

# IMPERATIVES OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AT THE GRASSROOTS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH EAST NIGERIA: A REVIEW



By

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## ABSTRACT

*The paper examines the strategic role of planning on sustainable development in North East Nigeria. It begins with the condition of North East Nigeria being the capital poverty of the world which is largely linked with the failure of leadership to plan well for the sustainable development of the region. This is followed by definition of a strategy ,strategic planning , and sustainable development. The various strategic planning models available for a leader to use have been examined. The ability to utilize these models for sustainable development at the grassroots at the right time have been discussed. The paper found out that the place of planning is very strategic to sustainable development of the region. This is even becoming more serious considering the new invention in automobile industry, being powered by electricity and water system technology instead of fuel. This calls for immediate planning for the future of this region to continue to be relevant as an agent of grassroots development. The paper concludes that time is running out for us especially in the North that requires immediate strategic plan. The paper recommends among others, the use of VMOSA Model of strategic planning as the conceptual framework for North East leaders. It is a framework that provides a blueprint for moving the region from poverty capital of the world to the **best region in grassroots development***

**Keywords:** Strategic planning, North East Region, leadership, models, grassroots and sustainable development

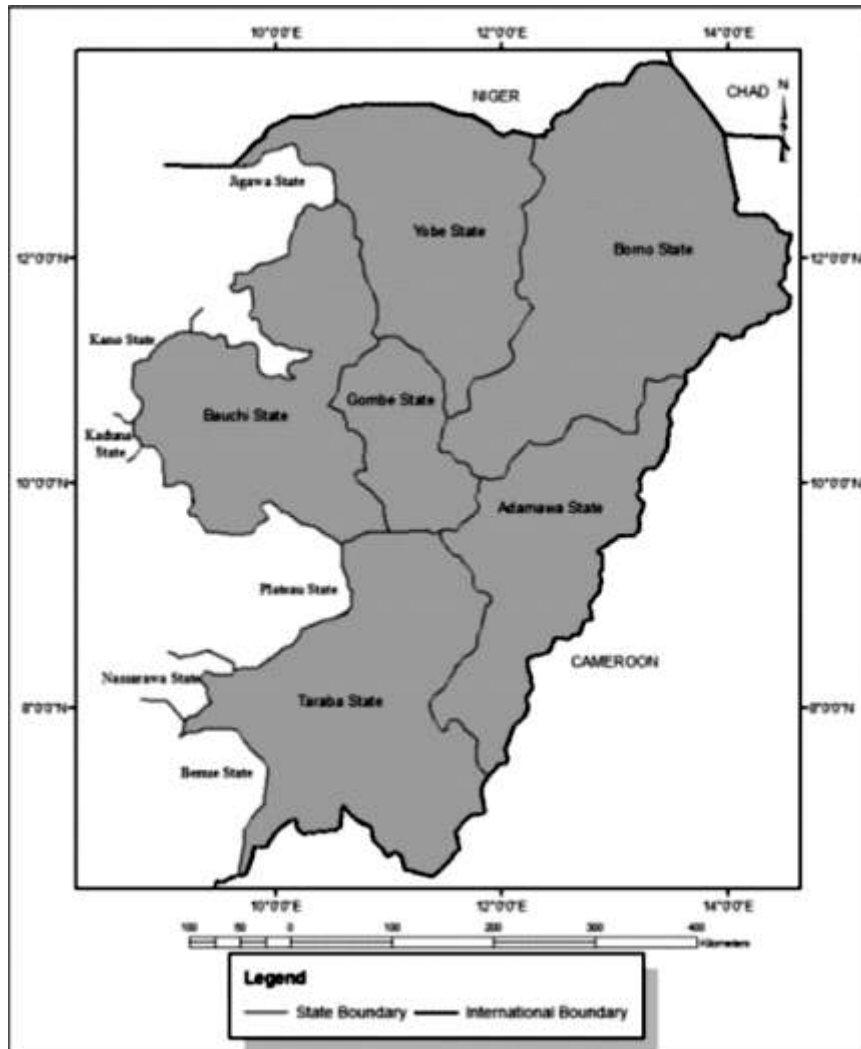
## Introduction

North East region is one of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. It is located on Latitudes  $6^{\circ}29' 0''\text{N}$  and  $13^{\circ}40' 0''\text{N}$ , Longitudes  $8^{\circ}50' 0''\text{E}$  and  $14^{\circ}35' 0''\text{E}$ . The area is located in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria with a total population of 18.9 million inhabitants based on the 2006 national census report. It shares state boundary with the following states: Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna, Plateau and Benue (Fig. 1)



Fig.1: Map of Nigeria showing North East Region

The North-Eastern region is very heterogeneous in the Nigerian Federation in terms of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. It has six states which comprises of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe State (Fig. 2)



**Fig.2: North East Nigeria showing the six states**

The region is the poorest in the country, with the lowest rates of university education. The 1970's oil boom redirected the focus of the economy, depriving the region of the investment needed to transition into large-scale mechanized agriculture. Similarly, climate change began to deprive the region of its natural resources. The Lake Chad Basin, provides water and a source of livelihood to a population of more than 30 million people, across four countries. It has been depleted by up to 90% over the past three decades,

creating significant pressure on the population. Alternative industries are difficult to develop, given the limited infrastructure and lack of human capital within the region. Endemic corruption, combined with the neo-patrimonial nature of Nigeria's institutions has robbed most of the population of basic governmental services, making it difficult to access healthcare, electricity and higher education. The private use of public institutions has exacerbated economic inequality, dividing citizens into the lucky few with access to government, and the unfortunate majority without it (Alkali, et al, 2012)

