MDGs and the Neglect of Anyiam-Osigwe’s Third Dimension of the Human Person: A Bane of Inclusive Development in Africa

By

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Abstract

The idea of sustainable development as a universal desideratum led to the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 with 2015 as their target. They were designed to mitigate fundamental problems that impinge upon human wellbeing or the attainment of a good life in developing societies.

With barely five years to the target of 2015, this paper contends that despite marginal and disparate improvements in quality of life in Africa, the MDGs have been doomed to be unattained on the continent from the onset. A reason usually offered for this conclusion is that the real needs of many African nations are greater and deeper than what could be addressed by the minimalist goals of the MDGs. Another is lack of commitment on the part of some key stakeholders.

This paper contends that beyond the often identified reasons, the MDGs cannot be achieved in Africa because while they focus on the physical and mental domains of the human person, they completely ignore what Anyiam-Osigwe identifies as the third dimension of human nature: spiritual/moral dimension. Deriving from Anyiam Osigwe’s position on human spirituality, the thesis of this paper is that the MDGs need to be reformulated to accommodate the crucial spiritual/moral aspect of human nature for them to be effective in addressing the challenges of development in Africa.

With Anyiam-Osigwe’s understanding of human spirituality/morality in terms of an awareness and respect for the intricate interconnection and interdependence of all humans and also between humanity and divinity, the paper elucidates how the MDGs could be modified to render them more achievable in Africa.

Introduction

The notion of development, is quite broad and ambiguous. It is employed in diverse ways in different contexts. In its most common usage, development means a process of change or growth from a given condition to another which is usually better, hence it is universally desired by all rational agents. Within the context of society, development may be construed as a process, a means to other ends and also an end in itself. As a process, development is always on-going, never ending and cannot be achieved in absolute terms. Virtually all societies, irrespective of existing levels of development, still desire to develop further. As a means, development is pursued not just for its own sake but because of other benefits that come in its wake: better standard of living, human security and peace, higher life expectancy, etc. As an end in itself, development is desired for its own sake because of its inherent benefit.
Without any gainsaying, the idea of development is one of the most touted in socio-political discourse, with various governmental and non-governmental institutions justifying their decisions, policies and actions in terms of the extent to which they can facilitate development. Within the African context, the search for development has been a continuous one ever since African countries began to agitate for political independence (Oladipo 1999, 106-123). Virtually all African countries have formulated and executed several development plans and structural adjustment programmes in the last four decades in the hope that these would facilitate development in the relevant countries. These plans and programmes have been premised on different conceptions of development and how it can be most effectively achieved. Indeed, there is an array of development theories with each claiming to have identified the essential preconditions, challenges and ideal approaches to be adopted by any society desirous of development.

Prominent among these development theories are the modernization theory of development, the dependency theory of development, the world system approach to development and the state theory of development (Cowen and Shenton, 1996) In the last two decades, and more particularly since the fragmentation of USSR, the prevalent opinion has been that liberal capitalism offers an antidote to the problem of underdevelopment in the world, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin-America. This is evident, for example, in the advocacy by such institutions as the World Bank and the IMF for the adoption of various principles of liberal capitalism, embodied in structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), in the developing countries of the world. Prominent among these are the principles of deregulation, privatization and liberalization designed to integrate national economies into the global economy in ways that would stimulate development within the relevant national economies. (Ekanola 2005, 140).

It is important that we appreciate the changes that have taken place with regards to the notion of development in the last four decades. These have been adequately characterised by into four major strands:

1. the ethnocentric notion of development as synonymous with westernization;
2. the economistic notion of development as economic growth, a more sharply focused “critical variable” version of (1);
3. development as the measurable amelioration of poverty, unemployment and inequality under the rubric of “the realization of human personality” and
4. development as a basic structural transformation from an
“interdependence based on hierarchy and Western charity to an interdependence based on symmetry and mutual accountability (Sklar 1994, 342).

