

## **Physical Fitness: A Prerequisite for Achieving the Transformation Agenda of Federal Government of Nigeria**

Donatus A. Aniodo

### **Abstract**

One of the cardinal goals of the Federal Government of Nigeria is the transformation of the economy such that it becomes one of the first twenty biggest economies in the world. The government believes that this can be achieved by improving the key sectors of the economy. This paper reviewed the key sectors of the economy among which are: agriculture, water resources, solid minerals, manufacturing, culture, tourism and entertainment, trade and investments. Improving these sectors requires among others the improvement of the physical fitness of the work force which is necessary for the improvement of productivity within each sector. It was based on that the paper discussed physical fitness of the workforce in relation to productivity in the various sectors. It was recommended that employers of labour in Nigeria should ensure that physical activities leading to physical fitness are part of the training and retraining programmes of the workforce so as to improve productivity and achieve transformation of the economy.

### **Introduction**

Transformation agenda is a programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria led by Dr. Goodluck Jonathan. This programme of transformation is meant to actualize the Federal Government of Nigeria's economic growth agenda. It is meant to enable Nigeria rank as one of the 20 largest economies of the world by 2020 (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2011). The Federal Government of Nigeria is passionate about the transformation agenda hence it is much talked about both by public officers and those in the private sector

Achieving the 20:2020 goal is an uphill task. According to Ardo (2012), for any nation to achieve that goal more goods and services must live the nation more than it comes into the nation. Ardo (2012) also pointed out that the nation must produce quality goods and services to be able to cope with the competition from other nations. Attaining vision 20:2020 through the transformation agenda is a serious business for it is required that every sector of Nigeria economic must be making impact globally. That means Nigeria being a developing nation must improve on every sector to be able to achieve this lofty goal.

Global competitiveness demands that indigenous companies should grow and out grow local market and compete favourably with other companies in the international market According to Ardo (2012) Nigerian companies in area of agriculture, pharmaceutical, oil and gas, automobiles, communications, banking, shipping, construction, textile, insurance and other sectors should exist and make profit in major

countries of the world. It is the level of impact that Nigeria economy is making in the global world that could help in getting Nigeria to becoming one of the first twenty largest economies of the world by the year 2020.

The whole idea of becoming one of the 20 largest economies in the world is a wonderful one. However this may not be possible except we first improve in key areas of our domestic economy. This is because it is the overflow of the domestic economy that could impact on the country's economy among the committee of nations. Some of the key areas calling for attention in Nigeria which fall under what is known as the real sector are: agriculture, water resources, solid minerals, manufacturing, culture, tourism and entertainment, trade and investments.

Achieving success in the key areas of our national live is very possible. There may be several things that could be done in different areas but very crucial one is possessing physical fitness. Physical fitness is everything. It is needed in every endeavour and all human beings need it to be able to accomplish anything meaningful. Physical fitness according to Howely and Frank(2013) is a state of wellbeing with low risk of premature health problems and energy to participate in a variety of physical activities. Physical fitness can be acquired through training and there are several training approaches. Some of them are formal like jogging organized for the purpose of keeping fit while some others are informal such as gardening, manual washing of clothes, bathing the traditional way, walking and so on. Informal physical activities are performed not for the purpose of fitness but end up improving physical fitness (Aniodo, 2011) Every individual requires physical activities to maintain health and fitness. Experts recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic physical activities per week or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity per week (National Institute for Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases, 2010). Examples of moderate-intensity activity include walking, gardening and water aerobic. Vigorous intensity activities are bicycling for at least 10 miles per hour, heavy gardening, jogging or running, race walking, rock climbing and swimming laps (Weight control information network 2010).

Physical fitness has several components which are necessary for enhancing productivity. Aniodo (2011) classified them as health related, health-skill related and skill related fitness. Among the health related fitness components are heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature. Health- skill related components include muscle strength, muscle endurance, flexibility, body composition and cardiorespiratory endurance (2011). These various components of fitness are needed by Nigeria worker in different sectors at varying degrees. A better trained labour is more efficient in production (Ottawa, 2006) and can contribute more is growing the real sector of the economy.

