

A Review of Nigeria's National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2025: Implications for the Women Economic Empowerment



Table of Contents

List of Abbreviation	2
Introduction	3
Methodology.....	3
Overview of the New National Development Plan 2021-2025.....	3
National Development Plan 2021-2025 and Women Economic Empowerment.....	5
Policy issues and analysis.....	11
Understanding the implementation unit of the National Development Plan 2021-2025	14
Role of Nigerian Women in National Development Plan Implementation	14
How to support women groups in monitoring the full implementation of the WEE in the National Development Plan.....	15
Conclusion.....	15
Recommendations	16
References.....	16

List of Abbreviation

CCHT	Culture, Creative, Hospitality and Tourism
CSOs	Civil Society Organization
CWG	Central Working group
ERGP	Economic Recovery and Growth Plan
ESP	Economic Sustainability Plan
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FEC	Federal Executive Council
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEPP	Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme
LGAs	Local Government Areas
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries Department and Agencies
MSME	Micro Small Medium Enterprises
MTNDP	Medium-Term National Development Plan
NDP	National Development Plan
NDR	Nigeria Development Report
NPRGP	National Poverty Reduction with Growth Plan
NSC	National Steering Committee
PIU	Development Plan Implementation Unit
POCs	people of concern
TWGs	Technical Working Groups
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment

Introduction

Between 1960 and the present, Nigeria has developed a series of development plans as part of the efforts to move the country towards the path of growth and development. The national development is a country's national plan that stipulates the Country's medium-term strategic direction, development priorities and implementation strategies for years. On the 10th of November 2021, the draft National Development Plan for the period 2021 and 2025 was approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC). The plan is expected to succeed the Nigeria Vision 20:2020 Economic Transformation Blueprint, Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017-2020 and the Economic Sustainability 2020 that elapsed in the year 2020¹. The new development plan is aimed at building a vast infrastructure development, promoting macroeconomic stability, improve living conditions among others. Therefore, given the importance of Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) to the national socioeconomic and political development, this report, analysis the new plan with the following objectives.

1. Determine whether or not the new plan prioritizes WEE.
2. Ascertain whether WEE is seen as a strategy for achieving the goals of the plan.
3. Identify the similarity and differences between the new plan and the previous development plans
4. Identify the policy issues in the new plan

Methodology

This is a desk review method with a specific focus on the women's economic empowerment related priorities in the National Development Plan 2021-2025. Activities focusing on opportunities for women such as financial inclusion, market access, provision of skill and training, tools and equipment, targeting women alone or women-plus others were tracked to arrive at the conclusion.

Overview of the New National Development Plan 2021-2025

In 2020 (June and September), the three planning committees namely Technical Working Groups (TWGs), Central Working group (CWG) and National Steering Committee (NSC) were set up to prepare the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP), 2021-2025, MTNDP 2026-2030 and Agenda 2050. One year after their inauguration, the draft of the long-awaited development plan was approved. The new National Development Plan which is aimed at generating 21 million full-time jobs and lift 35 million people out of poverty by 2025. It is part of the Federal Government's efforts to lift about 100 million Nigerians out of poverty in 10 years. The plan has the following broad strategic objectives.

- To establish a strong foundation for a diversified economy, with robust MSME growth, and a more-resilient business environment,

¹ NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP) 2021-2025 (Vol. 1), Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Page 3.

- To invest in critical physical, financial, digital, and innovation infrastructure,
- To build a solid framework and enhance capacities to strengthen security and ensure good governance, and
- To enable a vibrant, educated, and healthy population.

To achieve these objectives, an investment of about N348.1 trillion from both the public and the private sectors is estimated between 2021-2025. While 14% (N49.7 trillion) of the fund will be sourced from the government capital budgetary allocation, 86% (N298.3 trillion) will be sourced from the private investors. Certainly, 59.5% of the N49.7 trillion from the public sector will be contributed by the Federal Government, 27.2% (N13.4 trillion) by the State Governments, and 13.6% (N6.8 trillion) by the Local Governments. This fund is expected to fund the 31 sectoral priorities classified under the five thematic areas as seen in table 1 below.

