

**Second National Youth Policy
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Chapter one

Background and Policy Context

1.1 Introduction

Youth are one of the greatest assets that any nation can have. Not only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country's development. Young women and men are, in particular, recognized as a vital resource whose future prospects are inextricably tied to that of their country. They are the valued possession of any nation or region. Without them there can be no future. They are the center of reconstruction and development. They serve as a good measure of the extent to which a country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. The extent of their vitality, responsible conduct, and roles in society is positively correlated with the development of their country. For the first time in history, the number of people in the world aged 12 – 24 is the largest ever. According to the World Development Report 2007, there are 1.3 billion people in this age group. Close to 85 per-cents of this over 1.3 billion young men and women live in developing countries; this figure is projected to increase to 89 per cent by 2025.

Nigeria's population is predominately young. Nigeria has a population of one hundred and forty million people (NPC 2006 provisional results which makes her the most populous nation in Africa). One third of her population is young people between the ages of 10 to 24 years. The recognition of this fact led to the development of the National Youth Policy and the subsequent reviews of the policy. The review of the National youth Policy is necessary to improve the level of coordination among policies and sectors that affect youth in the country and raise the level of accountability for youth outcomes – many sectors of the economy needs to work together when devising youth policies to influence outcomes, strengthen the voice of young people in monitoring and providing feedback on the quality of youth policy and service delivery in Nigeria, and ensure global best practices in the design and implementation of National Youth Policy.

The National Youth Policy represents a declaration and commitment of the priorities, directions and practical support that a country intends to provide for the development of its young men and women. It is a concrete and bold step to

put the development and participation of young people at the centre of national development efforts. It is indicative of the readiness of the Federal Government to meet the needs and aspirations of the youth as well as seek solution to their problems. It sets guidelines and provides the framework for all stakeholders to empower the youth to realize their potentialities and take advantage of the opportunities available to make positive contributions to the well-being of their communities across the entire country.

The policy takes into account the range of problems faced by the youth, anticipates the challenges that they are likely to confront and outlines appropriate objectives, policies, programmes and implementation plans which will be put in place so as to empower the youth to take charge of their own destiny as well as make them active participants in the shaping of the political and economic destiny of our nation. The policy also recognizes that youth are not a homogeneous category and that differences exist among them. Therefore, the policy contains provisions that address the specific and special needs of each of several identified target groups.

Young women and young men should not be seen as a problem but as a force for change, and in keeping with this perspective, the National Youth Policy should be viewed not so much as a means of addressing problems associated with young people but as a means of ensuring their participation in the building of their communities and societies. The National Youth Policy recognizes and values young men and women as important resource and national asset and situates their needs and aspiration at the centre of national development.

The National Youth Policy provides a foundation and direction for a National Youth Action Plan. This Plan will describe the role of all agencies concerned with youth development and the programmes, services, facilities and activities they undertake to achieve the goals and objective of the policy.

1.2 Policy Context

The National Youth Policy recognizes the broader policy context in which it has been formulated and shall operate. This policy context is guided largely by other national policy initiatives and it is also reflective of international programmes and conventions. In particular the following:

- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria – The constitution sets a broad policy context for the National Youth Policy.

- National Policy on the Health and Development of Adolescents and Young People in Nigeria – The National Youth Policy identifies with the improvement in the health and development status of adolescents and other young persons in the country.
- National Policy on Population for Sustainable Development.
- National Gender Policy.
- National Health Policy.
- National Policy on Education.
- National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS 1&2).
- Seven point Agenda of President Umar Musa Yar'Adua
- The National Council on Youth Development – The National Youth Policy recognizes and draws from the input from the first ever National Council on Youth Development held in Katsina State, March 2007.
- The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – The National Youth Policy acknowledges and reaffirms the commitment of the United Nations Millennium Goals to the advancement and well being of the Youth.
- The ECOWAS Commission Youth Policy – The National Youth Policy recognizes the ECOWAS Commission Youth Policy as the basis for the overall development of all young people in the sub-region.
- African Youth Charter – Nigeria, as a member a member state of the AU, which have ratified or acceded to the African Youth Charter is working towards achieving the principles of the Charter which enable all young men and women to enjoy full participation in the life of the society.
- Commonwealth Youth Charter – the National Policy recognizes the work of the Commonwealth in the support of national youth policies in all commonwealth countries and its effort towards creating societies where young women and men are empowered to develop their creativity.

- Charter of the United Nations – Nigeria, as a member of the United Nations agrees to the attainment of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations which enables young men and women to enjoy full participation in the life of society.
- United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth - The principles and purposes of the United Nations World Programme of Action for the Youth has helped to inform the National Youth Policy at many levels. The ten priority areas identified and suggested by the World Programme of Action and the five newly identified priority areas namely: impact of globalization on young men and women; the use of and access to information and communication technologies; the dramatic increase in the incidence of HIV infection among young people and the impact of the epidemic on their lives; the active involvement of young people in armed conflict, both as victims and perpetrators; and the increased importance of addressing intergenerational issues in an aging society were largely taken in to consideration in the National Youth Policy.

1.3 Definition of Youth

Youth, as a concept varies from culture to culture and from society to society. In most societies in Nigeria the progression from childhood to youth involves some systematic rites of passage. These rites have symbolic significance in that, simply by participating in them, an individual achieves a new status and position. Such new status gains validity through genuine community action and recognition.

One thing is clear, the boundaries defining the transition from childhood to youth and from youth to adulthood are shifting, and the crossover into each new stage is now manifested in different ways. The changes that young people must negotiate do not occur as predictably as in the past, therefore, defining youth globally according to some exact age range can be a very difficult task. The age range 15-24 is often used by the United Nations and others for statistical purposes, but in many case this distinction is too narrow for countries like Nigeria. Apart from the statistical definition of the term “youth”, the meaning of the term “youth” have continued to change in response to fluctuating political, economic and socio-cultural circumstances. In many countries in Africa, for example, the male transition to adulthood, in terms of achieving the economic and social stability that comes with steady employment, may extend into late twenties and mid thirties.

In line with the conditions and realities on ground especially historical and contemporary socio-economic and political conditions, and for the purpose of execution of the current National Youth Policy, the youth shall comprise of all young males and females aged 18 – 35 years, who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. While it is true that this definition is broad, it is understood that this is a time in life when most young people are going through dramatic changes in their life circumstances as they move from childhood to adulthood. Young people in this age group require social, economic and political support to realize their full potential. Young people as defined by this youth policy are characterized by energy, enthusiasm, ambition, creativity, and promise; they are also faced with high levels of socio-economic uncertainty and volatility thereby becoming the most, vulnerable segment of the population. They represent the most active, the most volatile, and yet the most vulnerable segment of the nation's population.

1.4 Brief History of Youth Policy in Nigeria

Since independence in 1960, successive Nigerian governments have initiated programmes and projects aimed at the youth. These range from in-school education programme for physical and mental development to out-of-school programme aimed at shaping the character and behaviour of the youth, as well as promoting competitive spirit and national unity and integration. In-school programme include the formation of clubs, encouragement of sporting activities and other out-door activities, with discipline instilling organisations such as Boys Scout, Girls Guide and Man O' War. Out of school efforts include facilitation of the emergence and development of voluntary self-help associations which contribute to community development, skills and vocational training programmes, competitive activities and cultural festivals.

In the decades of 1970's and 1980's the Federal government elevated programmes of youth development by the establishment of a Ministry of Youth and Sports. Expanded revenue base of the state, arising from increase petroleum export earnings also resulted in the allocation of substantial resources in the funding of youth programmes. State governments were encouraged to establish similar Ministries at their own level and to initiate their own youth, sports, cultural and community development programmes.

At the Federal level, the National Youth Service Corps programme was launched in 1973, to promote national unity and integration and expose graduates of tertiary institutions to leadership roles and community development projects

before joining the job market. The Citizenship and Leadership Training Centre, Shere Hills, Jos, was developed and made to intensify its short-duration programmes and courses for youth with potentials for leadership. National sports and cultural festival were also organized in the 1970's and 1980's as fora for the research, identification and encouragement of talent amongst the youth.

The first attempt to introduce a National Youth Policy was in 1981 which was followed by the drafting of an inclusive social development policy for Nigeria in 1989, providing the basis for a review of the first policy on youth. Regrettably, by the early 1990's these commendable efforts aimed at Youth development started to suffer tremendous neglect. Besides, the policy attempts hardly provided a concrete framework for addressing the heightened problems confronting the youth. This was partly because the implementation mechanisms of the policy were weak and ineffective, and also partly because the macro-economic and socio-political environment was not conducive.

Thus, in the 1990's youth development came to be increasingly equated with sporting activities and competitions. Even then, these were not given the necessary policy and material support that they required. Programmes for civil education and leadership training suffered a serious setback. The issue of empowerment was hardly ever addressed. The Federal government dismantled the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and many state government followed suit. Consequently, by the late 1990's it had become evident that Nigerian youth are probably the most neglected by their government. This development created a huge gap in youth development in Nigeria.

Clearly, the prevailing situation should not, and cannot, be allowed to continue, as a nation can only afford to neglect the growth and development of its youth at its own peril. With the return of power to a democratically elected civilian government, some of the constraining factors which prevented serious effort at policy formulation and implementation have been reduced; a conducive atmosphere now exists for the development of a new policy for youth. The Federal Government under the leadership of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo created a separate Ministry of Youth Development in 2006. This development gave impetus to the revision of the National Youth Policy.

Chapter Two

Guiding Principles, Policy Goal and Objectives

2.1 Guiding Principles and values

The National Youth Policy is structured on guiding principles and values which influenced its design and direction. Guiding principles are fundamental values and beliefs that determine behaviours. The key principles and guiding values are stated as:-

- The National Youth Policy shall be based on commitment to extensive regional consultations, respect for diversity of interests and opinion, input and consensus from the grassroots and local communities. The people of Nigeria must be able to claim ownership of the NYP.
- Young people are the most important and valuable resource of the nation. Government shall recognize, discover and understand their conditions, needs, interests, issues, aspirations, ideas and capacities and make appropriate provision for their growth and development.
- The values and guiding principle of the National Youth Policy are consistent with the provision of other existing national policies and development initiatives for example National Reproductive Health Policy, National Health Policy, National Policy on the Health and Development of Adolescents and Young people, National Gender Policy, National Policy on Population for Sustainable Development, National Policy on Education, National Policy on Environment, and National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).
- Effective and result-focused policy implementation demands a cooperative interaction of all stake holders including the different tiers of government, private sector and civil society organisations, non governmental organisations, traditional and religious leaders, community based organisations and development partners at all levels.
- Commitment to youth participation in the democratic process, as well as in community and civic decision making and development process.

- The National Youth Policy shall be based on the fact that all youth development programmes must be youth-driven and youth centered.
- Commitment to mainstreaming youth issues as a development approach shall inform the economic reform agenda, medium and long term development planning, value reorientation and social transformation and other development initiatives of government. The creation of opportunities and strategies for addressing the challenges facing young men and women should be the concern of the whole society.
- Non-Governmental Organisations, Civil Society Organisations which supports the continued life-long development of young men and women and their skills and capacities thereby empowering them should be supported and encouraged by government and development partners.
- The National Youth Policy is mindful and reflects gender implications and strategies as contained in the gender policy and implementation modalities. Gender-inclusive approach to the development of young women and men, equal treatment and opportunity for all young people- male and female is central to the NYP.
- Cultural and religious diversity should be a basis for youth development. The NYP recognizes and respects the role of tradition, religion, and culture in the development of young men and women.
- The NYP promotes youth development programmes with rural emphasis. Emphasis should be placed on addressing the needs of rural young people and their communities.
- Appropriate strategies and mechanism including transparency, financial accountability systems for effective delivery of youth development programmes as a cross cutting issue shall be adopted and reviewed periodically to enhance explicit and measurable progress towards policy implementation.
- The NYP promotes a wide range of participatory methodologies to ensure maximum participation and contribution on youth development matters.

The principles and guiding values outlined above provided the framework upon which the vision, goals, objectives and strategies of the National Youth Policy are built.

2.2 Policy Goal

The overall policy goal is to provide an appropriate framework that will promote the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and protect the health, social, economic and political well being of all young men and women in order to enhance their participation in the overall development process and improve their quality of life.

