



READINGS IN DIPLOMACY, DEMOCRACY, PEACE & DEVELOPMENT

A Festschrift in honour of
Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, CFR

— *Edited by* —
Olugbemiro Jegede
Bala Sani
Ruth Abiola Adimula



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Published by
Spectrum Books Limited
Spectrum House
Ring Road
PMB 5612
Ibadan, Nigeria

In partnership with

Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development (SCDDD)
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
Kwara State University, Malete
Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin
Ahman Pategi University, Pategi; and
Bayero University, Kano

For enquiries: Book orders, book source, book price

e-mail: info@spectrumbookslimited.com

Customer care: 07052690000-2

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First published, 2023

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ISBN:978-978-926-626-5

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FOREWORD

If success is measured by the impact made in adding value to one's community, state, country, continent and the world, my highly esteemed Chief of Staff, Professor Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, would rank among the most successful and accomplished people of all time. The evidence to this assertion lies in the vast legacy he has imprinted on all his facets of service to humanity.

The man is both legendary and extraordinary. His accomplished career is worthy of critical appraisal and documentation for the benefit of the current and future generations of Nigerians. He is indeed success personified and an all-time role model for leaders and professionals. It is therefore my utmost pleasure to write this foreword to this book, in honour of a man who I had found worthy in character and learning to be appointed as Minister of External Affairs at the age of 39 when I was the military Head of State of our great country in 1984.

An Ilorin prince and uncle to the current Emir of Ilorin, HRH, Alhaji Ibrahim Sulu Gambari, Professor Ibrahim was born great and has also achieved monumental heights of greatness in his illustrious career that straddles many areas of human endeavour. This is a man in a million who wears many hats on his well decorated head. He is a foremost professor, a committed teacher, a high-ranking diplomat, a cerebral scholar, a community leader, a peace builder, a special envoy, an ambassador extraordinaire, a global educationist, a presidential chief of staff, a complete gentleman, a loving family man and many more.

Though Professor Gambari is not a stranger to consequential honours and recognitions, including the prestigious "Commander of the Federal Republic" (CFR) of Nigeria and the acclaimed "Order of the Companion of the Oliver R. Tambo" (OCORT) of South Africa, a book in his honour would definitely resonate most strikingly with him being primarily a "book man". His teaching career had, since 1969, made him a global teacher imparting knowledge to several generations of students at the City University of New York, University of Albany, our own Ahmadu Bello University (where he was Head of Political Science and International Relations Department), Georgetown University and Howard University, among others.

This book entitled *Readings in Diplomacy, Democracy, Peace and Development*, is therefore a befitting gift and a scholarly acknowledgement of the immense contributions that Professor Gambari has made towards making the world a better place. Reading through the academic papers that make the bulk of the book, one is struck by the depth and breadth of the themes that have been of interest to Professor Gambari as a scholar, examined largely robustly by the authors. From issues bordering on democracy, diplomacy, good governance, and development, to peace building and security, including health security, which undergirded the covid-19 pandemic that the world is still recovering from.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the Federal Government of Nigeria is proud of and grateful to Professor Gambari for his long and unblemished record of service to the country and the global system. He has always given a good account of himself and his pedigree. Having worked and related with him closely, I can attest to his being a blessing to Nigeria and Africa.

Whether as Director-General of the Nigerian Institute for International Affairs, Minister of External Affairs, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, United Nations Under-Secretary-General, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa or as Joint AU/UN Special Representative in Darfur, Deputy Chairperson of the AU's Panel of Eminent Persons of African Peer Review (APRM) or as Co-Chair of the Commission on Global Security, Justice and Governance at the Hague Institute for Global Justice and the Stimson Centre at Washington D.C., among other roles, Professor Gambari has always distinguished himself and made Nigeria proud as a man of excellence.

It is because of the totality of his personality that I knew I needed not to look far when the position of the Chief of Staff to the President became vacant in 2020. I was certain that Nigeria needs his wealth of experience at The Villa in order to steer the ship of state to a safe harbour. Thus, I must use this opportunity to thank Professor Gambari for his quality service in his current role. His academic credentials, professional background, international exposure, diplomatic networks and administrative acumen have proved pivotal in supporting the state in stabilising itself despite the daunting challenges of nation-building that we are facing.

Nigeria is also indebted to the Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows Alumni Association, Nigeria, and its partnering institutions, namely the University of Ilorin, Ilorin; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; Ahman Pategi University, Pategi; Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin; Bayero University, Kano; and Kwara State University, Malete as well as the Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development, Abuja, for working assiduously as a single formation to achieve the publication of this book. It is a scholarly gift to an ebullient scholar of international repute and diplomat of high ranking status.

While congratulating my amiable Chief of Staff on this honour bestowed on him, I want to recommend this book to all tertiary institutions, diplomatic missions, relevant ministries and non-governmental organisations. I am confident that everyone, especially those interested in the thematic foci of this book, will find it insightful and illuminating. It is my fervent hope that the ideas contained in the book will ultimately be converted to creating a greater country and a better world, devoid of war, hunger, poverty, diseases, illiteracy and other vices that stall the march of sustainable development.

Thank you.

Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR

President,

Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces.

