

BEYOND PALLIATIVES: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Augustine Ele Asor¹, Ogar, Ohiamas Ochagu², Mary Eta Ekpo³, & Agbor, Louis Friday⁴.

1 & 2: Department of Economics, University of Education & Entrepreneurship (UEE) Akamkpa

3: Department of Political Science, University of Education & Entrepreneurship (UEE) Akamkpa

4: Department of Social Studies Education, University of Education & Entrepreneurship (UEE) Akamkpa

Correspondence Email: augustineasor1@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The use of palliative economic measures has become increasingly prominent in Nigeria as government seeks to cushion households against the effects of economic reforms and rising living costs. This study examines the contribution of palliative economic programmes to sustainable development and considers how political leadership shapes their design, implementation and outcomes. It also considers the extent to which transparency, accountability and fair distribution influence the developmental value of such interventions. A survey research design was used to obtain primary data from citizens, public servants, community leaders, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics, with a five-point Likert scale and a decision benchmark of 3.00. The findings show that respondents generally viewed palliative programmes as helpful in reducing immediate economic hardship, improving household welfare and providing temporary relief. Political leadership was also perceived to have an important influence on programme implementation and distribution. However, respondents expressed reservations about fairness in distribution and transparency, even though accountability and proper distribution were regarded as important to sustainable development. The study concludes that palliative measures can provide useful short-term support, but their broader developmental contribution depends on responsible leadership, effective accountability and transparent implementation. It recommends stronger monitoring systems, objective beneficiary identification, greater stakeholder participation and the integration of palliative interventions with long-term policies for employment, entrepreneurship, poverty reduction and economic resilience.

Keywords: Palliatives, Political Leadership, Poverty Reduction, Public Policy, Sustainable Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Economic development is a major responsibility of government, particularly in developing countries where public policy is expected to improve living standards, reduce poverty, expand employment and support sustained economic growth. Economic reforms, however, can impose substantial short-term costs on households. When prices rise and real incomes fall, governments frequently introduce palliative measures to reduce the immediate burden on vulnerable groups. Although such interventions can offer much-needed assistance, questions remain about whether they can move beyond temporary relief and contribute to lasting development, especially where governance institutions are weak.

Nigeria has experienced repeated periods of economic uncertainty associated with oil-price fluctuations, fiscal pressures, exchange-rate instability, insecurity and major policy reforms. The removal of fuel subsidies and changes in the foreign-exchange regime has, in particular, increased the cost of living for many households. While the reforms were intended to improve fiscal sustainability and economic efficiency, their immediate effects have included higher inflation, increased transport costs, pressure on household incomes and greater vulnerability among low-income families. The World Bank (2024) notes that these pressures are particularly significant for households that devote a large share of their income to food, transportation and energy.

In response, government introduced a number of measures, including conditional cash transfers, food distribution, transport support and assistance to small businesses. These interventions may be described collectively as a palliative economy because they are designed primarily to soften the immediate effects of economic shocks and reforms. Their underlying purpose is consistent with the social protection role of government, which seeks to prevent temporary economic difficulties from pushing vulnerable households into deeper poverty (World Bank, 2024).

The immediate usefulness of palliative programmes does not necessarily mean that they produce sustainable development. Sustainable development involves more than short-term improvements in welfare; it requires sustained economic progress, social inclusion, environmental responsibility and effective institutions. The World Commission on Environment and Development defined sustainable development as development that satisfies present needs without reducing the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland Commission, 1987). The definition therefore points to the importance of addressing the structural sources of poverty and inequality rather than relying exclusively on temporary assistance.

In Nigeria, the temporary character of many palliative interventions has generated concerns about their ability to address the underlying causes of economic hardship. Cash transfers and food assistance may ease household pressure for a period, but they do not automatically

create durable employment, expand productive capacity or improve access to essential services. Once the intervention ends, beneficiaries may remain exposed to the same economic vulnerabilities. Todaro and Smith (2021) maintain that sustainable development requires a combination of economic growth, investment in human capital, infrastructure and institutional capacity. It is therefore necessary to determine whether palliative measures are contributing to long-term development or mainly responding to recurring economic difficulties.

Political leadership is central to the success of public policies because leaders influence policy priorities, resource allocation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Leadership that is transparent, accountable and guided by a clear development vision is more likely to use public resources effectively. In contrast, weak leadership can encourage policy inconsistency, corruption, poor implementation and wasteful use of public resources (North, 1990).

