Ray Onyegu 13th among the poorest

and the falling rate of food production. Nigeria has moved from a food exporter to a net importer. There is a high level of economic mismanagement, corruption, runaway inflation and rapid devaluation of the Naira.

In 1998, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) came to the following «Concluding Observations»¹ on the state of economic, social and cultural rights in Nigeria:

- «The enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights in Nigeria is being hindered by the absence of the rule of law, the existence (...) of military governments, the suspension of the Constitution in favour of ruling by decrees, and the concomitant resort to intimidation and negative effects that widespread corruption has on the functioning of government institutions.»
- «The Nigerian people are deprived of the necessary judicial protection of their human rights since the judiciary is being undermined by 'ouster clauses' attached to many military decrees as well as by the military government's refusal to implement the judiciary's decisions.»
- «The Committee is concerned about the high percentage of unemployment and underemployment among Nigerian workers, particularly among agricultural workers, due to neglect of the agricultural sector. This has led to massive migrations in search of work by agricultural workers into the cities, where they live in poverty and degrading conditions.»
- «The Committee expresses its concern that women suffer discrimination in their work places, particularly in access to employment, in promotion to higher positions and in equal pay for work of equal value.»

Nigeria has been under dictatorial military rule for 29 of the 39 years since the country achieved independence from Britain. Military rule has had far-reaching consequences for the social, economic and cultural life of its people. Despite the country’s rich natural resources, Nigeria ranks the 13th poorest nation in the world. There is a widening gap between the rate of population growth

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¹ In 1998, the CESCR and the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) reviewed Nigeria’s implementation of the two treaties they represent. Nigeria’s report to the CESCR was received as E/1990/5/Add.31. The «Concluding Observations» resulted from an examination of this report and a «Constructive Dialogue» with the Nigerian delegation and reports of various UN agencies, national (Shelter Rights Initiative also submitted a Parallel Report) and international NGOs.
COVID-19 and Development Assistance

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the global economy and development assistance. In response to the pandemic, countries and international organizations have had to prioritize health and social services. As a result, funding for development assistance has decreased.

The pandemic has also highlighted the need for greater resilience in development strategies. Financing for development must be better aligned with the needs of countries, particularly those in vulnerable situations. There is a need for a more inclusive, participatory and democratic approach to development financing.

The European Union has maintained its commitment to development assistance. However, there is a need for greater coordination and coherence across different policies and programs. This will help to ensure that funding for development assistance is used effectively and efficiently to achieve the SDGs.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic presents both challenges and opportunities for development assistance. Countries and international organizations must work together to ensure that funding for development assistance is used effectively and efficiently to achieve the SDGs.
According to Professor Onimode, Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, fiscal unitarism has serious negative implications for national development: «These include the visible and persistent under funding of the states which undermines their capacity to discharge their statutory functions, eg, with respect to the payment of minimum wages, pensions, teachers’ salaries, provisions of water and health care services, etc. In the process the economies of most states are stunted and this has been making balanced regional development impossible. Conversely, the relative over funding of the federal government has been encouraging resource waste and pervasive corruption as federal officials in Abuja, the federal capital, have to implement projects in far flung parts of Nigeria.»

Towards a New Beginning

After 16 years of uninterrupted military rule, Nigeria transitioned to a democracy on May 29th 1999. So far, not much impact has been felt, but there is hope for a new beginning.

Shelter Rights Initiative is a Nigerian NGO dedicated to the promotion of due process and basic standards in economic, social and cultural rights and having observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

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