PREFACE

In February 2019, when the Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows Alumni Association, Nigeria (COSFAN) resolved to appoint patrons for the association, it was emphatically stated that only diplomats of high repute could be appointed and a combination of academic scholarship was an added advantage. Only few names of Nigerians featured, including the name of His Excellency, Prof. (Amb.) Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, CFR. For months, no one could give a hint on how to reach him for our intention. Fortunately, in July 2019, when General Abdulsalami Abubakar, GCFR, former Nigerian Head of State, called a high-level security meeting in Minna, Niger State, chaired by Prof. Gambari; I attended as a delegate and it became a unique opportunity to use the closed-door gathering (less than 50 Nigerians) to interact and inform him verbally how much COSFAN sought him for appointment as a patron. This was formalised eventually upon his consent.

The book project is a brainchild of COSFAN under the leadership of Dr Abiola Adimula. COSFAN membership consists of eminent Nigerians who have enjoyed the sponsorship of the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission (CSC) in the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, for their respective postgraduate academic pursuits and, or career advancement from 1960 to date; with the main objective of promoting and advancing national development as agents of change, and to promote academic excellence. The reflection of COSFAN was confirmed when our patron was appointed as the Chief of Staff to President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR in May 2020.

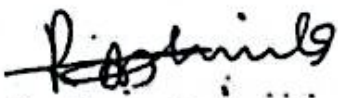
This book entitled *Readings in Diplomacy, Democracy, Peace and Development: A Festschrift in honour of Ibrahim Agboola Gambari* is an attempt to put on record, lasting legacies of the indelible achievements of the honoree in the sands of time, in acknowledgement of his immense contributions to scholarship and humanity and a memento for COSFAN's patron. In cross-cutting career explorations, Prof. Gambari has left track records of excellence, inspired several thousands of students in Africa and beyond, mentored several scholars and professionals, as well as executed projects and programmes in furtherance of international diplomacy, democratic development, world peace and global security. The honoree is a raving phenomenon and encyclopedic personality whose academic, professional, diplomatic and public service pedigrees are worthy of being studied and understudied for the benefit of humanity. He is a distinguished academic, a resourceful professional, an astute technocrat and a world diplomat. Someone once said that unique personalities like Prof. Ibrahim Gambari are usually one in a generation.

To maximise the advantage of the book, it was published in collaboration with the Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria, with the partnership of Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development and a consortium of selected universities in Nigeria, viz: Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kwara State University, Malete, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Ahman Pategi University, Pategi and Bayero University, Kano. This design is to give Authors an opportunity to

cite their articles for academic career promotions, in addition to serving as a one-stop book for resources on Diplomatic Relations, Democracy and Governance, Peace and Development.

Since the over five decades' service of the honoree to humanity cannot be penned in a single book, the preliminary pages have introduced the person of Prof. Gambari succinctly, with tributes in his honour. Section A presented scholarly articles on Diplomatic Relations; Section B is on Democracy and Governance; while articles on Peace and Development are systematically arranged under Section C.

This book serves as scholarly, academic and practice presentations of careers in diplomacy, democracy, security, peace and development and is a keepsake for all relevant stakeholders. It is globally relevant and current on topical issues discussed. This serves as a huge contribution of COSFAN to global discourse on the choice areas of publication.



Dr Ruth Abiola Adimula, Esq., FCTI

President

Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows Alumni Association, Nigeria.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea of a festschrift for an extremely versatile personality like Professor (Ambassador) Ibrahim Agboola Gambari whose life endeavour traverses several landscapes of academia, diplomacy, public service, national security, and peacekeeping was an exciting dream for us at the Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows Alumni Association, Nigeria (COSFAN). However, as the excitement began to fade, the enormity of the task began to dawn on us when the intricacies of addressing all the nooks and crannies of his undertakings, engagements and responsibilities took the route of, what seemed to be, an unending expedition. The road towards the conception of this project became even more complicated when COSFAN insisted that it should be guided by three beacons of contribution to human capital development in the context of the contemporary knowledge economy, be a potential *magnum opus* of the latest research dynamics, and a combination of synergies from many cross-cutting areas of knowledge and scholarship.

This book project, which began with a humble gestation of what in hindsight can now be regarded as a mustard seed, moved quickly from the chance meeting of Dr Abiola Adimula, the President of COSFAN, with the honoree, through deliberations by the Executive Board and the eventual approval by the Board of Trustees of the Association to a comprehensive search for partners, collaborators and hands-on participants. COSFAN could not have gotten a better and massive repository of goodwill and willing support from a cross-section of people and organisations whose full listing would be another book publication.

The task of acknowledging everyone is therefore a tremendously herculean one but which I have struggled to coalesce into a formidable and representative selection. It is hoped that this will percolate to several others without diminishing, in any way, the reverence and huge gratitude placed on their numerous and exceptional support. Without doubt, the Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development (SCDDD) provided excellent partnership for the book project through a variety of assistance and support including using their office as our planning and publication headquarters. The participation of a consortium of selected universities in Nigeria, viz: Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; Kwara State University, Malete; Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin; Ahman Pategi University, Pategi; and Bayero University, Kano provided the backbone of solid and unwavering stanchion required from academia. The publication would not have been possible if the major contents did not come from the array of commissioned and contributing authors, and reviewers who graciously bore our incessant nuisance of reaching them several times in a day for one correction, addition or amendment.

The 'beating into shape' of the compendium of articles by the distinguished and credible members of the Editorial and Advisory Boards has contributed in no small measure to the excellent final product you have in your hands today. All the membership and staff of the Book Project Co-ordinating Centre and Secretariat led by our hard-

working and indefatigable COSFAN President, Dr Ruth Adimula, who doubled as the Secretary to the Book Project Committee were simply wonderful in the commitment of their time and other resources. Several individuals, groups and organisations have made substantial and notable contributions in all forms and manner of resources to which COSFAN is eternally grateful, significantly recognises and acknowledges.

