NORTHERN NIGERIA DEVELOPMENT GOALS (NNDGs):

A System Strategy and Policy Lab (SSPL) Initiative

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Northern Nigeria Development Goals (NNDGs).
Northern Nigeria In 2045: Opportunities, Emerging Issues And Path Ahead

(A Guide In Developing State Strategic Plan)
A System Strategy And Policy Lab (SSPL) Initiative

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Message from the CEO/Founder of SSPL

Northern Nigeria at the Crossroads: Building a Sustainable Pathway to 2045.

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I am pleased to share that the Northern Nigeria Development Dialogue (NNDD) will serve as the launch platform for the **Northern Nigeria Development Goals (NNDGs) 2045, a transformative roadmap inspired by the recommendations from the United Nations General Assembly UNGA 79th 2024 Summit of the Future, where regions, countries and states are encouraged to develop a future-proof long-term plans.** Therefore, the NNDGs aim to drive sustainable, long-term development across Northern Nigeria by addressing key structural challenges while unlocking the region's immense potential.

Why does the Northern Nigeria Development Goals (NNDGs) 2045 Matter?

Northern Nigeria must take deliberate steps to harness its vast potential and transition from poverty to shared prosperity. **The region is endowed with abundant natural resources, a youthful population, and a rich cultural heritage—assets that, when strategically leveraged, can drive sustainable development.** Investing in human capital, promoting inclusive economic growth, and leveraging innovations in agriculture, technology, and renewable energy are essential pathways to achieving progress. **This is why the System Strategy & Policy Lab (SSPL) is proud to lead the charge with the inaugural Northern Nigeria Development Dialogue NNDD and the launch of the Northern Nigeria Development Goals. NNDGs**
The NNDGs will serve as a strategic blueprint for

Northern Nigeria's governors, guiding the development of state-specific plans and policies. By inspiring transformative governance, encouraging collaboration, and accelerating the region's transition from poverty to shared prosperity, the NNDGs will lay the foundation for a thriving Northern Nigeria by 2045.

A Strong Regional Focus for Nigeria's Future

The future of Nigeria is increasingly shaped by the success of its regions. While national unity remains important, the future of the country lies in strengthening its regional frameworks, particularly in Northern Nigeria. With 19 states that are rich in untapped potential, it is crucial that these states remain focused on their unique challenges and opportunities. **Regional development will not only contribute to the national agenda but will ensure that the diverse needs of Northern Nigeria are met, creating a more resilient and prosperous future for all.** The NNDGs are designed to address these regional needs, offering a sustainable and collaborative path forward for Northern Nigeria.

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Background →

Northern Nigeria, encompassing 19 states and the Federal Capital Territory, accounts for over 50% of Nigeria's population and landmass, making it a critical component of the nation's socio-economic fabric. However, the region faces entrenched developmental challenges, including high poverty rates, low literacy levels, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, and widespread insecurity. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2022)[1], Northern Nigeria hosts 87% of the country's poor population, with states like Sokoto, Taraba, and Jigawa recording poverty rates exceeding 70%. This multidimensional poverty is exacerbated by systemic issues such as weak governance, gender inequality, and the devastating impacts of climate change.

Education remains a significant challenge in Northern Nigeria, with over 10.5 million children out of school, the majority being girls (UNICEF, 2023)[2]. Factors such as early marriage, cultural norms, and insecurity, particularly from the Boko Haram insurgency, have hindered access to education in the region. In states like Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe, schools have been targets of attacks, further discouraging attendance and limiting educational opportunities. Without immediate interventions to address these barriers, the region risks perpetuating a cycle of illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty.

Similarly, insecurity has stifled economic growth and development. The ongoing conflicts, including farmer-herder clashes, banditry, and insurgency, have displaced millions and disrupted livelihoods. Data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2022)[3] indicates that over 2.9 million people are internally displaced in Northern Nigeria. This displacement strains local resources, exacerbates food insecurity, and undermines social cohesion. Efforts to rebuild trust in governance and security structures are urgently needed to restore stability and enable sustainable development.

