

SUTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND EYE CARE IN NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

INTROODUCTION: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in September 2015.

The Outcome Document adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 target, ensuring that ‘no one is left behind’ and its importance to eye care.

METHODOLOGY: Different WHO articles were reviewed, this was then related to eye health in Nigeria.

GOALS: The seventeen SDGs were related to the eye care services in this write up.

This highlights key policy, institutional and regulatory measures put in place to create necessary enabling environment for mainstreaming of SDGs in national policies, plans and programmes, and its coherent coordination. The need for making better use of prevalence data in strategic planning processes for eye care services in Nigeria.

RESULT: From this review of articles it was found out that there was great relationship between the SDGs and the eye.

CONCLUSION: The 2030 Agenda comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), or Global Goals, which will guide policy and funding for the next 15 years, beginning with a historic pledge to end poverty and to leave no one behind.

Key Words: Eyecare, Millenium Development Goals; Sustainable Development Goals; United Nations

INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in September 2015. They are a set of goals and targets that all UN member state have committed to achieving: ‘to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all’¹. In September 25, 2015, world leaders converged at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to consider and adopt a new comprehensive, ambitious and transformational development agenda. The Outcome Document adopted during the summit outlines a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets aimed at eradicating poverty in all its forms and shifting the world onto a sustainable and resilient development pathway while ensuring that ‘no one is left behind’¹. The SDGs seek to build on and complete the unfinished business of the MDGs; realize the human rights of all; achieve gender equality in all sectors and spheres of life; and importantly, strike a balance between economic, social and environmental dimensions of development. A major emphasis of the SDGs is to ‘leave no one behind’; that is, to reach everyone, including the poor and the marginalised. The United Nations (UN) adopted the resolution of transforming our world by the year 2030 through the agenda of Sustainable Development with a primary focus on strengthening universal peace with larger freedom. All member countries including Nigeria agreed to this ambitious plan for relieving poverty and reducing global inequality over a span of 15 years starting from January 2016 to 2030. All other health programs including, Millennium Developmental Goals, Universal Eye Health or Vision 2020 - the elimination of avoidable blindness by 2020 are expected to thrive under the umbrella of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There are 17 goals and 169 targets. The three dimensions of sustainable development - economical, social and environmental - are balanced in this new initiative.²

METHODOLOGY

This is a review article where information was sourced from literature searches online from Pub Med , Google scholar, Wikipaedia, Med scape, Medline and journal articles

The study was approved by the research and ethical committee of State Specialist Hospital Asubiaro

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): The United Nations Millennium Development Goals are eight goals that all 191 UN member states have agreed to try to achieve by the year 2015. The United Nations Millennium Declaration, signed in September 2000 commits world leaders to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women.³

1. To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (3, 3b)
2. To achieve universal primary education;
3. To promote gender equality and empower women;
4. To reduce child mortality;
5. To improve maternal health;
6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases;
7. To ensure environmental sustainability; and
8. To develop a global partnership for development.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS⁴

Figure 1 . Diagram showing 17 SDG⁵



HOW SDGs RELATE TO EYE CARE

Most of the SDGs relates directly or indirectly to eye health and eye care.

SDG1(No Poverty):Ending poverty as the first goal is very important in preventing blindness associated with eye diseases. Poverty eradication prevents patients from avoidable (preventable and treatable) blindness from glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy among working age groups.Reducing poverty can have a huge impact on communities and on the overall efforts and crucial role towards achieving the prevention of avoidable blindness and vision impairment. Vision impairment is both a cause and consequence of poverty. In the developing countries are about 90 percent of people living with vision impairment. This make challenges to be large.

SDG2 (Zero Hunger): Contributes to good eye care as important and made available when there is food security and improved nutrition from sustainable agriculture. Vitamin A plays a crucial role in vision by maintaining a clear cornea, which is the outside covering of your eye. This vitamin is also a component of rhodopsin, a protein in the eyes that allows the eye to see in low light conditions Vitamin A deficiency is rare in developed countries, but if unaddressed can lead to a serious condition called Xerophthalmia.

SDG3 (Good Health and Wellbeing):- Ensures healthy lives and promotes well-being for all at all ages.The inclusion of **Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)** in the targets is a major achievement: the global indicator is the ‘number of people requiring interventions against NTDs’. If this is adequately addressed in national level indicators, policies and practices, it can significantly support efforts to manage and control blinding NTDs such as onchocerciasis and trachoma. (Current prevalence in Nigeria or Africa).

