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## Contending Factors to the Quest for a Zero Hunger Society and Sustainable National Development: A Focus on Nigeria

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### Abstract

The quest for a zero hunger society is a global responsibility. The cost of hunger and malnutrition to the global economy is the equivalent of US\$3.5 trillion a year. Some countries may claim to be developed, strong and stable, but that does not mean that hunger is not affecting their economy. Even in the US, one of the richest countries in the world, one in seven persons - 14.3 percent, does not have enough to eat. The situation is more critical in developing countries, and Nigeria is deeply affected. The class of people regarded as being hungry in the US are far better than the class of people we refer to, in the developing countries as 'hungry'. In Nigeria, thousands of people, especially women, till the ground, suffer and sweat to feed the nation, yet food production is low. We do not have enough to eat owing to such limitations as the paucity of varieties of high yielding farm inputs, insecurity, government and political limitations, inaccessibility of the necessary agro-technology etc. Consequently, hunger has continued to be a challenge to Nigeria. The researcher adopted the descriptive method, and used the global theory of change to support his argument. Data for this study were mainly drawn from the secondary sources, and through a careful analysis, it was concluded that the world can produce enough food for humanity all we need do is to take proactive measures to reverse the ecological impact limitations. To achieve this, more attention should be given to farming, and government assistance should be direct to the rural women, whose prominent role in feeding the nation is well documented.

**Keywords:** Zero hunger, national development, poverty eradication, agriculture, unemployment.

### Introduction

October 16, every year has been set aside to mark World Food Day since 1975. It is a day earmarked by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) - an agency of the United Nations collaborating with other international organisations in pursuance of a common goal - *'Raising public awareness about hunger challenges and encouraging people worldwide to take action in the fight against hunger'*. Other collaborating organisations include: World Food Organisation (WFO), International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFIA), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), World Food Programme (WFP), etc. Their contributions are by way of recommendations for policy formulation, designing strategies for policy implementation and funding, organizing public lectures, roundtable discussions and international conferences; all aimed at proffering solutions to

the hunger challenges. As a guide to future international development efforts, the United Nations responded to the world's expression of repugnance at the current state of the globe by developing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in continuation of the MDGs. The SDGs were stated bearing in mind, preference and priorities based on their expected contribution to international development. Specifically, the scales of goal No 1 and 2 are mounting sociopolitical pressure on government, communities, farmers, and social organisations to fasten their effort to end poverty and hunger by changing their perception, attitude and practice of agricultural business. This is mounting more pressure on government to bring this into force through regulations and other authoritative means.

### **Statement of the problem**

In the international system today, hunger is among the few carefully selected variables that have dominated the strategic discourse of the century, in an effort to achieve a sustainable world. That was why it featured prominently in the MDGs and SDGs. All over the world, there is increasing number of hungry people despite international, regional and national governments' efforts. At the international level, the 2014 report of the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO) estimated that about 805 million people of the 7.3 billion people in the world, or one in nine, were suffering from chronic undernourishment in 2012-2014. Almost all the hungry people, 791 million, live in the developing countries, representing 13.5 percent, or one in eight, of the population of developing countries. 300 million children go to bed hungry each night and about 8000 children under the age of 5 are estimated to die of malnutrition every day. While there are 11 million undernourished people in developed countries. In as much as the statistics does not tally among nations, we are collectively fighting this scourge because when it comes to hunger, the only acceptable number in the world is zero.

### **Objective of the study**

The overall objective of this study is to identify the factors militating against food production and national development in the world and Nigeria in particular. Specifically, it is aimed at:

1. Determining the challenges facing food production, availability and affordability and
2. Making useful suggestion on how to improve food production for national development.

### **Methodology**

The researcher embraced the descriptive research method for this study. It was adopted because according to Ndiyo (2015:70), it is designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena. They are directed towards determining the nature of a situation, as it exists at the time of the study. Related literature were reviewed and a theoretical framework was employed to form the basis for the argument put forward in this study. Data for this study were mainly drawn from the secondary sources. Primary sources were in the form of observation and experience. Qualitative analysis was conducted from which conclusions were drawn.

