UNIOFFA JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES (U-OJIS)
A Multidisciplinary Journal of Science, Management and Social Sciences
Website: www.unioffajis.com
ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

Economic Diversification and the Implications for Poverty Reduction in Open Economies: The Nigerian Experience

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Volume 1:2

ABSTRACT

Economic diversification and poverty reduction are an underlying structural issue for resource dependent openness. Nigeria has been a highly integrated but structurally weak open economy for more than fifty years with its primary exports being petroleum products and neglecting its other sectoral exports. This primary commodity dependence has put the fiscal structure in the country under huge strains from the international shocks and has led to the high multi-dimensional poverty. This paper assesses the Nigerian experience of diversification barriers using a qualitative systematic economic review and structural policy analysis methodology. From the review of literature, it was observed that although the freeing of domestic prices to international markets can lead to an increase in exports, it can also lead to the Dutch Disease effect, which replaces high employment industries such as manufacturing and agriculture. Nevertheless, paper conclude that for Nigeria to fully exploit the potentials of an open economy in terms of create lasting jobs, improve food security and achieve real poverty alleviation, creating a multisectoral economic matrix that will break the dependence on resources. This study suggests that in order for the country's economy to become truly diversified, the non-oil resource base needs to be expanded, agro-processing networks must be unlocked and rural credit channels need to be strengthened.

Key words: Economic Diversification, Poverty Reduction, Nigerian Experience, Dutch Disease, Trade Liberalization, Non-Oil Exports.

INTRODUCTION

The link between economic diversification and poverty alleviation is one of the most important structural issues in the modern open economies. According to World Bank (2024), an open economy can be understood as one that is heavily involved in international trade and where the movement of capital, technology, intermediate goods, and services are able to cross the border. In theory, open-market models ought to speed up the domestic development process by enabling a country to take advantage of its comparative advantages, international financial inflows, and global production systems networks (IMF, 2025).

For many developing countries however, the reality of the global integration has been complicated by a structural vulnerability, which is the narrowness of their export portfolio in primary commodities like crude oil, natural gas and solid minerals (Adamu, 2021; Omoregie, 2018). This lack of diversification makes the fiscal planning of the domestic economy vulnerable to significant volatility in terms of trade and shocks to commodity prices in other countries, (Afreximbank, 2025). Nigeria is one of the most obvious examples of a macro-economic challenge country. Nigeria has been a paradox as an open economy with one of the largest multi-dimensional poor in the world for more than 50 years, despite its huge foreign exchange earnings from petroleum exports. In an open economy which is based on only one volatile sector, the benefits of international trade are far from reaching the masses, and therefore poor people and income inequality persist (Ekpete &

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

Wilson, 2024). Historically, this structural dependency has led Nigeria's institutions to prioritize petroleum extraction over other sectors with high potential. With the changing world energy dynamics and the scarcity of energy resources as a survival burden on Nigeria, the country can no longer afford to sustain its precarious single source revenue model. It must be intentional in creating a diversified economic matrix that will leverage on international trade for sustainable poverty alleviation and not wealth concentration (Wilson & Ekpete, 2025).

The main issue addressed in this study is that Nigeria's open economy model is characterized by chronic and systemic poverty due to the failure of its macroeconomic policies to address the structural diversification of the non-oil manufacturing and agricultural sectors as well as the over-dependence on capital-intensive primary sector of petroleum extraction. There are several compounding factors of the above core problem known as Resource Curse and Structural Unemployment. Nigeria's oil sector accounts for more than 85% of the total export earnings but employs less than 1% of the domestic workforce (NBS, 2022). The system is a capital-intensive, labour-scarce system, which generates high fiscal revenues for the state but does not create employment opportunities to the masses, which is the growing domestic labour force (Ekpete & Wilson, 2025; Wilson & Ekpete, 2025). Nigeria has consistently reduced trade barriers, again at the behest of the world's trade liberalization regime. But prematurely opening borders without effective backstopping industrial base can lead to an influx of foreign goods that are dependent on subsidies that can overwhelm weak local industries and undermine agriculture and manufacturing livelihoods (Ekpete & Ekpete, 2025). In terms of weak financial intermediation in other sectors, facilitating the flow of funds into sectors that are underfunded such as the agriculture and rural processing is crucial for diversification. However, because of the limitation of conventional commercial banks in providing credit to smallholder farmers and small businesses, these are highly credit constrained, and some of the other sectors of the economy are structurally weak (Ekpete & Iwedi, 2017).

