Federal Republic of Nigeria

Draft National Youth Policy 2016

Enhancing Youth Development and Participation in the context of Sustainable Development

Foreword

Acknowledgements

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
GAR	Gross Attendance Ratio
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
JAMB	Joint Admission and Matriculation Board
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
NAR	Net Attendance Ratio
NARHS	National HIV/AIDS & Reproductive Health Study
NCY	National Council on Youth
NDHS	Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, Training
NYCN	National Youth Council of Nigeria
NYDC	National Youth Development Council
NYP	National Youth Policy
OST	Out-of-School Time
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN-DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
YCE	Youth Civic Engagement

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1. Background and Rationale

1.1.Background to the National Youth Policy

Youths are one of the greatest assets that any nation can have. Not only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, but they are also potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country's development. Young women and men are, in particular, recognised as a vital resource whose prospects are inextricably tied to that of their country. They are the valued possession of any nation or region: without them, there can be no future. They are the centre of reconstruction and development. They serve as a good measure of the extent to which a country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. The extent of their vitality, responsible conduct, and roles in society is positively correlated with the development of their country. Programmes and policies that focus on the wholesome development of young people and their active participation in various sectors of nation building are increasingly being emphasised on a global level. The recognition of this fact led to the development of a National Youth Policy.

A National Youth Policy (NYP) is a declaration and commitment to the priorities, directions and practical support that a country intends to give to the development of its young men and women. It clearly defines the place and role of youths in society and the responsibility of society to youths, and should be supported by the following three universal concepts: 'Participation', 'Equity' and 'Cohesion'. In keeping with this perspective, the National Youth Policy should be viewed not so much as a means of addressing problems associated with young people but as a means of ensuring their participation in the building of their communities and societies. The National Youth Policy recognises and values young men and women as valuable resources and national assets and situates their needs and aspiration at the centre of national development.

1.2. Rationale for the Review of Nigeria National Youth Policy

Nigeria's first National Youth Policy was developed in 1981. The drafting of an inclusive social development policy for Nigeria in 1989 provided a basis for the review of the first youth policy in the same year. Subsequent youth policy reviews have been conducted over the years partly because the implementation mechanisms of the previous policies were weak and ineffective, and partly because of the changing national macro-economic and socio-political environment as well as the dynamics of the global youth development. In the year 2007, the Federal Government created a full-fledged Ministry of Youth Development. This development gave impetus for the revision of the 2001 youth policy in 2009. In 2016, it has become necessary to revise the 2009 youth policy to reflect new realities and trends including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and new and emerging issues affecting the vast majority of young people in Nigeria. This new Policy aims to build on the achievements of previous youth development efforts, provide the national framework to address the new realities and emergent issues in national youth arena, and elevate youth engagement in economic, political, and community life.

The review of the National Youth Policy is necessary to improve the level of coordination among policies and sectors that affect youths in the country, raise the standard of accountability for youth outcomes, capture new and emerging issues, and elevate youth engagement in economic, political and community life in Nigeria.

1.3. Youth in the Context of this National Youth Policy

Youth, as a concept varies in different societies and culture around the world. Traditionally, in most societies in Nigeria, the progression from childhood to youth involves some systematic rites of passage. These rites have symbolic significance in that, simply by participating in them, an individual achieves a new status and position. Such new status gains validity through genuine community action and recognition. However, the boundaries defining the transition from childhood to youth and from youth to adulthood are shifting, and the crossover into each new stage is now manifested in different ways. The changes that young people must negotiate do not occur as predictably as in the past,

therefore, defining youth globally according to some exact age range can be a very difficult task. For statistical purposes, youth is defined as the age range 15 to 24 years, but this age bracket is largely considered as too narrow for countries in Africa, given their political, economic and socio-cultural circumstances. In Nigeria, as in many other African countries, the transition to independent adulthood life, in terms of achieving the economic and social stability that comes with steady employment, may extend into the late twenties and sometimes, beyond. Thus, the African Youth Charter of 2006 defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 35 years. On a similar basis, Nigeria's 2009 National Youth Policy chronologically defined youth as persons of age 18 to 35 years.

While the contemporary socio-economic and political conditions in Nigeria still demands that the youth group be broadened beyond the 24 years stipulated by the United Nations, there is also the need for better targeting of the Youth Policy and Youth development agenda to mostly people who are transitioning to adult life. As the Nigerian demographic statistics (Section 3.1) shows, less than five percent of Nigerians are still in school beyond age 29 years, and about three-quarters of males, and over 90 percent of females have been married – a major social landmark for adulthood in Nigeria – by the age of 29 years. Thus, on the basis of the available demographic evidence, this new Policy specifies 29 years as the upper age limit for the chronological definition of youth.

On the other hand, the earlier rate of pubertal development, which marks the onset of reproductive capacity, and the earlier commencement of educational and other developmental pursuits in the 21st century support a lowering of the age bracket for youth in Nigeria. Furthermore, the convention in national and international population-based data arena, including the National Youth Survey, to present data in standard five-year brackets poses a significant challenge for data-based monitoring and programming for 18-19 year bracket separately. Thus, 15 years is specified as the lower age group for defining youth in the context of the current policy. Thus, for the purpose of execution of the current National Youth Policy, the youth shall comprise of all young males and females in Nigeria between the ages of 15 and 29 years. This age bracket captures the period that most young

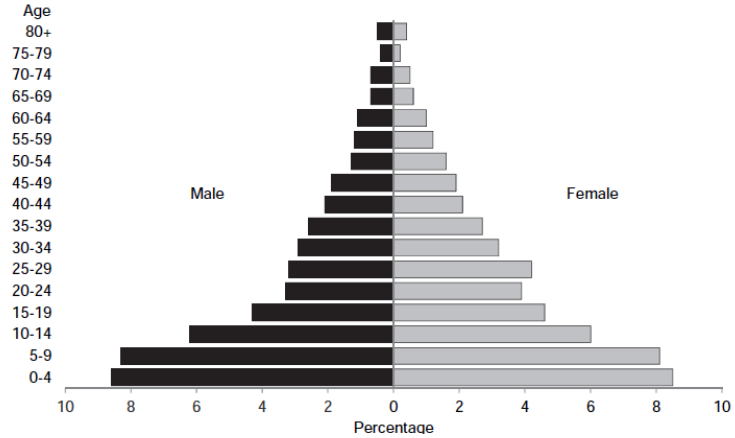
people in Nigeria are transitioning from childhood to adulthood, and require social, economic and political support to realise their full potentials.

2. Situation Analysis

2.1. Demographics of Youth in Nigeria

Nigeria is currently ranked as the seventh most populous country in the world, and the fastest growing nation. Nigeria's population was slightly over 182 million in 2015, with a median age of 17.9 years[1]. According to the Census, in 2006, Nigeria had 50 million people in the age group 15-34 years – which roughly covers the age bracket of 18-35 years that chronologically defined youth in the 2009 National Youth Policy; this youth population figure represented 35.6 percent of the Nigerian population. By sex, age 15-34 years constituted 33.4 percent of males and 37.9 percent of females in Nigerian in 2006.

Nigeria's Population Pyramid

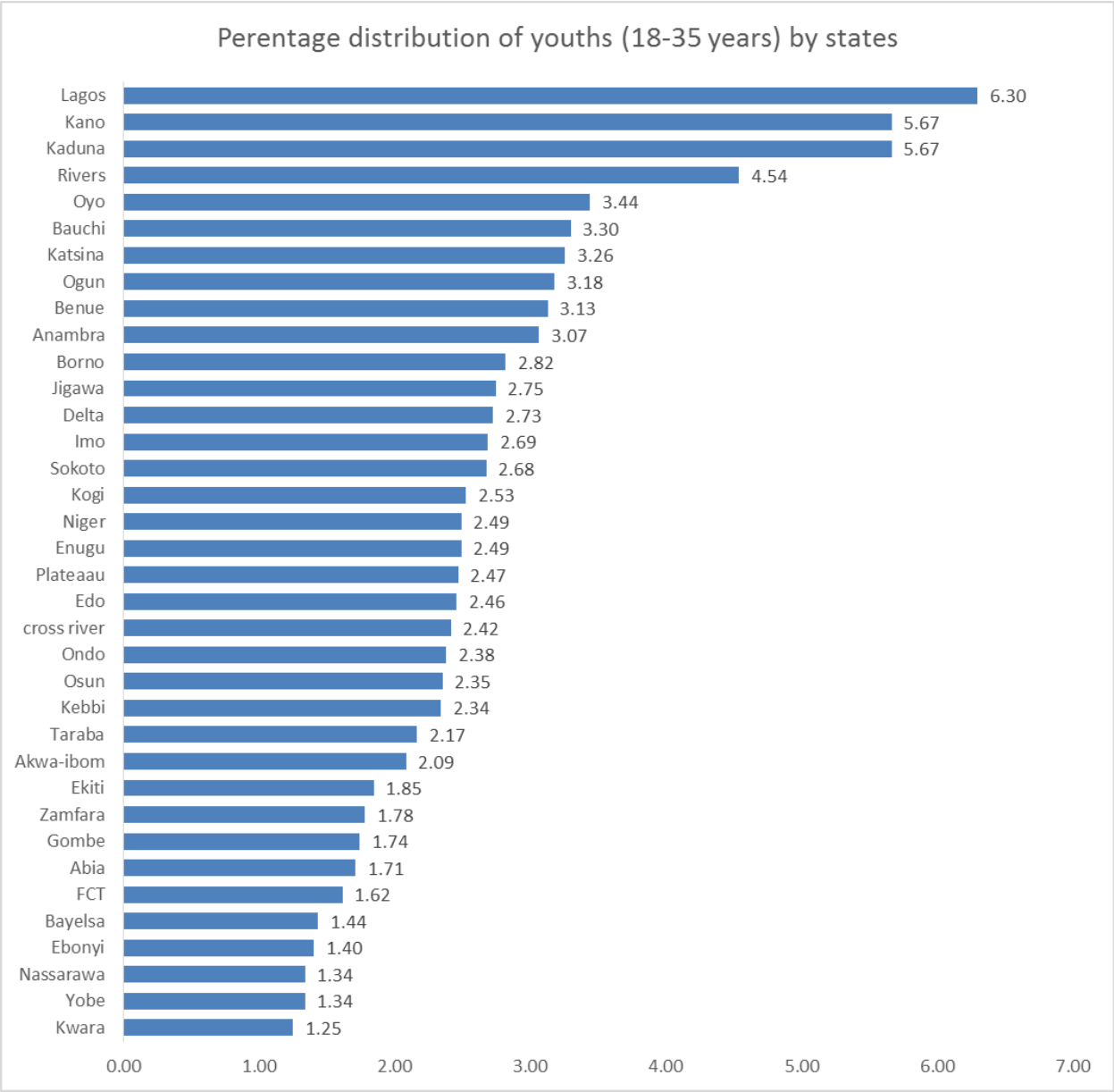


Source: NPC & ICF International (2014). 2013 NDHS

The 2012 National Baseline Youth Survey, undertaken by the National Bureau of Statistics in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Youth Development, estimates the population of youths aged 15-35 years in Nigeria as 64.1 million, and youths aged 18-35 years as 52.2 million. Females constituted 51.6 percent of youths aged 15 -35 years and 52.8 percent of youths aged 18 - 35 years. Lagos State had the highest percentage of youths (age 18-35 years) in Nigeria (6.3 per cent) while Kwara State had the lowest (1.3 percent) in 2012.

[1]UN-DESA, *World Population Prospects, the 2015 Revision*

Percentage Distribution of Youths (18 – 35) by States: Nigeria, 2012



Source: National Bureau of Statistics, *2012 National Baseline Youth Survey*

Nigeria's population structure and current trends in its youth population growth have significant implications for socio-economic policies and agenda in the country.