### **Review of Related Literature**

In this study, the thematic style of reviewing literature was adopted. This style according to Agba (2014: 93), demands that the researcher must outline the sub-titles under which relevant literature would be reviewed. This style was adopted because it will make the review have an organized systematic outlook and enhance the understanding of the concepts under review.

**Hunger:** Conceptually, contemporary literature has made it more lucid that 'hunger' is among the concepts that lack central definition. All attempts made to define it ended up bringing to fore, the dimensions of hunger that are far from the intellectual knowledge of the average man. Because of lack of common characteristics, the definition of hunger is extensive, contested, and ever-dynamic. From the perspective of public administration as an academic discipline, the term 'hunger' may not only mean absence of food or the inability of an individual to eat what is available, it means also, the product of an individual's inability to rationally manage the available resources in order to augment what is available in the form of food so as to provide for himself and his dependents the right quantity of, and nutritious food required for a balanced growth and functionality of the human body; the insufficiency or unavailability of certain dietary components of human food which individuals - old and young, requires certain quantity of it for their daily living. A good example is the protein.

**Development:** The concept, development has been given variety of definitions. All of which reflects the background of the different authors who have attempted to define it and their perceptual understanding of the phenomenon. At the same time, they are all focused on illuminating one aspect of the theoretical ideologies of development. Grant (2006: 259), argued that:

*It is instructive to examine the several roles of people in development process. First of all, people are the target of the development process; their wellbeing is the purpose of development. Political units such as nations, and states may also gain strength from systematic development, and it is desirable that they do so, but such strength is legitimately used to improve the welfare of the population as a whole, rather than to aggrandize some elite portion of the population, whether military, political, religious, or caste - or the state itself. It has been argued by some that a strong state is necessary to and will assure a happier and more prosperous population...*

Development is deemed more pertinent and urgently desirable because "development in human society is a many-sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being" (Rodney 2009: 1).

In Nigeria today, it is common knowledge that the economy strongly need diversification. This is resulting from the fact that our mono-economy is no longer supporting the quest for socioeconomic development desires of the country. In this regard therefore, agriculture is the most vibrant sector that holds hope of actualizing this national desire. But we must first, expunge the notion that agriculture is fundamentally static in terms of input, process and technology. We must also do away with the impression that agriculture is not a government responsibility. Throwing government weight into agriculture will swiftly usher in food stability, thus leading to sustainable national development in the long run. This is urgently demanded because we need a modern dynamic sector that will give free hand for complementary accelerated rate of growth in other sectors of the economy. Agriculture is the sure bet, only if we are able to conquer the ecological intervening variables.

Any attempt to proffer solution to hunger must have a theoretical cum practical penchant and proclivity to agricultural development. This is not a hypothesis, it is like a rule because it will help reduce the constraints imposed on agricultural development by some prevalent or presumed variables. Against this leaning therefore, the researcher devised this diagrammatic illustration to explain the variable that are limiting agricultural development in Nigerian; which has resulted to the

country's food insufficiency in terms of quality and quantity. These variables must be sufficiently and consistently controlled before we can achieve a zero hunger society and sustainable national development