Of the four conceptions of development identified above, (3) and (4) are consistent with the notion of social development that is prevalent today. This idea recognises that the form of development that is desired in contemporary society is quite complex and goes beyond mere economic growth. It consists in the effective coordination of several economic, political, cultural, ecological and even moral/spiritual factors in order to enhance the quality of life. All the nations of the world, especially the developing nations, are encouraged by various global organisations, with the United Nations at the forefront, to pursue social development in ways that would be self-generating, friendly to the ecological system and not compromise the wellbeing of future generations. This is the basic content of the concept of sustainable development.

As such, the idea of sustainable social development which might be defined as the effective and responsible coordination of available economic, political, cultural, ecological, moral and spiritual resources for the enhancement of the overall wellbeing of people through an increase in GNP per capita, life expectancy, access to education, health care services, housing, sanitation, drinking water and food.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

With specific reference to Africa, the quest for social development has been embarked upon at three levels: the state level where governments in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, and usually in line with relevant global policies, implement various forms of SAPs; the regional and continental levels, where countries cooperate in the bid to engender development (for example, the NEPAD initiative) and; the global level where such organisations as the United Nations design and implement policies meant to facilitate sustainable social development in developing countries with particular emphasis on Africa, Asia and Latin-America. Indeed, it is the policies and initiatives taken at the global level that, most often, give direction and impetus to what is done at the regional and state levels.

In 2000, the UN, in its continued effort to resolve the major problems that undermine human wellbeing, and ultimately record significant improvement in the level of social development in developing societies, formulated and got world leaders to adopt the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with 2015 as their target (See http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtml). The eight MDGs, with 21 quantifiable targets, were
designed to mitigate fundamental problems that impinge upon human wellbeing or the attainment of a good life in developing societies by tackling extreme poverty in its diverse manifestations. They also provide a framework for the international community to cooperate to ensure that human development is inclusive in the sense that it reaches everyone everywhere in the world. The achievement of these goals is expected to reduce world poverty by half, with tens of millions of lives, that would otherwise have died, saved, and billions of people positioned to benefit from the global economy. The 2010 UN MDG report affirms that

The goals represent human needs and basic rights that every individual around the world should be able to enjoy—freedom from extreme poverty and hunger; quality education, productive and decent employment, good health and shelter; the right of women to give birth without risking their lives; and a world where environmental sustainability is a priority and women and men live in equality (2010.3).

The eight MDGs are presented thus:

1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger: Halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and those who suffer from hunger.
2. Achieve Universal Primary Education: Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school.
4. Reduce Child Mortality: Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five.
5. Improve Maternal Health: Reduce by three-quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environment resources. By 2015, reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water. By 2020, achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dweller.
8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development: Develop an open trading and financial system including a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction. Address the needs of least developed countries, landlocked and small island states. Deal with developing countries’ debt problems and provide more and better aid; develop decent and productive work for youth. With pharmaceutical companies, provide access to essential drugs. With the private sector, make new technologies available.
With specific reference to Africa, south of the Sahara, one of the areas of the world in dire need of development, there are obvious indications that the MDGs would remain unachieved at the expiration of the 2015 target: the advantages of economic restructuring is hardly seen in this part of the continent in spite of the SAPs embarked upon; the inability to attract the foreign investment required for development; unabated debt burden; unstable and unpredictable commodity prices in the midst of declining industry (Poku 2008, 92). Indeed, the UN 2007 MDG assessment reports that in spite of some marginal improvements, the sub-Saharan Africa ‘is not on track to reach the goal of reducing poverty by half by 2015” (UN 2007, 4). According to Mohammed Salih, this failure is evident in,

1) undelivered commitments by international development agencies and organizations; 2) failure of WTO negotiations to yield any concessions for Africa and developing countries vis-a-vis protectionist agricultural subsidies paid by EU and US governments to their farmers; 3) low level of harnessing science and technology; 4) conflict and political instability; 5) climate change has affected agricultural productivity, contributed to resource scarcity and fuelled conflicts among diverse natural resource users in Africa’s land-based economies- to mention but a few factors (Salih 2008, 180).

