

FROM THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY & GROWTH PLAN (ERGP) 2017-2020, TO THE ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY PLAN (ESP) 2020, AND THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN IS MEDIUM TERM NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (MTNDP) 2021 - 2030 AND AGENDA 2050 – IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



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Introduction

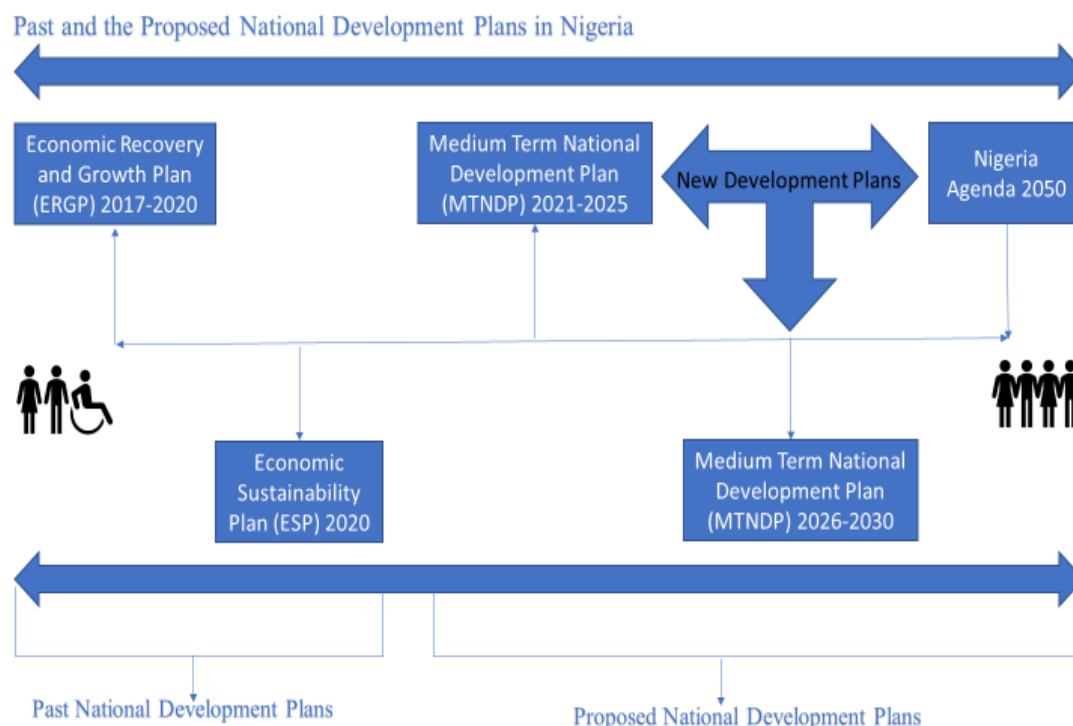
In June 2021, the National Assembly called for the review of the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan 2017-2020, four years after it was launched. Having come to an end in 2020 with no available report on whether it has failed or succeeded, the National Assembly saw the call as imperative to determine whether or not Nigeria had made progress or failed in terms of growing the economy, given the fact that the ERGP was the main source document of Nigeria's four years Appropriations Acts (2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021). While it is important for the NASS to inquire about the performance of the plan, it is also critical to examine the gender audits of the plan. This is because between 2017 and present, efforts were made by the Federal Government on development plans such as the Economic Sustainability Plans (ESP) launched in 2020, the ongoing preparation of the Medium-Term Development Framework (MTNDP) 2021-2025, MTNDP 2026-2030 and Nigeria Agenda 2050 towards ensuring that it attains its full potential.

This report reviews the past development plans (ERGP and ESP) and the proposed MTNDP 2021 -2030 and Nigeria Agenda 2050 and other plans to ascertain the level of success and best practices, identify gender gaps for improvement in the subsequent plan and look for the opportunity of addressing women economic empowerment.

Gender issues in Nigeria's development plans

Between 1999 and 2020, several national development plans have been developed. These include National Economic Direction 1999 –2003, National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy 2003 –2007, Vision 20: 2020, Seven Point Agenda, Transformation Agenda 2011–2015, the Economic and Recovery Growth Plan 2017-2020, and the Economic Sustainability Plan 2020. While resources are mobilised for these plans for their effective implementation within their implementation periods, there was little or no reports about their success or failure either from the legislative and executive arms of the governments, talk less of determining the extent at which they incorporated and addressed women economic empowerment.

FIGURE 1: PAST & THE PROPOSED NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS IN NIGERIA



With no government or NGO who has called for gender audit of the two immediate development plans: ERGP 2017-2020 and ESP 2020, ascertaining the level at which gender equality is mainstreamed as priorities, and the extent, in which the plan strategic programmes are actually carried out and favour women economic empowerment after their implementation periods remain a big issue. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) 2021, gender audit helps to assess and check the institutionalisation of gender equality in the in policies, programmes, projects and/or provision of services, structures, proceedings and budgets¹. By establishing a baseline against which progress can be measured over time, it helps identify and understand gender patterns within the policy development and implementation.

Given the above scenario, it will not be out of place to subject the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan 2017-2020 and its stabilization plan to probe on not only to ascertain their success or failure but how they benefit women. This will help to identify women-focused economic empowerment programmes implemented within the four years period, amount of resources mobilized, number of women who benefited, their current status compared to their previous socioeconomic status. It will also help to identify

¹ EIGE: Gender Audits, <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-audit>

non-women-focused economic empowerment programmes and how women have benefited over the four years period and in what ratio and manner.

Gender parity in the ERGP and ESP policy documents and their implementations

A.Economic Recovery and Growth Plans (ERGP) 2017-2020

The Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) launched in 2017 is a Medium-Term Plan for 2017 and 2020, developed to restore economic growth of the slipped recession in the second quarter of 2016 as a result of overdependence on a single commodity (e.i. oil) for revenues generation and foreign exchange. The scenario limits its ability to sustain growth, create jobs, and achieve real poverty reduction. The plan has three broad strategic objectives.