We cannot but immensely thank Mr President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari, for finding time out his exceptionally crowded schedule at this time of his tenure to be part of the presentation of the book. Finally, this book would not have eventuated, if the honoree did not give his nod, continual participation in its production and publication, and reaching out to every corner of the world for participation and support.

On behalf of COSFAN, I can only rely on the golden, most popular pair of words to express our appreciation to all and sundry: Thank you.



Olugbemi Jegede, D.Sc, FSTAN, FCOL, FAAS, FNAE,
Emeritus Professor,
National Open University of Nigeria.

TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR IBRAHIM AGBOOLA GAMBARI

Professor (Ambassador) Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, CFR, OCORT, the Chief of Staff to President Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR), is an internationally acknowledged envoy of the highest standing who has served in various capacities at the United Nations. As an accomplished diplomat and veteran academic, Prof. Gambari has also served in a number of positions in Nigeria over the last five decades, too numerous to mention. Indeed, he is such a towering figure whose presence in a gathering keeps tongues murmuring.

Bayero University, Kano, was indeed lucky when President Muhammadu Buhari, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, appointed Professor Ibrahim Gambari as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the 13th Governing Council of the University in 2017. From the inaugural Council meeting which was held on 7th June 2017 to the valedictory meeting on 23rd May 2021 which he chaired, Professor Gambari demonstrated unique leadership qualities, very rare to come by. He was accessible, humble and down to earth, ready to offer solution to problems. His academic expertise and diplomatic sagacity played a prominent role in guiding the Governing Council to take wise decisions. The Chief of Staff will ever be remembered for his remark that he is “a teacher by training and a diplomat by accident”.

The Chief of Staff signed my appointment letter as the 11th Vice Chancellor of Bayero University, Kano, on 8th August 2020. He also led the Governing Council in approving the appointments of three Deputy Vice Chancellors in February 2021.

Under his watch as Chairman of Council, the Chief of Staff ensured that a number of far-reaching decisions that would move the university forward were taken. In fact, he guided Council in its budget monitoring exercise and financial discipline through the Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GPC), which he ably chaired, and he gave approval for the creation of a number of new centres, faculties and a college for the university.

He was appointed Chief of Staff to President Buhari while serving as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council of Bayero University, Kano. That, indeed, was a cheering piece of news to the university, especially when he informed the Governing Council that the President had requested him to continue to serve as Chairman of Council in spite of the new appointment. To him, serving concurrently as Chief of Staff and Chairman of Council of Bayero University was certainly a great honour. In spite of the double role he was playing at the time, I make bold to say that he found time to attend Council meetings. On one occasion, however, he invited Council members to Aso Villa for Council's 14th Regular Meeting, displaying the importance he attached to Council meetings and ensuring that the right things were done.

The Chief of Staff, throughout his four-year tenure as Pro-Chancellor, remained unassuming, jovial and humorous but firm in exercising this onerous responsibility as chairperson. I have never seen him vent his resentment on anyone of us in the cause of

chairing meetings. I found him to be a complete team player who believes in knowledge sharing, and he listens attentively to a contrary opinion. As a matter of fact, he led the BUK Council as a gentleman, as a scholar, as a statesman and as a father to all. He brought his wealth of knowledge and experience to bear in directing the affairs of the 13th Governing Council.

For his contribution to the development of Bayero University, Kano, a monument has been named in his honour, **Professor Ibrahim Gambari Square**. Bayero University wishes him all the best in the task ahead.

Professor Sagir Abbas, FMAN
Vice Chancellor,
Bayero University, Kano.

ABOUT HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR PROFESSOR IBRAHIM AGBOOLA GAMBARI, CFR

Ibrahim Agboola Gambari was born into the Gambari royal dynasty of the Ilorin Emirate in Kwara State, Nigeria, on 24th November 1944. He attended Provincial (now Government) Secondary School, Ilorin, before proceeding to the *Floreat Collegium* Kings College, Lagos. He received his BSc (Econs) from the London School of Economics (1968), and his MA and PhD in Political Science and International Relations in 1970 and 1974 respectively, from Columbia University, USA.

Ambassador Professor Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, a Nigerian scholar-diplomat, began his career at home as a senior lecturer at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (1977-1980). He rose to become an associate professor (Reader, 1980-1983) and subsequently full professor at the same university in 1983. He was appointed the Director General, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) from 1983 to 1984. Before joining the United Nations, he served Nigeria as Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations (1990-1999). He was also Nigeria's Foreign Affairs Minister (1984-1985) and worked closely with regional leaders, institutions and governments, particularly within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to promote economic and political development of the subregion. He advocated and promoted the concentric circle theory as a major plank of Nigeria's foreign policy orientation during his tenure as Foreign Minister. Professor Gambari was a member of the 2014 Nigerian National Conference organised by the Goodluck Jonathan administration, where the political future of Nigeria was discussed. He was also a member of the Judicial Commission of Enquiry into the clash between the Nigerian Army and the Islamic Movement of Nigeria in 2016. Professor Gambari was appointed as the first Chancellor, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria in March 2013 and later the Pro-chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of Bayero University, Kano (BUK) (2018-2021).