Despite these challenges, Northern Nigeria holds immense potential for economic transformation. The region is endowed with vast arable land, natural resources, and a youthful population. Strategic investments in agriculture, renewable energy, infrastructure, and human capital could unlock inclusive growth and prosperity. The Northern Nigeria Development Goals (NNDGs) offer a comprehensive framework for addressing these issues, leveraging evidence-based approaches to create resilient systems and foster regional collaboration. By implementing these goals, the region can chart a sustainable path toward growth and development.

The Northern Nigeria Development Goals (NNDGs) outline a comprehensive framework aimed at tackling critical socio-economic challenges in the region, fostering inclusive development, and promoting sustainable growth. Developed by the System Strategy and Policy Lab (SSPL), the NNDGs are rooted in evidence-based strategies and actionable recommendations, addressing the unique challenges faced by Northern Nigeria. Below is an expanded exploration of each goal with data, evidence, and strategic recommendations for Northern governors.

[1]National Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria Report*. Abuja: NBS.
[2]United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2023). *Out-of-School Children in Nigeria: A Data-Driven Approach to Education Challenges*. New York: UNICEF.
[3]International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2022). *Displacement Tracking Matrix: Nigeria Report*. Geneva: IOM.

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GOAL 1

Accelerate Inclusive **Economic Growth**

Emerging Issues

Northern Nigeria plays a critical role in Nigeria's agricultural economy, contributing over 60% of the nation's agricultural output (NBS, 2022). Despite this, the region remains economically constrained due to limited industrialization, inadequate infrastructure, and low productivity. Rural populations, which make up over 70% of the region's demographics, suffer from poverty rates that exceed 75% in states like Sokoto, Taraba, and Zamfara (World Bank, 2022)[4].

The region's energy deficit is a significant impediment to economic diversification. Only 30% of households in Northern Nigeria have access to electricity, compared to 81% in the southern regions (International Energy Agency [IEA], 2022)[5]. This lack of reliable energy, combined with limited digital connectivity, hinders the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), manufacturing, and agro-industrial activities. Additionally, underdeveloped road and rail infrastructure restricts market access and raises the cost of doing business in the region.

Recommendations

GOAL 1. Diversify the Economy

- **Invest in Agro-industrial Hubs:** State governors should establish agro-industrial parks and value-added processing zones to promote agricultural product refinement, increase farmer incomes, and enhance export competitiveness.
- **Create Agricultural Export Zones:** Develop policies and infrastructure to facilitate regional and international trade of agricultural products. This includes reducing non-tariff barriers and providing logistical support for exports.

2. Infrastructure Development:

→ **Expand Road Networks:** Governments must prioritize building and rehabilitating rural and urban roads to connect farmers to markets and support economic mobility.

→ **Invest in Renewable Energy:** Harness Northern Nigeria's high solar radiation by promoting solar energy projects. Incentives should be provided for private-sector investments in renewable energy, particularly solar farms and mini-grids, to electrify rural and underserved communities.

3. Address the Energy Deficit:

→ **Upgrade Power Infrastructure:** Governors should collaborate with federal authorities and private investors to modernize transmission lines and establish regional power plants. This would provide stable electricity to households and businesses.

→ **Promote Off-grid Solutions:** Encourage the adoption of off-grid solar systems and microgrids to meet energy needs in remote areas.

4. Support MSMEs:

→ **Develop Microcredit Programs:** Establish credit schemes tailored for small businesses and cooperatives, enabling access to affordable financing.

→ **Create Entrepreneurship Hubs:** Develop centers that provide training, mentorship, and startup capital for entrepreneurs, fostering innovation and job creation.

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[4]World Bank. (2022). *Northern Nigeria Development Challenges and Opportunities*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
[5]International Energy Agency. (2022). *Energy Access Outlook: Nigeria Focus*. Paris: IEA.

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Ensure Quality
Education for All

Emerging Issues

Northern Nigeria grapples with an acute education crisis, with over 10 million out-of-school children, of whom 60% are girls (UNICEF, 2023)[6]. Schools are overcrowded, poorly equipped, and lack adequately trained teachers, leading to teacher-pupil ratios as high as 1:120 in some areas. These conditions significantly hinder learning outcomes and the delivery of quality education.