Socio-cultural factors compound this inequality open the region to Boko Haram insurgency and violence in general. Many Northern tribes have an aristocratic, patrician culture that is not conducive to social mobility through non-economic means. Inter-marriage and meaningful social connections between classes are relatively rare, providing limited opportunity to socialize one's way into the elite. Similarly, the paucity of jobs for the highly educated prevents many Northerners from working their way into prosperity. Therefore, lower and middle class individuals at university are uniquely susceptible to radical politics, stuck in the disconnect between raised expectations and a continually disappointing reality. Their education affords them political sophistication but falls short of providing real economic benefits (Alkali, et al, 2012).

The economy of the region has been seriously devastated by the activities of Boko Haram insurgency that led to the killing of thousand people and the loss of properties. This has resultantly caused a displacement of million people, loss of employment and means of livelihoods (Dlakwa, 2017). The region is now characterized by great losses of human resources, massive displacements, destruction of livelihood sources and loss of employment. Balami (2017) revealed that the incessant violent attacks in the region are functions of the economic injustice where more than 80 percent of the populace are not sure of three meals a day. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening and unemployed youths have resorted to violence in expressing their grievances. Youth unemployment is not just about lack of basic needs, it is also exclusion from the goods, services, rights, and activities which constitute the basis of citizenship. Hence, the eradication of poverty is not separated from the promotion of social inclusion. Poverty leads to frustration, ignorance, inferiority complex, aggression and violence, when the majority is poor, it inevitably leads to uprising and tension in a society (Balami, 2017).

The picture of what is happening in most communities at the grassroots especially in the North is summarized by Mustapha (2019) as follows:

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- (i). Over 10 million children are not receiving formal education in Nigeria, and the majority of these children are in the north
- (ii). Many of our youth have turned to drug abuse in search for a meaning to their lives
- (iii). Insurgency and banditry are moving like a harmattan wind and sweeping over our land
- (iv). The region is the poorest in Nigeria and being the poverty capital of the world
- (v). The north has become the factories of insecurity and poverty
- (vi). Rampaging evil of street children who will eventually be the incubators of every crisis that will bedevil the society in the future
- (vii). The despicable situation of seeing millions of street children in the north signifies a gathering critical mass of impending explosion that will give birth to unmanageable poverty and unending insecurity in our society
- (viii). We are surrounded by an ocean of unquantifiable potentiality of destruction which if the waters are not channeled to useful purpose, they will one day explode with destructive consequences
- (ix). There are an estimated 11 million street kids in the north. That means if you can gather all the street kids in the north, they can form the seventh largest country in Africa. What a calamity
- (x). High increase in population but apparently very little gain in human development. There is no significant improvement in revenue generation, oil has remained our sole source of revenue

This is the situation of most grassroots communities in the region where large percentage of her rural inhabitants are still wallowing under abject poverty, want, socio-economic penury and increasing rural-urban migration. These deplorable conditions that made Mustapha to conclude his lecture by saying “the time is running out for us especially in the north” This is even becoming more serious considering the new invention in automobile industry, being powered by electricity and water system technology instead of fuel. What will happen to our oil the most important source of our revenue? What happens to the monthly allocations to federal, states and local government councils from this revenue source? If we fold our hands and refuse to plan now, it will be very costly to pay for it in the future. Hence, the necessity for strategic planning at the grassroots to stimulate livelihood opportunities for sustainable development of the communities. It provides a comprehensive

planning tool that can help the region by providing a blueprint for moving from dreams to grassroots development. It is therefore imperative to clarify major concepts in the study to situate them within the context of our analysis

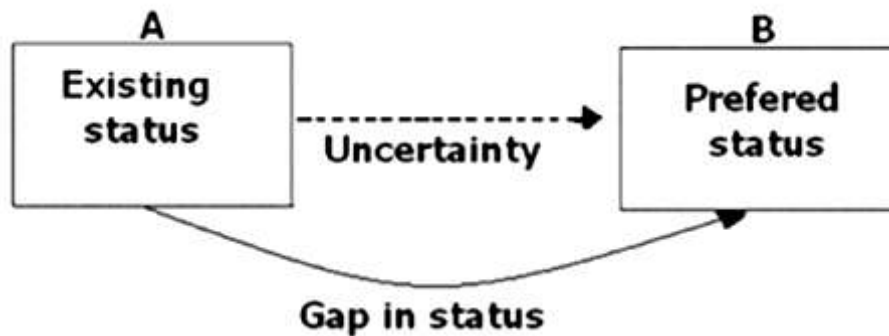
### **Conceptual Clarifications**

**Strategy** generally involves setting goals, determining actions to achieve the goals, and mobilizing resources to execute the actions. A strategy describes how the ends (goals) will be achieved by the means (resources). A strategy is a best choice based on careful analysis on how the organization wants to progress in view of resources, strengths and constraints (Adindu, 2007)