Table 1: NDP 2021-2025 Sectoral Priorities

Thematic Areas	Sectoral Priorities	Sectors with WEE Strategic Priorities
Economic Growth and Development	1. Macroeconomic Framework, 2. Agriculture and Food Security, 3. Integrated Rural Development, 4. Manufacturing, 5. Oil and Gas, 6. Solid Minerals, Mining and Steel Development, 7. Culture, Creative, Hospitality and Tourism (CCHT), 8. Business Environment, Trade and Competitiveness	1. Agriculture and Food Security
Infrastructure	9. Transportation, 10. Power and Alternative Energy, 11. Housing and Urban Development, 12. Digital Economy, 13. Science, 14. Technology and Innovation, 15. Financial Sector	2. Digital Economy
Public Administration	16. Defence, 17. Peace and Security, 18. Governance, Institutions and National Orientation, 19. Foreign Policy and International Economic Relationship	3. Governance, Institutions and National Orientation,
Human Capital Development	20. Education And Human Resources, 21. Health, 22. Food and Nutrition	4. Education And Human Resources,
Social Development	23. Water Resources and Sanitation, 24. Environment and Disaster Management, 25. Women and Gender Equity, 26. Population and Identity Management, 27. Accelerating the Realisation of Demographic Dividend in Nigeria, 28. Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, 29. Humanitarian Affairs, 30. Youths Development, 31. Employment and Job Creation	5. Women and Gender Equity, 6. Population and Identity Management, 7. Accelerating the Realisation of Demographic Dividend in Nigeria, 8. Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, 9. Employment and Job Creation

Source: National Development Plan 2021-2025 (Vol. 1)

Each of these sectors has a strategic and policies framework and estimated investment and resource allocation for the realization of their specific sectoral objectives. This makes the plan document more different from the previous development plans.

National Development Plan 2021-2025 and Women Economic Empowerment

Nigerian women constitute about 50% of the total population. Despite this estimate, they face serious socioeconomic challenges hindering them from achieving their full potential. Indeed, Nigeria women own less than 10% of the country's resources. Also, 13% of agricultural landowners are women despite constituting most of the labor force in the sector. Unlike the previous development plan, the new plan has about nine (9) sectoral priorities, where women's economic empowerment is seen as a sub-strategic priority. The plan explained thus:

The role of women in economic development is now widely recognized, which represents a unique opportunity to bring about significant change, by making gender issues a top priority of Nigeria's 2021-2025 development plan. Low gender parity has not prevented women from being actively involved in every sector of the economy.

National Development Plan 2021-2025 (Vol. 1), Page 140.

Therefore, the nine (9) sectoral priorities where WEE is prioritize in the new development plan 2021-2025 are discussed below.

1. Agriculture & Food Security

Existing agriculture financing schemes and initiatives to support value chain actors in maintaining and scaling up their operations will be realigned, while ensuring inclusion for women and youth-owned agro-businesses. This will be achieved by working with current agriculture financing ecosystem actors, including microfinance and commercial banks and ensuring the reorganisation of existing institutions such as the Bank of Agriculture and National Agricultural Insurance Corporation, and credit programmes including the Anchor Borrower's Programme among others. National Development Plan 2021-2025 (Vol. 1), page 49

This sector contributes about 2% to the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) in the 2020 fiscal year. It is recognized as one of the most important sectors for archiving the plan objectives. The government will ensure equity in ensuring that women have access to every agricultural input. Their capacity will also be built and be included in food security. In this

regard, the participation of women in this sector is expected to increase from 19.6 % to 25% by 2025.

2. Digital Economy

The plan recognized the role of digital economy in the development process as well as effective inclusion of the business both formal and informal in the economy. It recognized that lack of funding affects the promising start-up as well as the low-key Low skills development due to skills disconnection between academia and industry, which often leads to a shortage of workers with digital skills. During the implementation period, it is expected to improve the digital financial service by increasing digital financial inclusion especially in rural areas from less than 2% to 25% by 2025. An estimated 5000,000 graduate (male and female) are expected to be enrolled in advanced digital skills programmes annually. According to the plan;

The digital economy is also positioned to capture the potential benefits of the AfCFTA and drive job creation and income generation efforts, especially for women, youth, and informal businesses.

National Development Plan 2021-2025 (Vol. 1), page 93

This effort is expected to improve the various sectors such as trade, finance, and agriculture challenged by limited financial inclusion especially for women and youth. Indeed, the creation of a robust regulatory environment to protect and include more

Nigerians in a digital economy is considered a critical factor to remove bottlenecks and guarantee the competitiveness of Nigerian businesses including women enterprises ².