- I. **Restoring growth:** The Plan focused on achieving macroeconomic stability and economic diversification with a particular focus on agriculture, energy and MSME led growth in industry, manufacturing and key services.
- II. **Investing in our people:** This was aimed at creating opportunities and provides support to the vulnerable by increasing social inclusion, creating jobs and improving the human capital base of the economy.
- III. **Building a globally competitive economy** by investing in infrastructure, improving the business environment, and promoting Digital-led growth.

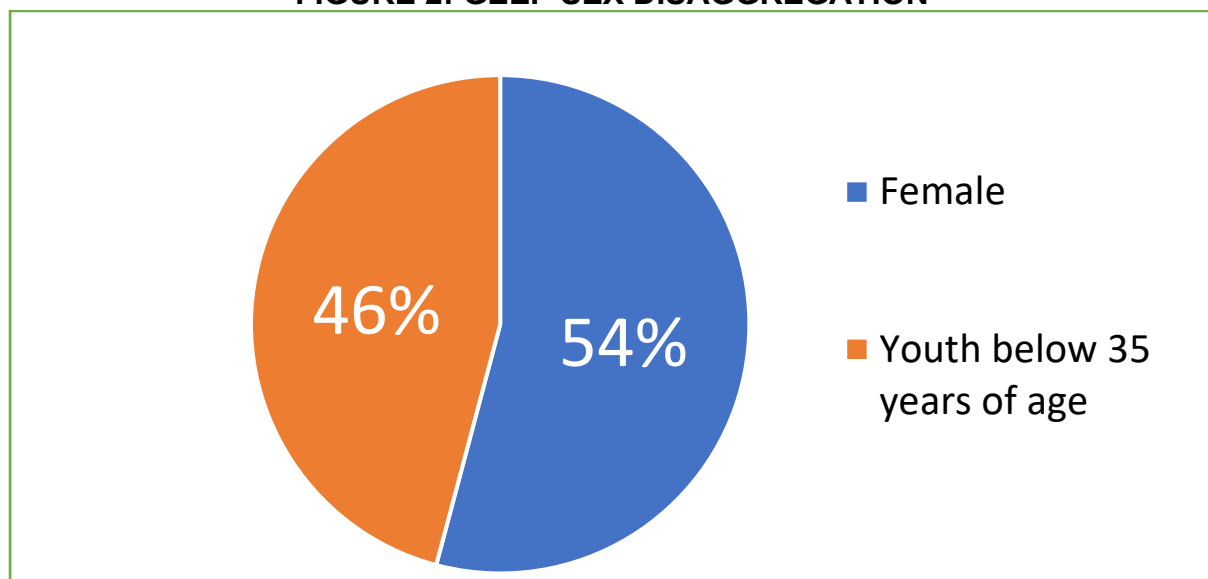
In 140 pages policy document, the plan has only four major women-related economic empowerment programmes. These are:

1. Provision of micro-loans for women through the GEEP and Women Empowerment Fund under Cross-Sector Strategies;
2. Sustainance and scale up of the GEEP to deliver credit to 1.6 million farmers, youth, women market traders and MSMES under Job Creation and Youth Empowerment;
3. Provision of micro-loans for women through the government enterprise and empowerment programme (GEEP) and women empowerment fund under Manufacturing.
4. Construction of special schools for girls in 13 pilot states under Education.

The first-three programmes were implemented mostly under the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP) consisting of Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), N-power, conditional cash transfer, and the Home-Grown School Feedings Programmes. The Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) managed by the Bank of Industry (BOI). GEEP provides micro-lending to 2.5 million small trades and businesses at the bottom of the financial pyramid. The beneficiaries include traders, women cooperatives, market women, enterprising youth, farmers, and agricultural workers. Called in various names like MarketMoni, TraderMoni, or FarmerMoni, the beneficiaries received interest-free loans starting from N10,000 and growing to N100,000 as they payback. With over

2,279,380 enrolled, 54.3% of whom are female while the youth below 35 years of age constitute 46%².

FIGURE 2: GEEP SEX DISAGGREGATION



Under conditional cash transfer, the sum of N5000 cash was distributed to the Nigerians (whose names are selected from the national social registered) who lives below poverty lines across the country. The purpose was to lift millions of Nigeria out of poverty. As of June 2020, about 1.2 million have were enrolled while a total of 748,684 households received transfers for the March/April 2020 cycle. In the same period, there were 22,065 savings groups and 9,716 cooperatives formed with a total of 345,610 beneficiaries. The accumulated savings of these groups is N1,058,578,425 and the amount of loans given out is N437,155,275. The groups have invested a total of N521,741,600 in micro-enterprises³. With no available gender audit of the intervention either from the states and non-state actors, the level of women benefited and what number cannot be ascertained.