> 'By investing in the right policies and programmes for adolescents to realize their potential and their human rights to health, education and full participation in society, we can unleash the vast human potential of this 'SDG Generation" to transform our world'.
>
> - Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030)

The growing population of youths, among others, needs to acquire high-quality education and skills to contribute to a productive economy, as well as access to a job market that can absorb them into its labour force. The increasing number of young people entering the working-age population positions Nigeria for significant economic growth through the realisation of demographic dividends, as the dividends become a possibility when a country's working age population is larger than the population that is dependent and younger. However, the dividends can only become a reality if the country invests heavily in young people's education and health, and protects their rights, and strategically equip them to seize opportunities for meaningful jobs and other income-earning possibilities. As the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030) notes, "By investing in the right policies and programmes for adolescents to realize their potential and their human rights to health, education and full participation in society, we can unleash the vast human potential of this "SDG Generation" to transform our world.

2.2. The Situation of Youths in Nigeria

2.2.1. Employment, Entrepreneurship & Poverty

Nigeria faces significant economic changes resulting in increasing unemployment and poverty levels. Youths are disproportionately affected by the unemployment challenge. Youths have been described as educated, qualified or jobless. Whereas, Nigeria's unemployment level has increased from 30 to 40 percent between 2002 and 2015, and the rate among youths had actually doubled. Youth unemployment rate in Nigeria increased from 21.5 percent in the first quarter of 2016 to 24 percent in the second quarter of 2016. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria's youth unemployment rate averaged 17.5 percent from 2014 until 2016, reaching an all-time high of 24 percent in the second quarter of 2016 and a record low of 11.7 percent in the fourth quarter of 2014.

A high level of unemployment and underemployment is one of the critical socio-economic problems facing Nigeria, and it undermines the development of the country. Young people are more likely to be employed in jobs of low quality, underemployed, working long hours for low wages, engaged in dangerous work or receive only short-term and/or informal

employment arrangements. The high rate of youth unemployment has several negative socio-economic and political implications. Unemployment and poverty are quite intertwined. The share of the total population living below the $1 a day threshold of 46 per cent is higher in 2016 than in the 1980s and 1990s—despite significant improvements in the growth of GDP in recent years. Poverty makes it difficult to make investments in education and health that would increase productivity.

The frustration that accompanies long-term unemployment among groups of young people is believed to feed political and ideological unrest and violence. It has also been argued that unemployed and idle youths who have emerged in society may question government authority and endanger its stability. Thus, youth unemployment is a political-security issue, as well as a socio-economic one. Its causes lie in both spheres, as do its effects. Untrained, jobless and alienated youths are ready to take up arms in exchange for small amounts of money. They can be easily recruited as political thugs, willing to eliminate opponents at the flimsiest excuse. Unemployment fuels conflict and crime, both of which in turn increase unemployment still further by their effects on economic performance, investor confidence, and political instability. Job creation, therefore, is a critical tool for conflict resolution.

There is a great need for entrepreneurship development in Nigeria currently, as entrepreneurship development is a major factor in economic growth and development, and also the permanent cure for extreme hunger and poverty dictated by unemployment. Entrepreneurship is more than simply "starting a business." It is a process through which individuals identify opportunities, allocate resources, and create value. If properly guided, young people generally tend to be risk-takers, high achievers, task-focussed, future-oriented, and quite resourceful. These are some of the skills required to be an entrepreneur.

According to the 2013 Report, "Generation Entrepreneur – The State of Global Youth Entrepreneurship," 60 percent of the youths in Sub-Saharan Africa indicate that they have both the belief that there are good business opportunities as well as the belief that they have the skills and knowledge required to start a business. One important factor

influencing this is the poverty level. In poorer regions, as the 2014 World Youth Report on Civic Engagement states, young people are more likely to actively pursue entrepreneurship because it often constitutes the best way to generate income. To address the problems of youth unemployment in Nigeria, it is crucial not to view youths themselves as the problem, rather, the vast energies of the majority of our youths should be treated as a potential asset, and youth as a creative force for the present as well as the future. Care must be taken to avoid focusing narrowly on young people only as "tomorrow's" leaders; the focus instead should be on their role as today's partners-in-development. Youths, world over, are now asking that their voices be heard, that issues affecting them be addressed and that their voices be recognised.

The Agricultural Sector, which had served as the backbone of the Nigerian economy before the discovery of oil, has been abandoned for a considerable period of time. With the reduction in income from oil, the Nigerian economic sector has little chance for recovery unless diversification of the economy is assiduously pursued. Thus, addressing unemployment among young people must include a reorientation towards the agricultural sector and promotion of entrepreneurship. The advent of technology and its appropriate application to the various dimensions of the economy and the overall diversification of the economy will promote youth employment.

2.2.2. Violence and Humanitarian Situation

Although a generally peaceful country, Nigeria has experienced several and repeated episodes of violence over the years, and the emergence of Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad group otherwise popularly known as *Boko Haram* is of particular significance in this regard. The Boko Haram group had engaged in diverse forms of violent acts, including bombing and kidnapping, resulting in one of the worst humanitarian crisis in Nigeria's history. The United Nations estimated that about 15 million people have been affected by the Boko Haram crisis since 2009 and over two million people had become Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the North-East region thereby, with the attendant huge physical, social, health, and psychological challenges. The United Nations further estimated that about seven million people require humanitarian assistance in Nigeria in 2016,

including 3.8 million people aged 18 years or younger. As such, youths constitute a huge proportion of persons affected by the fall-out of the Boko Haram activities. On the other hand, youths also constitute the majority of the perpetrators of the violent Boko Haram activities as well as other episodes of violence in the country, including the inter-communal clashes, restiveness in the Niger-Delta region, and increasing clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and indigenous community members in various parts of Nigeria.

Clashes between Fulani herdsmen and indigenous farming communities have been witnessed in virtually all Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. Inadequate resources and the inequitable distribution or access to the available resources are at the root of most of the violent clashes in Nigeria. In the case of the clash of Fulani herdsman- who are nomadic pastoralists, with indigenous communities, the core problem is the "competition" for increasingly scarce farmland produce that the herdsmen need to feed their cows and which is the local farmers' means of livelihood. The case of the youth restiveness in the Niger Delta region, of which the Delta Avengers is now the prominent arrowhead, typifies the case of inequitable access to resources, as the youths of deprived oil-producing communities resorted to violent acts, including blowing up of oil-production facilities, kidnapping of staff of oil companies, and armed encounters with military and police forces. Cases of inter-community clashes, often based on land and border disputes, are also witnessed intermittently. On the other hand, inter-personal conflicts including armed robbery as well as intimate partner violence and other forms of sexual violence such as rape are also increasingly reported by the mass media.

Youth unemployment and related economic frustration are widely believed to be associated with the rising rate of violence in Nigeria. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) report on Nigeria in December 2013, "Young people, under-educated by a collapsed educational system, may 'graduate' but only into joblessness. Lives decline, frustration grows, and angry young men are too easily persuaded to pick up readily accessible guns in protest when something sparks their rage."

Desperate humanitarian situations may result as in the case of the North-East Nigeria with the Boko Haram crisis. Natural disasters such as flooding and drought may also result in a similar effect, and thousands of Nigerians, including youths, have been displaced as a result of such disasters between 2015 and 2016.

2.2.3. Education and Capacity-building

Education is the single most important factor contributing to the ability of young people to live a productive and responsible life. It is a top priority in the development of young men and women because it is through education and training that they can be better prepared for life. The personal development of the individual youth, along with the development of the immediate local communities and the country as a whole is inextricably linked with the quality of education that the youth have. The provision of educational opportunities for the youth is a fundamental pre-requisite for building a strong, just, equitable, viable and vibrant nation.

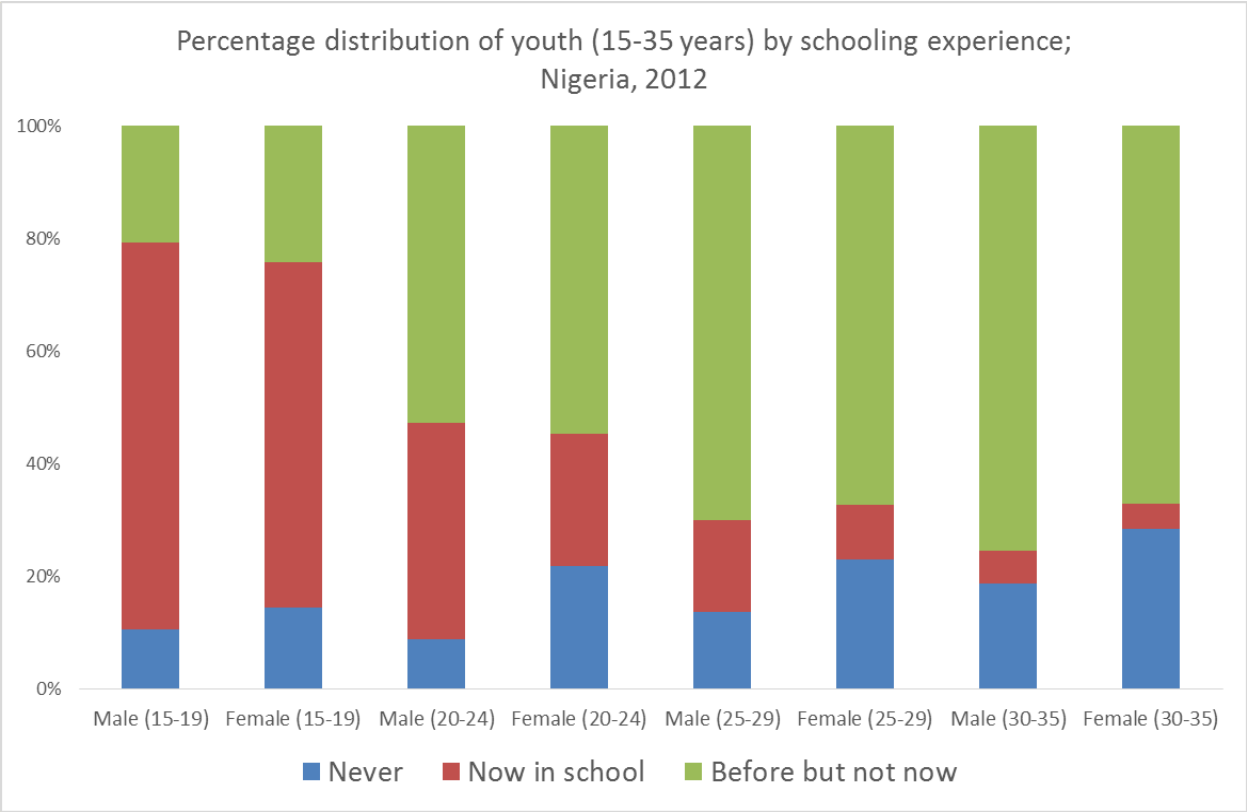
Unfortunately, the Nigerian nation has not been able to provide quality education for all her youth successfully. Demographically Nigeria is young and growing quickly, with 63 percent of the population below the age of 24 and a high average relative annual growth rate of 3.24 percent, which is higher than the African average[2]. This means incredible new demands on the Nigerian educational system. At the tertiary level alone, the number of students has grown from under 15,000 in 1970 to approximately 1.2 million in 2013. As a result of this huge surge in demand, hundreds of thousands of aspiring tertiary students are not able to get admission annually into tertiary institutions. In 2015 well over 1.7 million students registered for the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) examination, all of them competing for less than half a million spaces available, potentially leaving over one million qualified young Nigerians without a post-secondary placement. This is in spite of the fact that the number of universities alone has increased from 51 in 2005 to about 128 in recent times.