3. Governance, Institutions & National Orientation

According to Anne, et al. (2011: 4), to attain women's economic empowerment, there is a need to address the underlying factors that contribute to it. This according to them, includes institutions such as legal and policy structures, economic systems, market structures, marriage, inheritance, and education systems³. Thus, the new plan recognized the importance of citizen engagement and inclusion through policy and technology adoption. According to the plan,

The government will enact and implement policies that encourage citizen participation (particularly women and youth) to provide legal backing for citizen engagement. This will ensure increased transparency through higher citizenry access to information and participation in key decision-making areas. Finally, the government will create channels and mechanisms to engage directly with citizens and allow for the collection of feedback from the citizenry, ensuring that diverse voices are heard, and corresponding actions are swiftly taken.

National Development Plan 2021-2025 (Vol. 1), Page 109

Evidence has shown that when women are directly engaged by the policymakers, their voices are heard and there are high chances that their needs would be addressed.

4. Education and Human Resources

Nigeria will increase investments in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) & Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centres to boost enrolment in these programs, with particular attention paid to women enrolment.

National Development Plan 2021-2025 (Vol. 1), Page 119

Education remains the fundamental means of empowering women economically⁴. The new national development plan emphasis on skills development to equip Nigerians (both women and men) with the right competencies for employability through investments in key programs and skills. It commits thus,

The government is also expected to establish vocational centers in all states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and partner with the private employers across key sectors to align needed competencies with the national curriculum and develop skills certification programmes. It will also expand access to technological and entrepreneurial skills for Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSME) to boost their productivity and the nation's economy.

² National Development Plan 2021-2025 (Vol. 1), Page 128

³ Anne Marie Golla, Anju Malhotra, Priya Nanda, and Rekha Mehra. (2011), "Understanding and Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment Definition, Framework and Indicators", ICRW. Page 4

⁴ UNESCO, "Promoting women's participation in policy-making processes", Page 1. Available at www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/gender-and-science/womens-participation-in-policy-making-processes/

5. Women and Gender Equity

As one of the 31 sector priorities, the full participation of women in the economy would significantly contribute to improving socio-economic indicators such as GDP growth, employment generation, and poverty reduction. It is believed that the gender equity in the Nigerian workforce by 2025 would increase the GDP by 9% with an overall gain of US\$89 billion. The key objective of this sector is to improve gender parity and reduce gender-based violence. By 2025 while Nigeria raking in the Global gap index is expected to reduce from 128 to less than 100. The reported GBV cases are expected to also be reduced from 17.4% to less than 10%. Note that the Global Gender Gap Index measures four key dimensions namely economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment⁵. To achieve these strategic objectives, the government is expected to do the following:

1. Support the economic empowerment of women by facilitating access to financial literacy financing, providing skill building training and supporting MSMEs business viability.

2. Facilitate training for Women in Business associations at the national and state level.

3. Facilitating access to funds through digital finance tools as well as access to advisory services will equip women entrepreneurs with the tools needed to grow their businesses into viable enterprises.

NDP 2021-2025, (Vol. 1)
Page 141

4. Collaborate with private financial institutions (i.e., banks, insurance companies) to negotiate reduced interest and premium rates for women, while paying particular attention to rural women especially in relation to financial literacy and access to agency banking.

These initiatives are expected to boost job creation for women and cement their central place in the nation's economic growth and development. Thus, an estimated public investment of N108bn will be allocated to achieve the goals outlined in the area of women and gender equity over the Plan period. According to the plan, this will be used to execute priority projects in the sector as well as programmes essential to the operations of the relevant MDAs in charge of Women's Affairs and promote gender equity both at the National and sub-national levels⁶.

6. Population and identity management

With the average fertility rate stands at 5.3 average, the population is growing at 2.6% rate annually. The implications this could have on socioeconomic development cannot be emphasized. Several projections from the local and international institutions have

...maximizing the potential contribution of women is crucial, with a particular focus on the health, education, and life opportunities of adolescent girls and intensified investment in women's economic empowerment. Improvements in these areas are desirable by themselves and should continue to receive higher priority.

National Development Plan 2021-2025 (Vol. 1), Page 142

established that by 2050, Nigeria's population will double from 201.0 million to 401.3 million⁷

⁵ WEF- "Global Gender Gap Report 2021", http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf

⁶ National Development Plan 2021-2025 (Vol. 1), Page 199 -200.