Cultural barriers such as early marriage, societal resistance to formal education, and entrenched gender biases further marginalize girls and limit their access to education. Poverty exacerbates the situation, as many families cannot afford school-related expenses, while inadequate infrastructure and teaching resources deepen inequities.

Adding to these challenges is the high rate of learning poverty in Northern Nigeria. According to the World Bank (2023)[7], more than 70% of children in low-income areas of the region cannot read or understand simple texts by age 10. This learning crisis is fueled by poor foundational literacy and numeracy skills, inadequate teacher capacity, and insufficient classroom instruction time. Furthermore, technical and vocational education (TVE) opportunities are scarce, leaving many young people without the skills required for employment or entrepreneurship

Recommendations

1. Eliminate Barriers to Education:

- **Awareness Campaigns:** State governors should implement culturally sensitive awareness initiatives to combat resistance to education, focusing on community engagement and collaboration with traditional and religious leaders.

- **Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs):** Scale up CCT programs to support low-income families, ensuring that financial incentives are directly linked to school enrollment, attendance, and performance.

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2. Address Learning Poverty:

➡️ **Foundational Literacy Programs:** Introduce accelerated learning programs targeting children in early grades to improve foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

➡️ **Teacher Capacity Building:** Enhance teacher training programs to include modern pedagogical techniques and strategies for addressing learning deficiencies.

3. Invest in Infrastructure and Teacher Training:

➡️ **Expand School Infrastructure:** Prioritize constructing new classrooms, rehabilitating existing facilities, and providing essential learning tools like textbooks, digital resources, and laboratory equipment.

➡️ **Continuous Professional Development:** Collaborate with federal agencies and international partners to develop robust training modules for teachers, emphasizing subject expertise, child-centered methodologies, and inclusive practices.

4. Promote Technical and Vocational Education (TVE):

➡️ **Establish Training Centers:** Develop TVE institutions tailored to the region's economic needs, such as agriculture, renewable energy, and ICT.

➡️ **Industry Partnerships:** Align TVE curricula with the demands of local industries, ensuring skills acquisition leads to employment opportunities or entrepreneurship.

[6]UNICEF. (2023). *Education Crisis in Northern Nigeria: A Report on Out-of-School Children*. Abuja: UNICEF.
[7]World Bank. (2023). *Ending Learning Poverty: Strategies for Improving Foundational Skills in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

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Empower Youth & Women for Development

Emerging Issues

Northern Nigeria faces a critical challenge with youth unemployment rates exceeding 40% in some states, significantly higher than the national average (NBS, 2022)[8]. The lack of job opportunities, combined with insufficient access to quality education and skills training, has left many young people without the means to achieve economic independence or contribute meaningfully to society.

Women in Northern Nigeria are also disproportionately affected, with only 29% participating in the labor force compared to 48% nationally (World Bank, 2023)[9]. Cultural and socio-economic barriers, including limited access to education, restrictive gender norms, and discriminatory labor practices, further exacerbate their marginalization. Additionally, women and youth often struggle to access financial resources necessary for entrepreneurship or economic ventures, perpetuating cycles of poverty and dependence. Empowering youth and women in Northern Nigeria require a multi-faceted approach that addresses education, financial inclusion, and systemic barriers. By creating opportunities for skills acquisition, enhancing access to finance, and tackling socio-economic challenges, the region can harness the creativity and energy of its youth and women to drive innovation, economic growth, and social transformation.

Recommendations

1. Skills Development Programs:

→ **Technical and Entrepreneurial Training:** State governors should implement targeted programs to equip youth and women with industry-relevant technical skills and entrepreneurial capabilities, focusing on sectors such as ICT, agribusiness, and renewable energy.