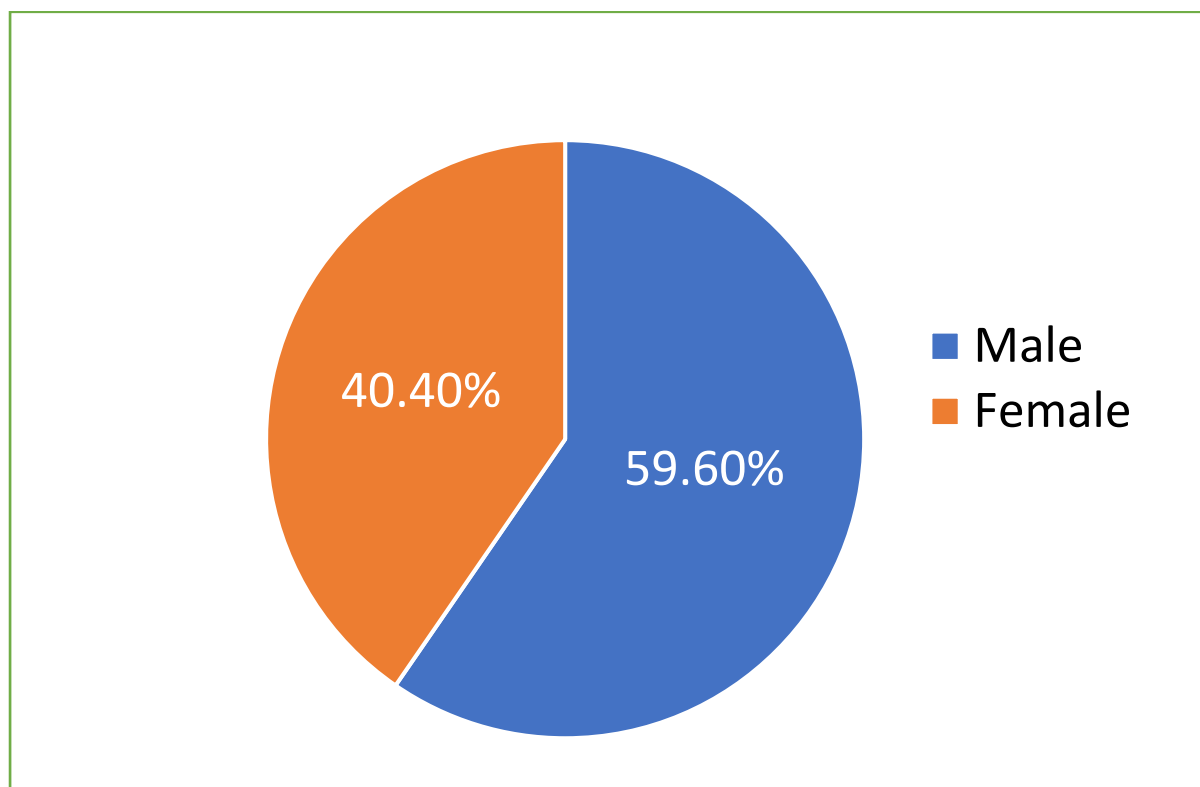
Also, about 500,000 youths (graduates and nongraduates) were engaged under the N-power across the 36 states and FCT on various programmes Agriculture, health services, teaching, etc. While the first batch numbering about 200,000 were engaged for 40 months between December 2016 and June 2020, the second batch numbering 300,000 were engaged between June 2018 and July 2020 with the sum of N30,000 monthly stipends. Thus, 40.4% of the N-power beneficiaries are male and 59.6% are female as shown in the fig below. However, following the discharge of the 500,000 beneficiaries (Batch A & B) in June and July 2020 respectively, about 1 million youth

² <https://n-sip.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NSIO-September-2019.pdf>

³ The World Bank Implementation Status & Results Report: National Social Safety Nets Project (P151488), June 2020.

including women are expected to be enrolled in Batch C⁴. The actual number of women beneficiaries was not disclosed.

**FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE OF MALE TO FEMALE NPOWER BENEFICIARIES
BATCH A & B**



It is important to noted that over 15 million jobs (with no gender disaggregation) were projected to be created during the plan horizon or an average of 3.7 million jobs per annum with particular reference to youth employment and ensuring that youth are the priority beneficiaries. In a report published by the Nigeria Economic Summit Group (NESG) in the late 2019, it was noted that between 2015 and 2018, an average of 4.8 million individuals entered into the labour market while only 625,000 net jobs were created⁵. In December the same year, the World Bank reported that five million (5 million) Nigerians joined the labour force in 2018 while only 450,000 of them were employed⁶. However, following the discharge of the 500,000 N-Power beneficiaries 2020, many criticised the Federal Government for sending the hundreds of thousands of youths back to labour force. However, the government justified the action on the

⁴ Olawale Ayeni. "N-Power Batch C: 1m To Benefit As 800, 000 Disqualifies", 9, June 2021 Leadership Newspaper, <https://leadership.ng/n-power-batch-c-1m-to-benefit-as-800-000-disqualifies/>

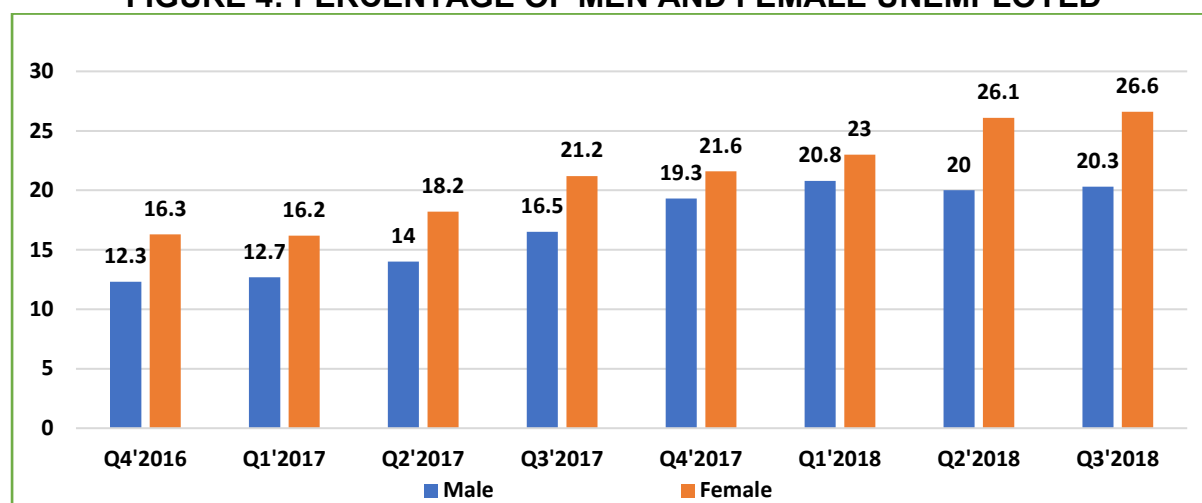
⁵ Growing and Inclusive Economy: Job Creation and Nigeria's Future, 2019. The Nigerian Economic Summit Group.

⁶ <https://tribuneonline.ng.com/4-5-million-nigerians-joined-labour-force-in-2018-%E2%80%95-world-bank/>

ground that the programme was not permanent and that a total of 109,823 (male and female) have become entrepreneurs through the programme⁷.