Current management or intervention at the National level against what is expected from WHO).Nigeria’s

Mass administration of medicines MAM(Ivermectin) for onchocerciasis elimination plan started in 2020 towards elimination in 2025 with WHO's approval. "The neglected tropical diseases road map 2021–2030, endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2020 through its decision 73(33), sets 2030 as the new target date for global elimination."⁶

SDG4 (Quality Education): is to ensure equitable quality education, as education is needed to salvage most eye problems. An educated individual responds to eye issues in a different way compared to a non – educated person. They tend to have more awareness and know the implications of some practices that may harm the eyes. Reading and listening to the media tends to improve awareness to stop harmful eye practices. This may provide scope for advocating at the national level, such as promoting school attendance. The country provides free universal basic education as a means to improve access to inclusive education.

SDG5 (Gender Equality) : Gender is one of the most significant groupings of social structure and remains a fundamental determinant of health. Vision loss undermines gender equity as women account for approximately 64 per cent of all blind people globally and in some countries.⁷ Women and girls are only half as likely as men to be able to access eye care services.⁸ In addition to the obvious social and development reasons for tackling inequality, actively broadening the benefits of economic growth to include women and girls can work to increase the pace of economic progress in developing countries.

SDG6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) This also relates to the eradication of some ocular diseases like trachoma, and Onchocerciasis by the provision of sustainable water supply. Global efforts to scale up SAFE (Surgery, Antibiotics, Face washing and Environmental hygiene) Strategy for trachoma control is ongoing across the world, extreme poverty within adequate provision of

basic social amenities give rise to vision impairment and blindness through various causes, including a lack of access to adequate nutrition, healthcare and access to clean water and sanitation. Poor personal hygiene and environmental sanitation are the resultant effects which are the trigger to diseases such as trachoma. Onchocerciasis can also increase when people have to go to the river banks to fetch water where they get bitten by Simulium damnosum (vector) fly.⁹

SDG8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):- This promotes inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Development programs that build capacity for eye health and vision care can reduce the burden of avoidable blindness and vision impairment, which empowers people who regain their sight to have greater access to employment opportunities, thereby contributing to economic growth.

SDG9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) Establishment of industries that can take care of affordable drugs and instruments that can assist in eye care. Basic innovative infrastructure that meets the needs of the country can also assist in providing eye hospitals easily accessible to the people in the rural communities. Monitoring, evaluation and accountability within innovation systems is complex. Scholarship on inclusive innovation (Chataway et al., 2014) and responsible research and innovation (Stilgoe et al., 2013) presents elements of a framework for guiding innovation systems towards societal goals, but more research and policy experimentation is required to understand how these might be applied in different contexts.

SDG10 (Reduce Inequalities): This proposes the reduction of inequalities within and among countries by 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. Target 10.3 is to ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate eye health policy among

race, gender, sex, all ages, economic and political categories. This hopefully will come to bear in the nearest future in the developing countries which have poor health infrastructure, and equipment to sustain the health care system. The Action Foundation: An organization in Kenya that fosters equality, inclusion and opportunities for disabled kids and their families in Kibera slum (SDG #10).¹⁰

SDG11(Sustainable Cities and Communities): This is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable by 2030. There should be a sure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services. The slums should be upgraded. Indicator 26 [Consultations with a licensed provider in a health facility or the community per person, per year] is to be developed. Legislation, policies and action in this regard should be taken. Residential areas of slum can breed infections such as trachoma . malaria infestations and infectious communicable diseases.

SDG12(Responsible Consumption and Production): Countries need to ensure healthy consumption and production pattern. This also, relates to food security. Malnutrition in children leads to vitamin A deficiency which can cause corneal blindness.

SDG 17(Partnership for The Goals): Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, Indicator 17.10: Percent of official development assistance (ODA), net private grants, and official climate finance channeled through priority pooled multilateral financing mechanisms. Partnering with multinational companies can help to sustain our efforts towards eye care either through training eye care personnel, building facilities, drugs supply, and surgical outreach support

GLOBAL ACTION PLAN FOR SDG

The WHO Global Action Plan calls for international partnerships that ‘support building strong and sustainable health systems’ and one of its objectives encourages ‘development and implementation of integrated national eye health policies, plans and programmes in line with WHO’s framework for action for strengthening health systems to improve health outcomes. Integration of eye health and vision care services into the countries’ health systems.⁵The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) also receives support through the Global Consortium. IAPB delivers workshops throughout the region to enhance communication, encourage good data collection and oversee implementation of National Eye Health Plans. A key focus of the IAPB’s work is to support and build capacity at a local level to strengthen advocacy and coordination in-country.

Target 17.15 International Agency for Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) anchored the control of blindness from Onchocerciasis in Nigeria sometime ago. Also, another IAPB project was launched on 7th February 2018. The Christopher Blinden Mission (CBM) led the implementation and worked in coalition with the Brien Holden Vision.