⁷ Sola Ogundipe, "More People to Live in Nigeria than US", Vanguard Online 26th September 2019, Page 1/
<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/09/more-people-to-live-in-nigeria-than-us-by-2050/>

people and become the world's 3rd most populous country.⁸ With current average poverty rate of 40.1%, unemployment rate as high as 33.3%, average GDP growth rate below 4%⁹, and the country is also currently battling with various infrastructural deficits. The objective of this sector is to reduce the population growth rate from 2.6% to 2.5% by 2025, fertility rate from 5.3% to 4.7% by 2025, urbanisation rate from 52% to 40 by 2025, rural-urban migration rate from 6.5% to 5% in 2025 as well as increase life expectancy at birth from 55.2 years to 56.5 years by 2025 by strengthening the existing population management systems. Part of the programme to achieve this according to the plan is women empowerment. Ann .et al, (2011) had identified access to resources as building block that women can draw on to succeed economically or to exercise power and agency. These include human capital (i.e., education, skills, training, etc.), financial capital (i.e., loans, savings, etc.), social capital (i.e., networks, mentors, etc.), and physical capital (i.e., land, machinery, etc. They also identified Norms and institutions influence how resources are distributed and used.

7. Accelerating the realisation of demographic dividend in Nigeria

UNFPA defines a demographic dividend as the economic growth potential which can result from shifts in a population's age structure.¹⁰ This is when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (14 and younger, and 65 and older). This is a period during which the proportion of working-age people is increasing relative to the rest of the population¹¹. In a simpler term, it is an economic growth that may result from changes to a country's age structure, due to the shift from people living short lives and having large families to living long lives and having small families¹². Countries with a demographic dividend experience a decline in the proportion of children because of low fertility, and the proportion of elderly people is also small. This contributes to the creation of the needed savings, reduce mortality rate, improve productive conditions, financial and social institutions, and effective social protection systems that accelerate growth and development¹³. In the same vein, it is argued in the Nigeria New National Development Plan that a favourable demographic age structure can fuel the engine of economic growth in Nigeria. Thus, there can be a window of opportunity for Nigeria to benefit from a "demographic dividend (DD)" when there are many more who are of working age relative to those not, either because they are too young or too old".

However, it was noted, these benefits are not automatic, Nigeria must embark on policies to accelerate the demographic transition and develop its workforce to be productive. Thus, part of the objective of the sector as relates to WEE includes an increase in female secondary school education from 67% to 71% by 2025 and empowerment of women for greater participation in the labor force from 55% to 62% by 2025.

To achieve the target female secondary school education enrollment within the plan period, the plans identified the following strategies.

⁸ WPR: "Nigeria population 2021", page 1. Available at <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/nigeria-population>

⁹ 2021 Half year budget implementation report, page 6

¹⁰ UNFPA, "Demographic dividend", Page 1. Available at <https://www.unfpa.org/demographic-dividend#readmore-expand>

¹¹ Andrew et, al. Demographic dividends, <https://www.sustainablegoals.org.uk/demographic-dividends/>

¹² Katie Luoma, What is the Demographic Dividend? page 1, <https://populationeducation.org/what-demographic-dividend/>

¹³ Andrew et, al. Demographic dividends, <https://www.sustainablegoals.org.uk/demographic-dividends/>

1. Implement policies that can increase girls' enrollment in schools, including general increases in educational access, especially at the secondary level.

2. Free secondary school education will be offered to all adolescent girls in Nigeria.

3. Female education programs will facilitate the expansion of family planning coverage.

NDP 2021-2025, (Vol. 1) Page 147

In order to achieve the target empowerment of women for greater participation in the labour force during the plan period, the plans identified the following strategies.

1. Empowered women in Nigeria have the potential to transform Nigeria's economy from the current state of high fertility, low education and slow economic growth towards a state of high education and rapid economic growth.

2. ...expanding availability of microfinance, establishment of local savings groups, and community banks that can support poor Nigerian women who may not possess collateral for loans from advanced financial institutions.

3. ...scaling of successful small and medium scale businesses will be supported by advanced financial institutions and favorable trade policies, especially those that will support women and the young populations.