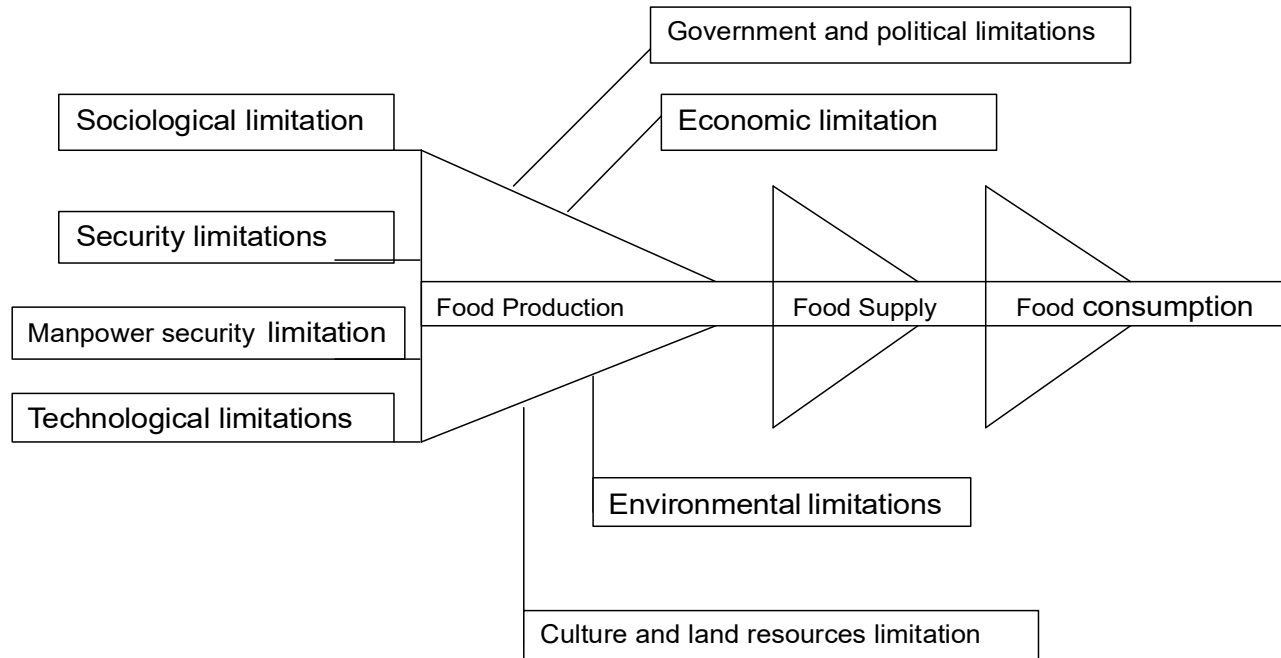


Fig. 1 Ecological limitation model

1. **Government policy and political limitations:** Different government in Nigeria have at different times, enacted policies and programmes that are geared toward agricultural development, food availability and accessibility in the right quality and quantity. Some of those policies and programmes include Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), and Green Revolution. Other programmes in the agricultural sector are: Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund (ACGSF), Special Programmes for Food Security, Building Agriculture Creating Wealth, and The Green Alternative. There are other institutional based programmes which include:

- i National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP),
- ii Nigerian Agriculture and Co-operative Bank,
- iii River Basin Development Authority (RBDA)
- iv Directorate for Food Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI)
- v National Agricultural Land Development (NALDA)

Empirical researches revealed that some of the previous programmes failed as result of insufficient supply of fund, policy bias, lack of proper supervision during implementation, personnel incapability, lack of programme continuity by successive governments, Top-down approach in programme implementation, bureaucratic bottleneck etc. There is need to employ efficiency and commitment in the implementation of programmes if the desired goals must be achieved. We are looking up to the

leadership of this country because they made fresh and firm promise, so we are watching to see how consistent they will be to restore our hope and confidence.

2. **Economic limitation:** Agriculturally Nigeria is backward because the acquisition and utilization of fund for agricultural purposes has been at minimal over the years. The sourcing and acquisition of fund for the implementation of agricultural programmes and projects and purchasing of equipment has not been afloat. This is because it was left in the hands of the poor farmers who had limited resources to engage in large scale agricultural enterprise. The little effort made by government to supply fund for implementation of agricultural programmes and projects, boost food and raw material production and supply has always landed in the hands of corrupt individuals. Corruption is a destructive monster that aches the national economy and retards development of the country. Most Nigerian farmers do not know how to access the loan from Nigerian Agriculture and Co-operative Bank and other agencies due mainly to lack of awareness, unavailability of collateral and high interest rate. There is near absence of agricultural insurance scheme. All these are as a result of government negligence and laxity.
3. **Sociological limitation:** The attitude of Nigerians towards locally processed agro-food products do not in any meaningful way encourage agriculture. It is only noodles and pasta that we do not hesitate to buy knowing very well that they are locally processed. Nigeria is the largest importer of food items, losing about ₦1 trillion to importation of food items annually. In 2011, the then Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Adesina Akinwunmi posited while interacting with Senate Committee on Agriculture that Nigeria has become a dumping ground for imported food. According to him, Nigeria was losing about ₦2 trillion annually on food importation; “₦1 billion is spent every day to import rice. We also spend ₦240 billion to import sugar, and ₦1.2 trillion annually on fish. With this, we are creating market for others” instead of our economy. Now, recent revelations have it that we spend on annual basis on four items as stated below:

Wheat ₦635 billion  
Rice ₦356 billion  
Sugar ₦217 billion  
Fish ₦97 billion  
Source: Elebeke (2016)

This amount, on its own is sufficient to boost agriculture if it is possible to garner them together and channel it to agriculture and the ancillary activities. More so, there are some basic amenities of which their presence will discourage rural farmers from migrating to the city in search of non-existing white-collar jobs. Such amenities include: recreation facilities, functional health centres, standard schools, electricity, interest-free loans to encourage entrepreneurship and good telecommunication network. Efficient transport system and storage facility are also eminent.

4. **Security limitations:**  
How can agriculture develop when, between 1996 and 2006, more than 121 people were killed in Bauchi and Gombe States alone as a result of conflicts between farmers and the Fulani Herdsmen. About 10 Agatu communities in Benue State have been severely

terrorized, leaving not less than 500 villagers dead by the Fulani Herdsmen. The rest are suffering untold hardship. In Abia State, several clashes have occurred between the herdsmen and some communities like Uzuakoli, Ebem, Akanu and Umuchieze. The clashes were as a result of rejection of forceful inversion of their farmlands. Lives were lost, properties and farmlands were also destroyed.

In Enugu, since 2014, not even one among the 482 communities that make up the State can claim not to have been attacked by the Fulani Herdsmen. Some were killed, robbed or kidnapped; others were raped and maimed by the Fulani Herdsmen. Echebiri (2017), also reported that Fulani Herdsmen have unleashed mayhem at Obio Usiere in Eniong Abatim, Odupkani Local Government Area of Cross River State killing at least 10 people.

5. **Manpower scarcity limitation:** In Nigeria, there is obvious lack of correlation between the assertion that agriculture is the second largest employer of labour, food sufficiency and national development. This is because even up till now, we still do not produce what is enough for us to consume let alone earning sufficient foreign exchange from export of agro-products. We have not engaged fully in industrially processed secondary food production, yet we are experiencing an unbelievable rate of unemployment. If half of the unemployed population will be encouraged to go into large, medium and small scale agriculture, not only that there will be sufficient food to consume (zero hunger society), the country's economy will boom.

**Table 1. Unemployment rate in Nigeria and Imo State 2007 - 2011**

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Unemployment population	Source
Nigeria	12.7	14.9	19.7	21.1	23.9	1, 103, 645	2006 Census
Imo State	28.3	17.4	20.8	28.1	35.9	1, 202, 946	2011 Projection

Source: Ukwuije, (2018)

6. **Technological limitations:** It is funny enough but an unmitigated truth that most Nigerian farmers are still using the same farm tools used over four decades by our forefathers such as hoe, cutlass. Modern farm machines and techniques are indispensable in the quest for a zero hunger society and sustainable national development. Procurement of tractors and irrigation equipment are not just for upgrading but for large scale farming which is not possible without modern equipment and the government must get involved. The Managing Director of Dizengoff West Africa Nigeria Limited, Richard Hargrave, said the country has only one tractor for every 4,100 farmers, an issue that makes agric mechanization a wild goose chase...the fact that Nigeria has only one tractor for every 4,100 farmers is ridiculous. Each tractor is farming 1,013 hectares of arable land...we have all the farmers we need as well, at around 12.3 million, making Nigeria 14th in the world, but we simply will not equip them (Anudu and Okojie 2015:4).
7. **Environmental limitations:** Environmental degradation is among the variables that has attracted international discuss in the millennium. This situation is worrisome to governments

of the developed and developing countries because its impact is universal. Environmental degradation takes different forms such as global warming, deforestation, grazing at unauthorised places, destruction of wide life, desert encroachment, uncontrolled building of houses for commercial purposes, pollution of streams, lake and rivers, erosion and land slide etc.