2.3 Policy Objectives

In pursuance of the policy goal, the National Youth Policy seeks to:-

- Establish a general policy framework which will provide guidelines on all matters relating to youth development;
- Approach youth problems from a holistic (comprehensive) perspective so as to ensure the coverage of the most critical elements;
- Promote youth participation in the democratic process, as well as in community and civic decision making process;
- Ensure that all youth programmes are youth-driven and youth centered;
- Reduce youth unemployment through the promotion of self-employment enterprises;
- Increase youth involvement in decision-making, leadership, community based and other development programmes;
- Mobilize resources for youth programmes and projects at all levels;
- Provide psycho-social support and other services to youth in conflict situations, difficult circumstances and to the disadvantaged groups;
- Promote collaboration between different tiers of government and civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, community based

organisations, religious organisations on youth development programmes;

- Improve institutional performance capacity and ensure country-wide coverage in the execution of youth programmes;
- Promote the use of wide range of participatory methodologies to ensure maximum participation and contribution on youth development projects;
- Ensure the mainstreaming of youth issues in the respective agenda of all government agencies, non-governmental organisations and developmental institutions;
- Promote a comprehensive, multi-sectoral response to youth issues and concerns in the country;
- Address the specific social, economic and health problems that confront the youth in their effort to develop their capabilities;
- Promote the harmonization of other policies, programmes, strategies and youth-related research;
- Promote the moral development and value orientation in the Youth.

Chapter Three

Rights, Responsibilities, and Obligations

The National Youth Policy recognizes the rights ascribed to every Nigerian as enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This includes affirming the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom of all citizens.

3.1 Rights of the Youth

The National Youth Policy recognizes the importance of youth and their right to enjoy their youthfulness, irrespective of their socio-economic status, ethnicity, religion and gender. Among the most important of these rights which the youth shall enjoy are the following:-

- Right to life;
- Participation in policy formulation, decision making, leadership, and development at local and national levels;
- Freedom of speech, expression and association;
- Protection from all forms of abuse coercion, violence, exploitation, discrimination and degradation;
- Right to protection from forceful recruitment into the forces;
- Access to all benefits such as proper education and training (including opportunities for life-long learning), employment, housing, legal services, health care (including reproductive health), and recreation;
- A secure future through policies and practices ensuring sustainable development;
- Protection against harmful traditional practices;

- In the case of the disabled, the right to be provided with the special treatment which his/her condition requires;
- Right to marriage at the legal age of consent;
- Right to individual ownership and protection of property;

3.2 Responsibilities and Obligations of the Youth

The rights of the Nigerian youth come with responsibilities and obligations. In order to make the youth in the country tolerant, caring, responsible and productive citizens, the National Youth Policy outlines the following set of obligations and responsibilities for the Nigerian youth:-

- To be patriotic and loyal to the Nigerian nation and promote her wellbeing;
- To promote peace, security and development;
- To promote and defend democracy and civility in the governance of the country and in interpersonal relations with fellow citizens across the country
- Promote human dignity and respect for adults and fellow young people, sound family and community values and community well-being.
- To promote tolerance and respect (cultural, political and religious tolerance).
- To eschew ethnic and religious bigotry.
- To promote reconciliation.
- To protect, conserve, preserve the environment.
- To respect and protect public property and property of others.
- To promote and advance the principles of gender equality.
- To acquire skills which increase their capacity for self-help, self-respectability, cooperation and community development;

- To ensure a society free from violence, coercion, crime, devastation, exploitation and intimidation.
- To promote physical and mental well-being, including the issues of reproductive health and rights.
- To promote work ethic, life-long learning and positive attitude to work;
- To promote positive lifestyles and behaviours by young men and women;
- To avoid risky sexual behaviours and child abuse;
- To eschew all acts of violence and crimes, such as cultism, armed robbery, street violence, alcoholism, substance abuse, prostitution, advance fee fraud (419) etc.
- To serve the Nigerian nation through national service, community and voluntary efforts.
- To be law abiding, respectable and enlightened citizens, knowledgeable about their rights as well as duties and obligations.

3.3 Obligations of Government to the Youth

Government and society have obligations to ensure that youth are empowered to discharge their obligations and responsibilities to society. The obligations of government to the youth include the following:-

- Encourage participation of young men and women in community life and development;
- Recognize the rights of young women and men to take responsibility for their actions and inaction;
- Teach human rights values, social justice, equity, fairness and gender equality;
- Assist young people in reaching their goals and full potential;

- Recognize their capabilities and individualities, according to age, maturity, and allow whenever possible their choice of educational fields and careers with recourse to guidance and counselling;
- Be sensitive to the needs and difficulties of young women and men;
- Respect and accept the contribution of young men and women to society through the use of their talents, resources, ideas;
- Provide adequate funding for educational and create equal opportunities to be educated;
- Create opportunities for the youth involvement in decision making that affects them, the environment and society.
- Provide adequate funding for sustainable development of youth oriented projects.

3.4 Obligations of Society to the Youth

Adults and parents need to establish a nurturing and safe environment for the young ones. The National Youth Policy defines the obligations of parents, guardians and society as follows:-

- Promote responsible parenthood;
- Provide the right atmosphere for the mental, emotional and physical development of young persons;
- Nurture the youth in warmth and affection in an atmosphere of peace and harmony.
- Act as positive role models to young men and women.
- Provide equal access and opportunities to family resources to the youth regardless of gender;
- Constantly provide counseling, support and guidance in accordance with the specific and peculiar needs of young people;

- Recognize their capabilities and individualities, according to age, maturity, and allow whenever possible their choice of educational fields and careers;
- Provide adolescent sexual reproductive health information including HIV/AIDS information and education to young people.
- Government and Private Sector should make effort to see that facilities for recreation are provided in schools.

Chapter Four

Priority Target Groups.

4.1 Target Groups

Generally Nigerian youth experience common problems, and also share similar aspirations and concerns. However, there are different categories of youth with different and peculiar sets of concerns and problems. There are also some categories of youth with special circumstances or problems, which require concerted, focused, and well targeted attention.

Accordingly, and having regard to current socio-economic and political realities, the National Youth Policy identifies target groups for special attention due to their vulnerability and circumstances of living. They include the following:-

- Students in secondary and tertiary institutions
- Out of school Youth
- Unemployed and under employed Youth
- Youth with disabilities
- Youth engaged in crime and delinquency
- Female Youth
- Gifted Youth
- Rural youth
- Young people living in the street
- Young men and women living with HIV/AIDS.
- Youth engaged in and affected by armed conflict situations.
- Illiterate Youth
- Sex Workers
- Youth in Diaspora

4.2 Students in Secondary and Tertiary Institutions

This category comprised of persons aged between 15 and 30 years. The policy seeks to prepare them for gainful employment and significant leadership and citizenship roles.

The absence of appropriate teaching and learning environment due to poor funding of secondary and tertiary education is critical to the tenets of the National Youth Policy. Hence the policy focuses on improving the quality of education at these levels through the provision of conducive teaching and learning environment.

Often, young people in their late teens are found in Senior Secondary Schools and need equitable access to relevant and qualitative education before attaining 18 years of age. Such an intervention would require increased enrollment, expanded access to resources be it physical, material, instructional and structural that could produce well-informed, enlightened, responsible, intellectually able, vocationally skilled, mentally sound, physically competent young citizens. It also entails, in the short and medium term, compulsory and free educational opportunities at this level, to prepare them adequately for entry into tertiary institutions and/or for gainful employment. Additionally, there is recognition of the need to create an enabling environment to facilitate and enhance the learning process in the critical fields of humanities, science and technology and the environment.

Thus the National Youth Policy provides for the following activities:-

- Promotion of the use of ICT (Information, and Communication Technology).
- Development of critical fields of knowledge in basic and applied science and technology.
- Provision of financial assistance to indigent students.
- Promotion of democratic student unionism to serve as launching pad for the training of youth in leadership roles and democratic cultures.
- Introduction of effective measures to curb cultism, gang-related violence and other vices in tertiary institutions.

- Revising the curricula to include life skills training, good citizenship, leadership training etc.
- Promotion of extra-curricular activities through voluntary associations and clubs, such as societies for Debating, Current Affairs, Historical and Cultural Affairs and established organizations such as Scouts, Red cross and Crescent, Girls Guide, Boys Brigade in secondary schools etc.
- Promotion of games and sports that is both recreational and competitive.
- Re-introduction of moral instructions, civics and civility in the curricula.
- Promotion of the teaching of science and technology, as well as the teaching of vocational skill in agriculture and technical trades.
- Promotion of Career, Socio-Personal, and Educational Guidance and Counselling in schools.
- Enforcement of enrolment and retention of girls in schools.
- Introduction of reproductive and health education, especially for female students who have to cope with problems peculiar to them.
- Encouragement and promotion of gender sensitive curricula in schools.

4.3 The Female Youth

Young women are exposed to difficulties in most developing countries worldwide. More young women for instance experience unemployment more frequently than their young male counterparts and tend to have fewer occupational opportunities. The increasingly high number of early marriages and teenage pregnancies recorded across the country is also an indication that young women require specific support measures in this regard.

The right of the girl-child has long been a major problem of concern and deserves priority attention. Many young women have been victims of sexual harassment, physical violence and abuse, labour exploitation, gender discrimination, as well as negative attitudes and practices. The National Youth Policy therefore seeks to protect and promote the interest and aspiration of young women so as to restore

their dignity and motivate them to contribute as equal partners in nation building. Specifically the policy seeks to achieve the following goals:-

- Promotion of specific programmes that address the peculiar social, educational, health and reproductive problems of women in general and those in difficult circumstances.
- Elimination of harmful traditional and current practices that affect women generally and in particular the female youth.
- Encouragement of female enrolment and education especially in the area of science and technology.
- Elimination of all forms of discriminatory practices against employment of females in all sectors of the economy
- Establishment, improvement and promotion of both in-school and out-of-school programmes that are aimed at ending gender-based discrimination and promoting the rights and dignity of the female adolescent-youth.
- Promotion of skills and leadership training aimed specifically at empowering female youth for self and gainful employment as well as greater participation in, and contribution to community and national development.
- Provision of packages of financial and/or material assistance to female youth, who have undergone training and have acquired skills for self and sustainable employment.
- Elimination of all forms of discriminatory practices against employment for females in all sectors of the national economy.

4.4 Youth with Disability

All persons with disability have fundamental rights that need to be protected by the government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The youth policy adopts a developmental approach to disability, where human rights, participation and inclusiveness are promoted. Young women and men with one form of disability or the other require specific strategies of support and assistance

to ensure adequate access and opportunity to participate fully in society. Thus the National Youth Policy seeks to promote the following activities:-

- Greater awareness of the issues faced by young women and men with disability.
- Removal of disabling attitudes.
- Creation of accessible environment.
- Empowerment of young people with disabilities and their representative organization.
- Programmes that can empower youth with disabilities to positively contribute to national development.

4.5 Youth engaged in Crime and Delinquency

The increasing involvement of young people across the country in violent crimes, cultism, and armed robbery is a worrisome development. To reverse this trend, the policy provides opportunities and incentives to discourage and dissuade the young people from social vices, anti-social and criminal conduct and; motivate them to be law-abiding and responsible. The Policy provides for the following:-

- Promote community based preventive measures to youth engaged in crime and delinquency.
- Sensitize the police and the judicial system to the specific concerns of young people involved in crime.
- Create avenues to monitor young people in contact with police, and develop ways to improve the way they are dealt with by the police.
- Ensure speedy trials of youth offenders.
- Find alternative to incarceration where possible.
- Providing counselling services to youth in and out of school.

- Encourage enlightenment programmes on the dangers of drug and substance abuse, cultism, and other forms of crime.
- Establishment of rehabilitation centre for drug addicts, juvenile offenders, and ex-convicts.
- Enlightenment programmes on the dangers of chronic drugs and substance abuses, cultism, other forms of crime and delinquency.
- Provision of socio/personal, career and educational guidance and counselling for the youth including out-of-school youth.
- Provision of education, skill-training and gainful employment opportunities for youth in juvenile correctional institutions.
- Provision of after care facilities for ex-inmates of correctional institutions.
- Observer UN minimum standard rules for the treatment of offenders.

4.6 Talented/Gifted Youth

There are many creative, gifted and talented young men and women in Nigeria whose vast potentials have not been adequately harnessed and utilized for the development of the country. This youth policy therefore seeks to identify, support and encourage this category of young persons in the following ways:-

- Develop effective ways of identifying and promoting gifted and talented young persons across the country.
- Provide support and an enabling environment for young and talented/gifted persons to actualize their full potentials.

4.7 Rural Youth

Young men and women in rural areas are generally more disadvantaged than those who live in urban settings due to limited access to services and facilities. The opportunities for employment are also far less than in urban areas.

The Policy recognizes this and proposes an even geographical spread of youth development programmes and strategies.

