Executive Summary

Nigeria, like many other countries, is faced with multifaceted challenges on its journey to achieve the SDGs. In 2023, Nigeria ranked 146 on the SDG index and scored 54.3 per cent on her level of achieving the SDGs as opposed to Tunisia’s 72.50 per cent (highest in Africa), SDGs Index Rankings. On the other hand, young people accounting for a population of 1.2 billion worldwide, and 151 million in Nigeria have been at the forefront of driving the SDGs due to their energy, creativity, potential and innovation. The Youth SDGs Cafe which started in 2018 as a partnership with the United Nations Information Centre and the United Nations Association of Nigeria was a monthly physical meetup with young people, sustainability professionals and youth stakeholders majoring on different topics around sustainability and the SDGs and actions young people can take. It will now
take a quarterly virtual mode of learning, exposing young people to experts and thought leaders in the field of sustainable development. The aim of which is to maximise the engagement and impact of young people in driving sustainable development.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), comprising 17 global objectives established by the United Nations, offer a comprehensive framework for achieving sustainable and inclusive development worldwide. To be able to game up and level up, knowing reasons for embracing and advocating for the SDGs is paramount as a pathway from poverty to empowerment.

Youth SDGs Cafe Main Event

The Youth SDGs Cafe kicked off with introductions from the NGYouthSDGs Communications Associate Praise Okezie who welcomed participants and gave a brief overview of the session highlighting the biography of the session facilitator Ruth Lyons (the deputy head of the Sustainable Development and Financing Team in the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Part of the organisations represented at the event were Leap Africa, Youth Hub Africa, WASH and others.
Ruth Lyons commenced the session by sharing the fact that the SDGs have been off-track due to several challenges such as Covid19, and wars across the world; however, the momentum is being picked up. She shared a short story of her 13-year-old sister who is an example of a young change-maker who led the awareness of recycling in her school to drive the SDGs. She emphasised that no matter where you find yourself as an individual, you can play a role in driving change. During the session, Ruth stated the importance of the SDGs, one of which is that they provide a vision and common language to describe our efforts in championing change. In line with this is the SDGs being backed by 8.5 million citizens and many businesses, civil society organisations, religious organisations, and academic institutions showed an interest in ensuring meaningful change across the world.

During the session, she shared compelling reasons to drive the SDGs as they serve as a partnership platform that applies universally to every country, brings a diverse range of skill sets, opinions and perspectives to the table, brings together people who might not agree on certain things to work together for the SDGs and also aids learning, sharing and collaboration. Ruth also elaborated on the need for financial support which should be channelled to make a greater impact on game changers for the SDGs.

Additionally, Ruth highlighted the integration of climate change and development within the SDGs, emphasising the acknowledgment of the interdependence of environmental and social goals. This integration effectively addresses critical issues and fosters sustainable development practices. Central to Ruth's statement was the SDGs' promise of leaving no one behind. She emphasised the commitment to inclusivity and addressing the needs of marginalised groups, advocating for systematic identification and resolution of root causes of exclusion to deliver prosperity and sound policy.

Furthermore, Ruth discussed the necessity for creativity and innovation in achieving the SDGs, emphasising the cultivation of new and innovative solutions to address complex challenges. She also highlighted the clear targets, measures, and accountability mechanisms provided by the SDGs, enhancing stakeholder accountability at all levels.

Ruth Lyons engaged with the audience as the participants were excited about the session. Questions were asked, contributions made, and connections through the session. Ruth Lyons explored the concept of intentionality and being bold with our actions while expanding our horizons. She encouraged the participants to find ways of not giving up.

The Operations Associate, Ocheche Johnson took the closing remarks encouraging participants to continue to play a role in driving the SDGs. The event was successful as the feedback from the Zoom platform and NGYouthSDGs platforms was remarkable. It was a
great time for young change makers, advocates, and youths to collaborate, and take direct steps towards achieving the SDGs.

Number of Attendees
Zoom: 66
YouTube: 122 Views
Overall, how would you rate the session in terms of its impact on your understanding and motivation to contribute to sustainable development efforts? (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest)

33 responses

Did the session enhance your understanding of the key concepts related to sustainable development and poverty alleviation?

33 responses

Did you find the expertise of the speaker valuable in addressing the topic of "From Poverty to Power: Learnings from Sustainable Development"?

33 responses