8. **Culture and land resources limitation:** In most places, shifting cultivation is not just a farming culture but also a law, yet there are no enough lands to cultivate on. The need for vast fertile land for agricultural purposes is not in doubt. There is no aspect of primary agricultural production that does not require land and now, buying and selling of land has become nearly the most lucrative business in both rural and urban areas. Many people who wish to go into agriculture usually get disappointed because of the scarcity of farm land. This situation seriously need to be overhauled. There is also the need to reactivate the establishment of farm settlements in our rural areas. If government goes into this, surely there will be improvement and it will be attractive and achieve its goal.

### Theoretical Framework

Theory allows us to explain what we see and to figure out how to bring about change. It is a tool that enables us to identify a problem and to plan a means for altering the situation especially when it is undesirable. Much more so, theory helps to identify what information is needed to design an effective development strategy. Indeed, any statements that explain what is measured or described - any general statements about cause or effect are theory based, at least implicitly (Frey, Botan, Friedman, & Kreps, 1991).

This study adopted the Global Theory of Change as a construct that will enables us identify the real sequence of a comprehensive transformation plan against this undesirable hunger situation. This theory was propounded by The Hunger Project, a global, non-profit, strategic organization devoted to bring about viable solution to world hunger. Their vision is to have a world where everybody including children will lead a healthy, fulfilling life of self-reliance and dignity. The Hunger Project supposed that every organised community is self-sustainable, when the responsibility of developing that communities is taken by individual members of that community and when government authorities are held responsible for their actions and inactions.

The theory laid down pathways as speculated by the Hunger Project that could lead to change and enhanced our livelihood in the communities. Using a change map as an illustration, (See: <http://www.thp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/THP-Africa-Program-Theory-of-Change.pdf>) the theory of change explained the two types of interventions: a single program and a comprehensive community initiative that brings about the outcomes depicted in the pathway of a change map. Each outcome in the pathway of change is tied to an intervention, revealing the often complex web of activity that is required to bring about change. The Hunger Project's Theory of Change is rooted in three main pillars:

- ◆ Mobilizing people at the grassroots level;
- ◆ Partnering with local governments and
- ◆ Empowering women.

The Hunger Project has a distinctive epicenter strategy which is the field complement to its Theory of Change. By definition, the hunger project posited that the epicenter strategy is the dynamic center where communities are mobilized for action to meet basic needs. The Hunger Project sees its comparative advantage as its experience and success as a capacity-building organization; hence, it attempts to determine its ability to train, mobilize and develop the capacity of epicenter populations to become successful agents of their own development.

I concur to the Hunger Project's belief that its strategy, when implemented totally over the appropriate length of time with sufficient funding and capable staff, will lead to epicenter self-reliance. But not without government support. Government will get involved in four inevitable ways:

- ◆ Legislation and implementation of the appropriate legal frame work that will guarantee a hitch-free operations.
- ◆ Provision of arable land and high yielding farm inputs at a subsidized rate
- ◆ Acquisition and distribution of modern farm-tech and equipment
- ◆ Provision of loan facility at a one digit or no interest rate with long period of moratorium

### **Analytical discuss**

At this point, analysis is deemed apt because "it is a knowledge process involving the examination of constituents and functional elements of something, and an interpretation of the underlying rationale for a particular piece of knowledge, action, object or represented meaning (Afuluobi and Izuagba, 2017:216).

Authors like Randolph 1985, Kumar 1987, Gladwin 1992, Koopmann 1993 and Ukwuije 2015, have a common observation that in Africa, some countries like Nigeria, Rwanda and Malawi women mainly grow food crops for household consumption, if there is any marketable surplus they sell it in the market but there is no common traditionally defined pattern of disbursing the monetary proceeds. However, while it is a conjugal responsibility of the men to provide for the family, the women's primary duty is to prepare the food and serve it; they feed the family. It is only after this that the women can engage in other income earning activity.