However, given the low level of job creation and increase in the population growth, unemployment rate (including among women) which was projected reduce from 13.9 per cent Q3 2016 to 11.23 per cent by 2020 rose. In the recently released report on unemployment in Nigeria by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), women are the worst hit with the current economic problem with 12.2 million unemployed females and 9.5 million unemployed men out of the 27 million currently unemployed in the country. In the same vein, the number of females underemployed was highest with 7.1 million while 5.2 million males were reported to be underemployed. It can also be observed that the number of persons in the labour force, people within ages 15 -64, who are able and willing to work was estimated to be 80 million of which males are about 41.6 million while females are 38.6 million as unemployment rate has increased from 13.9% in Q3 2016 to 33.3% Q4 2020. The figure below shows trends in women's employment compared to males between the Q4 of 2016 and Q3 of 2018.

FIGURE 4: PERCENTAGE OF MEN AND FEMALE UNEMPLOYED



Note that poverty which was one of the major priorities of the plan is also on increase. Between 2018 and 2019, the level of poverty rose 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/\$)⁸. Also, only 25.37% of women has income generating activities compared to 36.57% among men⁹. While 20.34% of

⁷ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/08/over-100000-n-power-beneficiaries-have-become-entrepreneurs-minister/>

⁸ <https://businessday.ng/business-economy/article/40-1-of-nigerians-poor-says-nbs-in-new-report/>

⁹ NBS: 2019 Poverty And inequality in Nigeria: Executive Summary, 2019.

women both rural and urban Nigeria has some level of education, it was 37.63% among men. This further heighten the poverty level.

TABLE 1: POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE BY HOUSEHOLD HEAD'S EDUCATION LEVEL & SEX

State	No Education/Less than Primary Education		Primary Education		Secondary Education		Post Secondary Education	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Nigeria	66.17	34.72	41.25	26.93	25.00	14.08	18.13	5.66
Urban	43.14	24.66	19.16	19.35	12.97	11.20	8.86	3.42
Rural	70.82	39.17	50.33	32.74	35.87	18.96	31.20	10.15

TABLE 2: POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE BY HOUSEHOLD HEAD'S INCOME GENERATING & SEX

State	Agriculture Only		Nonfarm Enterprise Only		Wage Work Only		Diversified		Apprenticeship/Notworking	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Nigeria	58.76	37.75	25.45	19.45	17.53	13.99	46.90	31.54	34.24	24.13
Urban	30.11	27.96	15.22	18.12	11.87	11.38	23.92	24.99	18.60	11.00
Rural	63.20	39.02	41.68	22.48	28.72	21.14	53.25	33.79	47.14	34.81

Source: NBS: 2019 Poverty & Inequality in Nigeria-Executive Summary 2019

The Nigeria Economic Summit Group (NESG) attributed the above situations to disparity between the population growth and economic policies¹⁰. It is believed that the population is growing at the rate of 3.2% (NBS, 2017) without a corresponding job opportunity. They call for the ease of business regulations by providing incentives and infrastructure development fundamental in the expansion of the private sector. Such interventions are necessary to attract local and foreign direct investments into key industries that can trigger job creation and poverty reduction¹¹.

B.Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP) 2020

The idea of Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP) was conceived and subsequently launched on April 2, 2020 and approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) on the 24th June 2020¹² as stabilization plan. It was aimed at mitigating the effects of a deep recession while ensuring social stability and addressing long-standing economic vulnerabilities as envisaged in the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP). It has a twelve months life span: June 2020 – May 2021. The strategic objectives of the Economic Sustainability Plans are to;

- Stimulate the economy by preventing business collapse and ensuring liquidity;

¹⁰ NESG: Growing and Inclusive Economy: Job... 2019, page 5

¹¹ NESG: Growing and Inclusive Economy: Job.... 2019. Page 5

¹² <https://statehouse.gov.ng/news/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-nigeria-economic-sustainability-plan/>

- Retain or create jobs using labour-intensive methods in key areas like agriculture, facility maintenance, housing and direct labour interventions;
- Undertake growth-enhancing and job-creating infrastructural investments in roads, bridges, solar power, and communications technologies;
- Promote manufacturing and local production at all levels and advocate the use of Made in Nigeria goods and services, as a way of creating job opportunities, achieving self-sufficiency in critical sectors of the economy, and curbing unnecessary demand for foreign exchange which might put pressure on the exchange rate; and
- Extend protection to the very poor and other vulnerable groups including **women** and persons living with disabilities through pro-poor spending¹³.

The plan was funded through a stimulus package of N2.3 trillion raised through a special account of N500bn; CBN structured lending of N1.11bn; external bilateral/multilateral loan of N334bn and N302.9bn other funding sources¹⁴. The N2.3tn stimulus package was projected to result in an annual growth rate of -2.82% in 2020 and 0.95% in 2021¹⁵. Interestingly, average GDP growth was -1.93% against -2.82 ESP projection. Indeed, the ESP moved the country out of recession with 0.11% GDP growth in the fourth Quarter of 2020¹⁶. This trend also follows with positive growth rate of 0.51% (year-on-year) in the first quarter of 2021. This shows positive result of the N2.3 trillion stimulus packages of the ESP.

However, despite the landmark achievement of the ESP 2020 within the three quarters of its implementation, it could be observed that 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 opportunities¹⁷. Most of empowerment programmes was not gender disaggregated. The table below shows the pull out of some of the key stimulus packages/interventions from the plan, and the level of women inclusion in the various interventions.

¹³ Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP) 2020, pages 10 & 11.

¹⁴ ESP 2020, page 20

¹⁵ ESP 2020, page 18

¹⁶ 2020 Fourth Quarter and Consolidated Budget Implementation Report, page 6.