**Strategic planning** - A strategic plan is founded on a vision and continues long after the initial groundwork is set. It's a common sense tool that sets a clear path for the future, while also allowing for your vision to mature and change as time passes (Snell and Bohlander, 2010). It is an organization's process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy. Conversely, Misheliza (1995), observed that strategic planning is the process of making important decisions which have significant impact on the ability of an organization to take opportunities and minimize threats in its environment. Strategic planning is a systematic process by which you identify:

- (i) why the organization exists?
- (ii) whom it serves,
- (iii) what benefits will be derived from the services it provides, and
- (iv) the vision your administration has regarding how citizens needs can best be served. The strategic plan is the result of this process, and serves as a blueprint for how your organization will achieve this vision (Mullins, 2007)

The aim of strategic planning is to develop methods for influencing and controlling or shaping the future of an organization. It helps simplify decisions making processes so that management can respond quickly to any changes which may occur in the organization's environment (Ezeali and Esiagu, 2009). It is an exercise undertaken by executive to understand their organizational strengths and weaknesses as well as to make attempts to fit the organization with its ever changing environment over a prolonged period of time. It is a means to help management gain increasing control over the destiny of their organizations. It is also the manifestation of an organization's determination to be the master of its own future. That is, to penetrate the darkness of uncertainty and elimination of probability (Mbaya, 2017). This point could be illustrated by Fig. 3 below:



**Fig 3: The uncertainty status from the existing status to the Prefered status**

Fig.3 shows the relationship between the existing and the preferred status. Strategic planning will help us to penetrate into the darkness of uncertainty from the existing status to the preferred status (Mbaya, 2017)

In drawing strategic plans, managers ask themselves the following questions:

1. Where are we now?
2. Where have we been?
3. Where do we want to go?
4. What are our external threats?
5. What are our internal threats?
6. Who are our competitors?
7. What are their strengths and weaknesses?
8. How do we get over the constraints and take advantage of the weaknesses of our competitors

To answer the above questions strategic planners usually set out broad scenarios, the tactical plan and the sub-goals for their corporations. These are coordinated to serve as effective feedback mechanism. This could further be illustrated by Fig. 4 below:



**Fig.4: The relationship among Broad, Tactical and Sub-goals plan.**

Fig.4 shows the operation of strategic planning. The broad scenarios set for the organization could only be achieved through the utilization of the tactical and sub-goals plans. Performing strategic planning is a process which composed of the following elements:

1. Establishing statement of corporate mission and objectives.
2. Scanning the external environment.
3. Analysis of company strengths and weaknesses.
4. Generating alternative strategies
5. Choice of strategy
6. Programming implementation of the chosen strategy; and
7. Controlling performance to conform to plans.

The model provides for a means of feedbacks and evaluation of the various steps. This is presented by the aid of Fig.5 below:



**Fig. 5: Elements of the strategic planning process adapted from Msheliza, 1995.**



Fig 5 shows the relationship among these elements. It serves as a means of simplifying a complex set of events (activities) and clarify the flow of information for decision-making (Mbaya, 2017)

**Strategic planning at the Grassroots Governance** refers to the process of identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats or challenges of all the local government councils in the region in order to define its mission and objectives, identify stakeholders and set up strategies that improve the efficiency of the administrative organization. This implies that the complexity of community problems as listed in the introduction requires transfers of information and in this connection the strategic planning allows to conceptualize a vision of the councils, formulate goals to achieve and develop projects for the achievement of the objectives.

**Sustainable development** is a type of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987). The primary objective of sustainable development in this context is to reduce the absolute poverty of the region through providing lasting and secure livelihoods that minimize resource depletion, environmental degradation, cultural disruption and social instability. Sustainable development could be seen as development which provides opportunities to allow everyone fulfill their potentials, social justice, environmental protection and the skills that businesses demand and require – now and in the future.

**The need for a strategic planning in the North East Nigeria**

- (i) For the region to come out as the poorest in Nigeria and being the poverty capital of the world. According to Mustapha considering the above listed problems in the introduction, the time is running out for us in the north. If we refused to plan now, insurgency worse than Boko Haram will emerge
- (ii) From the foregoing problems listed in the introduction, it is clear that if the region refuses to plan or act now communities in the region will be caught up in what Wagner Nurkse calls “a vicious cycle of poverty” which makes sustainable development exceedingly difficult. This cycle is depicted by Fig. 6 below

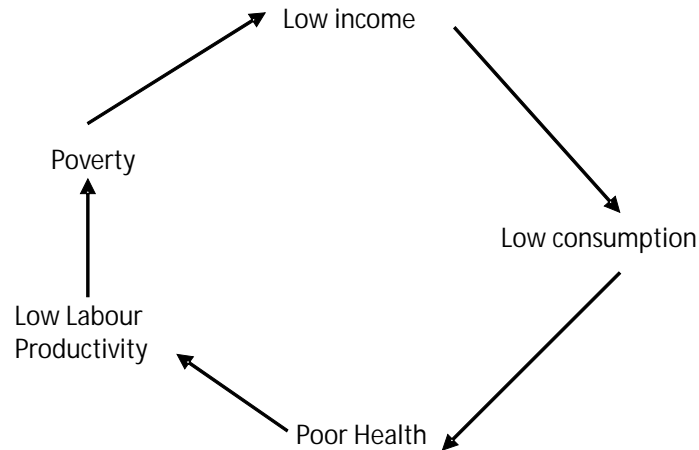


Fig 6: The Vicious Cycle of Poverty adapted from Mbaya, 2013

Fig. 6 indicates that sustainable development will not be possible if the issue of poverty among our people is not addressed. Jhingan (2011) says poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere. This is in line with what Karlmarx said "all human activities revolve around economic factor" This implies that socio-economic development in the region will not succeed if effective plan is not carried out to stimulate employment and livelihood opportunities in local government areas in the six states to improve their economic factor.