NDP 2021-2025, (Vol. 1) Page 147

The funding to drive the demographic dividend as detailed in Nigeria during the Plan period (2021-2025) by all tiers of government according to the plan would be delivered through MDA budgets. Some of the range of programmes in the budget document will include investment in accelerating fertility declines, secondary education opportunities among adolescent girls' women's economic empowerment and agricultural extension services. the specific funding commitment for the plan period was not stated.

8. Poverty alleviation and social protection

Over the year, the level of poverty among average Nigerians has risen from 39.1% in 2018 to 40.1% in 2019. On average, four (4) in ten (10) Nigerians or over 82.9 million Nigerians live in poverty according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in its latest Poverty and Inequality Report which defines national poverty as annual expenditure below N137,430 (N376.5 per day or roughly \$1 on 360/\$)¹⁴. According to the plan, 'poverty is the inability to live a fundamentally basic progressive life that would guarantee a sustainable and prosperous future. Roughly 40% of people live below the poverty line. Today, 74.63% of women do not have any income generating activities compared to 63.43% among men¹⁵. While 79.66% of women in both rural and urban Nigeria has some level of education¹⁶. This further heightens the poverty level. This is despite the Federal Government government's N500 billion annual budgets from 2016 for poverty reduction. Recently, the Federal Government launched the National Poverty Reduction with Growth Plan (NPRGP) in April 2021 – a 10 years (2021-2030) strategic framework aimed at lifting millions of Nigeria out of poverty.

¹⁴ <https://businessday.ng/business-economy/article/40-1-of-nigerians-poor-says-nbs-in-new-report/>

¹⁵ NBS: 2019 Poverty And inequality in Nigeria: Executive Summary, 2019.

¹⁶ Ibid

Like the above, the National Development Plan 2021-2025 is aimed to lift 35 million people out of poverty by 2025 and implement a national social protection system that will create a pathway from poverty to economic empowerment for all Nigerians (women inclusive) by 2025. It is expected that by 2025 the poverty headcount rate will reduce from its current 40% to 34%. In the same vein, through access to social services by the most vulnerable in the communities, the number of people of concern (POCs) provided with relief materials (food, non-food, medical) will also increase from 37,647 to 1,000,000 by 2025. One of the strategies identified to achieve these objectives/Targets is seen in the box below.

... a harmonized and transparent approach will generate support for social reforms, strengthen existing governance networks and develop a robust coordination framework to create a sustainable path to economic empowerment for over 50 million Nigerians.

National Development Plan 2021-2025 (Vol. 1), Page 151

To achieve the overall goals and objectives stated above, a Social Investment Fund of N5.4 trillion from 2021-2025 will be allocated across many MDAs. According to the plan, this is in line with the National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy (NPRGS)¹⁷. Thus, the resources for Poverty alleviation and social protection across levels are allocated through a broad range of MDAs budgets. Recall that over N400 billion is allocated for the National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy (FGN Commitment, Including NSIP Upscaling) in the 2022 proposed budget¹⁸.

9. Employment and Job Creation

In the recently released report on unemployment in Nigeria by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), female unemployment was highest among the genders with 35.2% while the male was 31.8% as of December 2020¹⁹. Between 2016 and 2021, several poverty reductions, economic policies, and stimulus were introduced, none was able to stem the tide. The unemployment rate increased from 13.9% in Q3 2016 to 33.3% in Q4 2020. Like the previous development plan: Vision 20: 2020, ERGP 2017-2020, and ESP 2020, the National Development Plan 2021-2025 has three major objectives namely job creation, ease of access to finance for entrepreneurs especially MSME and promotion of youths and females' inclusion in job creation and diversification.

"Government will fully support gender equality for gender balanced job opportunities across all sectors to significantly reduce the alarming rate of unemployment among women."

*National Development Plan 2021-2025 (Vol. 1),
Page 164*

In essence, the plan has a deliberate attempt to address female unemployment by setting the target for the five years periods (see table 2). This target and commitment have never been seen in the previous national or subnational development plan document.

¹⁷ National Development Plan 2021-2025 (Vol. 1), Page 209

¹⁸ Federal Government of Nigeria Proposed 2022 Budget, page 717-718.

¹⁹ Labor Force Statistics - Volume I: Unemployment and Underemployment Report (Q4 Q4 2020), March 2021, Page 37.