[2] World Education Services (2013), *Education in Nigeria*

A significant percentage of Nigerian youths are illiterate, and their educational needs should be adequately and urgently catered for, particularly in the educationally less developed states. An estimated ten million out of the 30 million school-aged children are not enrolled in school in Nigeria. The educational system suffers from deteriorating quality and insufficient investment to keep pace with the country's burgeoning school-age population[3]. The National Youth Survey conducted in 2012 indicated that 17.5 percent of youths have never been in school and that a higher proportion of male youths (51.5 percent) attend formal school compared to females (48.5 percent). The rate of schooling is higher among males compared to females and in Southern Nigeria compared to Northern Nigeria.

[3] United States Agency for International Development, *Nigerian Education Fact sheet, 2012*

Percentage Distribution of Youths by Attendance in School and Age Group



Source: National Bureau of Statistics, *2012 National Baseline Youth Survey*

Furthermore, there is a need to expand school enrolment, and significantly increase the percentage of transition from primary to secondary, as well as from secondary to tertiary levels of education sectors. Formal education is of great importance for the development of all young people. According to the DHS Education Data Survey conducted in 2003, the national primary school Net Attendance Ratio (NAR) in Nigeria was 60 percent, and Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR) was 91 percent. For secondary schools, the NAR and GAR ratios were 35 percent and 61percent respectively. At the secondary school level, the NAR was 38 percent for males and 33 percent for females while the GAR was 69.0 percent for males and 53.3 percent for females. There is a substantial regional disparity in the country with regards to educational enrolment and completion rate.

Poverty is a major barrier to schooling. When poor parents need to make a choice, girls tend to be excluded first from attending school. The gap between male and female literacy rates in Africa appears to be widening. In rural areas, young people have less access to education, the quality of education is poorer, and adult literacy is lower.

2.2.4. Health

Nigeria, as the 2016 report of the Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Well-being reflects, has "multi-burden" adolescent and youth health profile, "characterised by high levels of all types of adolescent health problems, including diseases of poverty (HIV and other infectious diseases, under-nutrition, and poor sexual and reproductive health), injury and violence, and non-communicable diseases." Most of the health challenges of youths in Nigeria have behavioural roots and are preventable. Thus, the high level of health challenges among youths reflect, to a large extent, the inadequate response of the Nigerian health and related social sector systems to the health needs, concerns and challenges of the youth. The result of the National Survey on Youth carried out by the Federal Ministry of Youth Development and the National Bureau of Statistics, in 2012, for example, reported that less than half (47.4 percent) of youths in Nigeria had access and used public hospitals, compared to 19.5 percent recorded for the Private hospitals. Similarly, the report of the study by the Federal Ministry of Health, in conjunction with the Action Health Incorporated, showed that health services with desired qualities to attract and retain the clientele of adolescents and other young people is deficient in number, and most public health facilities lack these desirable qualities.

Broadly, the leading health challenges among youths in Nigeria are sexual and reproductive health (SRH) issues, mental health issues, substance use, injury and violence, and nutritional problems. Youths in Nigeria, particularly those that are in the younger age groups, also suffer disproportionately high level of infectious diseases compared to older adults, while the challenge of non-communicable diseases is also among the youth in Nigeria. The rise of communicable disease is largely associated with four factors: tobacco use, unhealthy diet, sedentary lifestyle (physical inactivity), and harmful use of alcohol.

Sexual and Reproductive Health

The leading SRH issues among youths in Nigeria can be categorised into the following: (a) HIV and other sexually transmitted infections; (b) maternal health conditions, including early pregnancy and teenage motherhood, unsafe abortion, maternal morbidity and mortality; (c) gender-based-violence, which includes sexual coercion and rape. The HIV sero-prevalence for young people (15-24 years), as the national sero-prevalence studies show, has declined progressively from 6.0 percent in 2001 to 3.0 percent in 2014. Contrary to this picture, the National HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health Survey (NARHS) shows that HIV prevalence rate for the general population of adolescents (15-19 years) increased from 1.7 percent in 2007 to 2.9 percent in 2013. Females age 15-24 years, as reported by the 2012 NARHS have higher HIV prevalence than males (3.0 percent versus 2.7 percent). HIV prevalence rate differs widely between the various zones of Nigeria. Overall, the number of youths living with HIV in Nigeria is increasing progressively.

The modelling of HIV infection among young people in Nigeria estimates that 160,000 adolescents age 10-19 years (73,000 males and 90,000 females) were living with HIV in 2013. Also, 17,000 new HIV infections and 11,000 AIDS-related deaths were recorded among adolescents in 2013. Unsafe sex is the leading mode of HIV transmission among young people in Nigeria; for example, only 44% of females and 58% of males age 15-24 years were reported by the 2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) to have used a condom at their last sexual intercourse. Substance use and abuse have also been increasing among youths, particularly in urban slum areas, and the challenge of HIV transmission through unsafe intravenous drug injection is also likely to be growing concomitantly. Also, a fairly high proportion of babies who were infected with HIV at birth through transmission from their mothers have now grown into adolescents living with HIV.

High level of early and unprotected sexual exposure, either in the context of premarital or intra-marital sexual relationships results in Nigeria's high burden of adolescent mothers and unsafe abortion. About a quarter of adolescents of 15-19 years in Nigeria had commenced childbearing in 2013, according to NDHS. On the other hand, a high proportion of pregnancy among adolescents and never-married youths, especially those either in

school or in apprenticeship, are unwanted: such pregnancies often end up as induced and unsafe abortions, with the attendant high rate of maternal morbidity and mortality. Maternal causes, particularly unsafe abortion, currently constitute the leading cause of death among female youths in Nigeria.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Mental health, as the report of the Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Well-being shows, accounts for a high proportion of disability-adjusted life years among young people in Nigeria. Although reliable national statistics are not available, current evidence suggests that mental health burden is increasing in the country due to the escalating socio-economic and political challenges in Nigeria. There is a growing frustration among youths over the increasing problems regarding admission into tertiary institutions, unemployment, insecurity and uncertain prospects in terms of life goals and self-fulfilment. Among others, an increasing number of suicidal ideation and suicides are being reported among youths in Nigeria in both scientific literature and the mass media. The growing challenge of substance use and increasing divorce rate in families and family instability are also likely to add to the mental health challenge among the youth. Unfortunately, a study conducted by the World Health Organization has shown that there are inadequate facilities for mental health care in Nigeria. Facilities are particularly poor at Primary Health Care level where most of the population resides. Human resources for mental health care are also lacking significantly in Nigeria.

Injuries and Violence

The rate of injuries and violence among the youth in Nigeria has been increasing in recent years, although precise national data are not available. The practice of commercial motorcycle, which has spread around the country with the worsening economic condition and youth unemployment, has, for example, been associated with high level of accidents, with the result that most orthopaedic wards in Nigerian hospitals are filled with victims of motorcycle accident. Similarly, the worsening state of Nigerian roads has increased the rate of road traffic accident, while the increased rate of community-level violence, including

the herdsmen-farmers clashes, bombing episodes perpetrated by the Boko Haram group, Niger Delta Avengers and other restive groups, has further increased the rate of youth injury.

Nutrition

Youths in Nigeria face a double burden of nutritional challenge. While on the one hand, the rate of obesity and overweight is increasing among youths in Nigeria, in particular among adolescents. On the other hand, a spectrum of Nigerian youths also faces the challenge of poor nutrition. Adoption of sedentary lifestyles and westernised diet particularly, with the increasing presence of fast food joints are major factors contributing to overweight and obesity among the youths. Also, poverty and food insecurity are major factors associated with poor nutrition. Teenage pregnancy is another factor that contributes to poor nutritional status among young girls, particularly iron deficiency anaemia.

2.2.5. Civic engagement

Over the past two decades, youth civic engagement has acquired some prominence in research, policy and practice in many parts of the world. At the international level, the World Bank has identified the exercise of active citizenship as one of the most important activities for a healthy transition to adulthood for both the youth of today and the next generation[4]. Youth civic engagement leads to reduced risky behaviour, increased success in school and leads to greater civic participation later in life. Youth civic engagement (YCE) is an emerging area of practice and knowledge development that seeks to engage young people in democracy through in-school and out-of-school time (OST) learning opportunities.

Interest in civic engagement has been spurred by a range of factors, including concerns about the perceived decline in the levels of civic and political engagement among young people worldwide and about the potential negative impact of this decline on the governance of society. The focus on youth civic engagement is driven in part by the

[4] World Bank, Development Report 2007

assumption that young people who are more involved in and connected to society are less likely to engage in risky behaviour and violence—and are likely to stay engaged as they grow older[5].

Youth engagement may be considered an end in itself, but it is also a means to achieve other objectives and benefits in society. Its potential to contribute to the personal development of young people, to improve their welfare, and to address injustice in society also provides an impetus for promoting civic engagement as a component of youth work and youth action. Interest in youth civic engagement is also linked to increased public awareness of the right of children and young people to have their voices heard. A growing number of adults are coming to recognise the need to support and encourage youth participation and social action.

Through youth civic engagement initiatives, young people can make valuable contributions to social change efforts in schools and communities across the nation. Activities and programs vary depending on the setting: some are school-based civics education and service learning programs; others exist at the community level, taking place in the out-of-school-time hours. Across these settings, young people work on community action projects, participate in leadership development, and contribute to legislative advocacy efforts and electoral politics. It is evident from this range of activities, as well as from the extent of current foundation support for them that youth participation in strengthening democracy has become a critical component of new efforts to renew the civic fabric of our communities for the 21st century.

2.2.6. Political engagement and inclusion

Young people are a creative force, a dynamic source of innovation, and they have undoubtedly, throughout history, participated, contributed, and even catalysed important changes in political systems, power-sharing dynamics and economic opportunities of many countries of the world. However, youths, especially in Nigeria and many other developing countries, face a number of challenges such as poverty, barriers to education, multiple

[5]World Youth Report on Civic Engagement 2014

forms of discrimination and limited employment prospects and opportunities that constitute a major hindrance to their political participation and inclusion. As a result, the percentage of youths that hold political and leadership positions is quite low. Whereas, most of the leading political actors and leaders of thoughts at independence in 1960 were in their youthful years, the situation is radically different today with very few youths having the opportunity to play leadership roles in political parties, political processes, and overall governance of the country. Females are particularly disenfranchised by the political process practices: at present, the President, Vice President, the Senate President, Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives and all the 36 governors in Nigeria are all males.

Young people are not only "future good citizens in training" – a role from that they are often pushed to by the Nigerian educational and political institutions, but are also major actors in today's democracy and the governance sphere as events in the last five years in various parts of the world had re-emphasized. Young people have taken the leading role in the political activities and processes that have led to changes in the governance structure and the deepening of democratic practices in many parts of the world. As such, young people must be correctly viewed as critical stakeholders in democratic processes and practices.

"No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifeline; it is condemned to bleed to death."
— Kofi Annan, Former Secretary-General of the United Nations

(*Source: UNDP [2013]: Enhancing youth Political participation throughout the Electoral cycle*)

Youth participation in developmental processes, including politics and governance, is a fundamental democratic right. Several international conventions and declarations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the World Programme of Action for Youth, provide a strong frame of reference for a rights-based approach to related programmes of support. Removing existing barriers to youth political participation should be an end in and

of itself. For the most part, promoting youth participation needs to be geared towards achieving levels relative to those of the rest of the population. Effective and meaningful youth political participation has one of three attributes: it is consultative; it entails youth-led participation, where young people have a direct impact on decision-making within their own youth communities; and finally, it can involve youth collaborative participation, where young people effectively take part in regular political decision-making processes.