¹⁷ ESP 2020, page 46

TABLE 3: KEY ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES IN ESP 2020

S/N	EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES	PROGRESS	NUMBER OF WOMEN BENEFICIARIES
1	5 million jobs in the agricultural sector while boosting agricultural production and guaranteeing food security	1.1 million beneficiaries across all states and the FCT.	Not Disaggregated
2	1.8 million jobs through mass housing strategy starting from the construction of the 300,00 homes in the next 12 months.	Plan concluded & initial capital of N200 billion approved ¹⁸	Not Disaggregated
3	250,000 jobs in the energy sector while providing solar power to 5 million households by 2023.	Launched in September 2020	Not Disaggregated
4	1 million jobs in outsourcing, by launching a national programme to create jobs in digital outsourcing;	Not yet launched	Not Disaggregated
5	296,000 jobs in the construction and rehabilitation of roads in the 6 geo-political zones of the country	Ongoing	Not Disaggregated
6	Creation of 1 million jobs through the conversion of 30 million homes from dirty fuels (kerosene, charcoal, and diesel) to LPG and achieve emissions reduction in greenhouses gases.	Roll-out in June 22, 2021 ¹⁹	Not Disaggregated
7	774,000 jobs (in all 774 local governments) through a national public works programme.	Programme kicked-off in January 2021	Not Disaggregated
8	1 million jobs through the National Gas Expansion Programme that will be launched to promote domestic use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).	Launched, in December 1 st , 2020 ²⁰	Not Disaggregated
9	Establish the SME Survival Fund to sustain at least 500,000 jobs in 50,000 SMEs	Support Initiatives has been launched	45% to female-owned MSMEs ²¹
10	Sustain 300,000 jobs in 100,000 MSMEs by guaranteeing off-take of priority products, such as processed food, Personal Protective Equipment, hand sanitisers, face-masks, face-shields, shoe covers, pharmaceuticals.	Program has Kicked-off ²² , October 2020.	Not Disaggregated
11	Creation of jobs in priority sectors using BOI, NEXIM and other national development banks as fulcrums through the provision of N50bn MSME de-risking facility, N100bn Intervention Fund for the health sector, N150bn Capitalization Fund for priority sectors, and N50bn Export Expansion facility.	N100bn Intervention Fund for the health sector program launched.	Not Disaggregated

¹⁸ <https://www.thecable.ng/fg-cement-producers-agree-on-discount-for-mass-housing-project>

¹⁹ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/06/fg-targets-90-lpg-use-as-cooking-fuel-in-10-years/>,

²⁰ <https://www.energyvoice.com/oilandgas/africa/283135/nigeria-launches-autogas-push/>

²¹ SURVIVALFUNDINFORMATIONHANDBOOK-DRAFT, page 1. <https://jaizbankplc.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SURVIVAL-FUND-Information-Handbook.pdf>

²² <https://dailytrust.com/how-survival-fund-can-sustain-msmes-save-1-8m-jobs>

12	Enroll one caregiver (and one alternate) per household and start disbursement of Cash Transfers to all the 2,644,495 households captured on the National Social Register of Poor and Vulnerable Households	Ongoing	Not Disaggregated
13	Continue the N-Power Programme to provide job opportunities to Nigerian youths aged 18 – 35 on a year-to-year basis following which the beneficiaries exited into employment or entrepreneurship opportunities. 1 million men and women are expected to be recruited.	550,000 Shortlisted ²³ in June 2021	Not Disaggregated

Source: ESP 2020

Over 90% of the intervention programs have commenced, although the level of women beneficiaries in each of the program intervention cannot be ascertained. This is because there was no available information neither about the number of the beneficiaries nor their gender disaggregation with the exception of MSME survival fund where about 45% of the beneficiaries are women.

Women Empowerment & The New National Development Plan

Given the need for a succession plan for the ERGP, the Federal Government of Nigeria initiated an idea of a long-time national development plan. The new National Development Plan conceived is Medium Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2021 -2025, MTNDP 2026-2030 and Nigeria Agenda 2050. Medium Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2021- 2025, MTNDP 2026-2030 and Nigeria Agenda 2050. The main objectives of these successor plans are to lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty within the next 10 years, particularly given the World Bank's projection that Nigeria will become the world's third most populous country by 2050 with over 400 million people²⁴. The plans are expected to be based on coherent policy thrusts; a realistic macroeconomic framework; robust monitoring and evaluation framework; and prioritised and sequenced list of programs and projects to feed into the Medium-Term Sector Strategies (MTSS) as well as Annual Budgets²⁵. Some of these programs and projects are expected to be drawn from various sectors such as health, education, transport, culture, women' affairs among others.

To achieve the above, three (3) planning committees namely Technical Working Groups (TWGs), Central Working group (CWG) and National Steering Committee (NSC) were set up in June and September 2020 to prepare the plan documents. However, there is high expectation among the stakeholders working on gender issue on the place of women economic empowerment in the new plan. There are 26 TWGs works in designing programs and activities for the plans. Observably, the composition of the TWGs was not programme based rather sectoral/thematic in nature. Each

²³ <https://www.thecable.ng/n-power-fg-shortlists-550000-batch-c-applicants-for-final-stage>

²⁴ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/413477-agenda-2050-buhari-inaugurates-committee-to-lead-nigerias-new-development-plan.html>

²⁵ Minutes of the meeting of the NSC held at Transcorp Hilton Hotel Abuja on the 9th September 2020

theme would have different programmes designs necessary to achieve its set goal. The 26 thematical areas include;

1. Macroeconomic Framework and Growth Diagnostic
2. Agriculture, Food Security, and Rural Development;
3. Manufacturing and Industrialisation;
4. Transportation;
5. Housing and Urban Development;
6. Cross-Cutting Issues (Employment, Gender, and People with Special Needs);
7. Education and Manpower Development;
8. Health and Nutrition;
9. Environment, Social and Regional Development and Disaster Management;
10. Digital Economy, Bio economy, Science, Technology and Innovation;
11. Culture, Tourism, Creative Industry and Hospitality;
12. Defence, Peace and Security;
13. Governance, Institutions, Administration of Justice, Anti-Corruption and National Orientation;
14. Business Environment, Trade and Competitiveness and Product Space Mapping;
15. Water Resources and Sanitation;
16. Infrastructure;
17. Power and Alternative Energy;
18. Oil and Gas;
19. Finance Sector and Capital Market;
20. Foreign Policy and International Relations;
21. Population and Identity Management;
22. Solid Minerals, Mining and Steel Development;
23. Implementation, Communication, Engagement, Financing, Monitoring and Evaluation;
24. Youths and Sport Development;
25. Women Affairs;
26. Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection.