The distinction between crops and its ownership is sometimes not very clear especially in the case of maize, cassava and yam which in many countries of the Sub-Saharan Africa, they serve the immediate food needs of the family as well as a cash crop. With the introduction of high yielding varieties of these farm inputs, now the peculiarity is that the high yielding varieties tend to be men's crop and local varieties are women's crop. This pattern can be fairly accepted to be a long-standing tradition. The logic behind this farming culture is that high yielding varieties provide large amount of marketable surplus which allows men access to cash in the form of income while women continue with the varieties that provide enough for subsistence family consumption. Women's role in the farming chain does not end at food production; they are also required normally to process and prepare the food they grow, perform domestic care-work and also help men in their cash crop production which they have no strong control over the produce. Nnadi, Chikaire, Osuagwu, Ihenacho and Egwuonwu (2012:7) posited that:



*A major and often overlooked feature of Third World agrarian systems, particularly in Africa and Asia, is the crucial role played by women in agricultural production. In Africa, where subsistence farming is predominant and shifting cultivation remains important, nearly all tasks associated with subsistence food production are performed by women. Although men who remain home generally perform the initial task of cutting trees and bushes on a potentially cultivable plot of land, women are responsible for all subsequent operations, including removing and burning felled trees, sowing or planting the plot, weeding, harvesting, and preparing the crop for storage or immediate consumption.*

In as much as 12.3 million Nigerians are farmers of diverse scale and type, yet we are faced with the scorching challenge of hunger scourge, more scathingly from the time of the civil war. Some of these hunger inflicted scourge are designed and meted out by fellow citizens may be as a political, military or economic weapon to gain a desired immediate advantage or profit without minding what will be the aftermath on the sustainable development of the nation as a whole. Another factor is the uncontrolled activities of the oil companies where oil spillage has continued to destroy our crops and pollute our waters thereby causing preventable food shortage. This appears to answer the question of 'why does hunger exist?' Historically, Forsyht (1982:100) noted during the Nigerian Biafran war that:

*...1968 saw the emergence of a fresh scourge to flay the Biafran people. By the summer of that year, the blockade of protein foods had produced its first intended outcome. Children were beginning to die in ever increasing numbers from dreaded kwashiokor. It is a medical fact, known in Lagos and London, that to remain healthy an adult needs one gram of pure protein per day. But a child, with its growing bones and organs, needs five grams. A child being about a quarter the weight of an adult; that means that pound for pound, a child is twenty times more dependent on protein. Cut off the protein supply, the children suffer first. This is what happened. Eastern Nigeria had always had enough yams, garri and fruits. But for protein - in the form of meat, fish, eggs, and milk - it was heavily dependent on imports. Gowon's blockade, which even preceded secession, had cut off those imports. (What was their reason? 'Starvation is a legitimate weapon of war, and we have every intention of using it').*

The idea is not to recount the experiences of the civil war but to prop the claim that hunger started especially in the old Eastern Nigeria during the war time. The proportion of female headed households increased significantly after the Nigerian-Biafran War (1967-1970). Majority of those female headed households came to be as a result of thousands of young husbands who died during the civil war coupled with the remaining male heads migrating alone to distant places like Maiduguri, Lagos, Kaduna, Kano, Kafanchan and even traveled abroad much later in search of other income earning opportunities to make up what was lost during the war. The percentage of female headed households differed by numerical calculation based on the present six geo-political zones. But the female headed household is likely to be more in the South-East where the doctrine of "one man, one wife" is relatively adhered to. On the average, they tend to be small in family size, suffer social stigmatization, have lower incomes, feed very scantily and are less likely to adopt new agricultural technology as a result. They are prone to disease, and form majority of victims of untimely death. This situation unwittingly turned many families, after the war into subsistence farmers; depending more on farm produce for their family upkeep. Yet, what they were producing was not sufficient, to the extent that in 1984, precisely December 1, Brigadier Sani Abacha in the maiden broadcast that ushered in Gen. Muhammed Buhari as the Head of the Federal Military Government and the

Command-in-Chief of the Armed Forces said that our economy has been hopelessly mismanaged. We have become a debtor and beggar nation. There is inadequacy of food at reasonable prices for our people who are now fed up with endless announcement of importation of foodstuffs. Health services are in shamble as our hospitals are reduced to mere consulting clinics without drugs, water and equipment.