The link between leadership, governance and development has received considerable scholarly attention. Ake (1996) connected many development difficulties in Africa to governance failures and weak institutions, while Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi (2011) emphasized the importance of governance quality, accountability and institutional effectiveness. For palliative programmes, political leadership should ensure that interventions are properly designed, targeted at genuine beneficiaries and implemented in a manner that limits diversion, corruption and political manipulation.

Transparency and accountability remain major concerns in the implementation of palliative programmes in Nigeria. Problems associated with beneficiary identification, political interference, elite capture and possible diversion of resources can prevent assistance from reaching those for whom it is intended. When this occurs, the ability of palliative interventions to reduce poverty and improve welfare is weakened. Effective accountability and open reporting are therefore important for ensuring that public funds are used for their intended purposes (Kaufmann et al., 2011).

Fairness in the distribution of palliative assistance is another important consideration. Sustainable development requires broad access to opportunities and resources, and unequal treatment can deepen existing social and economic divisions. In Nigeria, concerns about differences in the distribution of palliative packages among regions, communities and social groups have contributed to public dissatisfaction. Alesina and Rodrik (1994) argue that unequal distribution can create social tensions and restrict access to productive opportunities, with consequences for development.

The increasing reliance on palliative interventions also raises questions about policy sustainability. Emergency assistance may be justified during periods of severe economic stress, but prolonged dependence on such measures can draw attention away from policies that raise productivity, create jobs, encourage industrialisation and diversify the economy.

A sustainable approach should help people build economic capacity and become more self-reliant rather than keeping them dependent on government support. This is consistent with the view that social protection should be linked to wider development policies that tackle the causes of poverty and vulnerability (United Nations, 2015).

The continuing debate over economic reforms and palliative measures in Nigeria therefore calls for empirical evidence on the connection between palliative interventions, political leadership and sustainable development. Although several programmes have been introduced to cushion the effects of reforms, there is still uncertainty about their longer-term contribution to development. There are also questions about how leadership affects programme outcomes through transparency, accountability and equitable distribution.

Against this background, the study examines the role of political leadership in strengthening the contribution of palliative economic policies to sustainable development in Nigeria. The issue is important because palliative measures are increasingly being used to respond to economic shocks. Evidence from the study is expected to contribute to discussions on how such interventions can be implemented more effectively while improving governance, accountability and longer-term development outcomes.

Research Objectives

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which palliative economic programmes contribute to sustainable development in Nigeria.
2. Examine the influence of political leadership on the design, implementation and effectiveness of palliative interventions in Nigeria.
3. Assess the effect of transparency, accountability and equitable distribution of palliative measures on sustainable development outcomes in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do palliative economic programmes contribute to sustainable development in Nigeria?
2. How does political leadership influence the design, implementation and effectiveness of palliative interventions in Nigeria?
3. What effect do transparency, accountability and equitable distribution of palliative measures have on sustainable development outcomes in Nigeria?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

Palliative Economy: A palliative economy may be understood as a set of temporary government interventions introduced to reduce the immediate economic difficulties faced by citizens during periods of crisis, reform or economic disruption. Such interventions may be used in response to inflation, unemployment, subsidy removal, recession, disasters and other shocks. Typical measures include cash transfers, food distribution, transport support, public works and other forms of social assistance targeted at vulnerable households.

The justification for these measures lies in the social protection responsibility of government. The World Bank (2024) observes that social safety nets can protect poor households from economic shocks and prevent a further decline in living standards. In countries where formal welfare systems are limited, palliative interventions can provide immediate support while governments work toward broader structural reforms.

Palliative measures, nevertheless, are generally temporary and should not be treated as substitutes for long-term development policy. Todaro and Smith (2021) note that short-term assistance does not, by itself, remove the structural causes of poverty, unemployment and vulnerability. Where palliatives are not combined with productive investment, employment creation and economic reforms, prolonged dependence may result. This concern is especially relevant in Nigeria following the removal of fuel subsidies and exchange-rate adjustments, both of which have placed additional pressure on household living costs.

Sustainable Development: Sustainable development brings together economic progress, social equity and environmental responsibility. The Brundtland Commission (1987) describes it as development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept therefore requires a balance between improving present living conditions and preserving the resources and institutions needed for future prosperity.