- Government to intensify efforts to reverse the under-development of rural areas.
- Deliberate and concerted effort must be made to ensure that programmes and services which address the needs of young men and women reach the rural areas.

4.8 Street Youth

Young men and women who live and work on the street are a particularly vulnerable. While there is paucity of information on their numbers, one the factors responsible is the gradual erosion of the extended family systems and communal living in most African cultures. These groups of young people are mostly found in urban centres. They are referred to as “area boys” in Lagos. The policy recognizes the plight of street youth and proposes:- .

- Federal, State, and local Governments should rehabilitate this category of young people emotionally, psychologically, and physically.
- Develop and Promotion enlightenment programmes on the consequences of street violence, substance and drug abuse, cultism and other forms of crime and delinquency.
- All three tiers of government to have some data base on street youth

4.9 Out of school Youth

This group includes persons who are of school age but are not attending schools or have dropped out of school for some reasons. Others have concluded one level of education and are informally/formally employed; and unskilled/skilled. The out of school youth is very mobile and resourceful, when their energy is not harnessed they become vulnerable to social vices either as perpetrators or victims; and may experience ill-health due to poor and limited access to health services.

- The Policy seeks to promote multi-sectoral efforts targeting them through rehabilitation, re-inclusion into the school system, wealth creation programmes amongst others.

4.10 Unemployed and under-employed youth

The ever-rising joblessness and under employment among young people in Nigeria is accompanied with a number of other social ills, including involvement in crime, drug and alcohol abuse, and loss of confidence in the larger society to mention just a few. The Policy recognizes the predicament of unemployed youth and the fact that they require special attention by all stake holders to deal with the wide range of concerns and problems they experience.

- All tiers of government in the country should redouble effort at job creation.
- Establishment of community-based centers for skills acquisition to promote apprenticeship and vocational training across the country.

4.11 Youth living with HIV/AIDS

The age group delineated as youth by the policy is extremely vulnerable to HIV infection with a prevalence of 5.2% which is higher than the national prevalence of 4.4% (2005 HIV Sentinel Survey). Almost 50 per cent of all new HIV infections are among young people (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2004). As the number of infected young men and women increases, the challenge of HIV impact mitigation and the challenge of MDG 6 must be addressed.

- The Federal Government of Nigeria should endeavour to provide care, support and treatment for all infected young persons
- Government at all levels should promote activities targeted towards HIV/AIDS prevention through risk reduction, abstinence, partner reduction, condom use among other evidence-based implementation strategies.

4.12 Youth in conflict situations

In most cases the relationship between youth and violence was only considered in the context of the problems of Juvenile delinquency and the need to prevent violence and crime in the society; however current trend in the Niger Delta region where young people are recruited as militants is source for great concern.

Conflict in the Niger Delta arose in the early 1990s due to tensions between the foreign oil corporations and a number of the Niger Delta's minority ethnic groups who felt they were being exploited, particularly the Ogonis as well as the Ijaws in the late 1990s. Ethnic and political unrest has continued throughout the 1990s and persists till date despite the successful transition of Nigeria from military rule to Democratic rule in 1999. Competition for oil wealth has fuelled violence between innumerable ethnic groups, causing the militarization of nearly the entire region by ethnic militia groups as well as Nigerian military and police forces (notably the Nigerian Mobile Police). The regional and ethnic conflicts in the Niger Delta with young people at the vanguard are so numerous that fully detailing each is impossible and impractical.

It is quite clear that young people are disproportionately affected by violent conflict, both as victims and as active participants. The extreme and often prolonged circumstances of armed conflicts whether as victims or perpetrators interfere with the identity and personality development of the youth. Moreover, the sudden changes in family life circumstances, such as death or disappearance of parents or siblings, can leave the youth without guidance, role models or sustenance.

The policy recognizes the predicament of youth in conflict situations and the need to address them.

- Federal and State Governments should promote effort targeted towards peacefully disarming and rehabilitating this category of young persons in the Niger Delta and other conflict situations around the country via job creation through skills acquisition and community development by providing appropriate support and infra-structure.
- Federal and State Governments should involve, promote the role of youth and youth organizations in promoting peace and non-violence as well as in mobilizing youth for post-conflict reconstruction.
- Federal Government should vigorously pursue the total and comprehensive development of the Niger Delta region with a view to empowering the youths

4.13 Illiterate Youth.

Literacy education in Nigerian history finds its roots in the efforts of missionary endeavour. Subsequent work in the field has always been piecemeal and uncoordinated; even though a degree of success has been achieved and valuable experience gained a lot still needs to be done to improve the literacy level of young people in Nigeria.

The Federal Government's decision to launch a Mass Literacy Campaign in 1982 is primarily a political response to the needs and exigencies of a developing country rich both in natural and manpower resources. The campaign is seen not only as a necessary means of creating a permanently literate society within ten years but also as an assertion of the nation's unity.

The youth policy recognizes that the campaign to promote mass literacy in this country can succeed especially among young people if certain issues are identified by government at all levels and other stakeholders. This include:-

- Functionality of the mass literacy campaign programmers,
- Training of personnel to handle the programmes;
- Adequate provision of money and materials;
- Government should make effort to match the assistance from national development organizations and international bodies by creating an environment capable of sustaining and reinforcing literacy education in the country.
- Above all the language to be used as a medium of literacy need to be resolved.

4.14 Youth in Diaspora

With the growing population of Nigerians in Diaspora there is a great need to tap in to the vast resources of young Nigerians in Diaspora. This policy recognizes the need to promote the voice of young Nigerians in Nigeria and those in Diaspora. Young Nigerians in Diaspora can be engaged in Nigeria's social, economic, and political development. They can be in the forefront of promoting good governance and better leadership in Nigeria. To promote better leadership we need to engage young Nigerians at home and abroad who are the future of Africa.

Government at all levels should do everything to:

- To Empower Young Nigerians in Nigeria and it's Diaspora as stakeholders and active partner in the process of Nigeria's Development and Integration;
- To galvanize Young Nigerians from Nigeria and its Diaspora as Stakeholder to work for a Common Strategic Purpose
- To create an avenue for Empowerment and Capacity Building for Young Nigerians in Nigeria and its Diaspora.
- To create an opportunity for Leaders of youth organizations in the country and it's Diaspora to meet with their counterpart in other parts of Africa to discuss issues relating to Africa's Development, Share Ideas, Build their capacities and network with one another;
- Thereby creating avenues for Young Africans in Africa and its Diaspora to engage in the actualization of the MDG's and the NEPAD Framework for Africa's Development

4.15 Female Sex Workers

In many societies, sex work is illegal, resulting in clandestine practices. Nigeria is no exception, with a constitution that is silent on sex work. As a result, sex workers, brothel operators, implementing partners, and even policy makers are uncertain of the legal status of sex work. Nigeria is guided by two legal frameworks: the Penal Code, which operates in northern Nigeria, and the Criminal Code, which operates in southern Nigeria. Both codes criminalize sex work and therefore hinder advocacy efforts on behalf of sex workers' rights. The recent adoption of the Moslem Sharia law in some northern parts of the country has resulted in sex work going underground or relocating to other, more conducive environments, making it more difficult to reach FSWs with interventions.

FSWs in Nigeria are characteristically poor, marginalized, and stigmatized. They lack both formal education and empowerment. Frequency of sex with multiple partners and a high burden of STIs place them at high risk of HIV infection. They often engage in unprotected sex and other risky behaviors, such as substance abuse. Surveys have consistently shown a high and rising HIV prevalence among sex workers, who are said to be the major reservoir of HIV infection. In some states, such as Lagos, the rates have increased from 2% in 1988–1989 to 12% in 1990–1991 to a whopping 70% by 1995–1996 (13). A behavioral surveillance survey conducted in 2000 reported that knowledge of HIV prevention methods

was low among FSWs, and consistent condom use varied from 24% in Jigawa to 89% in Lagos. FSWs also had a low uptake of HIV testing; only 24% reported having had an HIV test and learning the result (15). The low economic status of FSWs heightens their vulnerability as they engage in unprotected sex. At other times they may be raped or coerced into violent sex; dry sex, with its consequent abrasion and bleeding, increases their risk of contracting HIV. They are disadvantaged by a lack of self-esteem and adequate negotiation skills, which compromises their ability to manage the situation and to seek legal action (16–21).

In addition, FSWs face constant sexual harassment and abuse from law enforcement agents such as police officers. They may be forced to have sex without condoms, sometimes at gunpoint, and their money and valuables may be seized. Their impoverishment makes quitting sex work difficult. FSWs have clients from all walks of life, from artisans, to motorcyclists, military personnel, businessmen, civil servants, and politicians. These clients may contract HIV from commercial sex, and then transmit the virus to their partners in the general population. FSWs also have “boyfriends” with whom they may feel obliged to have sexual intercourse without condoms. These factors militate against HIV/AIDS control.

The illegality of sex work makes legal protection of sex workers impracticable and HIV interventions for them difficult. The daunting challenges contribute to the vulnerability, risk, and rising trend of infection among FSWs.

The Youth Policy believes that targeting FSWs for interventions remains an effective way to reduce the spread of HIV and also create opportunity to rehabilitate the increasing number of young people who have been driven in to commercial sex work as result of poverty.

Chapter Five

Priority Themes and Strategic Interventions

5.1 Priority Themes

The successful development and implementation of the National Youth Policy is largely predicated upon the identification of priority themes that affect young people in Nigeria, and the recognition of strategic interventions and informed practical strategies which address these identified priority themes.

The principles and purposes of the United Nations World Programme of Action for the Youth have helped to inform this National Youth Policy at many levels. The ten priority areas identified and suggested by the World Youth Programme of Action (education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women, and youth participating in decision making), and the five newly identified priority areas adopted at the 2005 UN General Assembly namely: impact of globalization on young men and women; the use of and access to information and communication technologies; the dramatic increase in the incidence of HIV infection among young people and the impact of the epidemic on their lives; the active involvement of young people in armed conflict, both as victims and perpetrators; and the increased importance of addressing intergenerational issues in an aging society were largely taken in to consideration in this National Youth Policy.

It is important to note that there have been many economic and social changes in the global environment since 1995 when the World Programme of Action for Youth was adopted by the United Nations. Each of the 10 issues included as priority areas in the World programme of Action in 1995 may still be relevant but additional issues of concern seem to have emerged. Between 1995 and 2005, the global youth population, defined as persons between 15 and 24 years of age, has grown slightly.

Based on the socio-economic and political realities existing in the country and global best practices the following priority themes and critical concerns facing the Nigerian youth are identified as follows:-

1. Youth and Education
2. Youth and Health
3. Youth and Agriculture
4. Youth and Employment
5. Youth and Science and Technology
6. Youth and Environment
7. Young Women and Girls
8. Youth Participation in Politics and Decision making
9. Youth and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
10. Youth and Conflict Prevention/Peace building
11. Youth and HIV/AIDS
12. Youth and Drug abuse
13. Youth and Crime
14. Youth, Sports and Recreation
15. Youth and Arts & Culture
16. Youth and Family life
17. Youth Migration and human trafficking
18. Youth and Poverty

5.2 Youth and Education

Education is the single most important factor contributing to the ability of young people to live a productive and responsible life. It is a major priority in the development of young men and women because it is through education and training that they can be better prepared for life. The personal development of the individual young man or woman, along with the development of the immediate local communities and the country as a whole is inextricably linked with the quality of education that the young people have.

Unfortunately, the Nigerian nation has not been able to successfully provide quality education for all her young people. The provision of educational opportunities for the youth is a fundamental pre-requisite for building a strong, just, equitable, viable and vibrant nation. A significant percentage of Nigerian

youth is illiterate, and their educational needs should be adequately and urgently catered for, particularly in the educationally Less Developed States.

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

Illiteracy continues to be an enormous problem for many young people in the world. In 2000, approximately 82 million young women and 51 million young men were illiterate. Another 130 million children are presently out of school, and they are most probably going to end up as the illiterate youth and adults of tomorrow (UNDP Human Development Report, 2005). Despite all efforts at providing education for her citizenry illiteracy rate for young people in Nigeria is still very high. Poverty is a major barrier to schooling. When poor parents need to make a choice, girls tend to be excluded first from attending school. The gap between male and female literacy rates in Africa appears to be widening. In rural areas, young people have less access to education, the quality of education is poorer and adult literacy is higher.

Goal:

The policy shall promote equal access to quality education, educational opportunities for all youth in Nigeria irrespective of sex, ethnicity, religious belief, geographical location, and socio-economic circumstances.