From a different angle all together, Onwubiko (2008), posited that:

*...with the exploitation of crude oil in commercial quantities, food production and supply were observed to be lagging behind increase in population growth. What followed was a situation of declining supply and increasing demand for food. Therefore, Nigeria had to search for a way of improving the food supply situation to avert a political crises, and the most readily handy option was massive food importation as a short term palliative (p.23).*

Falola, (n.d.), further traced why and what made men to have a tenacious grip of the cash crops, leaving the women with varieties of crops that are for family up-keep. His research showed that "the most serious threat to the influence and privileges of women occurred during the 20th century, when patriarchy combined with colonial changes to alter gender relations. As male Chiefs collaborated with the British Colonial Administration in collecting taxes and governing, the position of female chiefs declined in importance. When the economy became increasingly geared toward the production of cash crops for export, Nigerian men and European firms dominated the distribution of rubber, cocoa, groundnuts (peanuts), and palm oil. Women, pushed to the background, were forced to shift to the production of subsistence crops. A previous land-tenure system that had prevented land alienation gave way to land commercialization, favouring those with access to money gained from the sale of cash crops. Western-style education also favoured boys over girls and thus largely excluded women from many of the new occupations introduced by colonialism.

No doubt, there are hungry people around us hence we ask: why is it important to care for the hungry? We do because the need for food is a widely accepted important human existentiality requirement, to satisfy daily dietary needs. Again, if left to continue in this involuntary starvation, they person may begin to misbehave or die and you can agree with me that it is accepted all over the world that nobody deserves to die except justified by his actions or inactions. Therefore, any step made towards boosting agriculture is a right step towards ending hunger and boosting development.

Nigeria, ranked among the 25 poorest countries in the world, started its independent nationhood with poverty level of barely 15% of its population in 1960 and as at 2003, Nigeria was still struggling to bring it down from about 70% of its 120 million population. Of the number of the poverty stricken people, about 73% is concentrated in the rural areas where illiteracy prevalence is high, potable water and health facilities are rarely available, road and electricity infrastructures are either unavailable or ill-managed (Oyemomi, 2003: 4).

Poverty is the origin of individual and national underdevelopment and the prime cause of hunger. A hungry man they say, is an angry man! When majority of the citizens are poor, the country is poor and when the country is wealthy but the wealth does not circulate and reflect on the lives of the citizens, it then means that the country is enjoying a vain glory. It is good to talk about reduction but best to talk about eradication because hunger can destabilize government by promoting crime,

corruption and immorality. At the onset of the Agricultural Transformation Agenda, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pledged that efforts would be made to add 20 million tonnes of food to the nation's food stock by 2015. He said that additional 15 million tonnes of food were produced between 2011 and 2013, thereby reducing drastically the menace of hunger in the country. Besides, improved rice varieties, fingerlings, livestock, poultry and feeds were distributed to farmers nationwide through the Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GES) at subsidized rates. Value chains on staple and cash crops, which include rice, cassava, soybeans, sorghum, millet, cocoa, ginger and groundnut, among others, were introduced to encourage agri-businesses and stimulate increased food production.

Amidst this revelations, there is still mixed feelings and reactions as per the feat recorded by Nigeria in her effort to achieve a zero hunger society. Many farmers do not subscribe to the effectiveness of the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA), admitting that the effect of ATA has been very minimal and negligible. Unrest in some parts of the country especially the North-East has led to an estimated 1,538,982 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as at April 2015; poverty, hunger, unemployment and dissatisfaction became the end result. The level and effect of hunger in the country cannot be accurately measured while still in Abuja; a visit to the rural communities and the suburbs will reveal the true situation through empirical study.

However, Elver, (2015), said that "the greatest challenge for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to eradicate poverty and hunger while maintaining sustainable food security for all in a crowded and dramatically unequal world". In as much as the statement appears to be generalized, the women, particularly Nigerians are more concerned about eradication of hunger for one obvious fact. When a child is hungry, who does h/she go to? When a good husband is hungry, who does he go to? Obviously, women can endure hunger more than men who easily misbehave whenever they are hungry. This, I can say, is in part, the reason women have continued to endure the pains and sufferings they undergo in making sure there is good food to eat regularly. Am sure you know, a hungry man can hardly live upright! Nevertheless, in a well conducted empirical study, greater percentage of the respondents (29.4%) believed that land acquisition, nature of the activity, inputs, accessibility and lack of capital are the constraints to women participation (sic) in agricultural activities (Apata and Awe 2013).