Sustainable development cannot be achieved through economic growth alone. It also requires poverty reduction, fair access to resources, environmental protection and effective institutions. The United Nations (2015), through the Sustainable Development Goals, expanded this framework to include issues such as poverty, inequality, employment, climate change and governance.

From an economic standpoint, sustainable development involves increasing productive capacity while ensuring that improvements in income, education, healthcare and employment are maintained over time. Todaro and Smith (2021) stress the importance of preserving natural and institutional resources for future generations. Consequently, the

performance of palliative programmes should be considered not only in terms of immediate relief but also in terms of whether they help create conditions for lasting development.

Nigeria continues to face major obstacles to sustainable development, including widespread poverty, inadequate infrastructure, unemployment, corruption and insecurity. These conditions make it important to examine whether palliative interventions are helping to address development challenges or merely easing their immediate consequences.

Political Leadership: Political leadership refers to the capacity of elected or appointed public officials to set priorities, make decisions, allocate public resources and mobilise society toward shared objectives. It covers the way leaders formulate and implement policies and maintain systems of accountability and governance. The quality of political leadership can therefore have substantial implications for economic performance and social development.

North (1990) links effective leadership and institutions to economic growth and social progress, while Ake (1996) associates many African development problems with weak governance and ineffective leadership. Political leaders are expected to establish clear policy priorities, promote accountability and transparency, and create conditions in which development initiatives can operate effectively.

Leadership quality is particularly important when palliative programmes are being implemented. Competent leadership should support sound programme design, transparent administration and fair distribution. Weak leadership, on the other hand, can result in mismanagement, political favouritism, corruption and poor programme delivery, thereby reducing the developmental value of public interventions (Kaufmann et al., 2011).

Good political leadership is associated with integrity, responsiveness, accountability and commitment to public welfare. These qualities can strengthen citizens' confidence in government programmes and improve implementation. Within the context of palliative economy, leadership provides the institutional link between government intervention and improvements in welfare and longer-term development.

2.2 Empirical Review

Previous empirical work on social protection, palliative interventions, political leadership and sustainable development points to mixed outcomes. The literature generally suggests that palliative measures can provide immediate welfare gains, but their longer-term contribution is strongly conditioned by governance and the quality of political leadership.

On the contribution of palliative programmes to sustainable development, the World Bank (2024) reports that cash transfers and food assistance can support household consumption and reduce vulnerability during economic shocks. Barrientos and Hulme (2008) similarly found that social assistance programmes in developing countries can contribute to poverty reduction and improve access to education and healthcare. They nevertheless observed that

social assistance is less likely to produce sustained economic transformation when it is not accompanied by employment creation and productive investment.

Evidence from Nigeria is also mixed. Nwosa (2023) reported that government interventions offered temporary support to households affected by inflation and economic reforms, but their effect on long-term poverty reduction was limited. Adebayo and Ojo (2024) likewise found improvements in short-term welfare, while noting that inadequate funding, weak targeting and institutional limitations restricted the wider developmental impact of such programmes. These findings suggest that palliatives are more effective when embedded within a broader development framework.

Studies on political leadership emphasize the role of governance in determining the success of public interventions. Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi (2011) found that government effectiveness, accountability and regulatory quality are associated with better development outcomes. These governance characteristics are relevant to palliative programmes because they affect how resources are allocated, monitored and converted into services for citizens.

Rotberg (2014) argues that effective political leadership improves policy implementation through transparency, planning and responsible resource management. Fosu (2018), in examining African countries, also linked stronger institutions and accountable leadership with better development performance. In Nigeria, Ezeani and Nnamani (2022) found that leadership quality influenced the performance of poverty-alleviation programmes, with weak coordination, inconsistent policies and political interference undermining implementation. Taken together, these studies reinforce the expectation that leadership matters in determining whether palliative interventions produce meaningful outcomes.

Transparency, accountability and equitable distribution have also received attention in the empirical literature. Transparency International (2023) associates lower corruption and greater transparency with stronger social and economic outcomes, while Kaufmann et al. (2011) show that accountability can improve public expenditure and strengthen citizens' confidence in institutions.

Evidence from Nigeria indicates that distribution and monitoring remain important weaknesses. Ojo and Ibrahim (2023) identified political patronage, weak monitoring and incomplete beneficiary databases as factors limiting the effectiveness of social intervention programmes. Okeke (2024), however, reported that fairer distribution of welfare resources was associated with better programme effectiveness and greater public satisfaction. These findings point to the importance of ensuring that assistance reaches intended beneficiaries through transparent and accountable procedures.