The study is quite significant in being able to address the paradox of growth without development. Nigeria is no stranger to boom and bust cycles of GDP growth associated with oil price booms that do not translate to poverty alleviation or job creation. This study is sorely needed to give a structure to inclusive growth which is directly focused on the real economy. Moreover, Nigeria is an open economy which implies that it is exposed to balance of payments (BOP) crises, foreign exchange illiquidity and imported inflation. It is legal and economic imperative to diversify the export base for the purpose of bolstering external reserves and stabilizing the poor's purchasing power. This study's main aim is to explore the macro-to-micro transmission channels of the impact of international trade openness on structural economic diversification on poverty dynamics. In particular, the study examines De-risking the Resource Curse, which involves transforming the mono-product and oil price-sensitive export model into a diversified, high value manufacturing, climate-smart agriculture and digital services-based open economy. The remaining literature will be discussed under the following thematic pillars such as literature review, methodology, conclusion and policy recommendations.

LITERATUTE REVIEW

Review of Concepts

To contextualize Nigeria's economic trajectory, it is imperative to unpack the foundational macroeconomic concepts adopted in this paper.

(i) Economic Diversification

Economic diversification is an economic growth and development strategy that implies the process of shifting completely away from a single income source toward the direction of a several income sources from a range of markets and sectors. It is primarily a structural conceptual construction, moving away from a single basket of primary commodities to a diversified and more complex portfolio of different production and export sectors with high value-added (Gelb, 2010). The theoretical building block is that diversification helps lessen the impact of macroeconomic fluctuations in developing countries by shielding them from external commodity price shocks and terms of trade changes (Koren and Tenreyro, 2007). Long ago, Imbs and Wacziarg (2003) found a U-shape relationship in structural transformation. That is, countries first diversify the structure of production as their incomes rise, but then re-concentrate their production once they achieve high levels of income. Building on this, Hausmann et al. (2007) showed that the products a country exports are important; trade into more complex product spaces is a major factor in economic growth in the long run. Besides, Cadot et al., (2011) suggest that export

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

diversification can take two forms: intensive margin (which involves expanding the quantity of the same products) and extensive margin (which involves the introduction of new products on the market).

This relationship is of particular importance for developing countries, as Papageorgiou and Spatafora (2012) have pointed out that increasing economic complexity is a necessary step towards sustainable development. Acemoglu and Zilibotti (1997) argue that the macroeconomic risks in infant economies are high because projects are done "with large quantities of capital and have to be invested in all or nothing," and that risk sharing and the accumulation of capital must be achieved through diversification. Likewise, Hummels and Klenow (2005) claim that growing economies export more goods than just more quantities, so increasing the diversity of goods exported increases structural resilience. In the view of Freire (2017), diversification is not just the introduction of new industrial branches, but a continuous effort to enhance a country's technological and human capital capacities. Finally, as Hesse (2008) argues, significant structural economic diversification is still one of the best indicators of economic growth in the developing world that will hold up to shocks.

(ii) Poverty Reduction

In theory, poverty reduction is the application of specific economic, institutional and social mechanisms designed to move poor people above a poverty line. Widely understood as an 'absence of income', poverty has taken a radical turn after Sen's (1999) conceptualization of poverty as the loss of capabilities and freedoms that are essential for human functioning. Alkire and Foster (2011) practically implemented this paradigm shift by developing the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) that reflects living standards, health and education deprivations at the same time.

At the macroeconomic level Dollar and Kraay (2002) famously claimed that the poorest quintiles benefit proportionately as a result of increased economic growth, and that pro-poor growth is the main engine for poverty reduction. Yet Ravallion (2001) challenged this simplistic picture and showed empirically that economic growth will have a more muted impact on reducing poverty the higher initial levels of wealth inequality are. Turning to a microeconomic angle, Banerjee and Duflo (2011) changed the course of the discipline, and found that local, evidence-based measures have a lot more impact than sweeping structural ideologies to understand the behavioural economics of the poor.

Sachs (2005) on the other hand proposed the concept of the "big push", which calls for a large-scale and coordinated international assistance to overcome geographical and infrastructural poverty traps in sub-Saharan Africa. From a political economy perspective, Collier (2007) defined poverty reduction as an inseparable part of solving the world's "bottom-billion" countries' violent conflicts, natural resource curse and institutional problems. In addition, Chen and Ravallion (2010) made important empirical corrections to the global poverty line and showed that the absolute structural deprivations in the developing world have been much greater than had been previously assumed. The basic idea of relative poverty was set out by Townsend (1979) who highlighted that social exclusion and lack of participation in mainstream society are as important as absolute poverty. In the end, however, as Thorbecke concluded in 2004, poverty reduction must be approached multi-layered, with the need for sustainable macroeconomic growth alongside targeted social safety nets.