It is important to bear in mind that youth participation in the democratic life of any community goes beyond voting or standing for election, although these are important components of youth participation. Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engaging in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society[6].

2.2.7. Disability and Special Needs

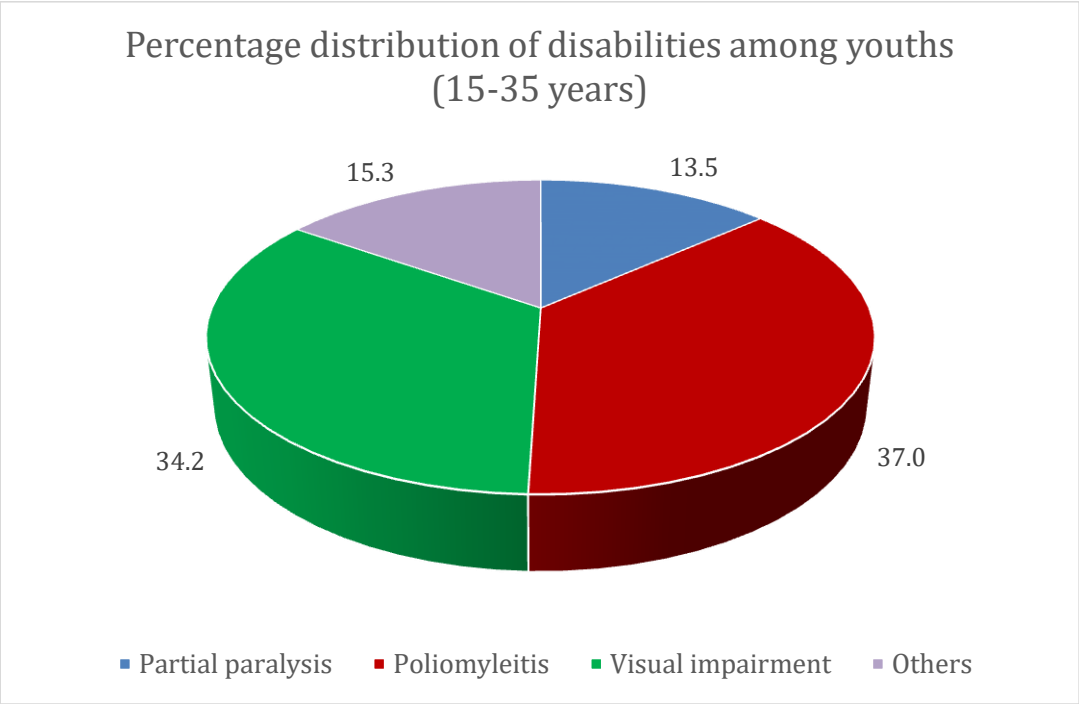
The 2006 National Census reported that 2.3 percent of the population have one form of disability or the other, but the data was not disaggregated by age. Among the six categories of disability provided (seeing, hearing, speaking, mobility, mental, and others), speaking impairment constituted the most common form of disability (45 percent), followed by hearing impairment (14 percent) and mobility impairment (14 percent).

However, the 2012 National Baseline Youth Survey shows almost half a million youth (490,000, or 0.94 percent of the youth population) have one form of disability or the other. Poliomyelitis-related disability constituted the highest category (37 percent), followed by visual impairment (34 percent). Overall, males constituted 51 percent of the youths with disability, although female constituted a higher proportion of those with visual impairment. The number of cases of disabilities vary widely among the states: Anambra, followed by Kogi State, has the highest number of those with visual impairment; Edo, followed by Borno, has the highest cases of polio-related disability; Kano, followed by Abia, has the

[6] United Nations Development Programme (2013). Enhancing Youth Political Participation throughout the Electoral Cycle – A good practice guide.

highest cases of partial paralysis; and, Rivers has the highest number of other forms of disabilities.

Percentage distribution of youths by forms of disability



Source: National Bureau of Statistics, *2012 National Baseline Youth Survey*

2.2.8. Migration

Migration is an increasingly important force in shaping the lives and development of youths at national and global level. The current level of migration of youths is at a level never before experienced in the world. The combination of the worsening economic situation in many low- and middle-income countries and exacerbation of in-country wars and politically-related violence has notably resulted in a high level of international migration. While specific data are not available for the scale of international migration, there are clear indications that the problem of youth migration from Nigeria is on the rise – largely due to economic challenge and rising unemployment. The phenomenon of "brain drain", which involves the migration of highly qualified Nigerian professionals, such as those in the medical field and the academic, deny the country the opportunity of benefiting from the capability, expertise and experience of these top professionals, many of which were trained in Nigerian public universities where tuition was free. While the Americas and Europe were the traditional targets for migrating Nigerians, migration is also occurring in large numbers to other African countries and developing countries. Nigerian youths are

migrating in large numbers to African countries such as Ghana for the purpose of tertiary-level education, which involves the payment of high amount of tuition and other school fees, as the number of candidates far outstrips the available spaces in Nigerian public universities.

In addition to international migration, internal migration is also a challenge in Nigeria. The 2006 Population and Housing Census revealed that more than 10 percent of Nigerians are lifetime migrants or live in states other than their states of birth. People born in Ogun, Kwara, Osun and Imo are the most migratory, with more than 20 percent living in other states. The Internal Migration Survey conducted by the National Population Commission in 2010 revealed that 23 percent of the sampled population of Nigerians are migrants, having changed residence within 10 years, and two percent are return migrants. This shows that a large number of Nigeria's population is on the move internally. These migratory flows are mostly influenced by the desire for better economic prospects and social facilities. The survey indicated that about 60 percent of internal migrants reside in urban areas, with obvious consequences on socioeconomic infrastructures in the urban areas.

According to the 2012 National Baseline Youth Survey, the predominant type of movement among youths in Nigeria is inter-state migration (49.9 percent), followed by rural-urban (21.4 percent), inter-local government area (16.2 percent) and urban-rural (9.1 percent) migration.

Almost half of the internal migration of youths in Nigeria (48.5 percent) in 2012 were tied to family reasons, while 22.9 percent were related to search for job opportunities and only 2.6 percent due to conflict and civil unrest. However, the picture may have changed in recent years with exacerbation of violence in some parts of northern Nigeria and the threat posed by the Boko Haram group to life and well-being.

2.3. Youth Development Efforts and Commitments

Youth development efforts have been a major focus of successive Nigerian governments. The Federal Government created a full-fledged Ministry of Youth Development in 2007 as part of that effort, with the statutory responsibility for advancing the youth development agenda nationally. In addition to spearheading policy development and advocacy efforts, the Ministry has also been engaged in major efforts to monitor the status of youths and facilitate youth development programmes, among others. The Ministry has now been renamed the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development under the current national government with Sports Development merged into it.

In 2008 the then Federal Ministry of Youth Development developed, for the first time, a Youth Development Index for Nigeria aimed at providing measures for understanding the well-being of the Nigerian youth. The Index assessed the status and needs of the Nigerian youth, and thereby generated empirical data to inform policy decisions and guide implementation, as well as provide evidence-based advocacy tool on youth development issues. The youth development index is an instrument created to monitor the development of youth for a designated period and evaluate subsequent changes in the status of youth. Thus, it is a mechanism designed to evaluate the effectiveness or otherwise of the country's youth policy. The four dimensions of the NYDI include access, quality of life, value system, and perception. The introduction of the Annual Nigerian Youth Development Report from 2008 is also an important youth development activity embarked upon by the Ministry. In 2012, the Ministry also undertook the National Baseline Youth Survey in conjunction with the National Bureau of Statistics. That survey reflects the status of youths in Nigeria in several areas, including employment, educational situation, health, sports, political participation, drugs and crime, migration issues. Overall, the survey showed that Nigeria still faces considerable degree of challenge in the area of youth development.

In 2008 the Federal Ministry of Youth Development also developed a Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan (NIYEAP). The employment action plan was the result of six zonal workshops covering the six geopolitical zones, and involving a wide spectrum of stakeholders. The Ministry also established Youth Development Centres to provide vocational and developmental training for youths in different parts of the country.

Furthermore, zonal offices have been established across the country to help fast track youth development activities.

At the Federal level, the National Youth Service Corps programme was launched in 1973, to promote national unity and integration and expose graduates of tertiary institutions to leadership roles and community development projects before joining the job market. National sports and cultural festivals were also organised in the 1970s and 1980s as fora for the research, identification and encouragement of talent amongst the youth. Citizenship and Leadership Training Centres were also developed in Lagos, Jos, and Port Harcourt to organise short-duration programmes and courses for youths to orientate them on citizenship issues and develop their potentials for leadership.

Major youth-related initiatives have also taken place in several other sectors including: the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN) Programme designed to encourage youth entrepreneurship and provide grants for small and medium scale enterprises; promotion of e youth engagement in agribusiness; and, the Growing Girls and Women in Nigeria (G-WIN) Project that focuses on young females and women. The G-WIN initiative involves five key Federal Government ministries: Health, Works, Communication, Agriculture and Water Resources.

In addition to the efforts of the government and its agencies, there have been considerable contributions from other development sectors – international development partners, the civil society and the organised private sector – to youth development in Nigeria. Whereas civil society organisations have functioned mainly in the areas of programme implementation, most of the technical and financial support for policy and programming in the youth development arena has been from the international development partners. The United Nations Population Fund, for example, has been in the forefront of adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and development in Nigeria for several decades in line with her mission as “the lead UN agency for delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled “and

mandate to support countries to fulfil their ICPD PoA commitment. UNFPA has supported policy development efforts in the areas of adolescent health, population and development, and reproductive health, and youth development. UNFPA champions the call for increased investment in youth development as a fundamental step for Nigeria to reap the demographic dividend. UNFPA has also provided technical and financial supports to the operationalisation of the national agenda in reproductive health, sexual and reproductive rights, girl-child empowerment and gender equity, as well as data collection to support development planning, among others.

Other multilateral agencies have also contributed to the youth development agenda in Nigeria in line with their mandate, including the World Health Organisation (health development), the United Nations Children's Fund (child right and protection, health, basic education, water and sanitation), the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (education); the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, and International Labour Organisation (job creation and employment issues); the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (drug, corruption, and crime control); the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (HIV prevention and control); UN Women (gender equity, female empowerment, rights and development of the girl-child), and the IMF and World Bank (economy, job creation, health, education). Several bilateral organisations are also very active in the youth development arena in Nigeria, including the Department of International Development (DfID) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the European Union.

3. Policy Context and Guiding Principles

3.1. Policy Context

The National Youth Policy recognises the broader policy context in which it has been formulated and shall operate. This policy context is guided largely by other national policy initiatives and it is also reflective of international programmes and conventions, particularly the under-listed ones.

3.1.1. National Policies and Development Agenda

- *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*: Sets a broad policy context for the National Youth Policy, and assures the fundamental rights of all youths and other Nigerians.

- *National Policy on the Health and Development of Adolescents and Young People in Nigeria*: Sets the policy agenda for the health and well-being of young people age10 to 24 years.

- *National Policy on Population for Sustainable Development*: Identifies youths as a critical population group, and emphasises the need for Government to "recognise their special needs and make appropriate provision for their growth and development, and meaningful participation in national development".

- *National Gender Policy*: Establishes a policy platform for gender equity and equality, and supports efforts to improve the development and well-being of the disadvantaged female gender.

- *National Health Policy*: Provides evidence-based mechanisms and directions for significantly improving the health status of all citizens of Nigeria, to enable them lead fully healthy and fulfilling lives.

- *National Policy on Education*: Constitutes the national policy platform for implementation of education agenda for the youth and other age groups in Nigeria.