Overall, the empirical literature indicates that palliative programmes can reduce immediate economic hardship, but their longer-term contribution depends on the institutional environment in which they operate. Political leadership, transparency, accountability and fairness in distribution appear repeatedly as important conditions for successful

intervention. The limited attention given to the combined relationship among palliative economy, political leadership and sustainable development in Nigeria provides the empirical gap addressed by this study.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology is presented under the following subsections:

Research Design, Study Population, Sample and Sampling Technique, Instrument for Data Collection, Method of Data Analysis, Ethical Considerations

3.1 Research Design: This study employed a survey research design. The design was appropriate because it allowed primary data to be obtained directly from respondents concerning their views on palliative economic programmes, political leadership and sustainable development. It also provided quantitative responses that could be summarized and analysed to identify patterns in the variables under investigation.

3.2 Study Population: The study was conducted in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The population comprised adult Nigerians who were beneficiaries or non-beneficiaries of government palliative programmes, civil servants, traders, entrepreneurs, community leaders and other stakeholders who had knowledge of government intervention programmes.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique: A sample of 3,000 respondents was used for the study. A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted. The two states were purposively selected because of the implementation of palliative programmes. Local government areas and communities were subsequently selected randomly, after which respondents were selected using simple random sampling to provide each eligible participant with an opportunity to take part in the study.

3.4 Instrument for Data Collection: Primary data were collected with a structured questionnaire. The instrument contained four sections. Section A covered respondents' demographic characteristics, including gender, age, educational qualification, occupation and income level. Section B examined perceptions of the effectiveness of palliative programmes in reducing economic hardship. Section C focused on political leadership, including programme design, implementation, transparency and accountability. Section D assessed perceptions of sustainable development outcomes, including poverty reduction, welfare improvement, employment generation and related development effects. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale: Strongly

Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Undecided (U) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis: The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. For the Likert-scale responses presented in this study, a benchmark mean of 3.00 was adopted. A mean score of 3.00 or above was regarded as acceptance of the statement, while a mean below 3.00 was interpreted as rejection.

3.6 Ethical Considerations: Participation in the survey was treated as voluntary. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, and information obtained from them was treated confidentially and used strictly for academic purposes. Respondents were not required to provide information that would unnecessarily identify them, and participation was based on their willingness to respond.

4. RESULTS

Table 1: Palliative economy

S/No	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Palliative programmes have reduced the economic hardship experienced by citizens	950	705	401	494	450
2	Palliative measures have improved the welfare of vulnerable households	765	820	415	620	380
3	Government interventions have provided temporary relief	910	750	342	490	508
4	Palliative programmes contribute positively to poverty reduction	742	801	298	497	662

Table 2: Political leadership

S/No	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Political leaders play important roles in the success of palliative programmes	704	851	196	701	548
2	There is government commitment to implement palliative programmes effectively	721	668	201	711	699
3	Political leadership influences the distribution of palliative measures	955	699	402	501	443
4	Effective leadership enhances the developmental impact of palliative programmes	1003	623	98	701	575

Table 3: Transparency, accountability and sustainable development

S/No	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Palliative materials are distributed fairly among beneficiaries	678	553	176	774	819
2	There is transparency in the implementation of palliative programmes	497	516	94	901	992
3	Accountability mechanisms improve the effectiveness of palliative programmes	897	701	239	606	557
4	Proper distribution of palliative measures promotes sustainable development	1026	871	105	417	581

Research Question 1: To what extent do palliative economic programmes contribute to sustainable development in Nigeria?

Table 4: Analysis of Palliative Economy

S/No	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Palliative programmes have reduced the economic hardship experienced by citizens	3.40	1.45	Accepted
2	Palliative measures have improved the welfare of vulnerable households	3.32	1.38	Accepted
3	Government interventions have provided temporary relief	3.35	1.48	Accepted
4	Palliative programmes contribute positively to poverty reduction	3.15	1.51	Accepted

Grand Mean 3.31 1.46 Accepted

The results indicate a generally favourable perception of the palliative programmes. All four statements recorded mean scores above the 3.00 benchmark, with an overall mean of 3.31. Respondents agreed that the interventions reduced economic hardship, improved the welfare of vulnerable households, provided temporary relief and contributed to poverty reduction. The highest assessment concerned the reduction of immediate economic hardship, with a mean of 3.40, while the lowest was recorded for the contribution to poverty reduction, with a mean of 3.15. This pattern suggests that respondents see palliatives primarily as a short-term buffer against economic pressure rather than as a complete solution to poverty.