Target 17.15 respects each country’s policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development Governance, policy and coordination support.⁶ In 2021, the global economy started to rebound, with the global output expanding by 5.5%. However, new COVID-19 variants and continued vaccine inequity, together with rising inflation, major supply-chain disruptions, policy uncertainties, and unsustainable debt in developing countries, caused the global economy to slow down again at the end of 2021.⁴ The world is also witnessing the highest number of violent conflicts since 1945, with approximately 2 billion people living in conflict-affected countries by the end of 2020. Refugees were at the

highest absolute number on record in 2021 and forced displacement has continued to occur and even grow. These numbers will only increase with the war in Ukraine creating one of the largest refugee crises of modern time. As of April 2022, more than 5.3 million refugees had fled Ukraine (most of who are women and children) and a further 7.7 million had been displaced inside the country. Another 13 million were in conflict areas.¹¹

PROGRESS AND STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) IN NIGERIA. ^{8.9.10,11}

In 2017, Nigeria was among 44 member countries of the United Nations that presented its Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the implementation of the SDGs at High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.¹² In 2020, Nigeria was ranked 160 on the 2020 world's SDG Index⁹. The government affirmed that Nigeria's current development priorities and objectives are focused on achieving the SDGs.

The Establishment of multi-layered and multi-clustered institutional frameworks for enhanced coordination and SDGs mainstreaming processes. The President has appointed a Senior Special Assistant to the President (SSAP) on SDGs with responsibility for ensuring both the horizontal and vertical coherence between development policies, plans and strategies. Similarly, an Inter-Ministerial Committee on the SDGs has been established and operational guidelines for the same developed in order to guide the coordinated engagement with Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). Similar structures have been established at the sub-national levels in order to fully harness available resources and effectively.¹³

Existence of a Good Policy and Planning Framework- The recently-launched Nigeria Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (NERGP) which is also the basis of the current medium- and short-

terms budgeting frameworks is, to a large extent, aligned to the SDGs. Similarly, many of the current State Development Plans (SDPs) are yet to be implemented.

Up scaling the Conditional Grants Scheme The Conditional Grants Scheme (CGS) is a counterpart contributory mechanism which incentivizes sub national governments into mobilizing resources in order to accelerate progress in the SDGs core areas Identifying and Targeting the Poor and Vulnerable Groups; This aspect of identifying the poor and the vulnerable had been achieved through the establishment of a “National Social Register” for the poor and vulnerable households. There is a monthly conditional cash transfer of five thousand naira (N5,000) about 6.7Dollars to such households as part of a national social safety net programme.¹⁴

10 July 2023: The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition provides a powerful call to action, presenting a candid assessment of the SDGs based on the latest data and estimates. While highlighting the existing gaps and urging the world to redouble its efforts, the report also emphasizes the immense potential for success through strong political will and the utilization of available technologies, resources, and knowledge. Together, the global community can reignite progress towards achieving the SDGs and create a brighter future for all.

According to the report, the impacts of the climate crisis, the war in Ukraine, a weak global economy, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have revealed weaknesses and hindered progress towards the Goals. The report further warns that while lack of progress is universal, it is the world’s poorest and most vulnerable who are experiencing the worst effects of these unprecedented global challenges. It also points out areas that need urgent action to rescue the SDGs and deliver meaningful progress for people and the planet by 2030.¹⁵

HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE THESE GOALS IN FUTURE?

People need to be aware of what the SDGs mean and their importance. When this is so, then the people can demand of the government and the policy makers to implement these targets as their rights. This is a global strategy and every person is under the care of World Health Organization. Unfortunately, most people are not aware or knowledgeable about the SDGs. For example in a study carried out in a university community, it was seen that the level of knowledge of SDG was very low. This calls for increased awareness across all cadres of people including the policy makers so that the goals can be achieved¹⁶

CONCLUSION

This highlights key policy, institutional and regulatory measures put in place to create necessary enabling environment for mainstreaming of SDGs in national policies, plans and programmes, and its coherent coordination. Sustainable development goal and eye care, this theme provides evidence of the value of integrating eye care across several areas, including gender equality, education for all training teachers. Existence of a Good Policy and Planning Framework The recently-launched Nigeria Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (NERGP) which is also the basis of the current medium- and short- terms budgeting frameworks is, to a large extent, aligned to the SDGs. Similarly, many of the current State Development Plans (SDPs) in vision screening, increasing eye personnel workforce. The importance of poverty eradication thereby preventing of hunger, strengthening health information systems, including the need for making better use of prevalence data in strategic planning processes for eye care.

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