He has received several academic and national honours, he is a recipient of the third highest national honour, Commander of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFR). As part of his commitment to leave an enduring legacy, Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari, founded the Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development in Abuja, Nigeria, a think-tank for research, training and public policy advocacy in the specific areas of diplomacy (conflict resolution), democracy and development in Africa (1993). He became the pioneer chairman of the centre in 2014 after he retired from public service, a position he resigned upon assumption of office as chief of staff to the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Indeed, his career as a lecturer began at the Queen's College, City University of New York (1969-1974), followed by as an assistant professorship at the State University of New York (1974-1977). Ambassador Gambari was a visiting professor at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) of the Johns Hopkins University, Georgetown

University and Howard University in Washington, DC from 1986 to 1989. Professor Gambari was also a research fellow at the Brookings Institution, Washington, DC, as well as a resident scholar with the Rockefeller Foundation Centre in Bellagio, Italy.

Ambassador Gambari has held several leadership positions at the national, regional and international levels and has built extensive contacts with governments as well as public and private institutions, especially in Africa. He was the Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid (1990-1994) during which he worked closely with African governments to coordinate UN policy to eradicate apartheid, thereby building trust and confidence with governments and policymakers in member countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Professor Gambari was the first Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, on Africa (1999-2005). In that capacity, he worked closely with heads of government, key policymakers as well as institutions in the continent to develop the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). During this period, he was concurrently the Resident Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission to Angola (2002-2003). He was a delegate to the Assembly of the African Union as a national delegate (1984-1985) and a member of the UN Secretary-General's delegation (2000-2012). His last assignment at the United Nations was as the Joint Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Chairperson of the African Union Commission/Head of the UN and AU Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) from January 2010 to July 2012. During Ambassador Gambari's tenure, UNAMID was the world's largest international peacekeeping mission in history.

At the global level, Ambassador Gambari was Under-Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs (2005-2007). During the period, he also operated as UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Cyprus, Zimbabwe and Myanmar. On 22 May 2007, the Secretary-General entrusted him with the Good Offices Mandate on Myanmar. He was also appointed in 2007 by the Secretary-General as Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Iraq Compact and Other Issues, positions he held until 2009. He co-chaired with the late Madeleine Albright, former US Secretary of State, the Commission on Global Security, Justice and Governance at the Hague Institute for Global Justice and the Stimson Centre at Washington DC.

In January 2017, Professor Gambari was appointed a member and Deputy Chairperson of the Panel of Eminent Persons of Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), a specialised agency of the African Union for the promotion of good governance at the political, economic and corporate levels. In the same vein, he was appointed in 2016 by Patricia Scotland, QC, the Commonwealth Secretary-General as the Special Envoy to Zambia on Elections and reappointed in 2017 as the Special Envoy for Democratic Stability and Elections, 2020. In addition, he is currently a member of the Senior Working Group (SWG) of the United States Institute for Peace (USIP). In 2018, he was appointed by

the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres as a member of the Group of Independent Eminent Experts on the Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. He is also a board member of the African Studies Programme, Oxford University. In May 2017, he was honoured with the Global Leadership Award by the University of South Florida, USA.

Ambassador Gambari has also been awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters (*honoris causa*) by the University of Bridgeport, Connecticut (2002) and Farleigh Dickinson University, New Jersey (2006). His other awards include: Honorary Doctorate of Public Service, Chatham University (May 2008) and Honorary Doctor of Letters (D.Litt), University of Ibadan, Nigeria (November 2011). He has also received the Special Recognition for International Development and Diplomacy, an award conferred by the Africa-America Institute (September 2007), the Distinguished (Foreign) Service Award by the Federal Government of Nigeria (April 2008), the International House Harry Edmonds Award for Lifetime Achievement, New York (May 2009) and the Campaign Against Genocide Medal by the Republic of Rwanda (July 2010). Ambassador Gambari has also received South Africa's highest national honour conferred on non-citizens, the Order of the Companions of Oliver R. Tambo, (OCORT) which was conferred on him personally by then President Jacob Zuma on 26th October 2012. Professor Gambari was elected to the Johns Hopkins University Society of Scholars in 2002 and has since 2005 served as a member of the International Advisory Board of the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance at Africa University, Zimbabwe.

He has taught at universities in the United States, Nigeria, and Singapore and has to his credit the authorship of a number of books including the most popular *Theory and Reality in Foreign Policy Making: Nigeria After the Second Republic*. Professor Ibrahim Gambari is currently the Chief of Staff to the President, Federal Republic of Nigeria, a position he has occupied since May 2020. He is married with children and grandchildren.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS BEYOND RHETORIC: THE AFRICAN WOMEN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

The actualisation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) remains a challenge in developing countries. Some of the major objectives of the SDGs are to eradicate poverty and hunger, improve gender equity, promote peace, justice and strong institutions. This study discusses the experience of women in Africa in the actualisation of the SDGs. The 7-point agenda on how to implement a gender-responsive peace agreement in South Sudan, the peace huts initiatives in Liberia, among others, are practical experiences of women's involvement in sustainable development in their respective communities. The objectives of the study are to identify women's experience in gender discrimination, highlight women's participation towards the actualisation of SDGs in selected African countries and to examine some efforts of government to improve gender parity, peace, justice and strong institutions for the protection and defence of the rights of women. The study adopted secondary sources of research instruments using information derived from countries' records and UN websites. Findings revealed that, the activities of women in their various communities have paved way for access to women's participation in decision making, among others. The study recommends giving priority to the education of women and girls as policy commitments and equal distribution of economic resources among men and women will improve sustainable development in Africa. Also, that the government must go beyond rhetoric and drive towards tangible actualisation of the goals of SDG programmes.