- *Vision 20:2020*: Sets the goal of Nigeria becoming one of the top twenty economies in the world by the year 2020, with "building a productive, competitive and functional human resources base for economic growth and social advancement" as one of its main policy thrust.

3.1.2. Regional Youth-related and Development Agenda

- *The ECOWAS Commission Youth Policy* – The National Youth Policy recognises the ECOWAS Commission Youth Policy as the basis for the overall development of all young people in the West African sub-region.

- *African Youth Charter* – Nigeria, as a member state of the African Union that has ratified or acceded to the African Youth Charter, is working towards achieving the principles of the Charter, which aim at enabling all young men and women to enjoy full participation in the life of the society.

- *Commonwealth Youth Charter* – the National Policy recognises the work of the Commonwealth in supporting National Youth Policies in all Commonwealth countries and its effort towards creating societies where young women and men are empowered to fully develop their potentials.

3.1.3. Global Development Agenda

- *Charter of the United Nations*: Nigeria, as a member of the United Nations agrees to the attainment of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which protects the fundamental human rights of all youths, including their rights to development opportunities and full participation in the life of their society.

- *United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth*: The principles and purposes of the United Nations World Programme of Action for the Youth as well as its identified priority area have informed the National Youth Policy at many levels.

- *International Conference on Population and Development* (ICPD) (1994) and the *ICPD Beyond 2014 follow up action* (2014): The ICPD Programme of Action (PoA) emphasises that everyone counts, and addresses the issues of sustainable development, poverty reduction, sexual and reproductive health and rights, education and gender equality, and the health and development of adolescents and youths among others. The objectives of the PoA include "to promote to the fullest extent the health, well-being and potential of all children, adolescents and youth as representing the world's future human resources." In the ICPD follow-up action, the UN General Assembly asserts that "the ICPD agenda remains relevant and must be fully implemented beyond 2014", and identifies investment in youth development, women empowerment, and reproductive health as some of the key priorities.

- *Resolution 2012/1 of the UN Commission on Population and Development on Adolescents and Youth*: Reaffirms the ICPD PoA, and calls on States to, among others, "promote equal opportunities for all, to combat all forms of discrimination against young people", "meet the needs and aspirations of youth, particularly in the areas of education, work, income creation and citizen participation" and "ensure that young people, on an equitable and universal basis, enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health by providing them with access to sustainable health and social services without discrimination, by paying special attention to nutrition, prevention of non-communicable and communicable diseases, promotion of sexual and reproductive health."

- *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs*): Nigeria has fully committed to these global developmental goal for the 2016 to 2030 period, and most of the 17 SDGs have implication for development and well-being of youth, and the environment in which they grow and function.

- *Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030)*: This Strategy, which replaced the earlier Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, "acknowledges not only the unique health challenges facing young people, but also their pivotal role alongside women and children as key drivers of change in the post-2015 era."

- *"Our Future: A Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing" Report (2016):* Sets evidence-based agenda for improving the health and well-being of young people aged 10-24 years by 2030 and outlines the opportunities and challenges for effective investment at both country and global levels in this respect.

3.2. Guiding Principles and Values

The National Youth Policy is structured on guiding principles and values, which influenced its design and strategic direction. The key principles and guiding values for the Policy are:

- The National Youth Policy is based on a commitment to extensive consultations, respect for diversity of interests and opinion, input and consensus from the grassroots and local communities in the spirit of national ownership.

- The Policy affirms and upholds the fundamental human rights of all youths, including their rights to fundamental freedoms, development opportunities and full participation in the democratic and governance processes, as well as in community and civic decision-making and development agenda.

- Young people are the most important and valuable resource of the nation, and strategic investment in their education, health, and overall development caries the potential for demographic dividends. As such, the government shall recognise the needs, interests, issues, aspirations, ideas and capacities of young people and youths, and make appropriate provisions for their optimal growth and development.

- The principles and aspirations of the National Youth Policy aligns with the provision of other existing national policies and development initiatives, including: the National Reproductive Health Policy; National Health Policy; National Policy on the Health and Development of Adolescents and Young people; National Gender Policy; National Policy on Population for Sustainable Development; National Policy on Education; National Policy on Environment; and, Vision 20:2020.

- Effective and result-focused policy implementation demands a cooperative interaction of all stakeholders, including the different tiers of government, the private sector, the civil society, and development partners at all levels.

- Commitment to mainstreaming youth issues as a development approach shall inform the economic reform agenda, medium and long-term development planning, value reorientation and social transformation, and other development initiatives of the government.

- The Policy affirms that youth development programmes must be youth centred, and implemented with high degree of youth involvement, and youth-led participation, and with full considerations for gender equity, evidence-informed approaches, inclusiveness as well as political and fiscal accountability.

- The NYP recognises and respects the role of tradition, religion, and culture in the development of young men and women.

4. Vision, Goals and Target Population

The National Youth Policy represents a declaration and commitment to the priorities, directions and practical supports that a country intends to provide for the development of her young men and women. It is a concrete and bold step to put the development and participation of youths at the centre of national development efforts. It is indicative of the readiness of the Government and people of Nigeria to meet the needs and aspirations of the youth as well as seek a solution to their problems. It sets guidelines and provides the framework for all stakeholders to empower the youth to realise their potentialities and take advantage of the opportunities available to make positive contributions to the well-being of their communities across the entire country.

4.1. Policy Vision

A Nigeria where youths live in a safe and secure environment with equal opportunities to realise their dreams and aspirations irrespective of their backgrounds, and contribute optimally to national development.

4.2. Policy Mission

To provide stakeholders in youth development an all-inclusive framework that will ensure the realisation of the full potentials of all Nigerian young men and women irrespective of their ethnic, religious, and socio-economic background.

4.3. Policy Goal

To provide an appropriate framework that protects the fundamental human rights of all youths, promote their optimal development and well-being, and enhance their participation in every sphere of national development processes.

4.4. Target Population

The National Youth Policy broadly targets all young people in Nigeria between the ages of 18 and 29 years, while recognising that youths are not a homogeneous group in terms of needs and circumstances. Therefore, the policy aims to provide a basis for interventions to appropriately address the specific and special needs of each of several identified target groups. In this regard, this policy categorises the target population into three groups:

a. *General population of youths*: This consist of young people who are transitioning appropriately to healthy and productive adulthood with little or no challenge and have the appropriate supportive environment. This group consists of individuals who: have no apparent physical or mental health challenges; have low level of engagement in, and vulnerability to risky health and social behaviours; and, are in an age-appropriate development-oriented process such as schooling, vocational training or employment to empower them for an economically productive future, and have the required supportive environment to enable them optimize their potentials and achieve their developmental goals.

b. *Especially vulnerable youths*: Youths who are socially and economically disadvantaged, or those in challenging social and economic circumstances, based on limited development opportunities, social exclusion, family circumstances, inadequate education, unemployment or precarious employment, migration, and other social, cultural, political, legal and economic factors, which may threaten their development trajectory or compromise the attainment of their potentials. This group includes:
    - Youths Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) – young people who are not engaged in education, employment or any form of training.
    - Youths who are drop-outs from the formal education system.
    - Youths living with chronic health challenges that may impact their potential or opportunities for participation negatively:
        i. Youths with disabilities

ii. Youths living with HIV.

- Youths in challenging social and environmental circumstances that increase their vulnerability to health risks, and anti-social behaviours:
  i. Youths living on the streets
  ii. Youths living in extreme poverty
  iii. Youths living in slum areas (with high rates of crime and access to drugs)
  iv. Youths living in disadvantaged communities, including rural areas
  v. Youths living in families where there is physical and/or sexual abuse
  vi. Internally displaced youths
  vii. Female youths in environments of high gender inequity
  viii. Youths working in hazardous occupations

c. *Most at risk youths:* This group refers to youths engaging in behaviours or practices detrimental to their health, well-being and development, and whose activities may also put the larger society at risk. This group includes youths who are engaged in:
   - armed conflicts
   - crime (whether incarcerated or not)
   - substance abuse
   - sex work
   - other risky behaviours that compromise health, well-being and their own development or that of other members of the society

To achieve the goal and objectives of this Policy, strategies and programmes need to be carefully and specifically developed with appropriate target segmentation and context-specificity to meet the need of each category of youths defined above.

5. Strategic Thrusts and Objectives

5.1. Strategic Thrusts

The strategic thrusts of this Policy are five cross-sectoral developmental pillars that are fundamental to enabling youths to transit to self-fulfilled and productive adulthood with opportunities for full, effective and constructive participation, in line with the Policy vision and mission. These are:

1. **Productive Workforce and Sustainable Economic Engagement of Youths**: Development of youths into a productive and committed workforce through appropriate quality education and skills development, adequate opportunities for productive employment and successful entrepreneurship that will enable them to live economically empowered lives and make sustainable contributions to national development, as well as strategically position the country for the achievement of demographic dividends.

2. **Health and Health-Promoting Lifestyle**: Fostering the health development of youths through appropriate health systems and supportive social sector actions and health-related behaviours geared towards the attainment of physical, social, mental, and spiritual well-being to enable young people live meaningful and fulfilling lives, and contribute appropriately to the achievement of a healthier and more productive society.

3. **Participation, inclusiveness and equitable opportunities for all Youth**: Address barriers to meaningful youth engagement in civil and political affairs, and enhance opportunities for constructive involvement and meaningful participation of all youths in Nigeria in community and social development, political processes, and governance agenda at all levels, to the limit of their ability, desires and experience.

4. **Promotive and Protective Environment for Youth Development**: Ensure an enabling environment that is supportive of optimal development of youths, and protective of their fundamental human rights, thereby ensuring inclusion, equal opportunities for development, and freedom from abuse, violence, intimidation, and discrimination.

5. **Partnership-building and effective collaboration**: Enhance cooperation, collaboration and synergy among all stakeholders as well as sustain the inter-sectoral and multi-sectoral dynamic of youth development agenda through the creation of relevant supportive structures and partnership engagement frameworks driven by competent and committed professionals, to ensure the maximum impact of youth-focused programmes and activities on the individual and the society.

5.2. Objectives

The Strategic thrusts as frameworks within the multi-dimensional youth agenda are cross-sectional in nature. The thematic foci embedded within these cross-sectional thrusts and associated specific objectives are outlined in this section as models to guide both policy advocacy and programming.