- (iii) **Strategic planning yields results:** A strategic plan provides a realistic, workable framework that is built upon a foundation of constant improvement. Built into the plan are milestones that help gauge your progress in service delivery to the community members
- (iv) **Strategic planning is an invaluable managerial tool:** Balancing daily, tactical and long-term operations with defined, and often limited resources is complex. A strategic plan assists you in determining how to perform work more efficiently and effectively, while staying within financial parameters.
- (v) **Strategic planning is adaptable to a changing environment:** A multi-year plan will, inevitably, be affected by the changing internal and external environments (e.g **the fluctuation of oil revenue since virtually no IGR**). Therefore, you need to have

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a framework that is flexible enough to accommodate flux, while at the same time, strong enough to adhere to your basic mission and objectives.

- (vi) **Strategic planning is responsive to citizens' needs:** A successful strategic plan includes those priorities that are important to the citizens. Because citizen input is a vital component in the process, the ability of the strategic plan to address their needs is great. This is because strategic objectives are formulated after SWOT and PESTLE analysis have been carried out
- (vii) **Strategic planning narrows the communication gap:** Dialogue among all of the affected parties ensures a narrowing of potential communication gaps. As said, strategic planning is a participatory tool that cannot function unless there is a two-way, open exchange of ideas. It requires the participation of key stakeholders and strategic team
- (viii) **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Each state in the region has different needs and the strategic plan allows for specific objectives and parameters that are specialized and appropriate to each state.. Elements contained within a strategic plan are not “carved in stone” and do not end once specific objectives and goals are put on paper. It is on-going process that is designed to be refined based on changing internal and external conditions.
- (ix) **Accountability:** With the fluctuation of oil revenue and poor IGR mobilization, a solid strategic plan with definite objectives, financial targets and monitoring tools in place, ensures accountability.
- (x) **Participatory:** A good strategic plan involves people at all levels of government, or within the department, and requires input from everyone if it is to succeed. By involving more people among the various levels, you are fostering teamwork and a sense of ownership (Manpaa and Joel, 2018). The strategic planning process should involve the public as well. Public forums, surveys and task forces are just a few ways that a community can involve residents. In order to become “ready,” you will have to organize the “Strategic Planning Team.” A strategic planning team is the human foundation of the entire project and serves as the sponsor for the plan.

- (xi) **The Structure of the Strategic Plan:** A structure is put into motion to provide participants with information at various levels related to the issues to be discussed especially the formulation of the vision, mission, core values, strategic objectives and the implementation. The structure mobilizes the main actors of politics, administration, the economy and the local citizenry to contribute to the region's economic and social development. Being an instrument for long-term planning, the municipal institution assumes the whole process and is defined as a Plan supported by the participation of different stakeholders such as those interested in public affairs and who are willing to act as representatives of a wider set of neighbors (associations) actors; representatives of the interests in the city (entrepreneurs and NGOs); elected officials and political parties; managers and representatives of public employees; expert technicians, and a host of others.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The foregoing benefits suggests the necessity of strategic planning in the region to stimulate sustainable development. There are various models of strategic planning and thousands of iterations of these models to use. However, for the purpose of this study nine models will be reviewed and at the end VMOSA model is adopted as the theoretical guide for this study.

#### **1-Basic Strategic Planning Model**

This model is often effective for new organizations that do not have much prior experience doing strategic planning. As the name implies, this is the most basic type of strategic planning that organizations can use to become familiar with the process and then expound on it in the future as they become more comfortable with the process and more established as an organization (Snell and Bohlander, 2010). The common elements of this model are as follows:

1. Identifying the purpose of the organization and developing a mission statement.
2. Creating general goals for the organization to accomplish the mission.
3. Identifying specific action steps to implement each goal.
4. Evaluating and updating the plan over time.
5. It is therefore, recommended for new and small organizations

## **2-Issue-based or Goal-based Planning**

This is an enhancement of the basic model and is often used by organizations that are more established and want to go deeper into the strategic planning process. This model starts off with a SWOT analysis, which is an assessment of the internal and external forces that play on the organization. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Second, the stakeholders identify the major issues or goals on which the organization will focus and prioritize these issues and goals. Third, the mission, vision, and values of the organization should be reviewed and updated to be in line with the issues and goals of the organization. Fourth, develop action plans for the goals and issues that detail the steps necessary to implement the goal. An effective way of writing action plans is using a process called SMART goals where goals are Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Results-oriented, and Time-bound. The basic elements of this model are as follows:

1. Identify SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). SWOT can exist both within and outside an organization.
2. Identify and prioritize major problems and goals. Go through the SWOT list and identify the organization's goals and the problems that might prevent goals from being reached.
3. Design major strategies (or programs) to address problems and goals.
4. Design or update the organization's mission statement (some organizations may do this step first).
5. Establish action plans (i.e., objectives, resource needs, roles, and responsibilities for implementation).
6. Create a strategic plan. A strategic plan contains all the documentation assembled so far. It also provides a record of problems, goals, strategies, updated mission statement, action plans, and any identified SWOT.
7. Develop a yearly operating plan. Decide which milestones the organization must reach by the end of each operating year.
8. Develop and authorize budget for the first year.
9. Conduct first year operations.
10. Monitor/review/evaluate/update Strategic Plan.
11. The model is recommended for organizations that have very limited resources and have major issues to address (Adindu, 2007)

## **3-Alignment Model**

The focus of this model is ensuring alignment between the organization's mission and its resources to be able to effectively implement the

mission. This model can be useful to organizations that want to fine tune their goals or find out why their goals are not achieving the impact they desired. This process begins with the stakeholders reviewing the organization's mission, goals, resources, and needed support. There is a discussion of what is working well and what needs adjustment. The bulk of the planning process focuses on the type of adjustments that need to be made and how they should be made and this is detailed in the plan. The steps are as follows:

1. Outline the organization's mission, programs, resources, and needed support.
2. Identify what is working well and what needs adjustment.
3. Identify how these adjustments should be made.
4. Include the adjustments as strategies in the strategic plan
5. It is best recommended for organizations that have poor record and impact of previous plans( Ezeali and Esiagu, 2009)

#### **4-Scenario Planning**

This model provides a way to prepare for different scenarios that may occur with a change in the environment and other external forces. The stakeholders project different scenarios that could occur and have an influence on the organization. Some examples include changes in policies or regulations, changes in funding, demographic changes, technological changes, etc. The stakeholders discuss these likely scenarios, including the best case, worst case, and a reasonable case for each external force. A review of the worst case is especially useful to highlight the importance of preparing for such a scenario. Brainstorm how the organization could effectively respond to the various scenarios or what the organization could do to strengthen itself so as not to be as influenced by certain external forces (Ezeali and Esiagu, 2009). This type of strategic thinking helps all stakeholders consider various scenarios in an environment that is calm and rational, instead of the reactive crisis mode that could occur without pre-planning. The common steps are as follows:

1. Identify vulnerabilities. Select several external forces and imagine related changes that might influence the organization, such as a change in regulations or a change in demographics, for example. Scanning the newspaper for headlines often suggests potential changes that might affect the organization.
2. Imagine scenarios. For each change identified, discuss three different scenarios (including best, worst, and OK/reasonable cases) that might

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result. Worst-case scenarios often inspire participants to make significant changes in an organization.

3. Design responses. Suggest what the organization might do, or potential strategies, in each of the three scenarios to respond to each change.
4. Select common strategies. Planners soon detect common considerations or strategies that must be addressed to respond to possible to external changes.
5. List the most likely problems. Select the most likely external changes to affect the organization over the next 3 to 5 years, and identify the most reasonable strategic responses available to the organization.
6. It is recommended for organizations that have previous knowledge of strategic planning

#### **5-Organic Planning or Self-Organizing**

This model uses a process such as dialogue among stakeholders. A technique called story-boarding to allow participants to think about their own ideas and then share them with the larger group. It is a more structured way of brainstorming and allows each person time to think about their ideas and then voice them to the larger group. This technique can be especially useful with diverse stakeholders who hold different amounts of power within an organization. The story board technique, as well as a similar technique called the nominal group technique, allows each stakeholder to play an active role in the meeting. It guards against the tendency for a few people to dominate the brainstorm session. The common steps are as follows:

1. Clarify and articulate the organization's cultural values. Use dialogue and storyboarding techniques.
2. Articulate the group's vision for the organization. Use dialogue and storyboarding.
3. Dialogue regularly. On an ongoing basis, e.g., once every quarter, discuss the processes needed to arrive at the vision and what the group is going to do next.
4. Remind everyone regularly that values are not goals. This type of naturalistic, values-centered planning is never really “over with”; rather, the group needs to conduct its own values clarification, dialogue and reflection, and process updates.
5. Be very, very patient. Group decision-making—often by consensus—takes time, and results can emerge irregularly and without warning.

6. Focus on learning and less on method. Organic planning encourages spontaneous, unexpected results. In many ways it resembles an experiment more than a machine.
7. Translate accomplishments into goals. Ask the group how it will portray its strategic plans to stakeholders and others who expect mechanistic, linear results. Be particularly aware of contract requirements for specific, measurable outcomes.
8. It is best recommended for organizations with diverse stakeholders who hold different amounts of power within an organization( Snell and Bohlander, 2010).