Keywords: Africa, Experiences, Rhetoric, SDGs, Women

Introduction

Gender inequality is a societal and human rights problem with a multiplier effect on economies, communities and nations (Leach, 2015). Women are not only more affected by these problems, while possessing ideas and leadership acumen to solve them. Gender discrimination is still holding too many women back and dampens the innovative quality that can only be achieved through entrenched gender equality, both in the workplace and in achieving the basic demands of the society.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by world leaders in 2015 are remarkable. These include: No

poverty, Zero hunger, Good health and well-being, Quality education, Gender equality, Decent work and economic growth, Sustainable cities and communities, Peace, Justice and strong institutions, among others. Some of the goals directly or indirectly have a mandate for gender equality and embody a roadmap for progress. Achieving gender equality and empowerment for women is integral to each of the 17 SDGs. However, it is only by ensuring the rights of women and girls, as postulated in the goals, that our world will enjoy unprecedented justice, political stability and socioeconomic development that will work for all and sustain our shared environment now and for future generations. The pertinent question therefore is, what is the significance of gender equality in the overall development, empowerment and emancipation of our world to delivering on the promises of sustainability, peace and human progress, especially on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? Therefore, how far have we come in turning the 2030 Agenda into reality for women and girls in Africa and Nigeria in particular, and what is needed to bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality in fulfilling these laudable 17 goals? These are questions that permeate minds. Though, there is much to be achieved to attain the goals, yet the efforts of women, government and relevant stakeholders in attaining some of the SDGs in Africa are worthy of mention to show that beyond rhetoric, laudable achievements have been made towards the actualisation of specific goals.

Statement of the Problem

The gender concept has been used in research as an analytical tool to draw attention to the way in which gender differences are constructed and conveyed in social groups, institutions, the media and law, etc. The term 'gender' refers to the culturally expected behaviours of men and women based on roles, attitudes and values ascribed to them on the basis of their sex, whereas 'sex' refers to biological and physical characteristics (ICRC, 2004).

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Unfortunately, one in five women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 have reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner within a 12-month period and 49 countries currently have no laws protecting women from domestic violence (UN, 2019). Every year, 15 million girls under the age of 18 are still forced into marriage. If the trend continues, between 2017 and 2030, 150 million girls will be married before they turn 18 (PLAN International, 2022). Access to education, health, decent work, and the ability to make choices are limited for marginalised women and girls, who end up paying a high price for this inequality. A girl living in rural India from a poor household is more than four times more likely than her rich, urban counterpart to be married before the age of 18. The same girl is almost 40 times more likely to have never attended school; more than five times more likely to become an adolescent mother; and significantly more likely to have

no access to money for her own use or have a say over household expenses. This dramatic reality shows that until women and girls can make fundamental choices about their lives, free from violence, then gender equality will be elusive (Kowalski, 2018).

A derivative factor of the previous 15 years implementation of the MDGs has seen a progressive occurrence regarding harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). UNICEF (2022) reported that there has been an overall decline in the prevalence of FGM over the last three decades, but not all countries have made progress and the pace of decline has been uneven. Thus, there is still much work to be done to completely eliminate such practices. Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large. Implementing new legal frameworks regarding female equality in the workplace and the eradication of harmful practices targeted at women is crucial to ending the gender-based discrimination prevalent in many countries around the world (UN, 2019). Achieving and sustaining these aspirations formed the basis for the SDGs. The objectives of this study therefore were to investigate the effects of gender inequality on women in Africa and how the actualisation of goals 5 and 16 on gender equality, peace, justice and strong institutions have impacted the lives of women in selected African countries.

Methodology

The study employs evaluative design, using secondary sources of data derived from governmental and institutional sources, such as information from the United Nations webpage.

Theoretical Framework

Sustainability theory, which emphasises the centrality of inclusivity in making developmental interventions impactful, was adopted in the work. In other words, a participatory approach is deemed expedient in making transformational initiatives long-lasting.

Literature Review

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The objective was to produce a set of universal goals that meet the urgent environmental, political and economic challenges confronting our world (UNDP, 2019). The SDGs replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which started as a global effort in 2000 to tackle the indignity of poverty.

SDGs are interconnected; success in one contributes to the success of others.

for instance, dealing with the threat of climate change impacts how we manage our fragile natural resources. Achieving gender equality or better health helps eradicate poverty and foster peace, and inclusive societies will reduce inequalities and help economic prosperity. According to the UN's position (2019):

... in short, this is the greatest chance we have to improve life for future generations. The SDGs are unique in that they cover issues that affect us all. They reaffirm our international commitment to end poverty, permanently, everywhere. They are ambitious in making sure no one is left behind. More importantly, they involve us all to build a more sustainable, safer, more prosperous planet for all humanity.

Plights of African Women on Gender Inequality

For many African women, the Beijing platform and the various international instruments their governments have signed are yet to translate into positive changes in their daily lives. They remain at the bottom of the social hierarchy, with poor access to land, credit facilities, health and education. While some of the agreements that African governments have ratified enshrine property and inheritance rights, in most countries women are denied those very rights (Mutume 2005). Compounding the situation are setbacks such as poverty, deprivations and the HIV/AIDS pandemic which is destroying the health of more women than men in Africa, eroding some of the development gains women had attained. As a result, poverty in Africa continues to wear a woman's face. Women make up the majority of the poor, as much as 70 per cent in some countries.