The finding is consistent with the World Bank (2024), which notes that social protection measures can cushion poor households against economic shocks and protect consumption. It also agrees with Barrientos and Hulme (2008), who found that social assistance can reduce poverty and improve access to essential services. However, the relatively modest mean for poverty reduction supports the argument that palliatives alone may not bring lasting changes in household economic conditions. Nwosa (2023) similarly reported that intervention programmes in Nigeria provided temporary relief but had limited effects on long-term poverty reduction. The implication is that palliative assistance should be linked to employment creation, productive investment and other measures that strengthen household earning capacity.

Research Question 2: How does political leadership influence the design, implementation and effectiveness of palliative interventions in Nigeria?

Table 5: Analysis of Political Leadership

S/No	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Political leaders play important roles in the success of palliative programmes	3.15	1.47	Accepted
2	There is government commitment to implement palliative programmes effectively	3.00	1.53	Accepted
3	Political leadership influences the distribution	3.41	1.45	Accepted
4	Effective leadership enhances the developmental impact of palliative programmes	3.26	1.57	Accepted

Grand Mean 3.21 1.51 Accepted

The results show that respondents regarded political leadership as an important determinant of palliative programme outcomes. The overall mean of 3.21 was above the decision benchmark. Political leadership influencing distribution recorded the highest mean of 3.41, followed by the view that effective leadership improves the developmental impact of palliative programmes, with a mean of 3.26. The statement concerning government commitment recorded exactly 3.00, indicating a relatively cautious assessment of the government's commitment to implementation.

These results support Kaufmann et al. (2011), who identified government effectiveness and accountability as important components of development performance. They are also consistent with Rotberg (2014), who emphasizes strategic planning, transparency and responsible resource management in effective leadership. The findings further agree with Ezeani and Nnamani (2022), who reported that leadership quality affected the

implementation of poverty-alleviation programmes in Nigeria. The present result therefore suggests that the effectiveness of palliative measures cannot be separated from the decisions and conduct of those responsible for their design, funding, distribution and monitoring.

Research Question 3: What effect do transparency, accountability and equitable distribution of palliative measures have on sustainable development outcomes in Nigeria?

Table 6: Analysis of Transparency, Accountability and Sustainable Development

S/No	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Palliative materials are distributed fairly among beneficiaries	2.83	1.5	Rejected
2	There is transparency in the implementation of palliative programmes	2.54	1.50	Rejected
3	Accountability mechanisms improve the effectiveness	3.26	1.52	Accepted
4	Proper distribution of palliative measures promotes sustainable development	3.45	1.54	Accepted

Grand Mean 3.02 1.53 Accepted

The findings present a mixed picture of governance in the administration of palliative programmes. Respondents rejected the statements that palliative materials were fairly distributed and that implementation was transparent, with mean scores of 2.83 and 2.54 respectively. At the same time, they agreed that accountability mechanisms improve programme effectiveness (3.26) and that proper distribution of palliative measures promotes sustainable development (3.45). The overall mean of 3.02 is only slightly above the decision benchmark, indicating that the positive assessment of accountability and proper distribution was tempered by concerns about current practice.

This finding is consistent with Ojo and Ibrahim (2023), who identified political patronage, weak monitoring and inadequate beneficiary databases as obstacles to effective social intervention in Nigeria. It also corresponds with Okeke (2024), who found that equitable distribution improved programme effectiveness and public satisfaction. The results reinforce the argument of Kaufmann et al. (2011) that accountability and effective institutions are important for converting public expenditure into meaningful development outcomes. Thus, the issue is not simply whether government provides palliatives, but whether the resources are distributed fairly, monitored properly and managed in a manner that citizens can trust.

Findings

1. Respondents perceived palliative programmes as contributing to the reduction of economic hardship, improvement of household welfare, provision of temporary relief and reduction of poverty, with a grand mean of 3.31.
2. Political leadership was perceived to have a significant influence on the implementation, distribution and developmental effectiveness of palliative programmes, with a grand mean of 3.21.
3. Respondents expressed concerns about fairness and transparency in programme implementation, although they agreed that accountability mechanisms and proper distribution can improve sustainable development outcomes. The overall mean was 3.02.