### **6-Conventional Strategic Planning**

This is the most common model of strategic planning among organizations that have sufficient resources to pursue very ambitious visions and goals. It is a model that impact positively in an external environments that are relatively stable as a results of previous planning experiences ( Mullins, 2007). It has the following overall phases:

1. Develop or update the mission and optionally, vision and/or values statements.
2. Take a wide look around the outside and a good look inside the organization, and perhaps update the statements as a result.
3. As a result of this examination, select the multi-year strategies and/or goals to achieve the vision.
4. Then develop action plans that specify who is going to do what and by when to achieve each goal.
5. Identify associated plans, for example, staffing, facilities, marketing and financial plans.
6. Organize items 1-3 into a Strategic Plan and items 4-6 into a separate one-year Operational Plan.
7. It is recommended for organizations that have relatively sufficient resources to implement the big vision of the organization

### **7-Real-Time Strategic Planning**

This is a model that put into consideration the continuous changing environments of planning especially the external environment. It adopts the framework of continuous planning that uses the short and medium plans to achieve long term vision. It has the following steps:

1. Articulate the mission, and perhaps the vision and/or values.



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2. Assign planners to research the external environment and, as a result, to suggest a list of opportunities and of threats facing the organization.
3. Present the lists to the Board and other members of the organization for strategic thinking and discussions.
4. Soon after (perhaps during the next month) assign planners to evaluate the internal workings of the organization and, as a result, to suggest a list of strengths and of weaknesses in the organization.
5. Present these lists to the Board and other members of the organization for strategic thinking and discussions, perhaps using a SWOT analysis to analyze all four lists.
6. Repeat steps 2-5 regularly, for example, every six months or year and document the results in a Strategic Plan.
7. It is recommended to organizations with very rapidly changing environments outside the organization ( Mbaya, 2017)

#### **8-Inspirational Model of Strategic Planning**

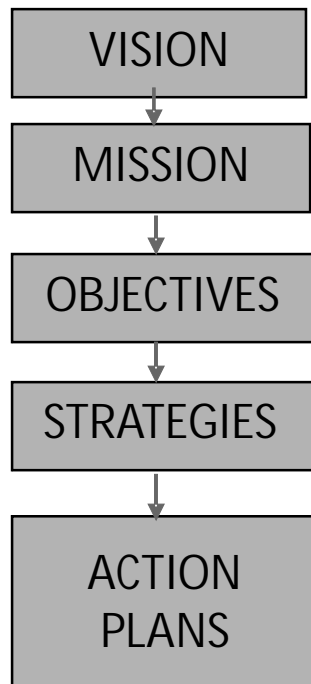
This is a model that operates within the framework that planners doesn't have enough time at their disposal to plan. Therefore, in order to have a document that will guide the organization is too quickly have a brainstorm with relevant stakeholders to come up with vision and goals for the organization. The overall phases include the following:

1. Attempt to gather Board members and key employees together for planning.
2. Begin by fantasizing a highly inspirational vision for the organization - or by giving extended attention to wording in the mission statement, especially to include powerful and poignant wording.
3. Then brainstorm exciting, far-reaching goals to even more effectively serve customers and clients.
4. Then include the vision and goals the Strategic Plan.
5. It is recommended for organizations that already struggles to find time for planning( Mbaya, 2017)

#### **9-VMOSA Model**

This is a comprehensive planning tool that can help organization by providing a blueprint for moving from dreams to actions to positive outcomes. One way for the region to make a journey from poor service delivery (poor performance) to excellent service delivery (socio-economic development) by using "VMOSA;" that is, its Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies, and

Action Plans. VMOSA is a practical planning process that can be used by any organization. The steps are illustrated by the aid of Fig.7 below.



**Fig.7 VMOSA Framework adapted from Mbaya, 2019**

**Vision (the dream)**

The vision communicates what the organization believes are the ideal conditions for the community members in the region – how things would look if the issues in the vision are perfectly addressed. Is a brief proclamation that convey the community's dreams for the future. By developing a vision statement, your organization makes the beliefs and governing principles of your organization clear to the greater community (Snell and Bohlander, 2010).

**Mission (the what and why)**

Developing mission statements are the next step in the action planning process. An organization's mission statement describes what the group is going to do, and why it's going to do that.

**Objectives (how much of what will be accomplished by when)**

Once an organization has developed its mission statement, its next step is to develop the specific objectives that are focused on achieving that mission. Objectives refer to specific measurable results for the initiative's broad goals. An organization's objectives generally lay out how much of what will be accomplished by when.

**Strategies (the how)**

The next step in the process of VMOSA is developing your strategies. Strategies explain how the initiative will reach its objectives. Generally, organizations will have a wide variety of strategies that include people from all of the different parts, or sectors, of the community. These strategies range from the very broad, which encompass people and resources from many different parts of the community, to the very specific, which aim at carefully defined areas.

**Action plan (what change will happen; who will do what by when to make it happen)**

Finally, an organization's action plan describes in great detail exactly how strategies will be implemented to accomplish the objectives developed earlier in this process. The plan refers to: a) specific (community and systems) changes to be sought, and b) the specific action steps necessary to bring about changes in all of the relevant sectors, or parts, of the community. The key aspects of the intervention or (community and systems) changes to be sought are outlined in the action plan.

**Application Of VMOSA By North East Region For Sustainable Development**

**Vision**

To be the best region in grassroots development and excellent service delivery by the year 2030 in Nigeria

**Mission**

The region will facilitate the mobilization of human and material resources through the involvement of members of the public in their local development and make appropriate services and development activities responsible to local wishes. Moreover, to facilitate the exercise of democratic self-government to the local levels as well as encourage initiative and

leadership potential. Furthermore, to facilitate active participation of the people and traditional institutions to ensure good governance and excellent service delivery to the community members.