There are more reasons for the presence of hunger in the world particularly in Nigeria and they are often interrelated; that is to say, one begetting the other. Poverty, scarcity of high yielding farm inputs, loose supervision of government programmes, lack of investment in agriculture in terms of equipment, weather and climatic change, war and displacement, unstable market and irregular consumption of locally manufactured secondary food, wastage and so on are the major causes identified.

## **Conclusion**

Looking at this myriad of challenges facing humanity as a result of hunger and the limitation we encounter in the cause of producing food for all, certain questions may summarily call to mind. Can the world produce enough food for humanity? Yes! The 2012 report of the Food and Agriculture Organisation is a sufficient proof that the world can feed its inhabitants. Part of the report says:

*The world produces enough food to feed everyone. For the world as a whole, per capita food availability has risen from about 2220 kcal/person/day in the early 1960s to 2790 kcal/person/day in 2006-08, while developing countries even recorded a leap from 1850 kcal/person/day to over 2640 kcal/person/day. This growth in food availability in conjunction with improved access to food helped reduce the percentage of chronically undernourished people in developing countries from 34 percent in the mid 1970s to just 15 percent three decades later (p. 4)*

In Nigeria, all we need do is to take proactive measures to reverse the ecological impact limitations and we will bounce back into large scale food production. With this, Nigeria's annual food import bill which was estimated at ₦630 billion will be redirected to the nation's economy and the result will manifest in national development.

### **Recommendations**

1. Individuals, institutions and governments being the propellers, should show strong evidence of determination to facilitate access to nutritious food for everyone, everywhere. International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFA) is strongly committed to this path; by providing the essential macro- and micro-nutrients for crop growth; fertilizer is an essential ingredient in the drive towards world food availability. IFA represents the global fertilizer industry, which produces 170 million tons of crop nutrients annually which are used in every corner of the globe to grow the crops that feed a growing population. It is the right choice, one that makes sense as both a global citizen and a private sector actor. To this end therefore, it is recommended that government takes the lead so that access to the product of IFA will not pose another set of challenges. It should be so accessible that even the rural farmers can buy the right quantity at a subsidized rate to augment the ones produced locally and use them in their farms.
2. Evidence from ubiquitous literature proves that hunger is a multi-causal problem requiring a multi-sectoral response. No doubt, food sustainability beyond 2030 requires strong national backup. Therefore, aggressive goal of zero hunger society cannot be attained by the farmers alone. In order to make an effective impact on improving the hunger challenge, a comprehensive multi-sectoral framework must be put in place, backed up by strong political commitment in the form of policies and programmes with the allocation of adequate resources particularly finance for its implementation; committed and resourceful manpower should be employed for implementation, supervision and evaluation.
3. Food and Agriculture Organisations has stated that agricultural sector globally must increase its production capacity by 60% to meet the food demand that will be required to feed the 9.2 billion people who will inhabit our planet in 2050. Against this backdrop, the next WFO General Assembly will have a specific session dedicated to how to provide the growing world population with sustainable, equitable and inclusive solution in the agricultural sector. Farmers, in fact, have the task of producing quality safe food in order to achieve the goal of food security for everyone. This makes it imperative for Nigerian Government and farmer to be readily available to key into the programme and action plans of the WFO while the government should be ready more, to provide the required fund for the procurement of necessary infrastructure and farm input.

4. The insufficiency of food and inability to buy as a result of poverty leads to hunger of a higher dimension and unruly social behaviour. It can as well lead to many other criminal activities which if uncontrolled, can result to violence. Indeed, joblessness breeds hunger and hunger leads to unnecessary migration which in the long run, results to brain drain. Therefore, it is recommended that while we make effort to curb hunger, we should as well make bolder steps to curb unemployment by proactively engaging in extensive mechanized agriculture, manufacturing, control of immigration, overhaul of political policy making process, efficient use of natural resources, ensure supervision all through the implementation stages of government programmes and vote wisely during elections so that good leaders can emerge and be in control of the state resources as well as direct the affairs of the State well, to achieve a zero hunger society.

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