→ **Mentorship and Business Incubation:** Create mentorship platforms and incubation centers to support startups led by youth and women, providing guidance, networking opportunities, and market access.
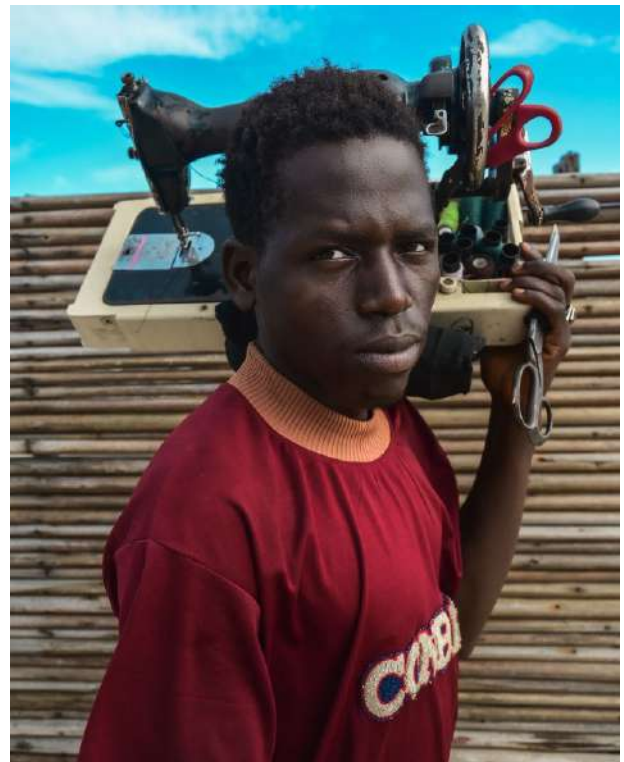
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2. Enhance Access to Finance:

→ **Gender-Focused Financial Inclusion:** Establish financial inclusion programs tailored for women, offering grants, low-interest loans, and microfinance schemes to enable participation in business ventures and local economies.

→ **Youth Entrepreneurship Funds:** Introduce youth-targeted financial assistance programs, ensuring that funds are accessible and linked to sustainable business models.

3. Address Socio-Economic Barriers:

→ **Legal Reforms:** Advocate for and implement policies that eliminate discriminatory laws and practices, particularly those limiting women's economic and social rights.

→ **Advocacy Campaigns:** Conduct widespread advocacy to challenge cultural and societal norms that hinder women's and youth's active participation in leadership and economic activities. Partner with community and religious leaders to amplify these messages.

[8]National Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Unemployment and Labor Force Report*. Abuja: NBS.
[9]World Bank. (2023). *Gender Equality in Nigeria: Challenges and Opportunities*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Strengthen Governance and **Security**

Emerging Issues

Governance and security challenges in Northern Nigeria have intensified, with over 50% of the region's states facing banditry, insurgency, and communal conflicts (NBS, 2022)[10]. According to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI, 2023)[11], Nigeria remains one of the countries most affected by terrorism, with Northern Nigeria disproportionately bearing the brunt of these attacks. These security threats have displaced over 3 million people, disrupted agricultural activities, and hindered educational access (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2022)[12].

Weak institutional capacity and corruption exacerbate the situation, undermining the ability of state governments to deliver essential services or restore public trust. Nigeria ranked 150 out of 180 countries on the 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index, highlighting systemic governance issues (Transparency International, 2023)[13]. Furthermore, limited capacity in data collection and strategic planning prevents governments from effectively monitoring resources or implementing evidence-based policies (World Bank, 2023)[14].

A lack of coordination between state and federal security agencies has also contributed to prolonged conflicts. Poor border security has allowed the proliferation of small arms and facilitated cross-border criminal activities, further destabilizing the region (Small Arms Survey, 2023).

Strengthening governance and security in Northern Nigeria requires a holistic approach that integrates good governance principles, robust security measures, and enhanced institutional capacity.

Recommendations

1. Promote Good Governance:

→ **Transparency in Budgeting and Service Delivery:** Governors should adopt open budgeting systems, ensuring that allocations and expenditures are publicly accessible. These fosters trust and allows citizens to track government activities.

→ **Citizen-Driven Accountability Mechanisms:** Establish platforms for citizen engagement, such as town hall meetings, feedback systems, and social media forums, to enable public participation in decision-making and monitoring.

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2. Address Insecurity:

➡ **Community Policing and Peacebuilding:** Strengthen community policing initiatives by involving traditional leaders, local organizations, and youth groups in designing and implementing peacebuilding strategies.

➡ **Collaboration with Federal Agencies:** Partner with federal security agencies to enhance intelligence gathering, strengthen border control, and deploy technology-driven solutions for monitoring and responding to threats.