**Core Values**

- (i) Provide accountability friendly work environment and treat each other with respect and dignity
- (ii) Embrace merit system in recruitment and job performance
- (iii) Apply the highest standards of excellence to job performance evaluation and motivation
- (iv) Sensitivity to community needs and expectations
- (v) Communication by file and not by emotion
- (vi) Sensitivity to grassroots development and excellent service delivery
- (vii) Recognize that community satisfaction is essential to our future success
- (viii) Zero tolerance to corruption and high regard to servant leaders and recognition

Therefore, to formulate strategic objectives and goals to be in line with the developmental needs of the region, the knowledge of internal and external environments of the region is necessary. Hence, the need to conduct SWOT( Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and PESTLE ( Political, Economic, Socio-Cultural, Technological, Legal and Environment), analyses

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Table 1 SWOT Analysis of North East Region of Nigeria.

Positive	Negative
<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Available farm lands</li> <li>-Available human and material resources</li> <li>-Several number of potential leaders</li> <li>-Available mineral resources for industry</li> <li>-Available lands for mechanize agriculture</li> <li>-Available water resources like the Chad Basin</li> <li>-Available animal resources for industry</li> <li>-Available tourist resources</li> <li>-Available raw materials for rural industries</li> </ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Poor attitude in strategic planning</li> <li>-High level of illiteracy and poverty</li> <li>-No enough training in local governance</li> <li>- Poor governance and leadership vision</li> <li>-The region is the poorest in Nigeria</li> <li>-The region has the lowest rates of education</li> <li>-Low level of infrastructure and industry</li> <li>- Has the highest level of illiteracy</li> <li>-Endemic corruption &amp; high level of economic inequality</li> <li>-Poverty capital of the world</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Several sources of generating revenue</li> <li>- State executive ready to support the plan</li> <li>-Good relationship with key stakeholders</li> <li>-Presence of NGOs and development partners</li> <li>-The presence of North East Development Commission</li> <li>-Well to do sons and Daughters of the community ready to assist</li> </ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Poor IGR mobilization</li> <li>-Main source of revenue from federal allocation</li> <li>The economy has been devastated by -Boko Haram insurgency</li> <li>-Millions of street children not going to school</li> <li>-High level of corruption &amp; mismanagement of local resources</li> <li>-loss of livelihoods and displacement of million people</li> <li>-Poor level of education, high level of poverty &amp; low standard of living of the community</li> </ul>

Source: Field work, 2020

Table 1 shows the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats of the North East Region of Nigeria. The information under each category will help the strategic planners to formulate objectives and strategies that will strengthen the positive category and strategies that will eliminate or manage the negative category of the table to prepare the region for sustainable development

Table 2 PESTLE Analysis of the North East Environment

<b>Political Trends</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Voting without choosing the qualified servant leaders</li> <li>- Heterogeneous in terms of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity</li> <li>- Ethnic and religious politics</li> <li>- Money politics</li> <li>- Porosity of the international borders</li> <li>- Display of ostentatious life style by the elitist class</li> </ul>	<b>Economic Trends</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Fluctuation of crude oil price</li> <li>- changes in Fiscal policy</li> <li>- changes in monetary policy</li> <li>-The Lake Chad Basin is depleted up to 90 %</li> <li>-Unfavourable climate change</li> <li>-Poor rural industrialization</li> <li>-Socio-economic and political impact of COVID-19</li> <li>-High level of importation without corresponding exports</li> <li>-Vicious cycle of poverty among community members</li> </ul>	<b>Socio-Cultural Trends</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poverty capital of the world</li> <li>- Population explosion</li> <li>- Millions of street children outside formal education</li> <li>- Ethno-Religious crisis</li> <li>- Heterogeneous in terms of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity</li> <li>- History of religious extremist</li> <li>- Almajeri syndrome- street begging and scavenging</li> </ul>
<b>Technological Trends</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-New invention in automobile industry, being powered by electricity and water system technology instead of fuel</li> <li>- ICT Revolution in governance and business</li> </ul>	<b>Legal Trends</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Changes in local govt. autonomy</li> <li>- No respect for Rule of Law</li> <li>- Constitutional amendments</li> </ul>	<b>Environmental Trends</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Climatic changes</li> <li>- Flood</li> <li>- Pollution</li> <li>- Desertification</li> <li>- Degradation</li> <li>- Natural and man-made disasters</li> </ul>

Source: Field work, 2020

Table 2 shows the political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, Legal and environmental conditions characterizing the North East Region of Nigeria. The PESTLE condition will assist the strategic planners to draw a plan that can be implemented.

### Strategic Objectives

The information from the above analyses will provide adequate background to formulate SMART( Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-Oriented and Time bound), objectives in line with the needs and expectations of the people.