Strategic Interventions

- Priority should be given to achieving the goal of ensuring basic education for all (beginning with literacy), mobilizing for that purpose all channels, agents and forms of education and training, in line with the concept of lifelong education.

- Special emphasis should be given to the reform of education content and curricula, especially curricula that reinforce traditional female roles which deny women opportunities for full and equal partnership in society.
- Emphasis should be placed on the introduction of such concepts as informal learning, lifelong learning, distance learning, Open University system, E-learning, peer education and training on the job thereby increasingly expanding educational opportunities to outside the classroom. This way a good number of youth and young adults who have dropped out the educational system can be reached.
- Special attention should be given to specific groups of youth in distressed circumstances, including indigenous, migrant and refugee youth, displaced persons, street youth and poor youth in urban and rural areas, and youth with physical and psychological disabilities.
- Special effort should be made to achieve gender equality within the educational system. There is evidence that educated young women are better able to make decisions that reduce poverty in their lives and their children. Government should create enabling environment for promoting female education through legislative and policy reforms; redistributing resources to meet girl's specific educational needs; reforming curricula; providing incentives to families to make sending children to school a worthwhile proposition; providing school meal programs; increasing the presence of female teachers; improving teacher training; confronting violence; working with parents; providing separate sanitation for girls; providing school-based health education program; and raising the minimum age of marriage.
- In addition to the provision of specialized educational programmes and institutions to cater for the needs of those with disabilities, young men and women who are disabled require access to mainstream education along with other young people. The provision of appropriate access and a supportive environment is essential to mainstreaming.
- The importance of teachers and trainers should be recognized in the context of attaining quality education for all. Attention should be given to the education of teachers and working conditions, career paths and wages that will make the profession more attractive.

- Effort should be made to promote human rights education in schools and educational institutions. It is crucial that young men and women be aware of their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, as well as their societal responsibilities, and to also develop harmonious inter-community relations, mutual tolerance for diversity.
- Introduction and/or Expansion of School Counseling Programmes in all levels of the educational system to provide vocational career guidance, socio-personal, developmental and preventive counselling.
- Urgent attention is needed to address the growing challenge evidenced in the exposure of Nigerian youth to information and communication technologies (ICT). Globalization is powered in part by tremendous and rapid ICT advances, and young people are often among the first to take advantage of new developments in this area. Youth are at the forefront of the information revolution, but they are faced with the challenges of reconciling the reality of their daily existence with the popular images presented in the media. Many young people are simultaneously experiencing life within the global and local spheres. They develop a global consciousness yet still have to function and survive in their own locality and culture. The challenge for government and other stake holders to create a culturally valid meaning to the use of ICT for the Nigerian youth.
- Provision of qualitative education in schools, which should enhance creativity, self-development and prospects for self and gainful employment for the youth.
- Provision of vocational training for the youth to make them self-reliant and employable citizens.
- Expansion of non-formal literacy programmes to capture young persons as well as adults.
- Reform of the curricula of secondary schools and tertiary institutions with a view to establishing an appropriate symmetry between formal education and the requirement of the job market, as well as establishing appropriate linkage between tertiary institutions and industries.
- Promotion of health education and family planning techniques.

- Elimination of basic labour and early parenthood.

5.3 Youth and Health

Health is defined as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO). The young very often are described as the future of society, but they are also very much its present. Healthy and happy young people are better equipped to contribute to the development of their communities. The classic picture that youths are relatively healthy segment of the population is fast changing. This is partly due to bad habits and poor hygiene, persistent behavioral risks, poor basic sanitation and new and emerging diseases.

Many young people in Nigeria suffer from poor health such as malaria, tuberculosis, diabetes, high blood pressure, HIV/AIDS amongst others. A number of these diseases result from societal conditions, including such factors as customs, attitudes and harmful traditional practices, Unhealthy environment, missing support systems in everyday life, lack of information and inadequate health services, lack of safe and proper sanitary environment, malnutrition, risk of infection, lack of portable water, the growing consumption of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, unwarranted risk-taking and destructive activity which very often result in unintentional injuries.

One-third of Nigeria’s population is young people between the ages 10 and 24 years. Their health status is therefore of significant importance in the overall health and development of the country. In the context of health as a holistic concept, there is the need to address the various dimensions of young people’s health – physical, social, mental as well as spiritual. The major health challenges confronting young people in Nigeria include sexual and reproductive health and rights, nutrition, substance abuse, accidents and violence.

The reproductive health needs of young people have been largely ignored. Early sexual exposure is an important reproductive risk factor among young people in Nigeria as many lack information and life planning skills to delay the onset of sexual activities. The 2003 Nigeria demographic health Survey (NDHS) reported, approximately a quarter of males (10-19 years) and half of females (10-19 years) had commenced sexual intercourse. A fifth of the females and 8% of the males had actually had sex by the age of 15 years. In 2005, the median age for first sexual intercourse for females was 17.4 years and 20.1 years for males. Most

sexually active young people do not practice contraception, with the resultant effect of high level of unwanted pregnancy and illegal abortion, most of which are unsafe in nature as services are mostly procured from medical quacks and untrained practitioners.

Young people worldwide are reaching puberty at earlier ages and marrying later. Premarital sex is becoming widespread. Teenage pregnancy is a major concern especially because of the health risks for both mother and child and the impact on the girl's education and life prospects. Births to females below age 20 account for 17 per cent of all births in the least-developed countries, which equals 14 million births world-wide each year. One female in three in developing countries gives birth before age 20, and 55 per cent of all females in West Africa give birth before age 20.

Goal:

The Youth Policy shall promote the optimal health and development of all young men and women in Nigeria through the design and implementation health services that will promote and maintain a healthy youth population.

Strategies:-

- Efforts should be made to include programmes focusing on primary health knowledge and practices in the curricula of educational institutions at the primary and secondary school levels. Health education, including life skills, should be introduced into school curricular and programmes designed for out of school youth. Emphasis should be placed on the understanding of basic hygiene requirements and the need to develop and sustain a healthy environment.
- Efforts should be made to institute the full participation of youth in the development and promotion of health-related programmes and policies that enable them to become agents of change in the communities and positively affect their lives and those of their peers.
- Efforts should be made to promote personal responsibility for a healthy lifestyle and also to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt a healthy lifestyle, including teaching the legal, social and health consequences of behaviour that poses health risk. Government at all levels should be encouraged to explore the possibility of adopting policies that

will discourage drug, tobacco and alcohol abuse, including the possibility of banning the advertisement of tobacco and alcohol. Programmes designed to inform young people about the adverse effects of drug and alcohol abuse and tobacco addiction should be undertaken.

- Health workers should be provided with specific training to be better able to communicate with young people to provide youth-friendly services and to build competence in handling the health concerns of young people. Such health care workers should act in the best interest of the young people; they should be non-judgmental and considerate, willing to treat all their client/patients with equal care and respect (regardless of status) and are willing and able to devote adequate time to each of their client. Adolescent-friendly policies that advocate for the provision of services to honour the rights and fulfill the needs of adolescents, that are sensitive to gender-related factors hindering equitable provision and experience of care, that do not restrict the provision of health services on any term, that guarantee reasonable privacy and confidentiality and promote autonomy should be the priority of the government.
- Investing in young people's health, education and skills development, and empowering girls to stay in school, delay any form of sexual involvement and pregnancy and marry later, are essential interventions that can substantially improve their chances of becoming well informed and productive citizens.
- Effort should be made to promote healthy eating practices in order to combat malnutrition among young people. School lunch programmes, provision of food supplements and similar services should be available whenever possible to help ensure a proper diet for young people.
- As recommended by the Vienna declaration and Programme of Action and at several other international fora, the Federal Government should work together with other countries in the ECOWAS sub-region to take steps to checkmate abuse and trafficking of young women, all types of exploitation and abuse such as abduction, rape and incest, pornography, trafficking and acts of pedophilia, teenage prostitution. Female genital mutilation should be prevented through legislation wherever it exists, and rigorous support should be given to the efforts of non-governmental organizations, community and religious organization to eliminate such practices.

- Efforts should be made to implement the National Policy on the Health and Development of Adolescents and Young people in Nigeria. Such services should include; providing education and services in family planning consistent with the recommendations of the International Conference on population and Development, the World Summit for Social development and the Fourth World conference on Women. The reproductive health needs of adolescents as a group have been largely ignored by countries in the sub-region. Specifically, information and services should be available to adolescents to help them understand their sexuality and to teach them the value of delaying sexual involvement until marriage, this will protect them from unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and subsequent risk of infertility. This should be combined with the education of young men to respect women's self-determination and to share responsibility with women in matters of sexuality and reproduction. This is important for the health of young women and their children.

5.4 Youth and Agriculture

Traditionally, most communities in Nigeria are basically agrarian societies. Many young people who are working in this sector unfortunately lack the necessary support to improve their productive capacity. Very often they do not have access to land, credit as well as extension services.

Young people are generally very energetic and are keen to take up challenges. Their involvement and full participation in the agriculture sector especially in the fields of research, training, and production, preservation, processing and marketing of the produce of agriculture, forestry, livestock and fisheries will certainly make all the difference.

Goal:

The National Youth Policy shall promote the involvement and full participation of young men and women in the agricultural sector of the country.

Strategic interventions

- Government at all levels should promote the involvement of young men and women in the agricultural sector (fisheries, livestock, forestry, processing and marketing of agricultural produce etc.)
- Efforts should be made by government at all levels and other stake holders to provide necessary agricultural inputs such as extension services, land, credit etc in order to facilitate youth involvement in agriculture.
- Effort should be made to encourage the teaching of the science of agriculture at all levels of the educational system in the country.
- Efforts should be made to disseminate knowledge on agricultural techniques and processes.
- Efforts should be made by government at all levels to finance, procure modern agricultural implements for the use of young farmers.
- Efforts should be made to encourage research in the agricultural sector.

5.5 Youth and Employment

Unemployment and underemployment among youth is a global problem. Labour force participation rates for young people decreased in the world as a whole by almost four percentage points between 1993 and 2003. This is mainly the result of an increase in the number of young people attending school and staying longer in the educational system, and the generally high unemployment rates world over. International labour organization (ILO) figures show that youth unemployment in the world increased from 11.7 per-cents in 1993 to an historical high 14.4 per-cent (88 million) in 2003.

Although no precise figures are available, there can be no doubt that unemployment among young men and women in Nigeria has reached alarming levels. The ever-growing number of jobless youth, and the desperation that accompanies it, undermines development in the country. It is no exaggeration to say that the future of the Nigeria state is threatened by the growing numbers of youths who lack prospects of ever being able to work for a decent living. Political

stability and social development will remain equally unattainable until this situation is addressed.

It has been argued that the frustration that accompanies long-term unemployment among groups of young people feeds political and ideological unrest and violence. It has also been argued that unemployed and idle youth who have emerged in society may question government authority and endanger its stability. There is no doubt that youth unemployment is a political-security issue, as well as a socio-economic one. Its causes lie in both spheres, as do its effects. Untrained, jobless and alienated youth are ready to take up arms in exchange for small amounts of money. They can be easily recruited as political thugs ready to eliminate opponents at the flimsiest excuse. Unemployment fuels conflict and crime, both of which in turn increase unemployment still further by their effects on economic performance, investor confidence, and political instability. Job creation, therefore, is a key tool for conflict resolution.

To address the problems of youth unemployment in Nigeria it is crucial not to view youth themselves as the problem, even if it is undeniable that the continued disregard of their aspiration will provoke instability, since they are often at the forefront of denunciations of injustice and demands for reform. The vast energies of the majority of our youth should be treated as a potential asset. They should be seen as an asset rather than a problem, a creative force for the present as well as the future. Care must be taken to avoid referring to young people as “tomorrow’s” leaders; the focus instead should be on their role as today’s partners. Young people world over are now asking that their voices be heard, that issues affecting them be addressed and that their voices be recognized.

Goal:

The Youth Policy shall promote the provision of a wide range of vocational, flexible employment opportunities, decent working conditions, and life skills which will in turn enable youths in Nigeria to find and maintain gainful employment and sustainable livelihood without any form of discrimination.

Strategies:-

- **Provision of School-based Career Guidance Service** – there is need for young men and women to be able to access information and receive guidance on existing job opportunities. This should be built into educational curriculum so that students are able to make career and study

choices based on a clear understanding of the labour market and emerging job opportunities. Career guidance services should be provided to students in secondary as well as tertiary institutions so that students at all levels will have relevant and meaningful information on which they can base decisions relating to further education, training and employment.

