**: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. The target by 2030 is to ensure access to safe and affordable housing.

12: **Responsible Consumption and Production**: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. Target includes using eco-friendly production methods and reduce the amount of waste' Recycling should increase.

13. **Climate Change:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy'. Tackling climate change can only be possible if the SDGS are met as economic development and climate change are linked.

14: **Life below Water**.
Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. The targets include preventing and deducting marine pollution and acidification, protecting marine and coastal ecosystems and regulating fishing. The targets also call for scientific knowledge of the oceans. Oceans and seas cover 71 percent of the earth's surface and are essential for making the planet livable. Rain water, drinking water and climate are all regulated by ocean temperatures and currents. Marine pollution caused by humans kills sea bird, marine mammals and fishes. Individuals can help the oceans by reducing the energy consumption, and use of plastics. Improving the oceans contributes to poverty reduction as it affords the law income families an opportunity for income and healthy food. in less developed countries a clean beach can attract tourism and reduce poverty by providing more employment.

15. **Life on Land:** 'Protect, restore and prompter sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. Sustainable manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land depredation and halt bio-diversity loss. This goal articulates targets for preserving biodiversity of forests, deserts and maintains ecosystems as a percentage of total land mass.

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[20] Sustainable Development Goals – Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sustainable-development-goals.
[21]*Ibid.*
[22] *Ibid.*
[23]*Ibid.*

16.**Peace, justice and strong institutions:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive be institutions at all levels.One target is to see the end of sex trafficking forced labour and all forms of violence against and future of children. The challenge here is insufficient data. Peace, justice and stronger judicial systems that will enforce laws and work towards a more peaceful and just society are the craving of the United Nation. This goal also targets universal legal identity and birth regulation. Where the birth of children is predominantly unregistered the country will need to buckle up to achieve universal birth registration by 2030.

17. **Partnership for the goals**
Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development. International cooperation should be increased. It is no longer international funding as in MDGS but now international partnership to share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial support.

4. Essential Interwoven Issues
The UN targets too reach the community which is far far behind others. For this purpose issues must address all the vulnerable groups such as children, disabled, the elderly, refugees, migrants, indigenous peoples and internally displaced persons.[24] It is widely acclaimed that attainment of SDGS will be stalled if women empowerment and gender equality is not holistically addressed. Education is another cross cutting issues. Others will include education, gender and technology (massive open online courses) to get to a wider audience, investment, implementation and support and also tracking the progress of the sustainable development goals. The SDGS are not without any criticisms. They have been criticized for having too many goals that are also competing.

5. The Perspective of the Universities
The SDGS cover a wider range of complex socio-economic and environmental challenges, and addressing them will require transformations in how societies and economies function ad how we interact with our challenges. One area that needs exposure is the role of certain public institutions especially knowledge institutions and their role in the implementation of these goals. Here, we prefer to the specific role of universities as well as their centrality in the provision of information and knowledge and how this in turn can be used on the implementation and attainment of sustainable development goals at the national and local goal. Universities, with their broad remit around the creation and dissemination of knowledge and their unique position within society have a critical role to play in the achievements of the sustainable development goals. Arguably, none of the SDGS can be effective achieved without roles from universities as a sector. For a university to further promote the attainment of the sustainable development goals the university itself must be a sustainable one. It must operate to help address climate change, biodiversity loss and social inequality. A sustainable university is an educational institution that educates global citizens for sustainable development, offers new insight on urgent societal challenges and reduces the environmental and social footprints of its campus operations.[25] Research and education are explicitly recognized in a number of the SDFGS and universities have a direct role in addressing these. However the role of the university is broad as they can help in implementing the individual goals as well as the framework itself.

Aspects of a sustainable university

Education: The focus of education in a sustainable university will be to empower global citizens for sustainable development. Curriculum should address topics from a social, economic and environmental perspective e.g. engineering students should not just learn about constructing a building in the most cost efficient manner but to construct a zero energy building that provides long term benefits to its occupants. Students should also learn to explore real life questions through projects and case studies. A sustainable university empowers students to learn about sustainability in an inter-disciplinary and learner centered way. In otherwise, the university provides students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to understand and address the SDG solutions and above all providing accessible, affordable and inclusive education to all.

Research: The University provides necessary knowledge. Evidence based solutions, technologies, pathways and innovation to underpin and support the implementation of the SDGS by the global communities through both traditional approach and the newer interdisciplinary approaches. To achieve this, researches should not be done for

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[24] .What is a sustainable University? Green Office Movement, https://www.greenoffice.orgment .org/sustainable university/
[25].*Ibid*

authorities and war mongering governments on how to make weapons of mass destruction but to find solutions to world hunger, economic inequality and climate change. Research projects should be run in an environmentally friendly way themselves and catering during project workshops should be health food all the way. Research funding should not be only in academic journals where only the people in the particular area would find it but should be able to educate the general public and should be accessible to all.

Operations' Principles of the SDGS should be implemented through governance structures, operational polices and decisions such as those relating to employment, finance, campus services procurement, support services, human resources and student administration. The import of this is that a zero foot print for campus operations is required. To achieve these buildings in the school must not waste energy or lack recycling. Buildings should be equipped with solar cells, good insulation and energy efficient lighting. Procurements practices should support human rights, animal health and labour conditions. Environmental impacts of laboratories must be improved.

External Leadership: The University is in a position to strengthen public engagement and participation in addressing the SDGS by initiating and facilitating cross sectional dialogues and actions, ensuring higher education sector representation in national implementation and eloping to design SDGS bused policies.

6. Conclusion
Universities award the highest degrees of the education system: Bachelors, Masters and PhD degrees, thus giving them the authority to shape the economic and political leaders and managers of tomorrow. The Universities should therefore function to foster sustainability education by inculcating in students a rejection of just being obedient citizens and passive consumers. Engaging with the SDGS will also greatly benefit universities by helping them demonstrate university impact, capture demand for SDG-related education, build new partnerships, access new funding streams, and define a university that is responsible, in tandem with the dictates of civilization and globally acclaimed.