The 26 TWGs were further grouped into five (5) clusters as seen below, for effective coordination.

1. Governance, Security and International Relations;
2. Macroeconomic Reconstruction and stability;
3. High Growth Sector;
4. Social Sector Development and Transformation;
5. National Development Plans Writing, Communications, Implementation, Monitoring and Continuity.

It could be seen from the above that there is a dedicated thematic area on the issues of women, as well as cross-cutting issues where gender was identified a sub priority. However, the incorporation of the robust women-focused economic empowerment programmes the various thematic areas such as agriculture, cross-cutting, women affairs, digital economy, youth and sport development, etc. depends on the level of understanding of the significance of women economic empowerment by the committee and the extent to which they understand it place not only in nation building but for strong socioeconomic and political development.

Furthermore, the TWGs were to produce and submit their reports on each of the thematic areas to the Central Working Group (CWG) for consideration and approval by the National Steering Committee (NSC). While the first and second reports were still hanging, the last report on the Nigeria Agenda 2050 which was due to be submitted by July 2021 has not been completed. This should be one of the major concerns of the National Assembly as the ESP implementation period already came to an end in June 2021. As of July 2021, when this issue brief is being prepared, Nigeria is without any National Development Plan that's guides its policy direction.

Reasons for poor Women-Focused Economic Empowerment Programmes in The Nigeria Development Plans

Irrespective of the governments (national and subnational), the Nigeria development plan often shortfall of women-specific or women-focused economic empowerment programmes due to the following.

- Plan indiscipline and unnecessary partisanship
- Poor or inadequate feasibility studies
- Lack of comprehensive statistical data for national development plan
- Poor knowledge about women current predicament and gender gap
- Male hegemony
- Gender stereotype
- Over ambition, many priorities were meddle-up in the plan without corresponding political will and poor collaboration with gender driving groups.
- Institutional/structural inconsistencies
- Poor consultation
- Lack of essential interministerial and inter disciplinary coordinating machinery;
- Lack of proper project monitoring and review of plans to see how women focused programme impact the social and economic development of a nation.
- Corruption by public officials;
- Poor oversight by the responsible bodies to ensure all-inclusive programmes

Overcoming the Challenges

Going forward, in order to ensure women-focused economic empowerment programme in the development plan, the following need proper consideration.

- There is a need for a viable National Development Plan based on strong data. Nigeria needs to strengthening or carry out a total overhaul of the machinery/institutions for gathering data for planning.
- Gender sensitivity of the National Development Plan.
- All-inclusive feasibility studies in planning.
- Proper consultation
- Adequate involvement of women in the preparation stage.
- Women inclusion in decision making at various levels.
- Effective resource mobilisation.
- Inter-ministerial/departmental and agencies coordinating machinery be strengthened for effective plan monitoring, evaluation of policies and implementation of programmes.
- Effective oversight of the committee by the presidency and the legislative bodies.

New National Development Plans & dRPC support to NCWS

For possible inclusion of women economic empowerment programmes in the new national development plans, the development Research and Project Centre (dRPC) is supporting the National Council of Women Society (NCWS) to achieve this goal. The NCWS is a leading women society in Nigeria having its base across the 774-local government in Nigeria. As a non-for-profit women organisation with decades of existence, NCWS has had a long history of advancing women's economic empowerment in Nigeria which it sees effective strategy for addressing the underlying causes of poverty and underdevelopment in Nigeria. It also has a strong influence within the government circle. It was selected as one of the members to represent the women and children's interest in the National Steering Committee on the MTNDP 2021-2025, MTNDP 2026-2030 and Nigeria Agenda 2050 along with other groups on the 9th of September 2020.

Realising the importance of incorporating women economic empowerment programmes in the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2021-2025, 2026-2030, and Nigeria Agenda 2050, dRPC between September 2020 till present provides the following support to NCWS.

1. Build the capacity of the NCWS to conduct strong analysis on economic development issues: - the capacity of the center was built with the various review of the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan 2017-2020 and the Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan 2020 and as well as previous economic development plans such as National Economic Direction 1999 –2003, National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), and the Vision 20-2020. This enables NCWS possessed sound knowledge about the current and past economic development plans with a particular reference to women and contribute effectively to the planning process. The review report also enabled the NCWS to understand the pillars of

each of the documents, funding commitment, loopholes (including gender), and how they fall short in addressing women economic empowerment issues.

2. Technical support to conduct desk review on the state of women involvement in the selected socio-economic sectors namely,
 1. Education and Manpower Development
 2. Health and Nutrition
 3. Defence, Peace, and Security
 4. Digital Economy
 5. Water resources and sanitation
 6. Infrastructure
 7. Women Affairs
 8. Cross-Cutting Issues (Employment, Gender, and People with Special Needs)
 9. Agriculture, Food Security, and Rural Development
 10. Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection
 11. Business Environment, Trade & Competitiveness and Product Space Mapping, etc.

The review highlighted the current state of involvement in each of the sectors, identified the challenges, and made recommendations on how women can be effectively integrated into the plans. NCWS submitted its recommendations to the TWG whose primary duty is to work on each of the issue areas above for consideration. Hopefully, the recommendations mostly on women economic empowerment are captured in both the MTNDP 2021-2025, MTNDP 2026-2030 and Nigeria Agenda 2050

3. Build its capacity in reviewing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as requested by the National Steering Committee (NSC) to which NCWS was a member and made projections on where the NCWS want to see each of the goals concerning women in the next in 2025, 2030 and 2050. This was done and submitted to the NSC for harmonisation with other members' opinions on the 24th of October 2020.
4. dRPC is also supporting NCWS programmes and activities focusing on the amplification of the women economic empowerment among the various key stakeholders within and outside the government circles for effective attention and full consideration in the proposed plans.

Some of the identified outcomes of the above of supports to the Nigeria Council of Women Society (NCWS) are as follows.