(iii) Structural Transformation

Structural transformation is the process of shifting economic resources from low to high productivity sectors and shifting labour from low to high productivity sectors, which began as a dual sector model of Lewis (1954). The structural transformation is weak in Nigeria. Labour that has left agriculture has mostly moved into the low productivity informal sector in cities (McMillan & Rodrik, 2011; Thorbecke, 2013). This trend is often referred to as "premature de-industrialization" (Rodrik, 2016; Erumban & de Vries, 2021; Page, 2012) and gives a ceiling to sustained growth in wages and to the reduction of massive poverty.

(iv) Resource Dependence

Resource dependence is when a country is dependent on one natural resource to a very high degree for its export earnings and fiscal viability. Nigeria's Dependency on crude oil: Nigeria is often referred to as the "Resource Curse" (Auty, 1993; Sachs & Warner, 2001), depending on crude oil has massively influenced the framework of the macro-economic system. This dependence installs the "Dutch Disease" that results in overvaluation of the real exchange rate, making non-oil exports (such as agriculture and manufacturing) uncompetitive in open international

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

markets (Corden & Neary, 1982; Oyejide, 2007; Iwayemi, 2018).

(v) **Inclusive Growth**

The concept of inclusive growth implies economic growth that creates equal opportunities for all the growth participants and that the benefits of economic growth are spread evenly across the population (Ali & Yao, 2004, Klasen, 2010). Nigeria has been a victim of 'jobless growth' for a long time. When oil prices are high, GDP grew at a high rate, but in a "capital-intensive and geographically concentrated manner" which did not result in widespread employment or be felt by the poorest quintiles (Ravallion, 2001). Structural policies need to be deliberately designed to address the economic capacities of the poor for inclusive growth to be achieved (Osabohien et al., 2020).

(vi) Open Economies

An open economy is a macroeconomic system that allows for the free movement of goods and services, capital and labour with the rest of the world. The basic theoretical approach to the understanding of this system is Mundell-Fleming model, developed by Mundell (1963) and Fleming (1962) which states that an open economy cannot simultaneously achieve an independent monetary policy, free movement of capital and fixed exchange rate.

In addition to capital flows, openness is largely conceptualized in terms of international trade dynamics. Krugman (1979) revolutionized the theory of trade in an open economy by showing that economies of scale and monopolistic competition can generate intra-industry trade between two countries even if their comparative advantages are the same. Sachs and Warner (1995) were empirically proponents of open economy paradigm, suggesting that open economy economies grow significantly faster and can converge faster than closed protectionist economies. This is backed by Frankel and Romer (1999) who showed that it is not only the wealthier countries that are more open to trade; trade openness causally affects national income levels. In addition, Grossman and Helpman (1991) defined openness as an important channel for technological spillovers: the more open a country is to foreign markets, the faster the local pace of innovation and the dissemination of knowledge within the country.

But there are critical caveats to the concept of open economies story. Stiglitz (2002) pointed out that the liberalization of capital markets has inherent dangers to the system, as "hot money" can lead to devastating financial crises in structurally vulnerable developing countries. The socio-economic aspect has been added by Rodrik (1998), who theorized that more open economies paradoxically need larger government sectors: The greater the exposure to external fluctuations of the markets, the bigger the social insurance that has to be provided to protect citizens against unexpected changes in the economy. To get a handle on the dynamics of the exchange rate and current account over time, Obstfeld and Rogoff (1995) "modernized" the field by incorporating microeconomic foundations for open economy macroeconomics. In the face of inherent complexities and vulnerabilities, Bhagwati (2004) strongly supports the open economy concept and explains why globalization and market integration are the strongest engines of global prosperity.