The UN 2010 MDG report also concedes that “unmet commitments, inadequate resources, lack of focus and accountability, and insufficient dedication to sustainable development have created shortfalls in many areas” (2010, 4). These shortfalls in the attainment of the MDGs have been further complicated by the global financial and food crises (UN 2010, 11) as well as violent conflicts (UN 2010, 15). Some of the shortfalls in the attainment of the MDGs identified in the UN 2010 MDG report are described as follows:

The number of people who are undernourished has continued to grow, while slow progress in reducing the prevalence of hunger stalled—or even reversed itself—in some regions between 2000-2002 and 2005-2007. About one in four children under the age of five are underweight, mainly due to lack of food and quality food, inadequate water, sanitation and health services, and poor care and feeding practices. An estimated 1.4 billion people were still living in extreme poverty in 2005. Moreover, the effects of the global financial crisis are likely to persist: poverty rates will be slightly higher in 2015 and even beyond, to 2020, than they would have been had the world economy grown steadily at its pre-crisis pace. Gender equality and the empowerment of women are at the heart of the MDGs and are preconditions for overcoming poverty, hunger and disease. But progress has been sluggish on all fronts—from education to access to political decision making (4).

Unfortunately, yet not surprisingly, the level of shortfalls and slow growth in sub-Saharan Africa, Western Asia, parts of Eastern Europe and Central Asia have led to the conclusion that the MDG are unattainable in these regions by the target date of 2015 (UN 2010, 6).
Again, going by the UN 2010 MDG report, the situation in these regions is so bad that extreme poverty rate among the working people may have increased by four percent or more rather than abate. In the case of sub-Saharan Africa, the large majority of workers (63.5 per cent) were at risk of falling below the extreme poverty line (UN 2010, 11). With regards to the education component of MDG, it is reported that enrolment in school is lowest in sub-Saharan African countries: at least one in four children of primary-school age were out of school in 2008 in half of the sub-Saharan African countries (UN 2010, 17).

In terms of child mortality, the record in sub-Saharan Africa is also worrisome as the highest rates of child mortality is found there. In more specific terms,

In 2008, one in seven children there died before their fifth birthday; the highest levels were in Western and Central Africa, where one in six children died before age five (169 deaths per 1,000 live births). All 34 countries with under-five mortality rates exceeding 100 per 1,000 live births in 2008 are in sub-Saharan Africa, except Afghanistan. Although under five mortality in sub-Saharan Africa has declined by 22 per cent since 1990, the rate of improvement is insufficient to meet the target. Furthermore, high levels of fertility, combined with a still large percentage of under-five deaths, have resulted in an increase in the absolute number of children who have died—from 4.0 million in 1990 to 4.4 million in 2008. Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for half of the 8.8 million deaths in children under five worldwide in 2008 (UN 2010, 27).

While the 2010 UN MDG report’s affirmation that unmet commitments, inadequate resources, lack of focus and accountability, insufficient dedication to sustainable development, the global financial and food crisis, as well as violent conflict account for much of the problems recorded with the attainment of the MDGs is correct, these problems are mere manifestation of an underlying and more fundamental problem. To fully grasp this underlying problem, I present a critical analysis of the MDGs vis-à-vis Anyiam-Osigwe’s conception of the third dimension of the human person.