### **Agricultural sector and physical fitness**

The agricultural sector is a very important part of the real sector of Nigeria economy. The main thrust of the agricultural policy in Nigeria according to FGN (2011) is food security and sustainable access, availability and affordability of quality food to all Nigerians. People in the area of food production require a level of fitness to be able to function even if mechanized farming is involved (Aniodo, 2006). Agricultural activities are tedious and require a lot of strength, muscle endurance, flexibility and cardiorespiratory endurance which are all health related components of fitness. Taking food or agricultural produce from the farm to the consumers requires a great deal of fitness. It is also important to note

that agricultural activities are useful in keeping fit and acts as informal type of physical activity.

### **Water resources sector and physical fitness**

Water is an essential need of every individual. It is needed in large quantity for sustenance of life and indeed life processes. The water resources sector is one of the largest of the real sector of the Nigerian economy. The water resources sector in collaboration with the agricultural sector is expected to provide water for irrigation for crop production, fish farming and safe drinking water. Collaboration with the power sector will bring about power generation which is needed to power a lot of other sectors. Achieving the goals of these collaborations require a great deal of human capital. These human capitals can only be made effective and efficient if physically fit. Aniodo (2010) pointed out that physical fitness is a pathway to human capital development. It means that human capital can be improved through physical fitness activities such as jogging, brisk walking and swimming. Through effective human capital the goal of the water resources sector which is to make quality water available where they are needed could be achieved (FGN, 2011).

### **Solid mineral sector and physical fitness**

Solid mineral sector is another area Nigeria can attract a huge amount of revenue both from within and from outside the country. Solid mineral deposits abound in many parts of the country. A good number of them have not been explored. If the Federal Government of Nigeria wishes to achieve the goal of becoming one of the first twenty biggest economy of the world 2020 more concerted effort must be made in the area of harnessing the abundant solid mineral resources in the land. This means among other things that producing a physically fitness workforce that can approach the business of mining more proactively to achieve the set goal.

The workforce of the solid mineral sector is a very important component of the productive base of the sector. Training the ability and dexterity of the workforce will go a long way in developing the capacity of the workforce (Mishra, 2003). This no doubt increases productivity and contribute to helping Nigeria attain the goal of becoming one of the 20 biggest economies of the world by the year 2020.

### **Culture, tourism and entertainment sector and physical fitness**

Culture, tourism and entertainment is one sector with enormous potentials of making Nigeria one of the biggest economies of the world in the very near future. Culture is seen as the way people live in a society or group knowledge handed down from one generation to another generation (Iyande & Yusufu 2006). Culture equally entails the expected behavior of people such as the culture of honesty, discipline, respectfulness, sincerity, and godliness. These are cultural values Nigeria stands to market to the world if the country is able to properly harness and package them for the world to appreciate.

The art of keeping fit is an expected cultural behavior with enormous internal and export value. Physical fitness has economic value if the country can develop the sport and fitness culture she can derive some foreign exchange by exporting sports persons who are physically fit. A good number of footballers today earn good money abroad not

only because of their enormous skills but also because of the culture of fitness which they have acquired (Aniodo, 2011).

Tourism is related to culture. As there are cultural values which Nigeria can sale to the whole world so are enormous tourism potentials in the country that the world would appreciate if properly presented to the world. Tourism according to Longman Dictionary of contemporary English (1995) is the business of providing something for people to do, places for them to stay while they are on holiday.

Tourism potentials can be enhanced by level of physical fitness. Physical fitness facilities can serve as tourism facilities. The author has been opportune to visit so many tourist centres in Nigeria such as Tinapa Business Resort Calabar, Cross River State, Rojenny Tourist village, Oba, Anambra State, Gprdons Hotels and Resort, Abraka, Delta State, Enugu Sports Club, Enugu State, Nike Lake Hotels, Enugu, Enugu State Olumo Abeokuta, Ogun State, Manpati hill Lokoja, Kogi State and several stadia in Nigeria. In all of them there is a blend between physical fitness facilities and tourism facilities. The workforce expected to run the tourism sector must also be physically fit to enable them meet with the physical challenges of the tourism industry.

Related to tourism is entertainment industry. Entertainment is one area where Nigeria seem to have the potential to rule the world. Just like footballers are being exported currently entertainers can also be exported. The entertainer just like the footballer must maintain a level of fitness whether he is to be exported or not. A physically fit workforce can attract huge amount of revenue and foreign exchange for Nigeria in the culture, tourism and entertainment sector. This will in no small way contribute to Nigeria achieving the vision of becoming one of the first 20 biggest economies of the world by the year 2020.