Taken together, the findings suggest that palliative interventions are useful in easing immediate economic pressure, but their broader developmental value depends on the quality of governance surrounding them. The results point particularly to the need for transparent administration, credible beneficiary identification, effective monitoring and fair distribution.

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study examined the relationship between palliative economy, political leadership and sustainable development in Nigeria. The evidence from the respondents indicates that palliative programmes have provided some relief from economic hardship, improved household welfare and contributed to poverty reduction, although their effects are more apparent in the short term. The grand mean of 3.31 reflects this generally positive assessment.

The study also established that political leadership is important to the success of palliative programmes. Respondents considered leadership relevant to programme implementation, distribution and developmental outcomes, producing a grand mean of 3.21.

Responses concerning transparency and accountability were mixed. While respondents recognized the value of accountability mechanisms and proper distribution, they were not satisfied with the fairness of distribution or the level of transparency in implementation. This indicates that governance weaknesses may limit the benefits that palliative programmes could otherwise deliver.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that palliative programmes remain useful for reducing the immediate burden of economic hardship among vulnerable Nigerians. However, their capacity to support sustainable development depends on how they are designed, implemented and

monitored. Political leadership, transparency, accountability and equitable distribution are therefore central to the effectiveness of these interventions. Palliatives should not be treated as a substitute for policies that create jobs, strengthen productive capacity and address the structural causes of poverty. A stronger institutional framework is required if short-term assistance is to contribute to longer-term development.

5.3 Recommendations

1. **Strengthen Transparency Mechanisms:** Government should improve monitoring, documentation and public reporting so that citizens can track the distribution and use of palliative resources and reduce opportunities for diversion or political interference.
2. **Promote Accountability:** Independent oversight institutions, civil society organisations and community representatives should participate more actively in monitoring programme implementation and reporting irregularities.
3. **Enhance Political Commitment:** Political leaders at all levels should demonstrate stronger commitment to programme objectives and comply with established guidelines for the selection, distribution and monitoring of palliative interventions.
4. **Ensure Equitable Distribution:** Beneficiary identification and resource allocation should be based on clear, objective and verifiable criteria that promote fairness and inclusion.
5. **Integrate Palliatives with Long-Term Development Policies:** Palliative programmes should be complemented by policies that expand employment, support entrepreneurship, improve productive capacity, reduce poverty and strengthen social welfare systems.

If implemented consistently, these measures would help government move from a predominantly short-term response to economic hardship toward an approach in which palliative assistance also supports resilience, productive participation and sustainable development.

REFERENCES

- Adebayo, A. A., & Ojo, T. O. (2024). Social intervention programmes and welfare outcomes in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, 66(1), 45–61.
- Ake, C. (1996). *Democracy and development in Africa*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Alesina, A., & Rodrik, D. (1994). Distributive politics and economic growth. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 109(2), 465–490. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2118470>
- Barrientos, A., & Hulme, D. (2008). *Social protection for the poor and poorest: Concepts, policies and politics*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Brundtland Commission. (1987). *Our common future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ezeani, E. O., & Nnamani, D. O. (2022). Governance and the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria. *African Journal of Public Administration*, 14(2), 88–102.
- Fosu, A. K. (2018). Governance and development in Africa: Progress, challenges and future directions. *Journal of African Economies*, 27(1), 4–17.
- Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., & Mastruzzi, M. (2011). The worldwide governance indicators: Methodology and analytical issues. *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law*, 3(2), 220–246.
- North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nwosa, P. I. (2023). Economic reforms, social protection and poverty reduction in Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Development Studies*, 11(3), 23–37.
- Ojo, A. A., & Ibrahim, M. (2023). Transparency and public sector intervention programmes in Nigeria. *International Journal of Public Policy and Administration*, 8(4), 55–70.
- Okeke, C. N. (2024). Equitable distribution of social welfare programmes and sustainable development in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Development Studies*, 19(1), 101–118.
- Rotberg, R. I. (2014). Good governance means performance and results. *Governance Journal*, 27(3), 511–518.
- Todaro, M. P., & Smith, S. C. (2021). *Economic development* (13th ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson Education.

Transparency International. (2023). Corruption perceptions index 2023. Transparency International.

United Nations. (2015). Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development. United Nations.

World Bank. (2024). Nigeria development update: Building resilience amid economic reforms. Washington, DC: World Bank.