The MDGs and Anyiam-Osigwe’s Third Dimension of the Human Person

The MDGs are designed essentially to enhance human material and mental wellbeing everywhere in the world. While MDGs 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 and part of 8 focus on human material wellbeing, MDGs 2, 3 and some of part MDG 8 concentrate on mental welfare, that is, the development of human cognitive abilities (Agbakoba 2010, 213). None of the MDGs addresses the spiritual/moral status of the human person and this neglect constitutes a fundamental defect in the construction of the MDGs and a primary reason for its shortfalls in
the regions of the world where development is needed the most. To establish this claim, it is important that we begin with a good understanding of human nature, which is quite complex and multifaceted (Reeve 1999, 444)

The Judaeo-Christian conception of human nature is tripartite, conceiving the human person as consisting of the body, the mind and the spirit. This idea of the human person is also found in many philosophical traditions dating back to the pre-Socratic era. That humans have a body is not controversial in any way, but philosophers have always grappled with issues relating to the existence and nature of the human mind and spirit. While there is less controversy over the existence of the mind, there is a lot of disagreement over its actual nature and relationship to the body. Of the three components of the human person, the issue of existence of the spirit is the most problematic. A reason for this is that it is conceived to be immaterial and unverifiable in empirical terms. Perhaps this is the primary reason why many people prefer not to get embroiled in any debate on the existence and nature of the human spirit.

Be that as it may, the enterprise of religion and morality are founded on the premise that humans have a spiritual component by virtue of which they are “a manifestation of Divine intelligence” (Agbakoba. 2009, 103) and are essentially connected, not just with the divine, but also with one another (Agulanna 2009, 18-19). It is also by virtue of this spiritual component that humans are able to develop “a certain nobility of character” (Charles Anyiam-Osigwe 1999, 5). On the basis of a critical exposition of Osigwe Anyiam-Osigwe’s position on human spirituality, Oladipo submits:

Man is essentially a spiritual being whose self-mastery depends on the extent to which he is able to approximate the divine, in his thoughts, dispositions and deeds. To do this effectively, he has to cultivate a mind-set or mental disposition that will enable him to transcend his raw human instincts – of selfishness, greed and lust, for example – which are products of his attachment, through the body, to the physical world, to develop that nobility of character, which will enable him to achieve what the narrator in Ben Okri’s novel, Astonishing the Gods, has called “the perfection of the spirit and the mastery of life”. In other words, he has to begin to see human life in a new way in which there will be less emphasis on material and visible things, but more attention to those values that can guarantee, again using Ben Okri’s words, “a sublime future” for the human race. (Oladipo 2009, 26-27).

What the above suggests is that to guarantee “a sublime future” for humanity, which might be interpreted in terms of a future in which the wellbeing of all is guaranteed, irrespective of
race, ethnic background, geographical location, religion, sex, religion or any factor we employ in defining ourselves, it is important to begin to see human life in a new way. More emphasis has to be laid on the spiritual component of humans than has been done hitherto. Human spirituality, according to Anyiam-Osigwe, is beyond mere mystical feelings, piety and devotion. Rather it is about the growing awareness of and respect for the essential interconnectedness and interdependence between all humans as well as the intricate connection between humanity and the divine. (Oladipo 2009, 27). This notion of human spirituality is understood as “an attempt to grow in sensitivity to self, to others, to non-human creations and to God who is within and beyond this totality” (Said and Funk 1996, 2-4). It sees reality and everything in existence as essentially interdependent and interconnected in such a way that “the only way that individuals or separate parts of the whole can win is if other peoples and parts of the whole also win” (Smoker and Groff 1996, 71). This spirituality is required to overcome such negative dispositions as selfishness, greed, wanton abuse of power, crass materialism, corruption and other social indecencies (Oladipo 2009, 27) that underlie many of the social ills that impinge upon the prospects of development in many of the sub-Saharan African countries.