Table 2: Employment and Job Creation Objective and Indicators

Objectives	Key performance indicators	Baseline	Target
Create sustainable jobs	Number of jobs created	469,000	21 million
	Unemployment rate	33.3%	19.6%
	Productivity per capita	2,100	3,706
Create new and enterprises	Number of new jobs created by businesses	3.1 million	4 million (2025)
	Percentage of new businesses still in operation after 5 years	45% ⁶⁴	50%
Promote inclusion	Female labour force participation (%)	48.52% ⁶⁵	70%
	Youth labour force participation, (Ages 15 – 24) (%)	29% ⁶⁶	50%

Source: National Development Plan 2021-2025, page 237

However, between 2021 and 2025, an estimated public investment of N351 billion will be allocated to achieve the goals outlined in employment and job creation in 2021 and 2025.

Policy issues and analysis

All the policies namely ERGP, ESP, and the NDP 2021-2025 are all geared towards sustainable growth, jobs creation, and real poverty reduction with broad strategic objectives and a defined time frame. It is also observed that all have programmes on women.

While the ERGP 140 pages policy document has only four major women-specific economic empowerment programmes under four (4) sector components²⁰, the ESP has no specific women-focused economic empowerment programs, except for the lumpsum programme titled “Jobs for Youths and Women Post Covid-19” aimed at ensuring appropriate gender diversity, access to resources and empowerment opportunities²¹. Most of the empowerment programmes were not gender-disaggregated. Therefore, the new National Development Plan 2021-2025 has several WEE-related programmes under 9 sectoral components out of the 31 sectoral priorities identified in the policy documents.

However, what makes the national development plan 2021-2025 a little different from the previous plan is that the policy linked women’s empowerment to various sectors of the economy. A good example is population management, Accelerating the Realisation of demographic dividend, education, and human resources, digital economy, agriculture, employment and job creation, poverty reduction, etc. In the real sense, women’s economic empowerment is tied to socioeconomic growth and development and on several occasions seen as a strategy to accomplishing certain objectives. For instance, part of the objectives of agriculture and food security in the plan is to increase female participation in agriculture from from 19.6 percent to 25 percent agriculture in 2025. To do this, the FGN will ensure the inclusion of women and youth-owned agro-businesses in the agricultural financing schemes and initiatives²². Recall that in 2022 approved budget, the sum of N412 million was allocated for the women in agrobusiness with the code ‘ERGP8175006’. It shows a clear linkage between the plan and the budgeting.

²⁰ ERGP (2017-2025), page 60, 72, 94, 119, 126, and 134.

²¹ ESP 2020, page 46

²² NDP 2021-2025, (Vol. 1), page 48

Unlike the previous plans, the NDP 2021-2025 sectoral objectives target by 2025 is not limited to the microeconomic level. All specific sectoral programme objectives have their specific targets at the end of the implementation period (i.e 2025). This is an innovation by the NDP National Steering committee during the preparation stage. It was aimed at linking the plan with various sustainable development goals. This is not the case with previous plans. There is nowhere in the ERGP and ESP where the target was designed for each of the programmes objective at the end of the implementation period. For instance, under the Ministry of Health, the Universal Health Coverage is expected to increase from 5% to 25% by 2025. Under food and nutrition programmes, the number of vulnerable households with access to basic services is expected to increase from 36% to 60% in 2025. Under the Demographic Dividend, the Women's labour force participation is expected to reach 62% in 2025. This is to mention but a few. This policy approach allows the government to determine which programmes strategy is working and which one is working at the end of the implementation period. Indeed, it allows flexibility.

Despite the above strategy and targets, the plan failed to delineate the target for women in many of the programmes and set goals. It is universally recognized that women and girls faced a series of challenges in assessing opportunities in their localities due to some cultural, religious, and/or economic barriers. However, the Federal Government target on housing supply rate of 1,000,000 per year from the current 500,000 has no established target on the number of women to benefit from the housing and to which number to be accrued for them. This is considering the fact that only 2.5% of Nigerian women own any house alone and 4.2% own any land.²³ The same is observable in assessing to digital skills. Under this programme, 500,000 graduates are to be enrolled in advanced digital skills programmes annually. What percentage will go to women graduate by 2025 was not stated. Also, the youth unemployment rate is expected to reduce from 42% percent to 25% by 2025. Indeed, there was no deliberate attempt on the part of the government to set such a goal for women who are already unemployed. These are some of the few examples of many lump sum targets/goals in the new plan.