3. Build Institutional Capacity:

➡ **Capacity Building for Public Officials:** Conduct training programs for government officials in strategic planning, data-driven governance, and crisis management to improve institutional responsiveness.

➡ **Digitization of Public Administration:** Implement digital tools and platforms for administrative processes, including procurement, resource allocation, and grievance redressal, to enhance efficiency and reduce corruption.

[10] National Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Insecurity and Economic Impact in Nigeria*. Abuja: NBS.

[11] Global Terrorism Index. (2023). *Measuring the Impact of Terrorism*. Institute for Economics and Peace.

[12] International Organization for Migration. (2022). *Displacement Tracking Matrix: Nigeria Report*. Abuja: IOM.

[13] Transparency International. (2023). *Corruption Perceptions Index 2023*. Berlin: Transparency International.

[14] World Bank. (2023). *Governance and Development in Fragile Contexts*. Washington, DC: World Bank

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Improve Health and Social Well-Being

Emerging Issues

Health and social well-being in Northern Nigeria remain critical concerns, with the region experiencing some of the highest maternal mortality rates globally—1,025 deaths per 100,000 live births—due to limited access to quality healthcare services, especially in rural areas (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023)[15]. Additionally, neonatal mortality rates are alarmingly high, contributing significantly to the country's overall child mortality statistics (UNICEF, 2023)[16].

Malnutrition is another persistent challenge, affecting over 45% of children under the age of five. This is attributed to food insecurity, poor dietary diversity, and inadequate breastfeeding practices (National Demographic and Health Survey [NDHS], 2022)[17]. Furthermore, Northern Nigeria faces a severe deficit in healthcare infrastructure and personnel, with doctor-to-patient ratios as low as 1:10,000 in some states, far below the WHO-recommended ratio of 1:1,000 (WHO, 2023).

Social vulnerabilities, such as widespread poverty and displacement caused by insecurity, exacerbate health challenges. According to the World Bank (2023)[18], over 80% of the region's population lives below the poverty line, limiting their ability to access healthcare services and meet basic nutritional needs.

Improving health and social well-being in Northern Nigeria requires concerted efforts to strengthen healthcare infrastructure, implement targeted social protection mechanisms, and address the underlying causes of malnutrition. Investing in these areas and leveraging partnerships with international and local stakeholders, the region can achieve significant progress toward better health outcomes and enhanced quality of life for its population.

Recommendations

1. Expand Healthcare Access:

➔ **Strengthen Primary Healthcare Infrastructure:** Governors should prioritize the establishment and upgrade of primary healthcare centers in rural and underserved areas, ensuring they are equipped with essential drugs, diagnostic tools, and qualified medical personnel.

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→ **Maternal and Child Health Programs:** Collaborate with international donors, such as the Global Fund and UNICEF, to scale up interventions targeting maternal and child health, including immunization drives, antenatal care, and safe delivery services.

→ **Mobile Health Services:** Deploy mobile clinics to reach remote and conflict-affected communities with critical health services.

2. Implement Social Protection Initiatives:

→ **Poverty-Targeted Cash Transfers:** Introduce conditional cash transfer programs linked to health outcomes, such as incentivizing antenatal visits, immunizations, and regular health check-ups for children under five.

→ **Health Insurance for Vulnerable Groups:** Establish subsidized community-based health insurance schemes to enhance financial access to healthcare services.

3. Combat Malnutrition:

→ **Local Food Production and Dietary Diversity:** Promote smallholder farming and community gardens to increase local food availability and improve dietary diversity, with a focus on nutrient-rich crops.

→ **School Feeding Programs:** Partner with international organizations to expand school feeding initiatives, ensuring that meals provided meet nutritional standards to combat stunting and wasting among children.

→ **Nutrition Education Campaigns:** Implement community-led campaigns to educate mothers and caregivers about proper breastfeeding practices, complementary feeding, and the importance of balanced diets.

[15]World Health Organization. (2023). *Maternal and Child Health Statistics in Nigeria*. Geneva: WHO.
[16]UNICEF. (2023). *State of the World's Children Report*. New York: UNICEF.