- **Provision of Youth Centres and Career Guidance Centres** – there is need to establish Community-based Youth career Guidance Centres for those young men and women who are not in school and are unemployed. These centres should be community-based and supported by government. Such centres should provide career information guidance and information services through collaborative efforts between educational institutions, business and labour organizations. Religious bodies, non-governmental organizations, community based organizations, local governments etc. should be involved in the management and running of these Youth Career Guidance Centres
- **Self –employment creation** – Government and organizations should create or promote schemes that will provide seed money to support enterprise and employment programmes for young people. The youths in Nigeria should not be denied access to micro-finance simply because they are seen to be a high risk group for credit. There is need to devise ways to help young men and women access micro-finance. Micro-finance is a tool used world-wide for starting new business, and young people should not be denied this facility. Business and enterprises are encouraged to provide counterpart financial and technical support for such schemes. Young people should be involved in cooperative schemes that will involve them in the production and marketing of goods and services. The formation of youth development banks is also an option that the Federal Government should consider. Opportunities for self-employment as a career option for young men and women should be promoted more widely and effectively. Self-employment should be recognized as a legitimate and meaningful career option and not just an option of last resort.
- **Vocational training and apprenticeships** – Promotion of vocational training programmes are very essential. Effective vocational training that is based on real labour market demands could greatly improve the economic growth of the sub-region. Vocational training should be tailored to meet the demands for labour in the country. The focus should be on increasing the overall employability of youth trainees, rather than just

training them for narrow occupational categories. Skills training need to be wide enough to avoid pigeon-holing a participant in too narrow an area of employability.

5.6 Youth and Science and Technology

Science and Technology are changing the world at unprecedented rates. The lives of people, how they live, the types of jobs they keep, the way they communicate, the way they travel and the way they relax have been affected almost day to day by the introduction of new technology and scientific understanding. Science and technology offers to young people world over new opportunities as well as new challenges. It is, therefore, important for young women and men to be fully informed of the opportunities in this area, and also to encourage them to take advantage of such opportunities.

Many rural communities in the country are grossly under-resourced, and lack access to technology. This situation has the potential of impacting young people negatively. The information age has opened up the entire world and converted it into a global village. It is important that all young people in Nigeria should be able to operate in their local environment making the best use of the opportunities that modern technology offers.

Goal:

The National Youth Policy shall promote the awareness of the opportunities offered by Science and Technology amongst young people in the country, and also encourage the use of appropriate technologies by them.

Strategic Intervention

- Effort should be made to promote science in schools, especially amongst female students.
- Efforts should be made to highlight the involvement of young men and women in the sciences by instituting youth science awards at all levels of education.
- Efforts should be made to promote science and technology role models.

- Efforts should be made to promote information technology. Information technology has the potential to enable rural and remote communities have access to new and appropriate technology.
- Science and technology clubs and societies should be encouraged within the schools with a view to supporting peer networks and interest groups around science and technology. Institutional support should be provided for the establishment and sustenance of these clubs and societies.

5.7 Youth and Environment

In its broadest sense, the environment contains the conditions or influences under which any individual or thing exists, lives or develops. These include the natural, social, political, cultural, and economic environments under which an individual lives and works. Environmental issues present some of the most profound and complex challenges requiring attention today and in the coming decades. Young people have important environmental concerns and responsibilities owing to the fact that they are likely to bear the consequences of current environmental policies, they are likely to live for much longer time with the consequences of a deteriorating environment left to them by their parents. As demonstrated through their contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, young people world over are strong advocates for environmental preservation, they understand perhaps better than most that humankind is not living in a zero-sum, environment-versus-economy world.

Young people, as with people of all ages, have a right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being; and to have the environment protected for the benefit of future generations. The issue of environmental management and improvements is also of a major concern to young people. Young men and women ought to take active role in participating in programmes and activities which improve the environment such as recycling, community clean-ups, land reclamations etc. There is urgent need for the natural environment to be maintained and preserved for both present and future generations. The causes of environmental degradation must be addressed; natural resources must be tapped and made use of in an environmentally friendly and sustainable manner.

Goal:

The National Youth Policy shall promote awareness amongst young men and women in Nigeria on the issues associated with the environment and actions needed to improve the environment.

Strategic interventions:-

- Efforts should be made to promote environmental awareness through the school curriculum. This should include awareness of local environmental issues, sites and heritage. It should also include emphasis on individual and collective actions towards the improvement and protection of the environment.
- Training programmes should be provided to inform teachers of the environmental aspects of their subject matter and to enable them to educate youth concerning environmentally friendly habits.
- The participation of youth groups in gathering environmental data and in understanding ecological systems and actual environmental action should be encouraged as a means of improving both their knowledge of the environment and their personal engagement in caring for the environment.
- Efforts should be made to encourage community initiatives aimed at improving and protecting the environment by relevant Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Religious Organizations, Youth clubs, Youth development organizations.
- Improving the knowledge base of the society is one important aspect of improving its capacity to address and cope with environmental issues. Much of the information young people receive about environmental issues comes from the media. To the extent that is consistent with the freedom of expression, the federal and state governments should encourage the media and advertising agencies to develop programmes to ensure widespread dissemination of information on environmental issues in order to continue to raise awareness among youth.

- In line with the recommendations of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the federal government of Nigeria should involve young people in designing and implementing appropriate environmental policies.
- Intergovernmental agencies should develop, scale-up, or replicate initiatives supporting youth participation in policy and programmatic development on environmental sustainability.

5.8 Girls and Young Women

One of the most important tasks of this Policy is to improve the situation of young women, and to recognize that young women are unique individuals with rights and responsibilities similar to those of young men.

The number of women in Nigeria is estimated to be about 60 million, half of the country's population. The United Nations Women Report 2000 ranked Nigeria 151 out of 174 countries because of women's limited access to education and other vital resources. For every 100,000 live births, about 800 women die in the process of child birth. This means that out of about 27 million women of reproductive age, about 2 million will not survive either pregnancy or child birth. Nigeria's maternal mortality ratio of 800 is unacceptably high even by African standards. The figure for selected African countries are; South Africa 340, Botswana 480 and Zimbabwe 610. Close to 65 million girls still remain out of school worldwide, 5 million women aged 15-19 have abortions every year, 40 per cent of which are performed under unsafe conditions. Studies have shown that the level of unawareness of HIV/AIDS-related issues is particularly high for young women aged 18-30 years.

The low status of women in the country is due mainly to Nigeria's cultures and traditions which generally regard women's roles as largely confined to the family, upholding child bearing as the symbol of womanhood. Girls are often treated as inferior and are socialized to put themselves last, thus undermining their self-esteem. Men and boys on the other hand, are accorded greater authority/opportunities and exert control both within the family and the larger society, most especially in decision making. This explains in part why Nigerian women continue to occupy subordinate position and roles in the society despite the fact that Nigeria is signatory to key United Nations agreements including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

(CEDAW), the plans of action from the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), United Nations Fourth World conference on Women, (Platform for Action; PFA) etc.

Violence continues to be perpetrated against girls and young women worldwide. Millions of girls and young women suffer physical, psychological and sexual abuses, yet these incidents are seriously underreported. In almost all regions of the world, young women fare worse than young men in the labour market. In Nigeria the prevalence of female genital mutilation is not known to have declined among some cultures.

Goal:

The National Youth Policy shall promote full participation of young women in the development of the Nigerian society recognizing that young women are unique and distinctive individuals with rights and responsibilities similar to those of young men.

Strategies:-

- Government are encouraged to enact and enforce legislation protecting girls and young women from all forms of violence, including genital mutilation, incest, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, child prostitution and child pornography.
- Governments are encouraged to pay attention to gender parity in such key areas as education, health and employment.
- Government at all levels should be encouraged to provide universal and equal access to and completion of primary education for girls and young women as well as equal access to secondary and higher education in the country.
- A framework should be provided in the country that ensures that the development of educational materials and practices are not gender biased.
- Policies should be put in place to promote educational settings in the country that eliminates all barriers impeding the schooling of girls and young women, including married and/or pregnant girls and young women at all levels of education.

- Government at all levels are encouraged to take steps to eliminate stereotyping and discrimination against girls and young women, and to ensure full participation of girls and young women in society.
- Girls and young women should be protected from economic and related forms of exploitation and from engaging in any work that is likely to be hazardous, to interfere with their education or to be harmful to their health or their physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

5.9 Youth and Participation in Decision-making

The demand for the recognition of the right of young people to be heard, to have their views given serious consideration, and to play an active role in promoting their own best interest has seen a growing acceptance world wide in the past decade. This demand represents a profound challenge to traditional attitudes towards young people in most societies of the world. It means a radical change in youth-adult relationships in all areas of life including the family, school, local communities, social services, and at local, national, and international levels. The age-old propensity of adults taking decisions concerning young people in their absence is at variance with the commitment respecting the participatory rights of young people.

The Policy posits that young people possess knowledge and experience that is unique to their situation, and have views and ideas that derive from such experience. They are social actors with skills and capacities to bring about constructive resolutions to their own problems. It is therefore legitimate for young people to contribute to programmes, policies, and decision making.

The more opportunities young persons have for meaningful participation, the more experienced and competent they become. Participation for young people strengthens the commitment to and understanding of human rights and democracy. Much of government policy often directly or indirectly impact on the life of young people, therefore they must participate in the policy making process. Youth participation is an essential strategy for ensuring young people's optimal development, and for achieving wider development for the society as a whole. Young people must be recognized and respected as social actors, as agents in their own lives, and as citizens of their own societies.

Goal:

The National Youth Policy shall promote the right of young people to be heard and to express their views constructively on all matters that affect them, and have their views respected by all.

Strategies

- Efforts should be made by relevant government agencies, political parties, and community elders to ensure the active participation of young men and women in the political process at local government, state, and national levels.
- Effort should be made to widely disseminate relevant information to the youths, and also facilitate access to them for the promotion of greater and more effective roles in the political process.
- Efforts should be undertaken to foster intergenerational relationships and support the capacity of young people to participate meaningfully in programmes and activities that affect them.
- Governments should always lend support to and be willing to engage in dialogue with youth led organizations. Government should seek to work with a broad range of the youth population.
- Efforts should be made by government to institutionalize democratic systems for the youth. This might take the form of legal reforms that give young people the right to develop democratic structures in schools and colleges or by introducing formal mechanism for political dialogue between youth and those in government. Student union associations should be encouraged, and supported in all tertiary institutions.
- Efforts should be made to pursue a broader inclusion of physically and emotionally challenged young people. Many remain marginalized and excluded from participatory activities. Greater investment and efforts are needed both to incorporate them into the mainstream programmes and establish avenues that allow them to share their particular experiences, priorities and expectations.

- Youth-led organizations should be encouraged to observe the principles of transparency, accountability, non-discrimination and mutual respect.

5.10 Youth and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Young people are among the first to take advantage of new developments in ICT and are at the forefront of the information revolution. They are capable of using ICT in diverse and novel ways; and stand to benefit most from the ICT revolution. The computer for instance releases the natural creativity and desire to learn of young people, which have been either blocked or frustrated by the traditional methods. ICT constitutes a socialization force that is increasingly becoming more powerful than the home and the school this can be seen in the number of young people that patronize cyber cafes across the country.

It is impossible to overlook the fact that youth of today are faced with a global media culture that represents a unifying force that shapes the way they think and behave, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. While it is true that the global media culture constitute a wave of pressure on the average young person the effects vary from society to society.

Goal:

The National Youth Policy shall seek to raise the level of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) awareness among young men and women in the country.

Strategic Intervention:

- Government at all levels should make effort to equip institutions of higher learning in the country with ICT resources and latest applications.
- Efforts should be made by relevant government agencies to reconcile global and local practices thus giving valid meaning to new technologies among local people in the country.
- Efforts should be made by government and other stake holders to establish community based youth facilities equipped with information and communication technology resources including internet facilities.

- Efforts should be made to create information technology centres that will support distance education and training.
- Efforts should be made by relevant government agencies to monitor television and radio programmes, internet sites with a view to restricting access to programmes that do not promote positive values among young men and women.

5.11 Youth and conflict Prevention and Peace building

Peace and security are prerequisites for development. When there is break down of law and order in conflict situations masses of people are displaced after their homes and communities are destroyed, rapidly fueling the ranks of refugees and internally displaced persons. Youth are often a targeted group during conflicts either as victims or perpetrators.