Furthermore, there were no specific design activities in the new development plan. What is however available are programmes objective, target, strategy, investment, and resource allocation. Also, the MDAs implementing the WEE programmes under each of the sectors were not stated. The ERGP and ESP have specific activities for various programmes and implementing MDAs. For instance, under the ERGP, there is a provision for micro-loans for women through the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) and Women Empowerment Fund under programme titled "Manufacturing" being implemented by lead seven MDAs²⁴. There is also provision for the micro-loans for women through the GEEP and Women Empowerment Fund under the programme titled "Cross-sector strategies" being implemented by six MDAs.²⁵ Likewise

²³ Nigeria Demographic Health Survey, 2018, page 394-395

²⁴ These MDAs are Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Power, Works and Housing, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Women Affairs, Office of The Vice President and the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory. See Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017-2020, Page 59-60

²⁵ These MDAs are Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, Ministry of Finance, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Women Affairs, and Central Bank of Nigeria. See Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017-2020, page 125-126.

the ESP, where there is a provision of start-up capital and entrepreneurship skills for young Nigerians and women under the programme titled “Jobs for Youths and Women Post Covid-19”.²⁶

Unlike the ESP and ERGP, the NDP 2021-2025 is developed through an investment plan of N348.1 trillion from both the public and private sectors. The public sectors include the Federal government, the State and the Local governments whose contribution is manifested through their annual capital budget. While the total funding commitment for the ERGP was not established for the four years in its policy document, the one-year investment plan of the ESP was only N2.3 trillion funded exclusively by the Federal Government²⁷. Thus, the total actual investment plan from the private sector, Federal Government, State Government or LGAs on WEE was not included in the plan.

Also, the National Development Plan 2021-2025 recognizes the significance of the local government to national development. In terms of investment of about N6 trillion and programmes implementation. According to the plan, “local Governments are also expected to contribute to job creation efforts through the One-Product Initiative Targeting Youths and Women”. This is a shift from the previous plans that pay little attention to local government in the implementation of the National Development Plan. Recall, plan was developed in consultation with stakeholders across the board. All the 36 states of the Federation and Federal Capital Territory Administration, representatives of the Local Government Councils, Organised Private Sector, Youths, labour Unions, Traditional and Religious organizations, amongst others, were all involved in the preparation process²⁸.

Another fundamental issue in the new National Development Plan is the local government's contribution towards its implementation. With N6.8 trillion to be contributed by the 774 LGAs across the country through their capital expenditure, a good measure! though, the question remains that how many of the 774 LGAs implement the capital budget. Both the States and LGAs operate statutory joint accounts managed by the States. This legal framework is being exploited by the State governments. Section 162 subsection 6 of the 1999 constitution as amended, stated

‘Each State shall maintain a special account to be called “State Joint Local Government Account” into which shall be paid all allocations to the Local Government Councils of the State from the Federation Account and from the Government of the State.’²⁹

Indeed, the local government statutory funding is under the control of the state government who in most cases select the chairmanship of the LGA's under them³⁰. With this, they determine what amount goes to the local government. The implication is that the LGAs may not have enough funds to implement the WEE component of the plan and had to depend on what the state government does.

²⁶ Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP) 2020, Page 45.

²⁷ Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP) 2020, Page 10.

²⁸ National Development Plan 2021-2025 (Vol. 1), Page 28

²⁹ Section 162 (6) 1999 CFRN as Amended.

³⁰ <https://www.pulse.ng/news/local/local-government-autonomy-will-clip-governors-wings-curb-corruption-sen-gumel/enehp0f> page 1.

Understanding the implementation unit of the National Development Plan 2021-2025

According to the plan, the Development Plan Implementation Unit (PIU) will be set up to report to NSC headed by the Vice President, with the HM/HMS Budget and National Planning as Vice Chair in the Budget and Planning Arm to promote overall coordination with the MDAs, private sector operators, CSOs, amongst others. The M&E and Coordination structure will also be established within the Planning Arm to provide a central coordinating mechanism³¹. This is part of a strong institutional framework that encourages performance and accountability in the plan implementation. The PIU will perform the following roles;