Summary of Policy Vision, Strategic Thrust and Objectives

Policy Vision **A Nigeria where youths live in a safe and secure environment with equal opportunities to realise their dreams and aspirations, irrespective of their backgrounds, and contribute optimally to national development.**		
THEMATIC FOCUS	**OBJECTIVES**	**KEY AGENCIES**
Strategic Thrust I: **Workforce and Sustainable Economic Engagement of Youths**		
Education, capacity-building and skills development	1. Improve the quality of education and skill training programmes	*Lead MDA:* Education *Other MDA:* • Youth and Development • Information
	2. Improve access of youth to education and skill training programmes	

Policy Vision **A Nigeria where youths live in a safe and secure environment with equal opportunities to realise their dreams and aspirations, irrespective of their backgrounds, and contribute optimally to national development.**		
THEMATIC FOCUS	**OBJECTIVES**	**KEY AGENCIES**
	3. Promote equitable access to educational opportunities for all youths	
	4. Promote life-long learning among youths	
Employment creation and entrepreneurship	5. Expand employment opportunities through diversification of the economy.	*Lead MDA:* Budget and National Planning Labor and Employment *Other MDAs:* • Finance • Agriculture & Rural Development • Water Resources • Science and Technology • Communication • Solid Minerals • Industry, Trade & Investment • Petroleum Resources
	6. Increase access of youth entrepreneurs to assets and supportive services	
	7. Build linkages between the industrial sector and the educational system	
Strategic Thrust II: **Health and Health-Promoting Lifestyles**		
Health Services	8. Improve the quality of youth-related health care services	*Lead MDA*: Heath *Other MDAs*: • Education • Youth & Sports • Youth Development
	9. Improve the coverage of health care services for youths	
Health-related behaviour	10. Promote appropriate health behaviour, including sports and leisure-time activities	
Strategic Thrust III: **Participation, Inclusiveness and Equitable Opportunities for All Youth**		
Civic Engagement	11. Strengthen the platform and capacity for youth engagement and participation	*Lead MDA:* Youth Development *Other MDAs:* • Women Affairs • Information
	12. Create platforms and enabling environment for the inclusion of marginalized youths	
	13. Strengthen intergenerational relationships and solidarity	
Political Inclusion	14. Enhance the capacities of youth and youth-led organisations to engage actively with the political processes at all levels	*Lead MDA*: • Independent National Electoral Commission • Youth Development

Policy Vision **A Nigeria where youths live in a safe and secure environment with equal opportunities to realise their dreams and aspirations, irrespective of their backgrounds, and contribute optimally to national development.**		
THEMATIC FOCUS	**OBJECTIVES**	**KEY AGENCIES**
	15. Foster an enabling environment for youth engagement with the political processes at all levels	
Strategic Thrust IV: **Ensure Promotive and Protective Environment for Youths**		
Human rights and fundamental freedom of youths	16. Develop and enforce gender-sensitive laws and policies that promote and protect the human rights of all youths	*Lead MDA:* Ministry of Justice National Assembly *Other MDAs*: • Youth Development • Women Affairs • Information
Peace and Security	17. Protect youths from direct involvement in armed conflicts, and the effects of conflicts and violence	*Lead MDA*: Internal Affairs *Other MDA*: Defense
Strategic Thrust V **Effective Partnership-Building and Collaboration in Youth Development**		
Capacity for promoting youth development agenda	18. Strengthening the capacity of government agencies for promoting youth development agenda	*Lead MDA*: Youth Development Other MDA: Academic institutions
	19. Strengthening professional development and professionalism in youth work	
	20. Strengthening the capacity of youth-led organisations for youth work	
Sustainable platform for multi-sectoral collaboration	21. Establishing and operationalizing sustainable platforms for multi-sectoral collaboration	*Lead MDA*: Youth Development Other MDAs: • Education • Health • Women Affairs

Strategic Thrust 1: Productive Workforce and Promote Sustainable Economic Engagement of the Youth

To ensure that youths in Nigeria develop into a productive workforce who can be engaged in sustainable development, strategic activities are needed to appropriately equip them with relevant skills and competencies through high-quality and result-oriented education and trainings. Complementarily, opportunities for productive and gainful employment of youths must be created through the promotion of entrepreneurship and strategic actions across several sectors that will create new job opportunities.

5.2.1. ***Thematic Focus I: Education, capacity-building and skills development***

Objective I: Improve the quality of education and skill training programmes

There is need to strategically review and re-orient educational curricula across board in Nigeria to improve the quality of education, foster greater skills development, engender the spirit of scientific inquiry, creativity and entrepreneurship as well as make Nigerian youths. Such development will make the Nigerian youth more globally competitive and position them to drive the knowledge economy envisaged in the country's vision for the future. Special attention needs to be paid to technical, technological and science-based education to drive knowledge economy. In addition, adequate number of appropriately skilled teachers need to be employed, and their capacity built continuously for quality curricula delivery. Furthermore, the learning environment needs to be improved, and an effective system put in place for continued monitoring and evaluation of teaching activities and learning outcomes.

Objective 2: Improve access of youths to education and skill training programmes

The level of access of youths to education and skills training in Nigeria at all levels needs to be improved to ensure the optimisation of the capacity of young people for self-actualization as well as contribution to national economic growth and development. Strategic efforts should include increasing the availability of educational and training opportunities at all levels, including vocational, technical and professional training and

apprenticeship opportunities, improving facilities and teaching resources in existing educational institutions to increase student intake, opening up new channels for educational pursuit such as the use of distance learning approaches, and creating entrepreneurship centres.

Objective 3: Promote equitable access to educational opportunities for all youths

Access to opportunities for education varies in the country, with poorer families, those in rural areas, young people with disabilities, internally displaced persons, and those belonging to groups such as nomadic herdsmen and migrant fishermen as part of the population groups with less access to education. There is also gender disparity in educational opportunities to the disadvantage of females. Local factors also affect access to education as in the case of the *Almajiris* in the North and shop boys in the South-east. Providing equitable access to educational, skills training and literacy development opportunities demands creative and context-specific interventions to reach these educationally disadvantaged and special groups of youths.

Objective 4: Promote life-long learning among youths

There is the need for continued improvement in knowledge and skills to remain relevant in the modern economy and the workplace environment of the 21st century. The foundation for lifelong learning needs to be laid in the early phases of life and through the educational system as well as value re-orientation. Furthermore, the culture of lifelong learning needs to be created, supported and nurtured at organizational and institutional levels.

5.2.2. ***Thematic Focus II: Employment creation and entrepreneurship***

Objective 5: Expand employment opportunities through diversification of the economy.

Diversification of the economy is critical to expanding opportunities for employment for Nigeria's growing number of youths. Policies need to be put in place to support the expansion of the manufacturing sector and ensure greater productivity and efficiency, and further promote the purchase of made-in-Nigeria products not only nationally but also

across the African region. Agriculture, and information and communication technology are two of the key areas for diversification with the capacity to engage a huge proportion of youths who could add significant values to their own life as well as the national economy. Special initiatives are needed to support youth engagement in these areas, including start-up grants, low interest loans, and easy access to needed work-related facilities and equipment, and other inputs.

Objective 6: Increase access of youth entrepreneurs to assets and supportive services

Entrepreneurship among youths is a vital approach to reducing youth unemployment which has additional potential to bring self-fulfilment to youths and contribute towards improving the national economy. Thus, strategic efforts need to be made toward promoting youth entrepreneurship, particularly by increasing access of youth entrepreneurs in both rural and urban areas to relevant assets, including financial and material resources as well as mentorship, and supportive services such as infrastructure and partnership with financial institutions and industries. Other efforts needed include the establishment of incubation centres, strengthening of the skills development system through establishment of new skills development centres and improvement of the facilities and services of existing centres.

Objective 7: Build linkages between the industrial sector and the educational system

Building and enhancing the linkages between the industries and the educational system has the potential to make educational curricula and training more responsive to the workforce needs of industries, as well as give youths an opportunity for more skills development in the course of their educational pursuit. Such linkages will also provide the industries with a ready supply of more skilled and competent workforce, as well as provide for the educational system to develop solutions targeted at improving the performance of the industrial sector, which should also translate to more employment opportunities and profitability. Strategic efforts in this direction should include: Strengthening the students' industrial work exposure scheme; Integrating internship activities into students' training programmes across all relevant disciplines where such scheme is presently lacking; and, creating science/knowledge parks in selected higher educational institutions, and

establishing/supporting centres of excellence in selected technological fields in higher institutions; and providing incentives for industries that partner with Nigerian educational institutions to advance science, technological education, and innovations.

Strategic Thrust 2: Health and Health-Promoting Lifestyle

Healthy youths are a nation's chief resources for development. In that regards, programmes that contribute to the optimal health of youths, including preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative health-related activities are critical for the well-being of the individual and the development of the society. Efforts to engender health-promoting behaviour and lifestyle are crucial. The health sector as well as other sectors that are contributory to the social determinants of health and health-related behaviours are relevant to the agenda of developing healthy, active, strong and productive generation of youths.

5.2.3. ***Thematic Focus III: Health Services***

Objective 8: Improve the quality of youth-related health care services

The rate and pattern of healthcare utilization among the youth is poor, and the poor quality and unfriendly nature of the orthodox health care system is contributory. Strategic efforts needed to improve the health of young people include training adequate number of healthcare workers on youth-related health friendly services, provision of adequate infrastructure and materials for optimal services, and, institutionalization of quality assurance systems in health care services. Implementation of the National Health Act is another key strategic intervention that can ensure appropriate quality of the health service.

Objective 9: Improve the coverage of health care services for youths

A high proportion of morbidity and mortality that occur among the youth is preventable and linked to health-compromising. In general, the poor response of the health system to the health needs and challenges of young people has been implicated in the high level of preventable morbidity and mortality among youths. A key strategy in developing a healthy population of youths is to improve the coverage of preventive services, including: family

life and HIV education, health promotion and counselling; screening for selected high-risk behaviour and diseases; relevant immunisation services such as tetanus toxoid (particularly for girls), Human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine (for the prevention of cervical cancer), and hepatitis B vaccine for those in relevant educational and employment engagement with high risk such as laboratory scientists, medical and nursing students. In addition, there is the need to provide youths with adequate access to relevant to curative services, and expand the reach and coverage of rehabilitative services to youths with disabilities, or other chronic conditions, and others with a need for such services. The key strategies needed in this direction include integrating youth-friendly health services into primary health care; strengthening of school health and occupational health services for youths who are schooling and those employed respectively; and integrating quality youth-related health services to skills development and youth centres. The use of the electronic media and mobile communication technologies to creatively and efficiently reach young people with relevant health information and education, the use of peer-to-peer approaches, and strengthening referral linkages are other key strategies .

5.2.4. ***Thematic Focus IV: Health-related Behaviour***

Objective 10: Promote appropriate health behaviour, including sports and leisure-time activities

Most youth-related health problems have behavioural origin; as such, appropriate health-related behaviours are fundamental to sustaining, enhancing and improving the health of youths. Key behavioural issues include sexual behaviour, nutritional practices, use of substances, physical exercises, sanitation-and environmental-related practices, sleep pattern and appropriate use of health services. Leisure-time activities including games and sports, religious and spiritual engagements, cultural events, entertainment and community services also contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of the individual youth. Among others, sedentary lifestyles and modern-time nutritional practices (such as fast-foods) are associated with the increasing rate of non-communicable diseases among youths. Behaviour change education and health promotion, including Family Life and HIV education, school-based physical education and drug education are important to

ensuring healthy youths. Promotion of sport engagement is also critical for youth health and well-being: physical activities reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases; improve the overall health and wellness of youths; contribute to a foundation for healthy adult life; promote relationship-building and pro-social behaviours; and, serve as a positive way of engaging youths' energy and means for some economic returns. As such, the Government and other stakeholders should promote the culture of physical activities and sport engagement among youths by: integrating sports and physical activities into various youth-related activities; improving sporting facilities and the access of youths to such facilities; organising and supporting games and sports competitions at grassroots and other levels for all categories of youth, including those with disabilities; and, appropriately recognising, supporting and rewarding youth sportspersons. Government's regulation of health-damaging products, industries and practices - including alcohol and cigarette production and importation, operation of fast food joints, and control of noise and environmental pollutions – are also crucial.

Strategic Thrust 3: Promote Participation, Inclusiveness and Equitable Opportunities for All Youth

Youth participation is one of the key elements in positive youth development critical for national development. Efforts need to be made to ensure that every group of youths have the opportunity for meaningful engagement and participation in development processes, including community development, governance, and politics. To make this a reality, special attention needs to be focused on disadvantaged groups that hitherto have limited opportunities for participation. The social development sector is particularly important in this respect, with the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development playing lead roles in the Nigerian context, alongside the civil society organisations, youth-led organisations, and the political and governance institutions.