The past decade has witnessed an unprecedented increase in armed conflict nationwide with young people taking up arms to fight as militants during religious conflicts and as political thugs during election. In the Niger Delta region young people are taking up arms to fight as militants with a mission to redress the many years of neglect suffered by the people of the region due to oil exploration. *The survival of these militants in the Niger Delta becomes a challenge as they put themselves in harms way, forcefully abducting foreign nationals, and attacking members of the general public and law enforcement agencies.* Drug abuse becomes an integral part of their lives, shielding them from physical and emotional pain and forcing them to stay awake and fight for their cause.

Conflict in the Niger Delta arose in the early 1990s due to tensions between the foreign oil corporations and a number of the Niger Delta's minority ethnic groups who felt they were being exploited, particularly the Ogoni as well as the Ijaw in the late 1990s. Ethnic and political unrest has continued throughout the 1990s and persists as of 2007 despite the conversion to democracy. Competition for oil wealth has fuelled violence between innumerable ethnic groups, causing the militarization of nearly the entire region by ethnic militia groups as well as Nigerian military and police forces (notably the Nigerian Mobile Police). Victims of crimes in many instances are fearful of seeking justice for crimes committed against them. The regional and ethnic conflicts in the Niger Delta have become so diverse and numerous in recent times

Young people's involvement in armed conflicts is facilitated through the influx of small arms and light weapons into the country; insufficient opportunities to earn a living; lack of credible role models and disintegrating personal/community value systems.

Goal:

The National Youth Policy seeks to promote the prevention of outbreak of violence and the escalation of conflict situations across the country, and also promote active youth-involvement in peace building and prevention of violence in the country.

Strategic Interventions

- Efforts should be made by government, the youth themselves, youth organizations and civil society organizations to detect early warning signs of conflict situations, and systematically collect and analyze information on crises prone areas around the country for the purpose of preventing violent crises.
- Efforts should be made to strengthen conflict prevention measures by promoting dialogue, tolerance, cooperation, peace education among young people in the country.
- Efforts should be made to strengthen conflict resolution measures. Non violent modes of conflict resolution can be applied to achieve peace and prevent future conflicts.
- Efforts should be made to promote educational materials and curriculum that focus on crises prevention and peace building skills in schools in the country.
- Efforts should be made to develop interim care centres with a view to removing, rehabilitating, and re-integrating street children in big cities across the country.
- Efforts should be made to respond appropriately to the special needs of young people in conflict areas in the country.

- Efforts should be made by government at all levels to engage the youth by providing them with gainful employment opportunities.
- Efforts should be made to provide a well coordinated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for militant youth particularly in the Niger Delta region.
- Efforts should be made to prevent youth involvement in thuggery, and those who sponsor youth as political thugs directly or indirectly should be severely penalized.

5.12 Youth and HIV/AIDS

The impact of HIV/AIDS has been most serious in sub-Saharan Africa. The region contains almost three-quarters of all young people living with HIV/AIDS, though only 10 per cent of the world's youth live there. The majority of new infections in the region are among those 15-24 years of age. It is estimated that in almost all the countries in the region at least 5 per cent of young women aged 15-24 years are infected with HIV.

Unsafe sexual practices among young people in Nigeria also result in high incidence of HIV&AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. The 2005 national sero-prevalence survey conducted at sentinel ante-natal care clinics reported a rate of 3.6% and 4.7% for young people aged 15-19 years and 20-24 years respectively. The HIV infection and AIDS among young people were most likely acquired within the last few years preceding the survey and thus gives a frightening indication of the rapidity of transmission currently occurring among young people. The low level of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) knowledge, which is reflected in the fact that only 57% of young people in 2005 knew all the transmission routes for HIV, is a major factor fueling the transmission of the virus in the country. General population statistics often conceal dramatic variation within countries. Where heterosexual transmission of HIV is dominant, generally more young women are infected than young men. Cities generally have higher HIV prevalence than rural areas, and disadvantaged people have been shown to be at greater risk than others.

Young people, like adults, contract HIV primarily in three ways: through injecting drugs; through unprotected sexual activity. HIV can also be transmitted via blood transfusions, through sharing of non-sterile equipment that breaks the

skin. Injecting of drugs using needles contaminated with HIV is playing a major role in the spread of AIDS among young people. Youth who share drug-injecting supplies are at high risk of HIV infection, as the virus is introduced directly in to the blood stream. High levels of sexual activity among adolescents have been known not to be accompanied with by the consistent use of condoms thereby placing them at very high risk of HIV/AIDS infection.

Goal:

The National Youth Policy shall promote reduction in the spread of HIV/AIDS infection among youth in the country and also lessen the impact of the epidemic on those infected and affected by the disease, and prepare young people to survive in a world with AIDS.

Strategies:-

- Government at all levels should ensure that youth have access to a full range of services fundamental to their healthy development such as schooling, youth-friendly health services, and counselling opportunities for decent livelihood thereby reducing their risk of contracting HIV.
- Efforts should be made to provide young people in AIDS-affected families with education, general health and food security, social welfare, protection and emotional health to lessen the impact of HIV/AIDS.
- Government should strengthen and enact relevant legislation focusing on protection issues in order to prohibit discrimination related to HIV serostatus e.g. protection of property rights, access to information and services, exploitation and trafficking of young people.
- The treatment of young people infected with Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) must be accorded priority by relevant government agencies..
- Effort should be made to provide Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) services for young people in urban and rural areas in the country. Young people who test positive should access treatment programmes to decrease their infectivity, as treatment can help lower

their viral load. Young people on the other hand who test negative should access skills-based programmes to reduce the risk of contracting HIV.

- Efforts should be made to promote programmes that encourage abstinence and mutual fidelity.
- Effort should be made to ensure blood safety in the country.
- Efforts should be made to strengthen life skills education in both schools and out of school programmes across the country.
- Efforts should be made to promote behavioural change communication (BCC) across the country. Young people cannot protect themselves if they do not know the facts about HIV/AIDS, programmes that promote abstinence and mutual fidelity (ABC of prevention) should be encouraged. Communication programmes must inform youth about the risk.
- Efforts should be made to mobilize youth participation, the family, public and private sectors, civil society organizations (CSO) and communities in the fight against HIV/AIDS and communities in the fight against HIV/AIDS.
- Efforts should be made to strengthen the HIV/AIDS/STI surveillance capacity in the country.
- Efforts should be made to rehabilitate commercial sex workers (CSW).

5.13 Youth and Drug Abuse

Youth is a period characterized by a search for independence from parents and other adults, seeking close friendships with peers and experimentation with a wide range of ideas, products and lifestyles. This experimentation sometimes involves taking increased risks and making choices and compromises as well as taking advantage of opportunities that may lead to uncertain outcomes. The use of tobacco and alcohol may become a means of escaping from situations that youth often feel powerless to change. Whenever the subject of drug use comes up, it is often in relation to young people. It is during the younger years that

most substance use begins. If a person in today's world has not begun to use alcohol, tobacco or an illicit substance during this period, it is unlikely he or she ever will. Young people world over tend to use these substances to a greater extent and in riskier ways than do older people, and this behaviour can result in significant problems in the short and long terms

Substance abuse, which refers to any non-medical or excessive use of a drug or any substance that changes the normal operation of the mind and body, is a health hazard for young people and has significant implications for their physical, psycho-social and mental development. Alcohol and cigarettes are the most common substances abused by young people, and constitute "gateways" to the use of other substances and illicit drugs. Young people usually take to these substances as a social habit, and a way of proving that they have come of age.

Cannabis is the most common illicit drug taken by young people; it is illegally cultivated in different parts of the country and relatively cheap, making it readily available. A study of adolescents aged 10-19 years in Nigeria reported 8% of them had used cannabis at one time or the other. The use of volatile organic solvents, such as petrol, and sniffing glue had also been reported. Studies have also documented high incidence of non-medical or self-medicated use of psychotropic substances such as benzodiazepines. The abuse of prescription drugs, self-medication with tranquilizers, sleeping-pills and stimulants are also rampant across the country. This is probably due to very weak control and distribution of drugs, which makes it very easy to purchase over the counter habit forming drugs and prescription drugs across the country without any form of censorship.

The vulnerability of young people to drug abuse has in recent years become a major concern. The consequences of widespread drug abuse and trafficking, particularly for young men and women, are all too apparent. Violence, particularly street violence is very often the result of drug abuse and illicit drug networks, physical and psychological damage and, sometimes premature death. Tobacco use is probably one of the chief preventable causes of death in the world. There are an estimated 1 billion smokers in the world today. By 2030, another billion young adults will have started to smoke. The highest rates of smoking among youth are in developing countries. There are fewer women smokers than men, but the number of young women taking up cigarettes is on the increase.

Goal:

The National Youth Policy shall promote drug control strategies aimed at reducing drug abuse among young people in the country thereby curtailing the consequences of drug abuse in the country.

Strategic interventions

- Efforts should be made to address drug use must take place within the overall context of poverty reduction, social inclusion across all sectors of society, and equal opportunity for all in order to be effective and credible.
- Efforts should be made to put in place well articulated demand-reduction programmes targeted at young people, particularly those at risk. The content of such programmes should respond directly to the interests and concerns of vulnerable youths, and must address the underlying factors that cause young people to initiate drug use.
- Effort should be made to develop a more comprehensive approach to drug abuse prevention by advocating restrictions on the marketing of tobacco and alcohol and emphasize demand reduction efforts that appeal to youth instead.
- Efforts should be made to increase opportunities for gainful employment; activities that help young people develop skills, and activities which provide recreation. These are important in helping young people resist drugs.
- Youth organizations and the youth should be encouraged to play key roles in designing and implementing education and prevention programmes. Such programmes should include training in communication skills and peer-counselling.
- Government in cooperation with relevant agencies, non-governmental organizations, youth organizations, should work together in carrying demand reduction programmes for illicit drugs, tobacco and alcohol.
- Effort should be made to encourage Medical/Para Medical Associations, Faculties and Colleges of Medicines in the sub-region to develop model

courses if they do not already exist for the training of medical and Para-medical students on the proper handling of drugs and early identification and diagnoses of substance abuse.

- Effort should be made to prevent exposure to drug abuse and dependence among young people suspected or convicted of criminal offences by making use of alternative measures, such as daily reporting to police stations, fulfillment of a specified number of community service.
- Young prisoners who are already drug-dependent should be targeted as priority candidates for treatment and rehabilitation services and should be segregated as appropriate.
- Prison authorities should cooperate with relevant government agencies and law enforcement agencies to keep drugs out of the prison system.
- In cooperation with the institutions of civil society and the private sector drug abuse prevention should be promoted along with the rehabilitation and education programmes for former drug and alcohol addicts, in order to enable them to obtain productive employment and achieve the independence, dignity and responsibility for a drug-free, crime-free productive life.

5.14 Youth and Crime

The problem of juvenile delinquency and crime is becoming more complicated and universal. Juvenile delinquency covers a range of different violations of legal and social norms, ranging from minor offences to severe crimes committed by minors. Although there are no hard core statistics available young people constitute the most criminally active segment of the population in the country. In most cases delinquency tends to be attributed primarily to hunger, malnutrition and unemployment. Also there is a growing involvement of the youth in financial and internet crimes (Yahoo Yahoo Bussiness).

Young people who are at risk of becoming delinquent often live in very difficult circumstances. These include children with parents who are abuse alcoholic beverages, poor living conditions, dysfunctional family, overcrowded and abusive conditions in the home, or the death of one or both parents in violent

circumstances, unaccompanied and without means of subsistence, housing and other basic necessities.

In many cases, youth offenders are “street children” who have been exposed to violence in their immediate social environment, either as observers or victims. Delinquency is also largely a group phenomenon; majority of juvenile offences are committed by members of some form of delinquent or cult groups. Even those juveniles who commit offences alone are likely to be associated with groups. The upsurge of cult activities among young people in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is a major source of concern for all stake holders in youth development.

Juvenile crime prevention programmes in Nigeria are either ill-equipped to deal with the present upsurge in juvenile crime and delinquency or do not exist. The law enforcement agencies are simply unable to cope with the situation. The National Youth Policy seeks to outline a systematic action that is task-oriented aimed at the prevention of juvenile delinquency in the country.

Goal:

The National Youth Policy shall promote the prevention of delinquent and criminal behaviour among youth in the country and also promote community based preventive measures to youth crime.

Strategies:-

- Youth involvement in delinquent activities can be prevented by providing young people with increased economic opportunities, professional training and education.
- Priority should be given to the establishment of prevention programmes aimed at helping young people to learn how to engage in positive self-appraisal, resolve conflict, and control aggression. Government and relevant organizations, particularly youth organizations should consider organizing information campaigns and educational and training programmes in order to sensitize the youth to the detrimental effects of violence in society. Such programmes should also teach youths how to communicate without violence, and to protect themselves and others from violence. Parents of adolescents, the school, local communities, and law

enforcement agencies should be involved in administering such programmes.