The idea of spirituality described above underlies Anyiam-Osigwe’s cosmopolitanism which maintains that each individual, irrespective of position or profession in society, has a responsibility to contribute his/her individual potentials and attributes into a common pool for the common good of all in society. It is the failure to develop this kind of spirituality that is largely responsible for much of the challenges of development that confront many of the developing nations of the world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. (Charles Anyiam-Osigwe 2002, 7-8, 48)

Obviously, sustainable social development is dependent on a kind of asymmetrical relationship between the level of control human beings have achieved over the physical world and the mastery of the human world – that is, the world of politics, religion, culture and interpersonal relationship (Oladipo 2009, 27). Be that as it may, while humans have achieved an impressive level of control over the physical world, as it is evident in the great achievements recorded via science and technology, we have not achieved the same level of success in terms of human spirituality. Hence, many people are still slaves to basic instincts, personal desires, emotions and prejudices (Oladipo 2009, 27) that impede the readiness of
people or groups of people to actually cooperate with one another, undertake requisite actions and make the necessary sacrifices for the kind of development that is both inclusive and sustainable. Anyiam-Osigwe, in this regard, argues that “the lack of honesty and probity in the managing of public affairs and assets, the disposition to unlawful acquisition, falsehood, hatred, envy, jealousy, and lust are all manifestations of spiritual impairment, which adversely affects the appropriate configuration of the mindset” (Charles Anyiam-Osigwe 2005, 30).

Focusing on the 8 MDGs, MDG 8, is described by Kumi Naido as the ‘deal breaker’ in the sense that it sums up the requirements for fulfilling the preceding MDGs 1-7. It addresses the questions of good governance, concrete development, poverty reduction, productive job opportunities, trade and technology transfer that constitute the core of the MDGs (Development 2008, 4, 41; Development 2009, 11-38). Unfortunately, “the world (including the developing countries of Africa) has not risen to the occasion of MDG 8” (Agbakoba 2010, 216) and this is a clear indication of, at least, the partial failure of MDG 8 with a ripple effect of failure on the other MDGs that are dependent on it. Indeed, the shortfall recorded in the achievement of the MDGs is attributable to such vices as greed, malice, meanness, lust, deception, trickery that cause Western countries and institutions from keeping to their own agreement in terms of the pursuit of the MDGs and Africans, both leaders and the led to refuse living above the level of basic instincts (Agbakoba 2010, 216). All these are manifestations of distorted values borne out of what Anyiam-Osigwe describes as spiritual impairment.

From the going, we are now in a position to state that the problem underlying the manifestation of unmet commitments, inadequate resources, lack of focus and accountability, and insufficient dedication to sustainable development as well as the global and financial crises, and violent conflicts identified in the 2010 UN MDG report as accountable for the recorded shortfalls in the attainment of the MDGs, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, is the impairment of human spirituality. This impairment also accounts for the moral problems of dishonesty, greed, discrimination and injustice that fuel underdevelopment in Africa. This viewpoint can be deduced from following two quotes:

Man’s estrangement from his spiritual essence and the inherent universal ethical cannons has been largely responsible for the impairment of his mindset (Charles Anyiam-Osigwe 2005, 20).
Where the ability to produce and contribute to the development process by majority of the composing individuals is constrained by the impairment of their apposite mindsets, the comparative yield of society falls short of expected sum total, thereby, engendering and increasing poverty in the social system. (Ukpokolo 2009, 89).

Our discourse, thus far, leads to the conclusion that for the MDGs to be realised, especially in Africa, it is needful that adequate attention is paid to the third dimension of the human person. As such, the MDGs need to be modified to include provisions for the enhancement of human spirituality since this affects, in a fundamental sense, human mindset, which in turn determines the human ability to produce and contribute to the process of inclusive and sustainable development. This, however, presents us with the question of how precisely are we to incorporate the enhancement of human spirituality into the MDGs. How do we get all stakeholders in the pursuit of the MDGs to have a growing awareness of and respect for the interconnectedness and interdependence of all humans in ways that would overcome the problems of unmet commitments, lack of focus and accountability, insufficient dedication, the global financial crisis and violent conflicts that underlie the failure of achieving the MDGs in Africa?