- NCWS gained the more technical capacity needed to effectively contribute to the MTNDP 2021-2025, MTNDP 2026-2030 and Nigeria Agenda 2050 draft reports.
- The Technical Working Groups (TWGs) accepted the 24 recommendations of the NCWS on issues around women's economic empowerment for possible inclusion

in the plan. Some of these recommendations includes the training of smallholders' women farmers on agriculture value chain and market access; Reduced all constraints associated to the Anchor Borrower for effect accessibility and make the scheme friendlier to women. There should be a specialised CBN Anchor Borrower Scheme for women farmers; Sustain and scale up the GEEP to deliver credit to women farmers, women market traders and SMEs; Improve allocation on women economic empowerment programs for development, etc.

- National Steering Committee accepted the submission of the NCWS on the recommended projections on the 17 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) as part of the vision for the plan. About 55 identified related identified by NCWS, 7 WEE related recommendations were made. These projections are harmonised with other member projections such as the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs (FMoWAs), etc. who is also a member of NSC and working on women affairs.
- The NCWS has up-to-date information on the level of implementation of the ERGP 2017-2020 and ESP 2020 especially on issues relating to WEE and gender as designed by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The analysis of the report shows that most of program are not gender/WEE sensitive. The actual number of women beneficiaries are not always stated and the few stated are often below average.
- NCWS is able to conduct evidence-based advocacy to various stakeholders on the need for more inclusion for women economic empowerment programmes in the new plans.

Emergence of Other Plans & Women Economic Empowerment

Two new plans were also identified. These include National Poverty Reduction with Growth Plan (NPRGP) and the recent unveiled Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) 2022-2024. The level of gender inclusion in the policies are discussed below.

A. The National Poverty Reduction With Growth Strategy

The NPRGP was approved by the Federal Executive Council in April 2021 and is to be incorporated into the proposed Medium Term National Development Plan 2021-2025 and the Agenda 2050²⁶. It is a long-time strategic framework aimed at lifting millions of Nigeria out of poverty. The NPRGS was anchored on four pillars namely:

- a) "Macroeconomic stabilization policies to improve the capacity of the economy to absorb shocks and avoid disruptive adjustment;
- b) Industrialization for Economic Growth and transformation of the economy from commodity dependent growth path to a diversified, industrialized, knowledge intensive and job creating economy;
- c) Structural policies and institutional reforms to engender efficiency in service delivery, promote transparency and accountability in the management of fiscal

²⁶ <https://thenationonline.ng.net/fec-approves-national-poverty-reduction-strategy/>

resources, bridge the infrastructure gap, improve private sector development and mainstream gender; and

- d) Redistributive Policies and Programmes to reduce levels of risk, vulnerability, shocks and deprivation (NPRGW, March 2021: page 5)²⁷.

The last pillar of the NPRGR on redistributive include programmes aimed at enhancing incomes, job opportunities and wealth creation through vocational skills training, micro-credit and micro-enterprise development and livelihood diversification in the agricultural sector as noted in the strategic document²⁸. The components of the redistributive policies and programme aimed at reducing the poverty headcount by 15 million by 2023 include:

- a) “Reforming and expanding social protection programmes to provide income and other support for families without livelihoods through Conditional Cash Transfer, the Homegrown School Feeding and other income subsidy programmes.
- b) Enhancing youth access to economic opportunities through vocational skills and entrepreneurship training and supporting their transition to gainful self-employment or wage-jobs with partner private sector or government organizations. The Programme will target the ultra-marginalized (the poorest and most vulnerable) populations which are under-served by market systems.
- c) Enhancing access to economic opportunities through MSMEs support. This Programme will target for support both survival-oriented activities often undertaken by poor women and growth-oriented micro and small entrepreneurs wishing to set up new businesses or expand existing ones.
- d) Reforming and increasing investment in health and education sectors to enhance access by the poor and vulnerable in society and to improve quality and efficiency in delivery.
- e) Implementing policies that support better outcomes in the agriculture sector and rural development, where most of the rural poor are concentrated as detailed
- f) Introducing institutional and policy reforms aimed at transforming social protection from a federal to a national programme while improving the organizational framework” (NPRGS, March 2021: page 34)²⁹.

A cursory look at the whole document shows that while there was no disaggregated information as to number of women to be lifted out of poverty, there were no women-focused components of neither the redistributive programmes nor economic empowerment in the strategic plan. Indeed, programmes were lumped together. The extent to which women will benefit from the activities were not clearly defined and established.

²⁷ The National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy, Page 5

²⁸ The National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy, Page 5

²⁹ NPRGS, page 34

B. Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) 2022-2024

The Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) is a quantification of the resource envelope and it defines the fiscal outlay necessary for the realisation of government's policies and programme over a three-year period³⁰. The MTEF is essentially a federal government framework and was unveiled by the Federal government in July 2, 2020 with N13.981trn, N15,458 and N16,772 budgets in 2022, 2023, and 2024 respectively³¹. MTEF aims to ensure that budgets reflect Government's social and economic priorities and give substance to Government's reconstruction and development commitments.³² However, the MTEF 2022-2024 available document as of July 5th 2021 when this report is prepared is not details enough to established what programmes are being proposed, to which sector, programmes and the amount projected to be spent on them³³. The gender sensitives and inclusiveness of the framework may not be established until the full document is available.

NCWS Potentials to Influence Full Implementation of the plans

NCWS Potentials in NPRGS Implementation

- Work with the independent committee to ensure proper monitoring of the programmes and also ensure that the MDAs implementing the strategy without duplication, overlaps and encroachment.
- Become part of the National Social Protection Network to be established to compose the federal and state government officials, representatives of the private sector, the media, and civil society under the chairmanship of the Vice President (in capacity as Chair of National Economic Council), the body who will meet regularly to monitor and evaluate implementation of all social protection policies programmes and projects across all levels of government as contained in NPRGS policy 2021 document, (page 54).
- Engage ministries responsible for social protection at the state and national level to ensure that the gender-related components of the projects are fully implemented.
- Provide a timely and accurate progress reports of programmes and projects in line with the approved reporting standards and formats that ascertain the level at which gender equality is considered in the project implementation.
- Track women economic empowerment programmes that were lumped in other components and monitor their full implementation.
- Identify and mobilise stakeholders across the 774 LGAs to create awareness about the important of WEE in the programmes implementation at all levels.