Theoretical Foundations of Diversification and Poverty

In economic literature it has been established that economic diversification is one of the key strategic approaches to reducing poverty level and promoting growth, (Krama & Aborh, 2025; Valentine, et al., 2020; Oyelami & Alege, 2018 & Akara, 2021). However, at international level, there are a number of important frameworks that show how trade concentration negatively affects an open economy and the importance of diversification as a form of poverty reduction. For instance, The Dutch Disease model, made formal by Corden and Neary (1982), is the main theory for why resource rich open economies cannot diversify. A large export boom of a major resource (oil) brings a large inflow of foreign currency into a nation. There is a significant appreciation of the real exchange rate, as a result of which the other traditional exports, including manufactured goods and agricultural products, lose their competitiveness in the international markets. Labor and capital as a result exit of these high-employment industries with their employment opportunities and flock to the main resource economics or the non-tradable service sector. This sectoral shift leads to structural unemployment and aggravates poverty, since manufacturing and agriculture are the main sources of employment for the lower income groups.

Development finance theory has suggested that developing open economies, routinely, experience a Savings-Investment Gap, that is, the domestic savings are not adequate to finance the capital investment

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

necessary for diversifying the industry. Finance can fill this gap but overdependence on foreign commercial debt can generate fiscal volatility if the amount is not invested directly into productive, high-yielding non-resource infrastructures (Ekpete et al., 2021). Diversification means that the foreign capital inflows should be intentionally funneled into the sectors that build capacity, directly improving human capital and providing employment opportunities.

In terms of openness versus protectionism, recent law and economic analysis reveal that there is no single panacea for development through trade liberalization. Open border has the potential to lead to infant industry exposure as a result of unfair practices in foreign trade like dumping of subsidized goods (Ekpete & Ekpete, 2025). So, economic diversification and poverty reduction should be accompanied by a balanced, law-based trade policy. The governments are required to protect and promote value addition to non-oil exports and also continue to be part of the global market (Ekpete & Ekpete, 2025).

The Magnitude of Poverty Challenges in Nigeria

Though policy efforts have been made over the years, poverty remains large, entrenched and structural in Nigeria. The macro economy current landscape shows that over the years, the rate of economic development has been greater than the rate of alleviation of inequities in wealth distribution, resulting in high level of vulnerability of the masses (Aigbokhan, 2000; Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

(i) **Poverty Rate and Population Dynamics:** Nigeria's national poverty rate was projected to rise to around 63% at the end of 2025 (World Bank, 2026). This amounts to 140 million people in Nigeria who are living below the national poverty line, and as population growth rates continue to outpace gross domestic product (GDP) growth, this figure is prone to growth (NBS, 2025).

(ii) **The Inflationary Overhang:** The surge in prices in earlier months of 2025 took a considerable toll on household purchasing power and headline and food inflation was easing in late 2025. As a result, real wages have risen slowly and a large proportion of the population is in ultra-poor conditions without being able to cover their calorie consumption needs (International Monetary Fund, 2024; World Bank, 2025).

(iii) **Multidimensional Deprivation:** There is poverty in Nigeria which is multidimensional and cannot be expressed only by the income measurement. It is defined by the high impact on human capital in the form of poor access to quality health services, quality education and clean energy (Sen, 1999; United Nations Development Programme, 2025).

(iv) **Spatial Inequality:** This is a Spatial Inequality case where poverty crisis is not evenly spread. There is significant variation across regions, poverty rates in the northern parts of the country are often over 70%, with high poverty levels due to subsistence farming and insecurity, while the more diverse southern parts of the country have lower poverty rates (NBS, 2024).

The Need for Economic Diversification in Nigeria

The need to diversify production and export bases is an urgent call to action for the Nigerian economy, for several important reasons. Nigeria is a single commodity exporter and is very exposed to the fluctuation of the world market. A decline in the world price of crude oil results in a sudden crisis in the fiscal budget, currency devaluation, and severe inflation that affects the poor (Afreximbank, 2025; Omoregie, 2018). Diversification provides several stable income sources, which safeguards the national budget and domestic households from taking external shocks. Economic diversification is one of the most feasible mechanism for realizing sustainable development, mitigating volatility (economic) and harnessing the Nigeria's full resource potentials (Soberu, et al., 2015). A well diversification planed would aid the Nigerian economy to take full advantage of its vast natural possessions base, strengthen economic/financial linkages across industries, drive progress in technology, attract direct foreign investments, lower cost due to operation, enhance competitiveness and improve living condition of the people, (Ayodele, et al., 2013).