**Modifying the MDGs**

MDG 2 targets the achievement of Universal Primary Education by ensuring that all boys and girls complete primary school. Although this focuses on the provision of only the basic form of education, it provides an entry point into how the MDGs could be modified to overcome its present shortfalls and enhance the attainment of a more inclusive development globally. This is in the sense that it is meant to lay a foundation for the development of the individual person, which according to Anyiam-Osigwe is a prerequisite for social development (Ekanola 2009, 142). In discussing the development of the individual person, Anyiam-Osigwe identifies a problem with the existing formal education. He argues that while it focuses on developing the cognitive competence and technical skills of persons, it does not pay adequate attention to their spiritual/moral development. Hence, he contends further that education should focus on the moral and spiritual development of individuals (Ekanola 2009, 142) as much as it concentrates on technical skill acquisition and cognitive competence. In his opinion, education should aim at the inculcation of such personal values as honesty, probity, equity which would crystallize into what he describes as a mindset that is suitable for social development (Ekanola 2009, 144). When humanity achieves this
appropriate mindset, “we would be able to transcend the barrier of discrimination or the imposition of the ego and be able to see and appreciate the equality of all human persons, irrespective of gender or physical or mental challenges” (Charles Anyiam Osigwe 2005, 24-25).

Given the understanding that a fundamental factor inhibiting the evolution of the mindset requisite for social development is “mans enstrangement from his spiritual essence and the inherent universal ethical canons” (Charles Anyiam-Osigwe 2005, 19), hence, there is a need for what Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Schwitzer, M. L. King and G. C. Marshall describe as “spiritual regeneration” which would establish a sense of good faith among all men. Such spiritual regeneration would be facilitated by an appropriate education that appeals to the “deeper sanctions of reason and consciousness” (Perry 1973, 185) embedded in each human person so that we can all develop the kind of spirituality that is manifested in ecumenical loyalty or international mindedness.

Anyiam-Osigwe proposes a form of education, described as holistic education (Ekanola 2009, 139), which goes beyond mere acquisition of cognitive competence and practical skills in order to earn a living. It aims to enhance the capacity of all to exert a regenerating and creative moral vibration on the social system (Charles Anyiam-Osigwe 2002b, 18) and it would result in the spiritual, moral, intellectual, technical, economic and socio-political enhancement of both the individual person and ultimately society as a whole. (Ekanola 2009). This form of education, according to Anyiam-Osigwe, is highly essential to regenerate the social system and cleanse it of much of the ills afflicting it today, including the foundational problems besetting the attainment of the MDGs identified above.

Hence, it is needful to incorporate into the MDGs, provisions for holistic education that would facilitate what has been described, earlier in this paper, as spiritual regeneration. In this regard, it is necessary to go beyond the focus of MDG 2, which is on primary education for children in developing countries, to make specific provisions for the holistic education of people across all nations. Such education must be designed to facilitate, in addition to the acquisition of cognitive competence and various technical skills, human spiritual development understood as the growing awareness of and the practical respect for the essential interconnectedness and interdependence between all humans as well as the intricate connection between humanity and the divine. As we have argued earlier, this is required to
overcome the negative tendencies of egotism, insatiability, reckless abuse of power, gross materialism, corruption and other social indecencies (Oladipo 2009. 27) that underlie many of the social ills that impinge upon the prospects of development. In terms of the MDGs, these negative tendencies have, as reported in the 2010 UN MDG report, manifested in unfulfilled commitments, lack of focus and accountability and insufficient dedication to an all inclusive and sustainable development.

Although the content of the holistic education proposed by Anyiam-Osigwe cannot be fully exposed and analysed in this paper, it is important to note that the Holistic Lifestyle Curriculum (HLC) for Nigerian schools, designed by The Africa Institute for Leadership, Research and Development, South Africa in conjunction with Osigwe Anyiam-Osigwe Foundation, Lagos, Nigeria and F.W. de Klerk Foundation, South Africa in 2002 provides us with a template for the inclusion of the moral/spiritual education into the MDGs. Based on the teachings of Anyiam-Osigwe, the HLC is meant to complement existing school curricula in order to achieve an integrated development of the spiritual (personal), economic and political dimensions of humanity (Holistic Life Curriculum 2002, i-ii). Some of the capacities the HLC is designed to equip people with include the abilities to:

- Investigate the interdependence of local, regional, national and global communities.
- Reach informed conclusions about the interdependence of communities, the environment and technological progress.
- Assess/critically evaluate contributions to today’s world of men and women of many races, historical periods and cultures.
- Investigate the causes and effects of power relationship within and among groups in their immediate environment, large society and the international community.
- Act in accordance with personal values, strengths, abilities and aspirations and speculate on how these might impact on future choices and opportunities.
- Make informed choices that will contribute to their own and others’ physical, spiritual, economic and socio-political advancement.

To achieve the above, the proposed holistic education to be included in the MDGs must seek to undermine the “them” and “us” dichotomy that not only inhibits people from engaging in positive interaction and cooperation that would enhance social development in ways that would benefit all stakeholders, but also generates and sustains the diverse manifestations of
hostilities and violent confrontations experienced by humankind. This dichotomy, according to Mahatma Gandhi, is illusory and gives rise to the unfortunate belief that each individual or group is separate from everything and everyone else, and has to look after his or its own interests first, even at the expense of others (Ambler 1990, 200). Holistic education must teach people to appreciate the fact that humanity is not ultimately separate, but profoundly tied together in the unity of life. This understanding is required to overcome the problems of insufficient commitments, lack of focus and accountability, and inadequate dedication to sustainable development (UN 2010, 4) as well as violent conflicts underlying the shortfalls recorded in terms of the achievement of the MDGs.

In connection with the above, the proposed holistic education should also aim to enhance the appreciation of the “deep economic interdependence between peoples across state boundaries” (Young 2000, 247). This interdependence is reflected, for example, in the fact that a change in the value of a currency or interest rate within a country usually has a spiral effect on the financial markets of the whole world. Likewise, a change in the prices of some key commodities – crude oil, gold, cocoa, etc – on the world market profoundly affects the lives and well-being of people living across several state-boundaries. Hence, it is true that people act within a set of institutions that connect them to one another by commerce, communication or the consequences of policies. These relations are not limited to the borders of nations-states; they cut across them (Young 2000, 242). What the essential interconnection and interdependence of human beings point at is that any positive development witnessed within a specific human group would have a positive ripple effect on other groups with which they come into contact. If the development is negative, it will equally affect other groups. Hence, it is true that the only way a nation can truly develop in a sustainable way is for other nations to also develop. What gives the appearance that an individual, a group or a nation can really win or lose anything to the complete exclusion or at the expense of others is the inability to recognise the intrinsic connectivity between what appears to be separate and distinct groups. The realisation of this connectivity would bring about the commitment, dedication and focus, hitherto lacking, required for the attainment of the MDGs.

Conclusion
The central argument of this paper is two pronged: first is that the MDGs has not and cannot be achieved in Africa because while they focus on the improvement of physical and mental domains of the human person, they completely neglect what Anyiam-Osigwe identifies as the third dimension of human nature: the spiritual/moral dimension. Second is that the MDGs need to be reformulated to accommodate the important spiritual/moral aspect of human nature for them to be effective in addressing the challenges of development in Africa. This requires the addition of a provision for a mode of education, described as holistic education, that would enhance human spirituality, which transcends mere mystical feelings, piety or devotion. Rather, it is about the growing awareness of and respect for the essential interconnectedness and interdependence between all humans as well as the intricate connection between humanity and the divine. It involves growing in sensitivity to self, to others and to non-human creations.

The HLC, derived from the writings of Anyiam-Osigwe, has been identified as providing a useful guide for the modification of the MDGs to enhance their attainability. There is, however, a need to carefully fashion out how the HLC can be employed to formulate a form of holistic education that would be incorporated into the MDGs. This has to be done in ways that would actually enhance human spiritual/moral development and effectively fill the gaps in the MDGs that have been identified as responsible for their failure in Saharan Africa.

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