A United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation study on Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Congo, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe shows that women rarely own land. When they do, their holdings tend to be smaller and less fertile than those of men (Mutume, 2005). Studies also show that if women farmers had the same access to inputs and training as men, overall yields could be raised by between 10 and 20 per cent growth (Mutume, 2005). But perhaps the most inhibiting factor is that women in Africa continue to be denied access to comprehensive education which is often the ticket out of poverty.

Despite this background of incidences of gender inequality, studies have shown that efforts have been made in some African countries to pursue gender equality, peace, justice and strong institution in favour of women. These efforts have brought progress in the actualisation of selected goals of SDGs in Africa.

African Women and the Actualisation of Sustainable Development Goals

Gender Equality – Goal 5

Gender equality is when people of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Unfortunately, everyone is affected by gender inequality – women, men, and gender-diverse people, children and families (Victorian Government, 2021). It impacts

people of all ages and backgrounds. The SDGoal 5 seeks for gender equality for all by 2030. Gender equality prevents violence against women and girls as it is essential for economic prosperity. Societies that value women and men as equals are safer and healthier. Gender equality is a human right that benefits everyone.

In Africa, efforts toward gender equality have been identified and recognised in some countries, for example the constitutional parity in sexes in Morocco. Morocco's position as a Western ally and a regional leader in women's rights is based on its legal protection for women. In recent years, Morocco has taken substantial steps to entrench the parity between the sexes in constitutional, family, and criminal law on the books.

Feminists, civil society and non-governmental organisations, composed mainly of educated, urban women, have been at the forefront of organising and lobbying in favour of these reforms. The 2011 Constitution guarantees equal protection and enjoyment of its laws for both men and women. The country's progressive Family Law (*Moudawana*) secured important rights for Moroccan women, including the right to self-guardianship, the right to divorce, and the right to child custody. The legal marriage age was changed from 15 to 18 years, and women are no longer required to have a male guardian approve their marriage. The criminal code has taken strides against acts of gender-based violence, cracking down on non-partner sexual assault and repealing the rape marriage law, which allowed a rapist to evade punishment by marrying his victim (Hanafi and Hites, 2017).

Also, in Rwanda, there is zero tolerance for sexual violence. The Rwandan government while recovering from genocide effects put in place the *Isange One Step Centre* where survivors of sexual violence can seek medical treatment, counselling services, and legal help in filing claims against their attackers. The design is intended to ensure that the patient has to tell her story only once. This has helped to reduce sexual violence in the country.

According to Wanzala (2017), in Kenya, 'Male Agents of Change' programme has supported and re-orientated people positively on gender equality. Sidori is one of the 28 'Male Agents of Change' working with the Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe (DREAMS) lives programme. This is being implemented in the slums of Nairobi by Global Communities, an NGO, since 2015. Its projects range from fighting gender-based violence to trying to eradicate poverty, especially among marginalised groups such as single mothers, sex workers and disabled women. All these efforts are geared towards reducing new HIV infections (Wanzala, 2017). The DREAMS programme has counselled more than 1,000 men about the need to shun violence against women. The aim is to get men in Kenya to stand up against violence wherever it occurs. The programme teaches men the benefits of ending violence in their homes. These include increased productivity of adults at work and children at school. DREAMS pushes men to seek treatment in health institutions and get tested for diseases. They are also trained to discard certain

behaviour they may have witnessed in their own families while growing up. The primary focus on men is because they are the key perpetrators of gender-based violence.

Sidori says involving men in the fight against gender-based violence is yielding positive results. Since the inception of the programme, he says he has seen attitudes change (Wanzala, 2017):

I can't quantify it, but whenever we go out, a sizable number of men and boys usually testify that their attitude about women has changed . . . It is necessary that men discover themselves, for change begins with individuals. If one undergoes transformation, your family becomes a role model and the whole society benefits.

In Nigeria, the National Centre for Women Development (NCWD) has established an initiative for assembling gender-disaggregated data to facilitate gender mainstreaming in evidence-based planning and programming. The National Gender Data Bank project commenced in 2006 with the support of UNICEF and the MDG Office. The aim is to determine the baseline of gender disaggregated data available within the Nigerian statistical system which have been captured in the report and presented as gender data (NCWD, 2021). This is a positive effort towards gender mainstreaming.

African Women and the Actualisation of Sustainable Development Goals on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions – Goal 16

Women and Peacebuilding in Africa

The SDGoal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institution at all levels (UN, 2022). Conflict, insecurity, weak institutions and limited access to justice remain a great threat to sustainable development. The number of people fleeing war, persecution and conflict exceeded 70 million in 2018, the highest level recorded by the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) in almost 70 years (United Nations, 2022). In 2019, the United Nations tracked 357 killings and 30 enforced disappearances of human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists in 47 countries (United Nations, 2022) in pursuit of peace. This background therefore has given prominence to the efforts of women in some notable African countries. For example in Liberia, Lawson (2017) reported that the Women in Peace Building Network (WIPNET) took great risks to elect Sirleaf on her promise to sustain peace and make gender equality a central agenda to her administration. Some women hid their sons' voter ID cards to prevent them from voting for Sirleaf's opponent; others tricked the young men into exchanging their cards for beer; still others managed market stalls while their female owners went to register to vote and watched babies so that mothers could vote on Election Day. When Sirleaf

came to power in 2005, the world was electrified. The Sirleaf administration kept some of its promises on women empowerment and emancipation. Liberia has tough rape laws, but weak enforcement mechanisms, and in 2016, Parliament signed into law a new domestic violence bill (Lawson, 2017). At the end of Sirleaf's two terms in office, peace continued to reign, with considerable progress on gender equality.