### **Manufacturing sector and physical fitness**

Manufacturing is another sector with enormous activities taking place. It is one area where Nigeria can compete favourably with the rest of the world if the population is actively involved. The manufacturing sector is meant to achieve rapid and sustained economic growth through broadening the nation's productive base, promote private sector investments through the creation of an enabling environment. For substantial improvement in efficiency, productivity and profitability to occur significantly, there should be increased local content in manufacturing, ensuring the global competitiveness for manufactured goods and making Nigeria manufactured goods major foreign exchange earner. (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2011).

Manufacturing at all level can be physically demanding. People in the productive sector require high level of fitness. Bampgarner & Jackson (1999) identified fitness needs which the individual requires to be able to function effectively and achieve her objectives. Among such needs are aerobic capacity, body composition, flexibility, muscle strength and muscle endurance. The manufacturing population of Nigeria needs to meet these physical fitness needs to be able to increase her manufacturing activities. Physical fitness stimulates local development through local sport events, producing low-cost and affordable sporting goods and through athletes' remittances (Getunik, 2013). This local manufacturing could be developed into international standard. These may help Nigeria in achieving the goal of becoming one of the first 20 biggest economies of the world by the year 2020.

### **Trade and investment and physical fitness**

Trade and investment opportunities exist in Nigeria. The focus in this area is to reflect on elements that are necessary for addressing the environment, energy, rural development and women entrepreneurship, and other issues that specially address the roles of foreign direct investment and poverty alleviation (FGN, 2011). Excelling in these areas requires that the individuals who are involved possess minimum level of physical fitness that would enable him or her to cope with the stress involved in trade since it is the key to being able to do what you want to do (Fitness for all, 2012). The operators and workforce in the trade and investment sector require the health and health-skill related components of fitness since all human beings require them for daily living (Aniodo, 2011). If this is achieved the objective of the trade and investment sector and ultimate goal of Nigeria becoming one of the first twenty biggest economies of the world could be achieved.

### **Summary and conclusion**

Physical fitness is the key to one being able to handle his or her day to day activities. Nigeria achieving vision 20:2020 requires reasonable level of physical fitness on the part of the citizenry. Hence the operators of the real sector of the Nigeria economy need to be driven by a physically fit population.

### **Recommendations**

It was recommended that:

1. Employers of labour in Nigeria should ensure that physical activities leading to physical fitness are part of the training and retraining programmes of the workforce so as to improve productivity and achieve transformation of the economy.
2. Nigerian governments should encourage people all over Nigeria to imbibe the culture of keeping fit by making policies that could encourage the working class of the population to engage in fitness activities as it will help sustain high productivity from generation to generation.
3. Operations of the private sector of the economy should invest in the physical fitness of their employees as it will improve productivity.

### **References**

- Aniodo, D. A. (2010). Physical fitness: A pathway to human capital development in Nigeria. *Journal of Nigeria Education Research Association* 15(1) 106-110.
- Aniodo D. A. (2011). Physical fitness: a pathway to longevity. Nsukka Tula Press Ltd.
- Ardo, U. (2012). Goodluck transformation agenda: A pessimist's view point. Sahara report April 30.
- Baumgartner, T.A & Jacksons, A. S (1999) Measurement for evaluation for physical education and exercise science. Dubuque: WCB Brown and Benchmark publishers.

- Federal Government of Nigeria (2011) the transformation federal government of Nigeria. Fitness for all (2012).
- Getunik (2013). Sports and economic development. <http://www.getunik.com>. retrieved on 23/5/13
- Howely, E. T. and Frank, B. D. (2013). Physical fitness. <http://www.answers.com/topic/physical-fitness> Retrieved on 07/08/13
- Iyande, S. & Yusufu, A (2006). The role of culture, ethnicity and language in national development. Journal of the national association of science, humanities and education research 4(1) 156-162.
- Longman Dictionary of contemporary English (1995). Longman dictionary of contemporary English. Harlow: Pearson Education limited.
- Mishra, S. K. (2003). Issues and problems of human resource development in NLR India/ Unpublished research work.
- National Institute for Diabetes and digestive and kidney diseases (2010). What I need to know about physical activities. National Institute for Diabetes and digestive and kidney diseases
- Tawiah, P. K. (2006). Basic economics for West Africa. Benin City: Idodo Umeh Publishers Ltd. Weight control information network (2010). Weight-loss and nutrition myths. <http://www.gov/publication/pdfs/myths.pdf>. Retrieved 18/12/2010.