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GOAL 6

Build Resilience to Climate Change

Emerging Issues

Northern Nigeria faces increasing threats from climate change, which poses significant risks to livelihoods, food security, and socio-economic stability. The region experiences severe environmental degradation, particularly desertification and deforestation, driven by unsustainable land use practices and climate variability. Desertification impacts over 60% of Northern Nigeria's land, reducing its agricultural productivity and contributing to the loss of biodiversity (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification [UNCCD], 2023)[19]. Deforestation, estimated at an annual rate of 3.7% in Nigeria, further exacerbates soil erosion and disrupts ecosystems (Global Forest Watch, 2023)[20].

Floods and droughts are becoming increasingly frequent and severe due to climate change. For instance, the 2022 floods in Nigeria displaced over 2.8 million people and caused extensive damage to farmlands, disproportionately affecting the Northern states (Nigeria Emergency Management Agency [NEMA], 2023)[21]. Droughts, on the other hand, contribute to water scarcity and reduced agricultural output, with the region losing approximately 2.5% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually to drought-related impacts (World Bank, 2023)[22].

Climate-induced migration and displacement are also significant concerns. Over 300,000 individuals in the region were displaced in 2022 due to extreme weather events and environmental degradation, further straining already limited resources and infrastructure (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC][23], 2023). Additionally, conflicts over shrinking resources, such as arable land and water, intensify social tensions and insecurity (International Crisis Group, 2023)[24].

The region's vulnerability is heightened by limited adaptive capacity, insufficient investment in climate-resilient infrastructure, and the absence of comprehensive disaster preparedness strategies. Without coordinated and urgent interventions, the impacts of climate change are projected to increase, threatening the long-term sustainability of livelihoods and ecosystems in Northern Nigeria (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2023)[25].

Recommendations

1. Promote Sustainable Land Use Practices

→ **Reforestation Programs:** Implement large-scale reforestation and afforestation initiatives to combat desertification, restore degraded lands, and enhance carbon sequestration. Programs should focus on drought-tolerant species to maximize resilience.

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➔ **Sustainable Farming Practices**: Promote agroforestry, conservation agriculture, and crop rotation techniques to maintain soil fertility and prevent land degradation. These practices have been shown to improve productivity while reducing environmental impact.

2. Implement Climate-Smart Agriculture

➔ **Climate-Resilient Crops:** Support farmers with access to drought- and flood-resistant crop varieties that are better suited to changing climatic conditions

- ➔ **Modern Irrigation Infrastructure:** Develop and expand irrigation systems to reduce dependence on erratic rainfall and enhance water efficiency in agriculture. According to the International Water Management Institute (IWMI, 2023)[26], sustainable irrigation can increase yields by up to 50%.

- ➔ **Agricultural Training Programs**: Provide farmers with training on climate-smart agricultural techniques, including integrated pest management, precision farming, and water conservation methods, to boost resilience and productivity.

3. Strengthen Disaster Preparedness and Resilience

➔
- **Early Warning Systems**: Establish and operationalize state-level early warning systems for floods, droughts, and other climate-related disasters. Effective early warning mechanisms can reduce disaster-related losses.
➔
- **Emergency Response Systems:** Create well-coordinated emergency response frameworks, including designated disaster response units and relief networks, to enhance preparedness and recovery efforts in affected communities.
➔
- **Community-Based Initiatives:** Foster community-led disaster risk reduction programs, such as flood embankments, rainwater harvesting systems, and local emergency response

[17]National Demographic and Health Survey. (2022). *Health Indicators in Nigeria*. Abuja: NDHS.
[18]World Bank. (2023). *Poverty and Health in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

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GOAL 7

Strengthen Regional Collaboration and Partnerships

Emerging Issues

Fragmented development efforts and limited coordination among states in Northern Nigeria significantly hinder regional progress. Despite the shared socio-economic and environmental challenges, states often adopt isolated and uncoordinated approaches, resulting in inefficiencies and duplication of efforts (African Development Bank [AfDB], 2023)[27].

Inter-state collaboration is further constrained by weak institutional frameworks and a lack of platforms to facilitate effective dialogue and joint decision-making. For instance, existing regional organizations often lack the resources or authority to enforce cooperative strategies (Economic Community of West African States [ECOWAS], 2023)[28].