In addition, the efforts of women in Liberia to foster peace in their communities cannot be overemphasised, as today, some of the powerful grassroots women who brought Sirleaf to power are at the forefront of running what is known as peace huts. This initiative has spread across the country. The purposes of these huts are: to put women in charge of mediating domestic abuse and other disputes before they escalate; and to empower women through entrepreneurial opportunities and to educate them about their rights. By and large, Liberian women and girls are well aware of their rights, especially those enshrined in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Peace huts have worked for gender equality, peace and human rights (Lawson, 2017).

Furthermore, South Sudanese women were in the forefront to ensure inclusiveness in peacebuilding. The 2015 ceasefire and conflict resolution agreement in South Sudan had no woman representation. In response, more than 500 women from all states of South Sudan have adopted a 7-point agenda on how to implement a gender-responsive peace agreement. This has been on since the 2015 agreement on the resolution of conflict and the subsequent discussions around its implementation which began at the National Women's Peace Dialogue in November 2015. The discussions focused on the importance of integrating women's voices in the implementation of the peace agreement. According to Kezie-Nwoha and Were (2018), in the renewed 2018 peace effort in South Sudan, there was a female mediator. Women constitute 25 per cent of the official delegates and the South Sudan Women Coalition – a new network of civil society leaders based in South Sudan and surrounding refugee camps. Women were also official participants and observers who signed the new agreement (Kezie-Nwoha and Were, 2018).

Key recommendations from all parties detailed in the 7-point agenda included: the need to fill 25% quota for women in the peace agreement, consult women on security reform and involve women in the peace monitoring team; include 25 per cent women in the constitutional review process; end sexual violence against women, girls and boys; include at least 30 per cent women in all institutions for resources, finance and economic management; translate the agreement and educate the public on the content; and respect freedom of expression (Kezie-Nwoha and Were, 2018).

Also, the grassroots organisations working on informal peacebuilding do so through everyday efforts to reconstruct the society. They provide food, shelter, healthcare services, education, economic empowerment and support to victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Some of the organisations are formed by internally displaced women and become discussion forums on issues affecting women, like insecurity caused by rebel

groups, early pregnancy, and income generating activities (Kezie-Nwoha and Were, 2018). Furthermore, in 2017, hundreds of South Sudanese women marched in silence through Juba, South Sudan's capital, to call for an end to the conflict. They protested the continued rape and killing of civilians, displacement, and the lack of humanitarian services for people in need. They demanded accountability for atrocities and sexual violence committed by armed groups, security forces, and peacekeepers (Kezie-Nwoha and Were, 2018).

The women organisation also used the social media to communicate their stand by tweeting:

We women started the Peace Building Committees as membership organisation. Our main objective is to promote home-grown peace by addressing tribalism and promote unity. We advocate for personal peace because if you do not have peace in yourself, then your family, neighbours and entire community will be affected.

We organised a silent march in Juba town. Women put tape on their mouths to signify repression and lack of freedom of expression. We had posters with messages calling for peace and an end to sexual violence. Our leaders were summoned and threatened by the security agencies (Kezie-Nwoha and Were, 2018).

Moreover, the efforts of women in Rwanda (post-genocide) were novel. Inclusive Security (2019) reported that in Rwanda, after the massacres stopped, Rwanda lay in ruins. Hundreds of thousands of bodies littered roadsides. Churches and schools were destroyed, offices and businesses looted. Electricity became erratic, potable water non-existent, and governance minimal. Above all, the nation was traumatised by the heinous crimes that had decimated the population. Nearly a million of Rwanda's eight million people were killed in 100 days during the culmination of decades of ethnic violence between Hutus and Tutsis.

Due to the fact that most of those killed were men and because many male perpetrators fled to neighbouring nations, 70 per cent of Rwanda's post-genocide population was female (Inclusive security, 2019). Faced with ensuring their families' survival, women stepped up. Mothers took in orphaned children and organised support groups for widows. Women moved from cleaning buildings to reconstructing them. They farmed and started businesses. Throughout the country, they created stability in the aftermath of unspeakable violence.

I would describe a Rwandan woman as a very courageous woman . . . "These are women that went through so much, but they have bounced back. They have a past that is very hurtful, it is very painful but they have said, 'Whatever we went through will not stop us from reaching out for the best (Rwamwenge, 2019).

Women, Justice and Strong Institutions

Furthermore, the pursuit of justice and strong institutions has led some governments to

put in place structures that protect persons against violence and strong judicial bodies to defend violations of human rights. In Lagos State, Nigeria, the Prohibition Against Domestic Violence Law of Lagos State, Law No. 15, 2007, was enacted as a response to the rising incidences of violence against women in Lagos State. It was discovered that the enforcement agencies, such as the police, were not interested in pursuing cases of a 'domestic' nature when there were more cases considered as 'serious' such as robbery to deal with. The law prohibiting domestic violence is a mechanism to correct the inadequacies of the legal system by ensuring that victims of domestic violence are protected, the strict compliance of police officers in apprehending suspects, providing alternative orders, such as interim protection orders and expanding the definition of the laws that constitute domestic violence (Ojigho, 2009). To drive this, the Lagos State government put in place the Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team (DVSRT). This has led to a rise in the report of sexual and domestic abuse cases; Lagos States residents are now better informed of the various channels made available by the government to report cases of domestic violence to appropriate authorities.