- Young people apprehended for various crimes should be given access to timely justice
- Urban youth who are poor should have access to specific educational, employment and leisure activities particularly during long school holidays. A wide range of recreational facilities and services of particular interest to young people should be established and made easily accessible. Appropriate leisure programmes such as games, sports, cultural events, entertainment and community service are very important in fighting social ills such as drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and other deviant behaviour.
- Young people who drop out of school or come from broken homes should benefit from specific social programmes that help them build self-esteem and confidence conducive to responsible adulthood.
- Efforts should be made to involve CSOs, religious organizations, volunteers (sportsmen, celebrities, politicians, well-known authority figures) in social work with youth.
- Programmes targeted at the rehabilitation of street children, unaccompanied and homeless children should be established in the sub-region. Special attention should be given to young people who have lost their families during armed conflicts and thus have no appropriate family surveillance.
- Efforts should be made to develop programmes designed to promote tolerance and better understanding among youth, with a view to eradicating ethnic chauvinism, religious bigotry and all forms of discrimination in the sub-region.

5.15 Youth, Sports and Recreation

The importance of leisure-time activities in the psychological, cognitive and physical development of young people can not be over emphasized. Leisure-time activities include games, sports, cultural events, entertainment and community service. Appropriate leisure programmes for youth can be targeted towards fighting social ills such as drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and other deviant behaviour. Leisure-time or discretionary time can play a major role in promoting social inclusion, access to opportunities and overall development of young people.

In every culture, there are hours in the day when young people are not formally required to be in school or engaged in household or paid work. These hours and the activities that young people chose to engage in during this period are considered discretionary. They are viewed as optional, nice but not necessary, or even particularly important. It is these hours that policy makers, programme planners, and sometimes the public have no problems reducing or canceling outright. When public funds are low, sports, recreation and cultural programmes are usually the first to go.

As indicated in the World Youth Report 2003, terms such as “leisure”, “informal learning” and “play” imply a casualness of purpose and practice that does not do justice to the way in which a majority of young people use their free time. Young people’s leisure time and volunteer activities has direct relationship to such issues as education and employment. Threats to the well-being of a young person, such as HIV/AIDS, delinquency, conflict and drug abuse, are very much linked to the way discretionary time is utilized. Given such interconnections, it is critical that leisure time activities continue to occupy a premium position in the National Youth Policy of this country.

Apart from the fact that sports improves physical health, contributes to the development of positive self-concept and values such as team work, it can be a veritable tool to unite the young people of this great country. Sports are a universal language that can bring people together, no matter their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status.

Goal:

The National Youth Policy shall promote the participation of young men and women in a wide range of leisure and sporting activities, and also ensure that leisure time and opportunities constitute a right to be protected rather than a privilege.

Strategic Interventions:-

- Government at all levels should promote well designed sports based initiatives which can serve as tool to unite the young people of this nation.
- Efforts should be made by government at all levels and stake holders to promote greater support for games, sport and recreation through the school system. This will involve the creation of sports and recreation facilities in primary and secondary schools. Skills training programme which promote and encourage sports and recreation activities among young men and women should be put in place at all levels of education.
- Efforts should be made by government and all stake holders to create and promote a sports and recreation culture throughout the country. This will require parents, community leaders, politicians, public and private sectors, youth clubs and sporting organizations to promote and encourage participation of young people in a wide variety of sports, games and recreational activities including reading for pleasure.
- Government and all stake holders including the private sector should make effort to create community sports and recreational facilities. The development, for example, of parks can be very important in the promotion of sports and recreation within the local community.
- Effort should be made to promote the leisure needs of young people in the process of urban planning and development to ensure the availability of a wide range of leisure activities and opportunities for youth to relax and wind down. The effort of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) administration in the creation of parks and relaxation areas within Abuja metropolis should be encouraged and replicated in other big cities nationwide.

- Efforts should be made to create a balance between the traditional based leisure activities and the “individualized leisure time” created by modern technology through the use of mobile phones, computer games, and home videos so as to avoid the negative consequences of the latter.

5.16 Youth and Culture

Arts and culture is an important vehicle for appreciating and respecting the heritage of a people. They represent the sense of identity, self-respect and path through which generations seek to learn and transfer the skills and techniques of social relations and survival. Through arts and culture, young people are able to express their personal and collective views on society and the world in which they live. Through arts and culture norms and values of society can be questioned, while creativity can be enhanced. It also contributes to the promotion of social networks, reconciliation, and the breaking down of barriers to social and cultural diversity.

The National Youth Policy is convinced that the participation of young people in all forms of art and culture helps the young person to have a sound understanding of their culture and heritage.

Goal:

To promote the participation of young people in various forms of arts and culture, and to ensure that young people have a sound understanding of their culture and heritage.

Strategic Interventions

- Efforts should be made to include arts and cultural education in the school curriculum at all levels.
- Government should encourage local communities in the country to undertake arts and cultural activities such preservation of cultural sites, the writing of local stories and folklores.

- Effort should be made to encourage artistic and cultural activities among youth in and out of school, and also promote the understanding of, and respect for the diverse cultural differences in the country.
- Efforts should be made to promote the learning and dissemination of local languages in the country.
- Efforts should be made to promotes, all forms of cultural exchange among different cultures and ethnic groups in the country
- Effort should be made to develop structures and mechanism for the production, propagation and utilization of local arts and crafts industries among different cultures and ethnic groups in the country.

5.17 Youth and Family Life

Major economic, social, cultural, political and demographic changes have disrupted and redefined the role of the traditional African family. The extended family network which represents a coping mechanism of infinite versatility, a quasi-communal approach to the supervision and the correction of the younger generation in many communities in Nigeria is gradually being eroded.

The home as the primary socializing agent provide the platform for healthy development of young people, and parents play very important roles in the configuration of the social factors shaping the development of their young ones. Studies have shown that young people who feel close to their parents consistently show more positive psychological development, behavioural competence and psychological well-being. Young people from homes where domestic violence is rampant are more likely to indulge in violent acts, while children of parents that engage in substance abuse are known to have higher incidence of substance abuse and mental challenges. The quality of relationship between teenagers and their parents also contribute substantially to their self esteem.

The poignant answer of young people to questions about why they join gangs is that these groups become the families that they never had. This is a compelling testimony of young people's fundamental need for close, reliable relationships with a supportive, protective group that confers respect and identity and recognizes competence. Young people will flourish and contribute positively to

society when they have a family life that is characterized by warmth and mutual respect and when parents show serious and sustained interest in their lives. Such a family is very likely to be able to provide a consistent basis of discipline and close supervision, provide powerful protection against the risks of a young person's involvement in unhealthy or antisocial practices.

Goal:

The National Youth Policy shall promote the re-engagement of families in providing appropriate atmosphere that protect against the risk of young people engaging in unhealthy or antisocial behaviour in the country.

Strategic Interventions

- Government at all levels shall encourage and support parents and other adults in their vital roles in the lives of their young ones by encouraging the establishment of parent support groups in neighborhoods.
- Efforts should be made by government at all levels to encourage parents to remain involved in the education of their wards at all levels.
- Efforts should be made by all who work with youths such as relevant government agencies, civil society organizations, religious organizations etc. to be prepared to work not only with young men and women but also with their families.
- Educational institutions should offer parents opportunities to support the learning of their wards at home and at school.

5.18 Youth and Migration

Currently, nearly 191 million people or three per-cent of the world's population live outside the country of their birth. In 1960, an estimated 75 million or 2.5 per-cent of the world's population lived outside their country of birth (United Nations, 2006a). This increase in international flow of international migrants is affecting the composition of communities and societies in both the developed and developing countries. Nigeria is definitely not left out of this international migration which is otherwise referred to as "brain drain".

The National Youth Policy seeks to position the issue of migration on the front burner with a view to creating renewed interest in government on how the benefits of migration can be maximized for sending, transit and receiving countries as well as the migrants themselves, while minimizing its negative effects.

Like HIV/AIDS pandemic “Euro mania” which has afflicted many young people in the country, appear to be incurable. The significant outflows of Nigerian migrants are mainly directed towards Western Europe, and North America. Almost on a daily basis young people attempt to get out of the country to these destinations. Experts have advanced many and a varied reason for this trend, not least among these is the under development and limited opportunities in their country of origin. Young people who risk their lives to enter the western developed nations at all cost, do so to escape and get a better life. It follows that if our youth see bright prospects for themselves at home, they would be less tempted to emigrate to Europe and the Americas. The huge human toll arising from illegal migration is a needless loss for the country; very drastic actions must be embarked upon by the government to reverse this ugly trend.

Goal:

The National Youth Policy shall seek to reverse the migration crisis involving young people who risk their lives to emigrate at all cost to Europe, North America and other parts of the world

Strategies:-

- The federal government should urgently put in place an all embracing mechanism that will be involved in migration management that goes beyond punitive and control measures.
- Effective mechanism should be put in place in the country to enlighten young people on migration issues to avoid being caught in traps that may ruin their lives.
- The government should exert itself to ensure improved economic and social status for everyone in the country
- Government should ensure that youth have decent living, health and physical well-being, and equal opportunities.

- Youth in the country should be encouraged to have central roles in politics, democracy, and to uphold the principle that guarantees human survival.
- It is obvious that the migration crises cannot be effectively managed by unilateral actions; hence bilateral relations should be forged between countries sending and receiving migrants.
- Efforts should be made to undertake cooperative research and information sharing between countries of origin and destination in order to have accurate data base for migrants.
- Government should adopt responsive policies that will address high levels of unemployment, poverty, internal disorder, mismanaged economy and rural degradation.
- Government should endeavor to strengthen all the institutions or agencies required to manage migratory flows such as the customs, immigration and the police through capacity building, retraining and proper funding.

5.19 Youth and Poverty

Poverty is a complex phenomenon and is usually indicated by house hold income and poverty line statistics as well as by lack of access to basic services and resources. Some of the key issues in poverty debate include the profile of the poor, the possible links with macro-economic reform and the association between gender-based inequalities and poverty. Nearly 50% of all youth in the world survive on less than two dollars a day, in 2000, approximately 82 million young women and 51 million young men (ages 10-24) were illiterate (UNFPA,2003).

Young people constitute a third of the population of Nigeria. The distribution of this population continues to change due to issues like urban-rural migration thereby compounding the problems of poverty in the country. Rural-urban migration happens because migrants perceive that the possibilities of better work and better access to education and health services are much higher in urban areas. Unfortunately poverty in the cities is very apparent, with high

unemployment rates among young people, over-crowding in slums with poor water and sanitary conditions leading to ill health and fueling crime

Goal:

The National Youth Policy shall put in place necessary mechanisms that will eliminate absolute poverty among young men and women in the country.

Strategic Intervention

- Government, civil societies, NGOs and the private sector should work together with the local communities, families to ensure the provision of quality education, social amenities for all youths in the country
- Efforts should be made by governments to empower the youths economically by creating jobs for them
- Government should encourage, support and provide funding for agriculture which is the mainstay of most rural communities in the country.
- Government should be encouraged to invest in the education, health and nutrition of the people of this country.
- Efforts should be made to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination in the labour market in the country.

Chapter Six

Policy Implementation and Resource Mobilization

6.1 Policy Implementation

The effective implementation of the National Youth Policy cut across various sectors, as health, education, agriculture, trade and commerce, science and technology, environment, information, women, youth development, and sports. It also involves specialized agencies such as the National Drug Law Enforcement agency (NDLA), National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic Persons (NAPTIP), Sports Commission etc. Similarly it involves civil society organisations, religious organisations, the organized private sectors. Thus, to achieve the goals of this policy, implementation must be multi-sectoral.

Implementation also requires a significant expression of political and economic commitment by government at all levels in the country. There will be the need for the Federal Government to strengthen partnerships and network among State and Local governments, relevant government agencies, the private sector, development partners, and civil society organizations for the effective implementation of the National Youth Policy.

6.2 Political Will

Creating a society where the youth are able to attain their full potentials thereby contributing to the overall developmental process of society requires support from the highest level of governance at all tiers, particularly the presidency. The presidency, the Federal Executive Council, the Legislature and the Judiciary must practicalise their support for the full implementation of the National Youth Policy.

6.3 Resource Mobilization

The success of the National Youth Policy and the achievement of set objectives will depend on the ability of government and civil society to mobilize sufficient resources from internal and external sources. For adequate support and successful management of youth development programmes, critical resources requirement will include **human, material and technical, and financial resources** at Federal, State, and Local Government Levels.