³⁰ NPRGS March 2021, page 55

³¹ MTEF 2022-2024

³² http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/national%20budget/1998/review/chapter_05.pdf

³³ <https://www.budgetoffice.gov.ng/index.php/draft-2022-2024-mtff-public-consultation/draft-2022-2024-mtff-public-consultation/download>

NCWS Potentials in MTEF Budget Outcome and Implementation

- Participate in the budget preparation process of the WEE implementing MDAs to ensure more funds is dedicated to the WEE in 2022 budget compared to 2021 in their respective MDAs.
- Engage the National Assembly to ensure that more funds are dedicated to the WEE in their zonal intervention projects.
- Monitor the recommendations and outcome of the engagement
- When the 2022 budget is prepared by the MDAs presented to the National and passed into law, they can further engage WEE implementing MDAs to ensure that they implement various WEE budget in the 2022 fiscal year in line with resources allocated.

How dRPC can support the NCWS to influence other plans

The development Research and Project Centre (dRPC) will provide technical/human resource capacity to support National council of women societies in the implementation process of the national poverty reduction with growth strategies implementation through:

- The development of M&E tool to monitor the process of the national poverty reduction with growth strategies implementation level.
- The development of scorecard as a community accountability tool.
- Support the dissemination of the NCWS findings on monitoring of the national poverty reduction with growth strategies implementation level.
- Development of the communication and advocacy strategies on national poverty reduction with growth strategies implementation.
- Development of awareness and sensitization campaign strategies on new national poverty reduction with growth plan effective implementation.

The development Research and Project Centre (dRPC) will provide technical/human resource capacity to support National council of women societies on the MTEF budget outcome through:

- Building of the capacity of the NCWS on the WEE budget monitoring, tracking and analysis.
- Support NCWS to develop scorecard to track WEE project compliance.
- Support dissemination of the NCWS findings on WEE level of implementation in the 2022 fiscal year.

Conclusion

The quest for an inclusive development plan has taken the front burner of Nigeria discourse over the years. Between 2017 and 2020, Nigeria Government has made series of efforts to put Nigeria on the pace of progress and development through various development plans. These includes, the Nigeria and Economic and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017-2020, Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP) 2020 as well as the MTNDP 2021-2025, MTNDP 2026-2030 and Nigeria Agenda 2050. As the MTNDP and Nigeria Agenda 2050 is still at its preparation stage with little information on the level of priority for the WEE, it was discovered both the ERGP and ESP has no specific women economic empowerment as one of their strategic objectives. Also, identified WEE-related programmes except for the women empower fund, were lumped under youth empowerment programmes such as GEEP, Npower, MSME loan for youth, public work programmes among others and no efforts are made to established the percentage of women beneficiaries in the policy documents. These findings also applicable in the NPRGS where programmes under the redistributive pillar were not WEE focused.

Lastly, it was discovered that no attention is always paid to the gender audits of the plans as most of the plan's M&Es do not include/have gender audits as a component.

Recommendations

For effective inclusion of women-Focused economic empowerment programmes in the new National development plan, the following are necessary.

- The stakeholders calling for women-focused economic empowerment in the new national development plans must not solely depend on the NSC because the preparation of the plan is bottom-top approach. They must identify those members of the TWC working on women's affairs and express their concerns. They must also identify women groups at the CWG to encourage the interested program such as WEE. In essence, a multi-level approach is key for effective outcome.
- WEE stakeholders must do underground work to ensure that their aim is achieved. they must identify the member of the TWG working on women affairs and other key thematic areas especially those working on Cross-Cutting Issues (Employment, Gender, and People with Special Needs); Agriculture, Food Security, and Rural Development; and Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection shares its findings of the desk review and analysis of the past and current development/economic plans on the gender gaps and share its proposed activities and programmes that are favouring WEE for possible consideration. So, when they all come together to deliberate on the possible women related economic empowerment issues, they found themselves on the same lane and probably chose from programmes and activities already shared with them. This is a door to approach to policy influence.

- CSOs should conduct high level evidence-based advocacy to various stakeholders including the coordinating Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, as well as the legislative who carry out oversight on the MDAs on issues of National concern.
- CSOs should further identify and build the capacity of champions and reformers within and outside the government circle to conduct advocacy and amplify the need for the women economic empowerment in the new national development plans.

To ascertain the level of women economic empowerment in the past development plan especially the ERGP 2017-2020 and ESP 2020, the following are necessary.

- High level evidence-based advocacy by the CSOs and relevant stakeholders to the state actors especially the legislative and relevant stakeholders in the executive to mandate the call for gender audits of development plan.
- Call for the legislation by the CSOs and relevant stakeholders mandating annual progress report of the ongoing development plan including the gender audits of the plan.
- Call for legislation by the CSOs and relevant stakeholders mandating the women economic empowerment as a key strategic objectives and goals in any development plan both at the national and subnational level government.
- Create awareness on the importance of gender audits and annual implementation report of the development plans. This can be created through traditional and social media.

To ensure full implementation of the NPRGS as well as the realization of inclusion of WEE in the implementation of the MTEF budget outcome. The following are very important.

- CSOs should conduct high level advocacy to the WEE implementing MDAs.
- CSOs should endeavor to engage the National Assembly on the amount to be dedicated to the WEE in both their annual ZIP as well as in the budget of about of 105 WEE implementing MDAs.
- CSOs should create awareness on the full implementation of the NPRGS and also monitor implementation level.
- CSOs should carry out independent progress report of the NPRGS for effectiveness.

To reshape the Nigeria development plan on the path of progress, the governments need to do the following.

- Reduce the cost of governance
- Diversify the economy
- Increase commitment for women economic empowerment
- Manage corruption in the public sector
- Create enabling environment for business to thrive
- Cut interest rate for MSMEs

- Encourage local content and protect local industries
- Invest strongly in human capital
- Avoid nepotism and favouritism in the management of the public asset and resources.
- Strengthen the public private partnership for inclusive growth and development.
- Projection should be based on realistic data
- Mobilize adequate resources: human and materials.

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