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) remain underutilized due to regulatory hurdles, limited investor confidence, and a lack of clear guidelines for engagement. According to the World Bank (2023)[29], Nigeria's Northern region attracts less than 10% of total national PPP investments, leaving critical infrastructure projects underfunded and delayed.

Additionally, trade barriers within the region, such as complex regulations, inadequate infrastructure, and insecurity, inhibit regional trade integration and economic growth. The region's potential to leverage its strategic location as a trade hub within West Africa remains untapped (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], 2023)[30].

Without a concerted effort to address these challenges, the Northern region risks lagging behind in achieving sustainable development and regional integration goals (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2023)[31].

Recommendations

1. Enhance Inter-State Collaboration

→ **Northern Governors' Development Council:** Establish a dedicated council to facilitate coordinated planning, resource sharing, and the exchange of best practices across states.

→ **Joint Policy Frameworks:** Develop harmonized policies to address shared challenges, including insecurity, climate change, and infrastructure deficits.

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2. Strengthen Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

➡️ **Incentivize Investment**: Introduce investor-friendly policies, including tax incentives and streamlined approval processes, to attract private sector participation in key infrastructure projects.

➡️ **Capacity Building:** Provide training and resources to state governments to improve their ability to design and manage PPP projects effectively.

3. Promote Regional Trade

➡️ **Simplify Trade Regulations:** Harmonize and simplify trade rules to reduce barriers for businesses and promote economic integration with the broader West African market.

➡️ **Infrastructure Development**: Invest in transport and logistics networks to facilitate efficient movement of goods and services across state and regional borders.

Conclusion

The Northern Nigeria Development Goals provide a roadmap for addressing the region's persistent challenges while leveraging its vast potential. Through strategic actions across these seven goals, Northern governors can create an environment of inclusive growth, sustainable development, and social cohesion. Collaboration, evidence-based policies, and community participation will be critical to achieving these objectives and transforming the future of Northern Nigeria.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). (2023). *Desertification and land degradation in Nigeria*. Retrieved from www.unccd.int

Global Forest Watch. (2023). *Nigeria deforestation rates and drivers*. Retrieved from www.globalforestwatch.org

Nigeria Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). (2023). *2022 flood impact assessment report.* Retrieved from www.nema.gov.ng

World Bank. (2023). *Economic impact of droughts in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Retrieved from www.worldbank.org

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). (2023). *Climate-induced displacement in Nigeria*. Retrieved from www.internal-displacement.org

International Crisis Group. (2023). *Resource conflicts in Northern Nigeria*. Retrieved from www.crisisgroup.org

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). (2023). *Climate change 2023: Impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability*. Retrieved from www.ipcc.ch

International Water Management Institute (IWMI). (2023). "Sustainable Irrigation Practices and Agricultural Productivity."

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African Development Bank (AfDB). (2023). *Regional integration and development in Africa*. Retrieved from www.afdb.org

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). (2023). *Annual report on regional development and cooperation*. Retrieved from www.ecowas.int

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United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). (2023). *Trade and development report: West Africa regional insights*. Retrieved from www.unctad.org

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2023). *Enhancing regional collaboration for sustainable development in Africa*. Retrieved from www.undp.org

About System Strategy and Policy Lab

System Strategy and Policy Lab is a private-led policy, governance and development think tank with the primary goal of offering evidence-based, tailored, results-driven, people-centered, and future-proof technical support and advisory services to both state and non-state institutions and organizations.

SSPL is dedicated to empowering our partners to navigate and overcome complex governance and development challenges. Our approach is built on people-centered policy design, ensuring that the needs and voices of communities guide every solution we create. We offer comprehensive support across key areas, including policy implementation, system and capacity strengthening, research, and advocacy.

Our technical expertise includes Building Institutions for Results Delivery (BIRD), where we help states, national, and international NGOs transform policies into tangible, impactful outcomes. We prioritize the establishment of robust systems for monitoring and evaluating results, ensuring that each initiative is both effective and sustainable.

Guided by a strong commitment to excellence, SSPL aligns its work with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), underscoring our dedication to sustainability and climate action. More than just advisors, we are partners in progress, driving meaningful change and promoting development that benefits all.