5.2.5. ***Thematic Focus V: Civic engagement***

Objective 11: Strengthen the platform and capacity for youth engagement and participation

Civic engagement counts significantly in the healthy transition of youth to adulthood, and contributes towards both the success of the individual and development of the society. The key strategic interventions to promote civic engagement include education on citizenship and community values, creating and supporting opportunities for youths to engage in volunteerism at community and organisational levels. Considering the vast needs of our societies and the necessity for every individual to benefit from any plans made in this regard, coupled with the limitations of government resources, there is a need for assistance from other bodies like youth volunteers in various development activities/programmes to supplement the efforts of government. Thus, the services of voluntary youth organisations need to be significantly encouraged to complement the services provided by Government, particularly if social development is to reach the grassroots. Building partnership with community development organisations and with both public and private institutions that can provide a platform for youth engagement can expand the opportunity for volunteerism and civil engagement. The National Youth Service Scheme should be strengthened, and the creation of local community development service schemes encouraged and supported by relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, promoting 'social entrepreneurship' by recognising and honouring youth social entrepreneurship and providing grants to some of their initiatives can also promote civil engagement among youths.

Objective 12: Create platforms and enabling environment for inclusion of marginalised youths

Specific attentions and strategic actions are needed to provide opportunities for civic engagements to disadvantaged and otherwise socially excluded youths. These groups of youth may include those with disabilities, teenage mothers, youths on the street and many other groups of "especially vulnerable" and most-at-risk youths as defined in the section on "target population" of this Policy. For youths with disability, proposed actions would include structural interventions and environmental modifications to facilitate the easy mobility of some groups, increased educational opportunities through the expansion of existing special schools, improvement of the quality of special education, and promotion of

the integration of children with disability into the normal school system. Also, exploration of communication and other technologies to mitigate and minimise the effects of their disability on their development, functioning, and activities. Legal provisions and affirmative actions may also be necessary to protect the rights of certain groups, or promote their rightful participation in certain developmental processes. Government and stakeholders also need to create support and rehabilitation systems for vulnerable and most-at-risk youths, including those involved in substance use, sex work or crime and those in institutional care, correctional homes and prison.

Objective 13: Strengthen intergenerational relationships and solidarity

Effective and positive intergenerational relationships between youths and older generation is symbiotic in nature. It holds the potential for benefitting both the youths and older people. On the one hand, youths can enjoy mentorship from the older generation and gain tremendously from their knowledge and experiences. On the other hand, older generations can benefit from the physical strength and support of young people. Providing opportunities for youths to work and partner with older generations in a more robust manner could offer the youth a platform to contribute to richer family and community lives, and enhance community cohesion and solidarity. Efforts needed to build inter-generational relationships include development of mentorship programmes to connect older generations and youths, and providing the platform for inter-generational communication.

5.2.6. ***Thematic Focus VI: Political inclusion***

Objective 14: Enhance the capacities of youth and youth-led organisations to engage actively with political processes at all levels.

Youths are critical stakeholders in democracy and have potentials for influencing political processes and governance positively. However, the engagement of youths in Nigeria with the political system and their inclusion in political processes has been rather poor. Inadequate knowledge and experience, and lack of institutional support for political engagements are part of the major challenges limiting youth participation in politics. To

address this challenge, there is the need to appropriately strengthen the capacities of youths for political engagement through training and mentorship, and the promotion of their leadership skills for governance. Furthermore, the capacity of youth-led organisations needs to be strengthened and their potentials harnessed to serve appropriately as the platform for advocacy for youth engagement in politics, and a base for continuous capacity-building for youth engagement in politics and governance.

Objective 15: Foster an enabling environment for youth engagement with the political processes at all levels

With the mindset to fully maximise the potentials of youths and harness their resources for improved governance system, government and political actors need to promote an enabling environment for youth participation in inclusive political processes and democratic practices. This will include developing and enforcing, as may be appropriate, legal frameworks, regulations, policies and plans targeting active and full participation of youths and youth-led organizations in a broad range of political processes and governance activities at various levels.

Strategic Thrust 4: Ensure Promotive and Protective Environment for Youths

To ensure their optimal development, youths need to develop and operate in an environment in which their human rights are safeguarded and their rights to fully enjoy fundamental freedom promoted. Youths need to grow and operate in an environment devoid of abuse, violence and discrimination on any ground. In this respect, the legal sector, law enforcement and security agencies are important, along with community leadership and agents. Similarly, youths need environments that enhance their self-confidence, stimulate their creativity, as well as support their drives, dreams and initiatives.

5.2.7. ***Thematic Focus VII: Human rights and fundamental freedoms of youths***

Objective 16: Develop and enforce gender-sensitive laws and policies that promote and protect the human rights of all youths.

Promotion and protection of the human rights of youths is core to the agenda of youth development, and critical to the transition of the youth into full adulthood and active citizenship. Youths, among others, need to enjoy full rights to development to fulfil their potential. In this respect, government needs to intensify efforts to enact, strengthen or enforce, as appropriate, legislations, regulations and policies, to protect the human rights of youths, and eliminate all forms of abuse, violence and discrimination. It is important that gender lens be applied in this process and specific efforts must be made to particularly protect the rights of socially disadvantaged groups including women and youths with disabilities, and those living with HIV. Among others, the laws against child marriage and other forms of gender-based violence should be reviewed and revised as necessary, and robustly implementation.

5.2.8. ***Thematic VIII: Peace and security***

Violence and armed conflicts endanger development and lead to situations where individual rights and well-being can be easily compromised. As such, youth development, peace and security and human rights must be recognised as being inter-linked and mutually reinforcing. On the one hand, youth development efforts must embrace the necessity to ensure an absence of every form of armed conflict, community violence and insecurity. On the other hand, in the event of armed conflicts and violence, efforts must be made to protect youths from direct involvement and minimise the effects of the conflicts and violence on them. In addition, measures must be taken to protect internally displaced persons and other victims of violence and armed conflicts from further abuse, such as rape and other forms of gender-based violence.

Objective 17: Protect youths from direct involvement in armed conflicts, and the effects of conflicts and violence

Ensuring security is a primary responsibility of the state, and all efforts must be made to strengthen the security services and put in place other measures that will ensure the sustenance at local, sub-national, and national levels. There is the need to entrench a mind-set and culture of peace-building, tolerance, dialogue and conflict resolution among youths through formal and informal education, and putting in place supportive social structures and mechanisms. Government should ensure adequate measures to protect youths in situations of conflict and post-conflicts from harm, torture and abuse, especially vulnerable populations such as young women. In addition, appropriate measures are needed to promote the recovery, rehabilitate and socially re-integrate victims of conflicts. Furthermore, government should provide opportunities, through amnesty programmes, for youths involved as combatants in armed struggles and conflicts to be demobilised and rehabilitated for peaceful and economically productive lives that contribute to the well-being and development of the society.

Strategic Thrust 5: Effective Partnership-Building and Collaboration in Youth Development

Youth development is a multi-sectoral agenda that needs effective collaboration among various groups of stakeholders to achieve the optimal result desired in line with this policy goals. Skilled and competent professionals with the appropriate attitudes and approach to the multi-sectoral nature of youth development are core to building result-oriented partnerships to drive productive collaborations. The Ministry of Youth and Sports Development is strategic to developing and implementing appropriate partnership frameworks for youth development agenda.

5.2.9. ***Thematic Focus IX: Capacity for promoting youth development agenda***

Objective 18: Strengthening the capacity of government agencies for promoting youth development agenda

The strategic intervention for strengthening youth development agenda at government ministries and agencies include the designation of youth development focal persons in each ministry/agency, specification of budget line for youth development agenda in congruence with this Policy objective, allocation of funds annually into the budget line, and subsequent release of allocated funds for focal activities.

Strengthening the capacity of government agencies for promoting youth development agenda
Strengthening professional development and professionalism in youth work

Objective 19: Strengthening professional development and professionalism in youth work

Government and relevant stakeholders, particularly academic and training institutions, should develop appropriate skills-based programmes at various levels (certificate, diploma, degree, and postgraduate) to develop adequate number of youth workers with desired level of knowledge, attitude, skills and professional orientation in youth work. Training programmes are similarly needed for developing the organisational leadership of youth-led organisations and youth work initiatives. Mechanisms for recognising such training and remunerating such trained individuals in the regular scheme of employment in the country are also important. Existing youth leadership training programmes and curricula should also be reviewed as necessary and improved where necessary for greater effectiveness.

Objective 20: Strengthening the capacity of youth-led organisations for youth work

Government should institute mechanisms to undertake regular organisational capacity assessment of youth-led and youth-focused organisations to understand their potential for effectiveness and the nature of capacity strengthening needed. Directory of civil society organisations involved in youth-related work should be developed, regularly updated, and widely disseminated. Government and stakeholders should organise periodic capacity-building programmes for credible youth-focused organisations and youth leaders to boost their capacity and morale, providing them with relevant technical and financial resources

where relevant and possible. Support should also be provided to credible and result-oriented youth leaders to participate in local training and youth-related sub-national and national activities.

5.2.10. ***Thematic Focus X: Sustainable platform for multi-sectoral collaboration***

Objective 21: Establishing and operationalizing sustainable platforms for multi-sectoral collaboration

Strategic interventions needed for effective partnership and collaboration in the youth development arena include the establishment of multi-sectoral Youth Development Working Group that will involve representatives of various key government ministries, departments and agencies, as well as representatives of other stakeholder groups like civil society organisations, research and academic institutions, the organized private sector, international development agencies and youths at every level of governance; effective government funding of the meeting and operations of the Working Groups; and institutionalization of effective mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the policy implementation.

6. Implementation Framework

Youth development is a cross-cutting national agenda; as such, the implementation of this Policy will involve all development sectors, including the government, the civil society, the organised private sector, international development agencies, and the youths themselves. This section highlights the roles and responsibilities of various institutions, agencies and groups related to youth development activities in Nigeria, as well as the coordinating structures at the various levels of governance. It is important to note that the National Youth Policy provides a foundation and direction for a National Youth Action Plan. The Plan will further elaborate on the roles of all institutions and groups concerned with youth development, and the programmes, services, facilities and activities they will undertake to achieve the goals and objectives of this Policy.

6.1. Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development

The Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development is the national organ with the mandate to coordinate youth-related development issues, including the implementation of the National Youth Policy. The ministry is directly responsible for policy formation and review, the design of priority programmes of action, and broad guidelines for Youth development in the country. It has the responsibility of overseeing and co-coordinating the implementation of the policy from the Federal to the State and Local Government levels and other implementing agencies and NGOs. Also, it has overseeing and/or supervisory responsibilities for the specialized agencies concerned with youth development, such as the National Youth Development Council, National Council on Youth (NCY), National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN) and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme. The Ministry shall also be directly responsible for the implementation of all issues relating to sports as it affects the youths of Nigeria.

6.2. National Youth Development Council (NYDC)

6.2.1. Composition –

The National Youth Development Council is an Inter-Ministerial Council to be chaired by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria or his Vice. Because youth development is a cross-cutting national agenda, the membership of the national youth development council shall consist of the entire Ministers of the core and relevant ministries in youth development. This shall include Ministries such as Youth Development and Sports, Education, Agriculture and Rural Development, Health, Women Affairs and Social Development, Labour and Productivity, Information, representatives of the National Youth Council of Nigeria, other relevant Ministries and agencies.

6.2.2 Roles and Responsibilities –

1. To provide the much-needed political will for youth development.
2. To elevate and mainstream youth development as a crucial national agenda.
3. To provide a forum for an integrated cross-sectoral approach to youth development in Nigeria.

6.3. National Council on Youth (NCY)

6.3.1. Composition

The National Council on Youth Development shall consist of all State Commissioners for Ministries of Youth Development or relevant State Ministries and agencies in charge of youth development. The chairman of the National Council on Youth is the Honourable Minister for Youth and Sports Development.