The government of Nigeria appreciates the role of development partners in supporting youth programmes in the country. However in line with the spirit of self-reliance, government will endeavor to increase its funding level for youth development programmes to the level commensurate with the scope and scale of activities required to achieve the goals of the youth policy. No effort should be spared in the task of generating sufficient resources to facilitate the efficient and timely execution of all the programmes associated with the Policy. Financial resources will be mobilized from government's annual budgetary allocations; grants from state and local governments; assistance from governments and international donors/agencies; and contributions from the private sector and persons of good-will.

6.4 Human Resources

To improve the human resource base for the implementation of the National Youth Policy, the following should be undertaken:-

- Comprehensive manpower policy for youth development programmes across the country shall be formulated and implemented;
- Nigerian Universities and other institutions of learning should promote leadership training programmes and survival skills training for young people;
- Short-term in service-training through workshops and seminars at local and international level to build the capacity of youth organisations, NGOs, CSOs working with young people should be encouraged

6.5 Financial Resources

The sources of funding shall be both internal and external.

- Government and people of Nigeria shall strive to increase internal funding for youth development programmes;
- Federal, State, and Local Government shall provide annual budgetary allocations, and such allocations should be released on time for the implementation of the policy;

- The federal Ministry of Youth development and all the agencies under it shall mobilize other sources of internal funding;
- Federal Government should establish a National Youth Development Tax Fund similar to the Education Tax Fund. Corporate organisations should be made to contribute a certain percentage of their tax to this tax fund;
- The Federal Government shall mobilize external funds from development partners for the implementation of the youth policy;
- Federal, State and Local Governments shall provide necessary counterpart funding and contributions for the implementation of donor-assisted youth development programmes and activities;
- Government at all levels, development partners and NGOs shall ensure transparency and accountability in the disbursements of all funds for youth development programmes and activities;
- Government shall promote and encourage private sector initiatives aimed at supporting the implementation of the youth policy.

6.6 Material and Technical Resources

Material and technical resources will be essential in the process of implementing the youth policy.

- Government shall procure and provide technical equipments for the provision of quality reproductive health services, educational training, vocational and skills training, leisure activities, and rehabilitation of young people in the country.
- Government, in collaboration with other development partners shall ensure the availability of technical expertise and support in the implementation of the key strategies covering all the priority areas of youth development identified in the National Youth Policy.
- Government shall ensure the availability of technical resource, including instructional advocacy and IEC materials relevant for the achievement of some of the goals in the policy

6.7 Inter-agency Coordination

Many partners, including external donors, shall be involved in the implementation of the youth policy. Coordination is required to ensure the most efficient use of available resources.

- Government, development partners, civil society organisations and the organized private sector shall endeavor to work together to ensure the full implementation of the National Youth Policy.

Chapter Seven

Institutional Framework

7.1 Broad Institutional Framework and Agencies

There is a broad but linked legal, administrative, budgetary/funding institutional framework for the implementation of the policy and it consists of the following:

- 1. Federal Ministry of Youth Development:** The Federal Ministry of Youth development is the ministerial organ of the Federal Government directly responsible for policy formation and review, the design of priority programmes of action, and broad guidelines for Youth development in the country. It has the responsibility of overseeing and co-coordinating the implementation of the policy from the Federal to the State and Local Government levels and other implementing agencies and NGOs. And it has overseeing and/or supervisory responsibility for the specialized agencies concerned with youth development, such as the National Youth Development Council, National Youth Advisory Committee; National Youth service Corps (NYSC) Scheme, as well as the proposed National Youth Development Agency and National Youth development fund.
- 2. National Youth Development Council:** There will be an Inter-Ministerial council to be called the National Youth Development council under the chairmanship of the President. It will comprise all the chief executives of the core relevant ministries e.g. Ministries of Women Affairs, Youth development, Education, Employment, Labour and Productivity, Health, Agriculture and Industry, with responsibilities for the implementation of diverse aspects of the policy; chief executives of the major specialized agencies on youth development, and adequate representation of the youth. It will serve as the forum and clearing house on all Youth Policy matters of national interest. The purpose of the council is to elevate and mainstream the concern for the problems and aspirations of the youth to a priority of the inter-ministerial level on the national agenda.
- 3. National Youth Advisory Committee:** The committee which already exists will be strengthened to provide an effective forum for all stakeholders. Its status will be upgraded to comprise the Honourable Minister of State, as the chairman, and all state commissioners in charge of

Youth affairs as members. Its responsibilities will include co-coordinating and streamlining youth development activities at the state level, as well as the role of the private sector and NGOs in line with the National Youth development Policy. It will propose policy recommendations to the Federal government on matters concerning Youth, including the utilization of the Youth development fund. It will also serve as a link between key government implementation agencies on the one hand and the private sector and NGOs on the other, to ensure that initiatives and programmes associated with the policy are executed and that their effects reach intended beneficiaries.

4. **National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN):** The National Youth Council of Nigeria was founded in 1964 to be the voice and the umbrella organization for youth organizations in the country. The Youth Council is non-governmental, non-partisan, and not-for-profit organization. The council comprises the National Executive Committee (NEC) of 23-members. The NEC members are democratically elected from their respective state chapters and its affiliated voluntary youth organizations. The National Youth Council of Nigeria is a major stakeholder in the implementation of the National Youth Policy, and as such should be strengthened by government. Government at all levels should endeavour to provide subvention for the NYCN annually without necessarily controlling or interfering in the running of the organization. All voluntary youth organizations, youth NGOs and CBOs should be encouraged to be affiliated to the National Youth Council of Nigeria to ensure proper coordination at the level of the Federal Ministry of Youth Development. As an umbrella organization for youth NGOs, and youth organizations across the country the NYCN shall pursue democratic norms at all times, embrace the principles of accountability and transparency in all its conduct, and initiate and execute activities that are in consonance with the goals of the National Youth Policy.
5. **National Youth Service Corps (NYSC):** Established by Decree in 1973, in furtherance of the Federal Government Post war Policy of Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation. The scheme was designed to raise a new corps of highly disciplined and detribalized Nigerian youth by affording them the opportunity of service to communities other than their own. The NYSC has as its objectives to inculcate discipline in youth; to raise the moral tone of the youth; develop attitude acquired through shared experience; and to promote national unity. The programme is

laudable, and should be strengthened and refocused so that it can achieve greater results in the implementation of the National Youth Policy. The supervisory responsibility will remain vested in the Minister in charge of Youth Development. The scheme will operate in line with the objectives and programme of action outlined in the youth policy and strategic action plan. Specifically, it will now have a mandatory period of at least 4 months of intensive citizenship and leadership training, in addition to active participation in community development activities during the service year. This is to ensure that at the end of the service year, NYSC participants are better prepared for challenges and leadership roles expected by the job market.

6. **Citizen and Leadership Training Centre Nigeria:** The citizen and Leadership Training Centre, Shere Hills, Jos is a parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Youth Development, created in 1951 as a Man O' War Bay Training Centre, it was given a legal status in 1960 and modified by a decree in 1989. The centre was given the mandate of leadership training, empowerment, and character development among young people in the country. The CLTC is a major stakeholder in the provision of quality training that will position our youth for good citizenship and responsible leadership. The centre needs to be repositioned so that its impact is felt at Federal, State and Local Government levels. The centre has a major role to play in the implementation of the National Youth Policy.
7. **National Youth Development Agency:** An executive agency to be called the National Youth development Agency will be established to help administer the policy.
8. **Youth Development Fund:** The Federal government will establish a National Youth development fund to finance the execution of all the programmes for youth development conceived in relation to the implementation of the National Youth development Policy. The fund will have a Board of Trustees, to be headed by the Honourable Minister in charge of Youth Development, and its membership will be drawn from relevant Ministries and Parastatals, the private sector, youth organisations and relevant NGOs. The fund should have the power to mobilize and obtain funds from the private sector and international development agencies for the financing of Youth development programmes and projects, in addition to government sources.

- 9. The Youth Development Act:** Certain provisions of the policy, in terms of programmes, structure, funding, etc will require legal backing. Consequently, a bill will be submitted to the National assembly for a comprehensive Youth development Act to assist the enablement and enforcement of the implementation of the Policy.
- 10. State Ministries and Local Government Departments In Charge Of Youth Affairs:** In order to ensure effectiveness, mass participation and the active involvement of the youth in decision making processes, the implementation of the programmes in the policy will involve the grassroots. This underscores the relevance and significance of the States and Local Governments in the implementation of youth development programmes. Both have a responsibility to create the enabling environment for the growth and development of youth associations at various levels of the community, provide advice, materials and other logistics support to youth NGOs and ensure the success of youth development programmes in their areas of jurisdiction.
- 11. Youth Associations and NGOs:** The Youth themselves have a crucial role to play in their development and the development of the society in which they live. They are the major stakeholders in the National Youth development policy. They are expected to be prepared to join hands and collaborate with other stakeholders in pursuit of the objectives of the policy. Not only are they expected to forge unity, they must also be well organized to tap the potential benefits of the policy for their own empowerment and development. They will be expected to form voluntary youth associations and NGOs that are important vehicles through which they can actively participate in the implementation of the policy. Through these, both the private sector and the government will additionally reach out to them and integrate them in the efforts to promote and concretize youth development objectives.
- 12. Students' Unions:** Students' Unions, particularly in tertiary institutions, are voluntary youth associations which provide leadership training grounds for the youth. The unions empower and enable them to actively participate in decision-making processes about matters that affect them. Students' unions also empower the youth to contribute positively to institution-building and national development.

13. The values of democracy, accountability, transparency, and good governance. The national umbrella organization of students' unions in tertiary institutions will have representation in the National Youth Development Council, the National Youth Development Fund, the National Youth Advisory committee and the National Youth Council of Nigeria.
14. **Private Sector Organisations:** The organized private sector is an important partner in promoting the objectives of the National Youth development Policy towards national development. It is expected to support programmes of employment generation, skills training for the Youth, work-experience, as well as community development activities. It will therefore have representation on the National Youth Development Fund and the National Youth Advisory committee.
15. **International Organisations:** Multilateral and Bilateral donor Agencies and International NGOs represent important vehicles through which some of the objectives and programmes of the National Youth Development Policy can be actualized. They could provide funding, training, information and linkage programmes which can contribute to the implementation of the Policy. They will be cultivated as relevant and necessary partners in Youth development initiatives.
16. **Mass Media:** The prints as well as the electronic media are recognized as important partners in the implementation of the policy. It is expected that they will educate, inform and enlighten the citizenry on all matters concerning the problems, the desires and the aspirations of the Youth. It is also expected that they will publicize the objectives of the policy, report and review the progress of their implementation.

7.2 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research

The objective of monitoring is to ensure compliance with the guidelines, goals and principles outlined in the National Youth Policy. Evaluation is concerned with assessing the extent of achievement of the set goals and targets. The importance of monitoring and evaluation is to ensure successful implementation of the youth policy.

Monitoring and evaluation shall be carried out on a national, state and local government levels. Baseline research will be carried out at the onset of the implementation, and will be followed by subsequent researches which will collect disaggregated data on age, gender, location, socio-economic status as well as special circumstances of youth to assess progress in specific areas of the youth Policy.

Monitoring and evaluation shall be an essential strategy for the delivery of the National Youth Policy. Appropriate tools, templates and modalities shall be developed to facilitate annual review of the performance of the youth policy

The policy's Monitoring, Evaluation and Research components shall aim at:-

- Assisting stake holders to operationalise the policy as it relates to their specific sectors and/or organisations and generate indicators for assessing performance and progress towards policy goals;
- Assessing levels of efficient and judicious use of resources and youth development programmes;
- Measuring the long-term impact of the policy on youth development in the country;
- Establishing data bank on youth activities and youth development, and regularly update the situational analysis of youth development programmes in the country;
- Undertaking research on youth development issues;
- Support and strengthen M & E systems in the different states;
- Conduct periodic M & E reviews on youth development programmes in the country.

The role of monitoring and evaluation in enhancing the success of any governmental policy package cannot be overemphasized. Agencies such as the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) in collaboration with the National data Bank (NDB), the National Population Commission (NPC), Universities and Social-science research institutes shall be mandated to monitor and evaluate the progress of implementation of the programmes of the policy. Analysis of data

generated should enhance the process and machinery of implementation as well as provide useful guidance for subsequent review of the policy.

7.3 Periodic Review of Policy

Since the society is dynamic, and changes are the norms rather than the exception in the contemporary world, it is therefore necessary that the National Youth Policy be reviewed periodically (every five years).

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