One major problem of resource rich countries is the way in which the system creates the paradox of plenty by encouraging high level of economic dependence and weakening other important sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture, Edame & Efefiom,

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

2013). Resource abundant countries tends to experience slow economic growth and development compared to resource scarce economies, (Akujuru, 2015 & George-Anokwuru, 2025). This is validated by (Sachs and Warner, 2025; Sunday et al., 2021). There are no linear employment growth possibilities for increasing output in petroleum extraction. However, other industries such as light manufacturing, agro-processing, and modern service industries are labour intensive. Policies that move the economy's weight into these sectors can promote a labor market that has a direct link between growth and sustainable gains in real wages and a reduction in poverty.

One important segment in Nigeria known for poverty eradication is the banking sector. Empirical evidence has shown that traditional banking system has been failing to cater for the important sectors that can help in poverty alleviation like agriculture and small-scale manufacturing (Ekpete & Iwedi, 2017). To attain diversification, Nigeria needs to promote strong micro financial structures that target its rural entrepreneurs and small farm holders, thereby mobilizing them with finance to tap their productive potential and enhance food security (Ekpete & Iwedi, 2017). A sensible and effective deployment of resources to areas of deficit is crucial for economic growth takeoff, (Tsenkwo & Aiyelabowo, 2023).

The Potentials of Non-Oil Economic Diversification in Nigeria

Agriculture is a vital sector that employs more than 35% of Nigerians (NBS 2022), and any progress to enhance Nigeria's agricultural value chains will create employment opportunities for them. But there is a low return from export of raw agriculture products. The real power of the sector is that of Agro-Processing whereby raw inputs are transformed into refined, value-added products for consumers. Domestic packaging, refining, and preservation facilities lead to increased retention of value in the country, increased non-oil export revenues, and creation of millions of off-farm rural jobs.

Beyond agriculture, Nigeria has a great and untapped solid mineral and marine (blue economy) resources (e.g., lithium, gold and limestone). The solid minerals have been mined informally for decades, resulting in the mining communities being left in poverty with little tax revenue being generated as it is exported in raw and unrefined form (George-Anokwuru, 2025). These secondary resources can be a significant contributor to industrial development and wealth creation in the locality if the government facilitates small-scale mining, invest in local processing facilities and creates an environmentally sustainable management framework for maritime logistics.

Policy Issues and Institutional Barriers to Diversification

The policy issues and other regulatory and institutional challenges that to impede diversification in Nigeria among others are political in nature. It has been observed that political, not economic barrier, is the main obstacle to significant diversification. Government rents (including oil revenues) generate quick and centralized cash flows which can cause institutional complacency (Wilson & Ekpete, 2025). Such an economic structure shift demands long-term planning, a regulatory regime that does not waver and a determination to forgo easy pickings from rents on resources – all qualities that short-term political cycles may not encourage.

Micro-financial credits are meant for improved agricultural productivity and for small scale entrepreneurs but they turn out sub-optimal when not targeted properly (Ekpete & Iwedi, 2017). Administrative friction, risk aversion and information asymmetries help explain why the non-resource sectors continue to have relatively low commercial credit flows, and therefore limited long-term investment funds for local businesses to expand production.

Other barriers to diversification are infrastructure scarcity and high realities. In an area where electricity grids are unstable, transport corridors are poor and port logistics is in poor condition, alternative sectors such as manufacturing and commercial agro-processing cannot flourish. Nigerian businesses are forced to invest on their own to generate and transport power, hugely increasing their cost of operation. Such high costs cancel out the competitive benefits of low labor costs and make domestic non-oil products less competitive internationally.

Government Efforts Towards Ending Poverty Via Diversification

Successive administrations have recognized the peril of mono-product dependency and deployed strategies to stimulate the real sector.

Agricultural Value Chain Interventions: Programs such as the Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP) and various agricultural transformation agendas sought to

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

inject credit into rural farming. The objective was to commercialize smallholder farming, reduce import reliance, and retain wealth within rural communities (Awotide et al., 2012; Osabohien et al., 2020).

Financial Inclusion and Microcredit: Initiatives spearheaded by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and various national social investment frameworks aimed to bank the unbanked and provide micro-loans to informal traders and small enterprises, positing that access to capital is a prerequisite for escaping poverty (Adeyemi et al., 2023; Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN], 2023).

Solid Minerals and Creative Economies: Recent diversification roadmaps have aggressively targeted the formalization of artisanal mining and the expansion of the digital/creative economies (ICT, Nollywood) as alternative, youth-driven foreign exchange earners.