6.3.2. Roles and responsibility –

- Coordinating and streamlining youth development activities at state levels

- Define and coordinate the roles of the private sector, CSOs, and NGOs at state levels in line with the provisions of the National Youth Policy.
- Serve as a link between state and local government, key government implementation agencies and the private sector and NGOs to ensure that youth development initiatives and programmes are properly and promptly executed.

6.4. National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN)

The National Youth Council of Nigeria was founded in 1964 to be the voice and the umbrella organisation for all youth organisations in the country. The Youth Council is non-governmental, non-partisan, and not-for-profit organisation. The council comprises the National Executive Committee (NEC) of 23-members. The NEC members are democratically elected from their respective state chapters and affiliated voluntary youth organisations. The National Youth Council of Nigeria is a major stakeholder in the implementation of the National Youth Policy, and, as such, should be strengthened by the government. Government at all levels should endeavour to provide subvention for the NYCN annually without necessarily controlling or interfering in the running of the organisation. All voluntary youth organisations, youth NGOs and CBOs should be encouraged to be affiliated with the National Youth Council of Nigeria to ensure proper coordination at the level of the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development. As an umbrella organisation for youth NGOs, and youth organisations across the country, the NYCN shall pursue democratic norms at all times, embrace the principles of accountability and transparency in all its conduct, and initiate and execute activities that are in consonance with the goals of the National Youth Policy

6.5. Coordination Mechanisms

Technical Working Groups on Youth Development will be established at the three levels of governance in Nigeria. The Working Groups will be multi-disciplinary.

6.5.1. Federal Level

A National Technical Working Group shall be established at the Federal level. The technical working group shall consist of representatives of the core relevant Ministry, Departments, and Agencies to youth development. Among other things the technical committee will ensure the mainstreaming of a youth perspective in all relevant policy areas at the federal level, and. monitor and evaluate the implementation of the national youth policy at the national level.

6.5.2. State Level

The technical working committee at state level shall also consist of all relevant ministries and departments and agencies at the state level. Among other things, the technical committee will ensure the mainstreaming of a youth perspective in all relevant policy areas at the state level, and monitor and evaluate the implementation of the national youth policy at the state level.

6.5.3. Local Government Level

The technical working committee at local government level shall consist of all relevant stakeholders at the local government level. Among other things the technical committee will ensure the mainstreaming of a youth perspective in all relevant policy areas at the local government level, and monitor and evaluate the implementation of the national youth policy at the local government level

6.6. Roles and Responsibilities of Government Institutions

6.6.1. The Presidency

The Presidency shall take full responsibility for convening regular meetings of the National Youth Development Council. The roles and responsibilities of the national youth development council shall be to provide the much-needed political will for youth development, elevate and mainstream youth development as a crucial national agenda, and also provide a forum for an integrated cross-sectoral approach to youth development in

Nigeria. The presidency shall ensure the integration of planning, implementation and coordination of youth development with national development planning.

6.6.2. Legislative bodies

To ensure the effective implementation of the national youth policy, certain aspects of the youth policy need to be passed into law. This will provide the necessary legal backing for the policy and ensure that the implementation is mandatory for all relevant agencies. The House Committee on Youth Development and the Senate Committee on Youth Development have major roles to play to develop the required bill necessary to give legal teeth to the youth policy and ensure that such bill is passed into law.

6.6.3. Ministry of Youth and Sports Development

The Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development is the ministerial organ of the Federal Government assigned the responsibility for being the coordinating body for youth-related issues and for coordinating the development and implementation of the youth policy. The Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development has the responsibility of overseeing and co-coordinating the implementation of the policy from the Federal to the State and Local Government levels and other implementing agencies and NGOs. It has overseeing and/or supervisory responsibilities for the specialized agencies concerned with youth development, such as the National Youth Development Council, National Council on Youth (NCY), National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN). The Ministry shall also be directly responsible for the implementation of all issues relating to sports as it affects the youths of this country.

6.6.4. Ministry of Education

The Federal Ministry of Education shall be responsible for the implementation of all issues relating to education and training of youths in Nigeria.

6.6.5. Ministry of Health

The Federal Ministry of Health shall be responsible for the implementation of all issues relating to the health of all youths in Nigeria.

6.6.6. Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development shall be responsible for the implementation of all issues relating to young women and girls.

6.6.7. Ministry of Information

The Federal Ministry of Information shall be responsible for the implementation of all issues relating to information as it relates to youth.

6.6.8. Ministry of Finance

The Federal Ministry of Finance shall be responsible for the implementation of all issues relating to finance and access to finance relating to youths in Nigeria.

6.6.9. Ministry of Agriculture

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development shall be responsible for the implementation of all issues relating to youths in agriculture.

6.6.10. Other Ministries and Agencies

Will focus on mainstreaming a youth development perspective and the implementation of all areas related to youth development in the respective MDA.

6.7. Roles and Responsibilities of the Organized Private Sector

The organized private sector is an important partner in implementing the overall goals and objectives of the National Youth Policy. It can play major roles in employment generation, skills training for the Youth, work-experience as well as support community development activities involving youths. Representatives of the organized private sector should be

members of the Youth Development Council and the National Council on Youth Development.

6.8. Roles and Responsibilities of the Civil Society

6.8.1. Civil Society Organizations

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are important stakeholders in the implementation of the National Youth Policy. CSOs have major roles to play in implementing some of the strategic interventions in this Youth Policy and also in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation processes.

6.8.2. Academic and Research Institutions

The Universities and research institutions across the country have a major role to play in ensuring that the National Youth Policy on a continuous basis is evidence-based, through periodic research into key issues in youth development and programmes. This will help to collect quantitative as well as qualitative data on youth development, which will in turn inform youth intervention initiatives. The Universities should also introduce new programmes and courses in youth work education and training both at the Diploma and Degree levels. This will go a long way in encouraging the professionalization of youth work in the country.

6.8.3. Professional Groups

It is important that youth workers be recognized as members of a profession. This is crucial towards the effective implementation of the policy initiatives contained in the National Youth Policy. The Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development needs to take the lead in investing in youth work education and training. State governments should be encouraged to do the same. Both Federal and State governments should take steps to further train, register and employ youth workers. Professionalising youth work brings legitimacy, status and power to the activities of youth workers. Professionalisation also provides a common language and value base for youth work and enhances quality, effectiveness, and advances within the professional network. Other professional groups

can also network in providing important necessary social enterprise skills needed by all young persons.

6.8.4. Students' Unions

Students' Unions, particularly in tertiary institutions, are voluntary youth associations which provide leadership-training opportunities for the youth. The unions empower and enable young people to actively participate in decision-making processes about matters that affect them as students. Students' unions also empower the youth to contribute positively to institution-building and national development. Student unionism helps to nurture and galvanize values of democracy, accountability, transparency and good governance in the youths. The national umbrella organization of students' unions in tertiary institutions should have a voice in decision making on youth development at the highest level.

6.8.5. Youth-led Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other youth organizations

These have a crucial role to play in youth development programs and initiatives. They are major stakeholders in National Youth development policy. They are expected to join hands and collaborate with other stakeholders in pursuit of the objectives of the policy. Not only are they expected to forge unity; they must also be well organized to tap the potential benefits of the policy for their own empowerment and development. Through voluntary youth associations and NGOs, young people can actively participate in the implementation of the youth policy. Government and the private sector should support and reach out to youth organizations and integrate them in the efforts to promote and concretize youth development programs in the country. The National Youth Policy promotes the fact that all youth development programmes must be youth-driven and youth centred.

6.9. Roles and Responsibilities of International Development Partners

International development partners, including multilateral and bilateral agencies, Foundations, and international NGOs, will provide technical and financial support to youth development agenda in Nigeria in line with their mandates in conformity with the national

policies and plans; and will participate in relevant coordination structures and monitoring of on-field activities as relevant.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

The monitoring and evaluation systems broadly encompass monitoring, evaluation and research. Monitoring and Evaluation are essential parts of the implementation of the Policy and are critical to achieving the policy objectives. Monitoring will involve the continuous, systematic process of collecting, analysing and using information to track the Policy implementation efforts to assess whether the related activities are progressing according to plans, and the efficiency with which the stated goals and objectives are being achieved. Evaluation, on the other hand, will take place at specified periods in the policy cycle and geared towards the assessment of the impact of various youth-focused programmes on the development and well-being of youth as articulated in the policy goals. Research in the field of youth development agenda will contribute to improved data on youth structure and composition, to drive evidence-based youth-focused programming.

Appropriate and user-friendly monitoring and evaluation tools will be developed and shared with all implementing agencies, and the Planning, Monitoring and Information Management (PMI) Department of the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development will be the focal point for the data aggregation, analysis and dissemination. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be developed specifically with respect to the policy implementation, and indicators for monitoring and evaluation would thereby be specified based on the Policy objectives. Youth and youth-led organisations are expected to play active roles in the monitoring, evaluation and research activities.

7.1. Monitoring

Monitoring of all relevant youth-related activities is expected to take place on a continuous basis by the relevant implementing partners – government agencies, organised private sector, civil society organisations, and international development partners. The monitoring activities will cover all aspects of programme implementation and the result forwarded to

the Planning, Monitoring and Information Management (PMI) Department of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development or its equivalent at the different levels of governance (LGA, State and Federal). Data from each level will be forwarded to the next level on a monthly basis. For the LGA, this shall be done not later than the end of the second week of the new month, while for the State, the state-level data, incorporating those from LGAs as well as state-level activities and civil society organisations operating within the state, shall be forwarded not later than the end of the fourth week of the month following the reporting period.

The State and Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development will present a report on the policy implementation to the Youth Development Working Group at their level of governance at each of the regular meetings of the Working Group. The State and Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development will give regular feedback to the implementing agencies based on the monitoring data, and the feedback from the Working Group meetings will also be shared with relevant stakeholders.

The Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development will publish an annual "State of Youth Development in Nigeria" report, which will highlight the progress made in the year on the implementation of the policy, the associated challenges in the policy implementation and the recommendations for improving the implementation of the policy in the following year. The Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development will also track various research publications relating to the Policy focus as part of the monitoring activities, and this will also constitute part of the input into the annual report. The annual report shall be disseminated widely, particularly in electronic format, and will be made available on the website of the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development. States are also encouraged to develop and disseminate their annual report on youth-related activities and policy-related issues.

7.2. Evaluation

Evaluation shall take place at both the midterm and end of the policy cycle to determine the overall achievement in youth development in the focal period and identify success and mitigating factors. The report of the mid-term evaluation will be fed back into the policy implementation process to inform strategies and activities for the latter half of the policy period, while the report of the end-of-cycle evaluation will be expected to shape the future development of strategic youth agenda and foci. The evaluations will be participatory in nature and conducted jointly with representatives of other youth development stakeholders' groups, including government agencies, civil society organisations, international development partners, youth-led organisations, and the academic and research institutions. The evaluation will also involve independent and experienced experts in the field of evaluation. The result of the evaluation will be shared widely, especially in electronic format, through the website of the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development.

7.3. Research

Research is critical to generating data and providing evidence on progress being made in the implementation of youth agenda, and in the assessment of the status and needs of youths Nigeria. Thus, research forms the backbone of evaluation, and is complementary to both monitoring and evaluation activities. Research efforts in the context of the youth development agenda in Nigeria will include collection of data through national household surveys, programme activities, special surveys and research focusing on specific youth-related issues and the thematic thrusts of this Policy (such as education, employment and job creation, health services and health-related behaviour, civic engagement, and political inclusion). Other types of research would also be required to improve programming and policy efforts, operational research, implementation research, and action research. Research and related data collection effort must prioritise appropriate disaggregation of data by age, sex, geographical location, socio-economic level, educational and health status among others, for optimal utility. As such research is fundamental to the implementation

of this policy, and government must spearhead efforts in this realm with support from relevant stakeholders.