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- (i) Subsidization of education expenses from primary to university level
- (ii) Provision of integrated farming zone/cluster
- (iii) Provision of vocational training centres
- (iv) Building of new schools in the communities
- (v) Provision of boreholes in the communities
- (vi) Construction of feeder roads linking communities
- (vii) Provision of electricity in communities
- (viii) Provision of PHC clinics in the communities
- (ix) Provision of rural industry cluster in each of the six states

#### **Strategies to achieve the Objectives**

- (i) Provision of soft loans to less privileged persons especially those that have been trained in the various vocational training centres to promote Small and Medium scale Enterprise (SMEs)
- (ii) Provision of farm inputs: such as seedlings, fertilizers, herbicides, extension services etc. to farmers
- (iii) Programme on collaboration with development assistance, civil society organizations, NGOs and Ministry of Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation to teach the community on modern way of farming, fishing, livestock rearing, crop production, community development, petty trading, etc
- (iv) Promotion of cooperative societies and local economic development associations in the field of farming, livestock rearing, crop production, irrigation, poultry, businesses, etc
- (v) Establishment of institutions for the direct provision of essential services, and effort in subsidizing these services when they are provided by the private sector.
- (vi) Programme on free basic education include feeding, uniform, books, pocket money to attract the millions of street children into integrated school system
- (vii) Job training of people in skills relevant to their immediate work environment and rural development
- (viii) .Provision of Small-scale shops (petty trading), industrial clusters , Petty transport business, etc

#### **Strategic Action plan**

The strategic team should therefore incorporate the above strategies into short and medium plans to achieve the strategic vision of the region-**To be the best region in grassroots development and excellent service delivery**

**by the year 2030.** The following can be grouped into **Phase one** (Sub-goals plan) to be executed in one year; **phase two** (tactical plan) to be executed from two to ten years and **phase three** the attainment of the vision in the year 2030. The implementation can utilize the sub-goal plan and the tactical plan procedure to realize the vision of the region as discussed below.

#### **Sub-Goal Plan( to be implemented in phases)**

In the sub-goal plan, the strategic team should use the basic need approach to provide the basic needs for the people in order to provide the basis for self-empowerment, development of skills, industrial clusters and self-reliance. Basic Needs Approach to economic development holds that the most effective means of ensuring development in any society is to guarantee the provision of basic human needs such as health care, housing, education, food and nutrition, security, sanitation, potable water, power supply, access road, etc. In this respect, the region should create institutions for the direct provision of essential services, or make effort in subsidizing these services when they are provided by the private sector. The advantage of this principle is that it will ensure that the essential needs of people are met ( Mbaya, 2017)

#### **Tactical Plan( to be implemented in phases)**

Now that the basic needs of the people are provided, the next thing is to empower the people by teaching them skills, modern way of farming, poultry, crop production, small businesses, etc the region can use Self-Empowerment Approach. This approach argued that the best way to induce development is to empower the people to be able to handle their own development by themselves. This principle, like the basic needs' principle, believes that meeting people's basic need is an essential component of development. However, it goes beyond that and argues that the provision of basic necessities alone does not constitute development. Julius Nyerere, the former president of Tanzania, argued that services that provide human beings comfort such as roads, building, electricity, increased food and nutrition are essential to rural development. But, to him, these things in themselves do not constitute development. He said that the availability of these things could facilitate development only when it leads to develop the mind, understanding and competence of the people to have more effective control over their own destiny. Nyerere translated his philosophy of development through his Ujamaa programme, which was aimed at building “an agrarian society that is equity-based, village and community-oriented, participative and democratic, and which places a high value on human freedom”. The principle subscribes to the saying that “if you want a child who



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loves to eat fish, you should do him a favour by teaching him how to fish than to give him fish at any time he needed it”. This is to enable him have access to fish even when you are not around ( Mbaya, 2017)

#### The Strategic Goal or Vision

Now that the community members are empowered and have participated in several economic opportunities, the year 2030 will now usher in **the region as the best region in grassroots development and excellent service delivery**. This entails the following:

- (i) Social sustainability - continuous improvement in the social well-being and quality of life of the rural dwellers. This entails that rural communities will have favourable social and human development indicators.
- (ii) Economic sustainability - continuous improvement of livelihood opportunities such as rural industrialization
- (iii) Environmental sustainability - less dependence on natural resources, less resource depletion and environmental degradation stimulating forest reserve that improves health of the environment by mitigating climate change, conserving biological diversity, maintaining clean and reliable water resources, controlling erosion, protecting agricultural soils, providing low-cost and renewable energy and enhancing social and economic development (Dlakwa, 2017)
- (iv) Eliminates rural-urban migration thereby increases rural productivity
- (v) Reduction in rural poverty by eliminating unemployment and underemployment
- (vi) Now the region attracts more investments and businesses, Leads to high wage and more buoyant markets
- (vii) More cooperative societies and local economic development associations in the field of farming, livestock rearing, crop production, irrigation, poultry, businesses, are increasing day by day in the region (Balami, 2017)

#### Conclusion

*Nobody want to be Mr. poverty but a friend to Mr. poverty is the person that does not want to plan.* The place of planning is very strategic to sustainable development in the North East region. The deplorable conditions listed in the introduction made Mustapha to conclude his lecture by saying “the time is running out for us especially in the north” that requires immediate strategic plan. This is even becoming more serious considering the new invention in

automobile industry, being powered by electricity and water system technology instead of fuel. This calls for immediate planning for the future of this region to continue to be relevant as an agent of grassroots development. This was why Jhingan (2011) says poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere. This is in line with what Karlmarx said" all human activities revolve around economic factor" This implies that if we refuse to plan now, we will pay for it dearly in no distance time. "The Chinese would say the journey of 10,000 miles begins with a single step" let the region start planning now before it becomes too late.

### Recommendation

The study recommends the use of VMOSA Model of strategic planning as the conceptual framework for North East leaders. It is a framework that provides a blueprint for moving the region from poverty capital of the world to best region in grassroots development and excellent service delivery.

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