Summary of Economic Diversification Vectors

The interactions, the problems, and the poverty-reduction strategies available in the different diversification channels of an open economy like Nigeria are summarized below:

Table 1: Summary of Economic Diversification Vectors

Economic Sector	Poverty Alleviation Mechanism	Strategic Open-Market Opportunity	Primary Structural Barrier
Agro-Processing	Creates mass employment; improves rural incomes and food security.	Exports high-value, processed agricultural consumer goods globally.	Limited access to institutional credit (Ekpete & Iwedi, 2017)
Manufacturing	Absorbs low-skilled labor; drives long-term wage growth.	Redirection of trade via balanced, protective trade policies (Ekpete & Ekpete, 2025).	Severe power deficits and high transport logistics costs.
Solid Minerals	Generates localized jobs; expands non-oil state revenues	Upgrades raw ores to industrial components within local processing zones.	High levels of informality and lack of state-backed processing infrastructure
Services & Fintech	Lowers transaction costs; improves financial inclusion for SMEs	Connects local entrepreneurs directly to global digital marketplaces.	Long maturity lags between technological adoption and real economic growth.

METHODOLOGY

This analysis adopts a qualitative systemic economic review, designed to synthesize existing literature, policy documents, and empirical data transparently.

Literature Selection: Data was purposively sampled from verified multilateral repositories (World Bank, IMF, UNDP), national statistical bodies (NBS, CBN), and peer-reviewed academic databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar etc.

Inclusion Criteria: The study considered peer-reviewed journal articles and official institutional reports published between **1955 and 2026** to capture both foundational theories and contemporary data. Studies explicitly addressing Sub-Saharan Africa, open market dynamics, and the Dutch Disease were equally considered. The literature reviewed were directly linking macroeconomic policies to poverty indices.

Exclusion Criteria: the study excluded non-peer-reviewed opinion pieces or political rhetoric lacking empirical economic backing. Also, the study excluded purely closed-economy theoretical models, as Nigeria operates an open, trade-dependent economy.

Analytical Framework: A dual framework was utilized in the study. The pro-poor growth framework to assess whether diversification outcomes reach the lowest quintiles, and the Structuralist framework to evaluate the sectoral shifts from oil to the real sector.

CONCLUSION

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

The intensive review of economic diversification-poverty reduction nexus in open economies makes it abundantly clear that a country's ties with global trade can only bring extensive prosperity if the country's production structure is diversified. The Nigerian experience shows that over-reliance on capital-intensive primary resource extraction, combined with neglect of the broader economy exposes open countries to shocks from outside, a constraint on employment growth and a trap in chronic poverty. To tap the potential of an open economy, there has to be a conscious policy shift. Nigeria needs to implement a balanced trade regimes which will provide some protection for local infant industries, enable financial credit to flow effectively into agriculture and manufacturing sectors, and pledging to invest in infrastructure over the long term. Nigeria can only fully exploit the potential of international trade to create lasting jobs, improve food security and achieve real poverty alleviation by creating a multisectoral economic matrix that will break the dependence on resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To transition from policy formulation to impactful poverty reduction, the following institution-specific actions are recommended:

(i) Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) & Bank of Industry (BOI) should Shift from direct intervention lending (which suffers high default rates) to institutionalizing targeted Credit Risk Guarantees. As a way of implementation, a decentralized guarantee fund specifically for export-oriented, agro-processing SMEs should be establish. By covering up to 70% of the default risk, commercial banks are incentivized to fund labor-intensive local manufacturing that absorbs low-skilled labor.

(ii) Federal Ministry of agriculture and food security should move from seasonal input subsidies (e.g., fertilizer distribution) to climate-resilient capital infrastructure. The ministry should execute a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) partnership with private agri-tech firms to deploy solar-powered irrigation and cold-storage hubs across 100 strategic rural clusters within Nigeria over the next 24 months, ensuring year-round production and curbing post-harvest losses.

(iii) Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC) should **s**ubsidize the cost of global market entry for non-oil exporters. In terms of implementation, the council should launch a 50% matching-grant facility dedicated exclusively to funding international phytosanitary and quality certifications (e.g., ISO, Global G.A.P.) for verified local producers, directly countering the trade barriers that hinder Nigeria's non-oil competitiveness in open economies.

(iv) Ministry of Solid Minerals Development should formalize the artisanal mining sector to block revenue leakages and protect rural communities. The ministry should mandate the registration of artisanal miners into localized state-licensed cooperatives. Provide these cooperatives with mechanized equipment in exchange for exclusive, regulated off-taking via a transparent national commodity exchange.

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