- a) Work with all actors to activate the plan and ensure effective alignment of the priorities in the Plan, the annual national budgets, the priority policies and programmes across all stakeholders
- b) Track activities and performance of outlined programmes
- c) Prepare Nigeria Development Report (NDR) providing an account of the progress on targets and goals
- d) Expand the implementation capacity of MDAs by working closely with them and providing execution support
- e) Submit Plan quarterly reports to the Steering Committee
- f) Identify bottlenecks and resolve issues
- g) Prepare Nigeria Development Report (NDR) providing an account of the progress on targets and goals
- h) Expand the implementation capacity of MDAs by working closely with them and providing execution support
- i) Submit Plan quarterly reports to the Steering Committee
- j) Identify bottlenecks and resolve the issue

Role of Nigerian Women in National Development Plan Implementation

- The Nigeria women should work with the Development Plan Implementation Unit comprising of the Federal and State Government Officials, representatives of the private sector, the media, and civil society under the chairmanship of the Vice President who will meet regularly to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the National Development Plan 2021-2025 across all levels of government.
- Nigeria women should work with the M&E coordination structure to ensure proper monitoring of the programmes and also ensure that the MDAs implement the strategy without duplication, overlaps, and encroachment.
- Nigerian women need to engage MDAs responsible for WEE implementation at the National, State and LGAs to ensure that the WEE-related components of the projects are fully implemented.
- The women Civil society organization and activist need to provide a timely and accurate progress report of programmes and projects in line with the approved reporting standards and

³¹ National Development Plan 2021-2025 (Vol. 1), Page 254

formats that ascertain the level at which gender equality is considered in the project implementation.

- They should work together to track women's economic empowerment programmes that were lumped in other component, and monitor their full implementation.
- Mobilise stakeholders across the 774 LGAs to create awareness about the importance of WEE in the programme's implementation at all levels.
- The women groups also need to work with private sectors on needs to give priority to WEE in the design of their programmes and also provides an independent report when necessary. This will help to identify and bridge lapses.

How to support women groups in monitoring the full implementation of the WEE in the National Development Plan

- The state and non-state actors should provide technical/human resource capacity to support women groups in the implementation process of the national development plan 2021-2025.
- The development of M&E tool to monitor the process of the national development plan over the implementation period.
- The development of scorecard as a community accountability tool.
- Support the dissemination of the findings on the national development plan implementation level.
- Development of the communication and advocacy strategies on national development plan implementation.
- Develop awareness and sensitization campaign strategies on new national development plan effective implementation.
- Simplify the plan document relating to WEE in different languages for citizens government engagement

Conclusion

The new national development plan 2021-2025 is a milestone in the Nigeria national plan. The new plan is a shift from the previous plan with its clear incorporation of women's economic empowerment in about nine (9) sectors of the economy. While there are similarities between the NDP 2021-2025, ERGP 2017-2020 and ESP 2020 in terms of objectives, components and medium-term structure, there are differences in terms of priorities, implementation strategy, and WEE components. Various policy issues such as lack of defined activities, LGAs contribution and the joint account dichotomy, lack of a clear linkage between the implementing MDAs and the sectoral/programmes priorities, emergence of development plan implementation unit among others were identified. It could however, be argued although WEE was seen as a strategy for achieving the goals of the plan, the actual investment plan from Private Sector, Federal Government, States Government, or LGAs for WEE was not stated in the plan. Also, not all sectors have a clear WEE intervention or see WEE as a major strategic priority.

Recommendations

- CSOs should conduct high level advocacy to the WEE implementing MDAs.
- CSOs should endeavor to engage National Assembly on the amount to be dedicated to the WEE in both their annual ZIP.
- CSOs should create awareness on the full implementation of the NDP 2021-2025 and also monitor implementation.
- Simplify the document for effective understanding by the average Nigerian women
- CSOs should carry out independent progress report of the NDP 2021-2025 for effectiveness during the implementation.

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PAWED Profile

Partnership for Advancing women Empowerment in Development (PAWED) is two years project with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation (BMGF). It aims at building a Nigerian CSO advocacy and communications coalition to advance evidence, policies and programs that further women's economic empowerment vanguard organizations such as Women's Empowerment Collectives. The project is being implemented by development Research and Project Centre (dRPC). The three primary objectives for the PAWED project are:

- Increase the salience of women's economic empowerment with national and state government ministries, writ large
- Increase the salience of effective policies and programs to advance women's economic empowerment with donors and national and state government ministries, with a primary focus on women's empowerment collectives
- Increase the salience of women's economic empowerment amongst civil society and influential leaders and their appetite to support change that might be in opposition to cultural and social norms.

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