Kazeem (2018) disclosed that recent records show a total departure from the apathy initially harboured by survivors of domestic abuse. The statistics made available by the State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team reveals that, no fewer than 3,089 cases of sexual and domestic violence were reported within eight months in 2018. The 2018 figure increased over 200 per cent compared to the 2017 figure of 1,044. "From January to August 2018, the team handled 1,037 cases. 939 domestic violence cases, 245 child abuse cases, 40 defilement cases, 22 rape cases, 13 cases of attempt to commit rape and sexual assault by penetration".

The establishment of Family Court in Kwara State, Nigeria, has brought succour to many children and families facing abuse and violence. The Nigerian Child Rights Acts, 2003 was domesticated and passed into law in Kwara State in December 2006. The law made provision for the establishment of the Family Court to hear and determine children and family cases in unique ways, and to ensure quick access to justice. In pursuit of the implementation of this provision of the law, the author coordinated two members of the National Children's Parliament representing Kwara State (Ayodeji Adimula and Quawil Olododo) to pay an advocacy visit to the then Acting Chief Judge of Kwara State (Hon. Justice Fola Gbadeyan) in June 2009. A month later (July 2009), the Kwara State Judiciary established a Family Court and swore in magistrates and area court judges to sit in the court. However, the Family court could not function as the personnel were not trained for the job. In 2012, the researcher applied to the Kwara State Judiciary for the release of two magistrates to be trained. The Chief Judge released two magistrates who were eventually nominated by the researcher for Commonwealth Fellowship in the United Kingdom. Through the British Council in Nigeria, these two magistrates were fully sponsored and trained in child justice administration and family cases in the United Kingdom. On their return, the magistrates started sitting in the Family Court in January

2013. Thus, all cases relating to children, family and domestic violence receive speedy attention in the court. Presently about 500 family cases have been filed in the court while over 200 cases have been determined (records of Family Court Kwara State, 2020).

Conclusion

Conclusively, the continent of Africa faces many challenges in her efforts to meet the SDGs, including but not limited to poverty, insecurity, social inequality, the absence of inclusive growth, youth unemployment, gender inequality, limited funding as well as prevalent weak institutional capacities. However, having identified the crucial role of women in their unique ways of actualising the SDGs in Africa, it is apt to say that the African experience is an eye opener to the fact that, when women stand to address any issue, only results make them look back. Thus, the need for gender equality in achieving sustainable development in Africa (as reflected above) requires greater action to protect women's rights and to unleash their potentials. Their rights to participate in and benefit from the economic, social and environmental policymaking processes; to manage natural resources and to participate in the allocation of public resources should be respected and observed.

Recommendations

Though much progress has been made towards attaining gender equality in Africa, much more remains to be done to empower women and reduce gender disparities. As more women seek education and enter the labour force, leveraging their productive contributions for economic growth and sustainable development must be prioritised. Unless gender disparities are addressed urgently, most women's potential contributions to economic growth will remain untapped.

Education (formal and vocational) for women and girls is one sure way of addressing gender disparities. This can be achieved through government's deliberate efforts in making basic education compulsory and to support and encourage higher educational training for women and girls. Government should also put in place and implement sound policies to monitor and ensure learning process from elementary to tertiary institutions, with policies specifically targeting girls which will allow for considerable improvements on gender equality.

Translating Policy Commitments into Action remains a challenge. Greater efforts are needed to strengthen laws, improve public services and enhance women's representation in leadership as well as their access to resources. Institutionally, there should be synergetic relationship between gender, peace and conflict studies with more emphasis on research, teaching and community service.

In addition, there should be equal distribution of economic resources, which is not only a right, but also a panacea to accelerate development in multiple areas like politics, economic and political development. There is need for a fair balance of responsibility for paid and unpaid care work between men and women.

Furthermore, the reactivation of Women Development Centres, skills and artisan development is an integral component of gender empowerment and equality in Nigeria. As more women acquire skills and achieve economic empowerment, government has a greater opportunity to achieve gender parity. Women learn new skills to empower themselves to compete for opportunities as well as reduce their dependency on their male counterparts.

Also, to avoid data limitations, which pose a significant constraint to monitoring progress and evaluation of the impact of policy commitments on gender equality strengthening data availability is critical, as there should be an existing National Gender Data Bank.

There should be adequate funding to aid the efficient and adequate operation of a centralised National Gender Data Bank. Through this, the Bureau of Statistics would work extensively in the disaggregation of data by sex to enable policymakers assess the progress made by women in all the critical sectors of our economy. The effective use of these Management Information Systems would be extensively appreciated in sectors like health, education, water supply, to critically evaluate the progress made by women.

Moreover, there is need to teach sex education: this is a crucial issue to addressing the SDGs, and not the least in the implementation is the need for comprehensive sex education, especially for girls. Prevention is better and cheaper than cure, and it seems that we could have prevented the prevailing sexual problems if good, comprehensive sex education are in place in all schools.

In addition, there is need for government at all levels in Africa to put in place strategies and mechanisms that will promote peace and security to douse the incessant harm and threats to lives and security in the continent.

Above all, the need for a strong judicial system and institutions for the protection and defence of the rights of women and children in Africa cannot be overemphasised. Governments should establish strong and functional institutions to ensure justice for female victims of violence. Such institutions will give immediate protection to victims when cases are reported.

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Footnote

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