

RE-ENGINEERING GOVERNANCE FOR NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIA

(7th Sina Egberongbe Memorial Lecture Delivered by Engr. Dideolu Falobi, FNSE, FCIoD. On 1 May 2025)
PROTOCOLS:

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to deliver lectures, which I always consider a great honor and privilege. My favorite topic is industrialization, and I have delivered lectures on the industrialization of Ijesaland, Osun State, and Nigeria at various events, including those organized by the Nigerian Society of Engineers, both locally and abroad. I have also been privileged to speak on the restructuring of Nigeria in honor of one of my bosom friends and a leader in the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE), Engr. Biodun Oyedepo. Additionally, I have delivered lectures on "Investment in Nigeria" at events in Nigeria, Helsinki, Finland, and New York, USA.

However, none of these lectures has excited me as much as the delivery of this lecture being held in Abeokuta today, for several reasons:

1. This lecture is in honor of Engr. Sina Egberongbe, a distinguished engineer who distinguished himself in the practice of engineering and contributed significantly to our society, apart from serving as a past Chairman of the Abeokuta Branch. It is essential to remember and celebrate our heroes, especially in this age when true heroes and worthy role models are scarce.
2. Abeokuta is a city with unique historical, political, and military antecedents. This city was where the great Lisabi Agbongbo Akala made his name as its protector. Abeokuta has produced notable icons, including General Obasanjo, Chief MKO Abiola, Chief Ernest Shonekan, Alhaji Lateef Adegbite, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, and Professor Wole Soyinka, among others.
3. Abeokuta is also notable for being the location of President Tinubu's two most famous pre-election speeches, which were logical, scientific, and probably spiritual. Given the rich platform that this city provides, I felt compelled to oblige when my Chairman, Engr. Olumayowa Idowu, invited me to speak, despite my busy schedule. The privilege of choosing my topic was an added bonus, and I decided to choose "Re-engineering Governance for National Productivity" almost effortlessly. I thank my Chairman and all the members of the Nigerian Society of Engineers, Abeokuta Branch for this privilege and honour.

The choice of the topic "Re-engineering Governance for National Productivity" is most suitable for our country at this time of reforms, with a high impact on the today and tomorrow of our industry. It is a testimony to the contemporaries of our society, as well as an honor to the man in whose name this event is being held. May his soul rest in peace.

Definitions and Concepts

The title of the lecture brings out three keywords, and I will add a fourth. These are "Re-engineering," "Governance," "National Productivity," and the addition, inspired by my engineering background, is "Process."

Re-engineering

"Re-engineering" in engineering is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as the process of changing and improving the design of a product, a system, the way a company works, or the way a job is done. However,

AI defines re-engineering in a broader perspective as the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of processes to achieve dramatic improvements in all areas, including but not limited to cost, quality, service, speed, profitability, and productivity. This process moves beyond incremental improvements to achieve a holistic transformation.

Governance

"Governance" is defined by Bevir Mark (2012) in its publication "Governance: A Very Brief Introduction" as "governance refers, therefore, to all processes of governance, whether undertaken by a government, market, or network, whether over a family, tribe, formal or informal organization, or territory, and whether through laws, norms, power, or language." Governance focuses less on the state and its institutions and more on social practices and activities.

The concept of "Good Governance" was introduced by the World Bank in its 1992 report entitled "Good Governance and Development," where it defined good governance as "an essential complement to sound economic policies and is central to creating and sustaining an environment that fosters strong and equitable development." The four P's of governance are People, Purpose, Process, and Performance.

People

This refers to the individuals involved in the governance structure, including the board of directors, management, employees, and stakeholders. It also encompasses their roles, responsibilities, and accountability.

Purpose

This defines the organization's reason for being, its mission, vision, and values. It provides the framework for strategic decision-making and the pursuit of organizational goals.

Process

"Process" means implementing clear, transparent, and accountable systems for decision-making, risk management, and daily operations in all organizations and groups that seek good governance. Good processes streamline workflows, ensure legal and ethical compliance, and help organizations respond quickly to challenges.

Performance

The fourth P of governance is Performance. Measuring, reviewing, and adapting performance to ensure that businesses reach their full potential is essential for good governance.

The World Bank identified six dimensions of governance for over 200 economies over the period 1996-2023. These are Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption.

National Productivity

Productivity is defined as the efficiency of production of goods or services expressed by some measure. Its measurements are often expressed as a ratio of aggregate output to a single input or aggregate input used in a production process, typically over a period.

National Productivity or the productivity of a country is defined and measured in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, per employed person, or per hour worked. GDP is the monetary value of all final

goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific time period, typically a year. It is a broad measure of a country's economic health and output.

Our conversation on "Nigeria as a case study of Re-engineering Governance for National Productivity" will focus on the six indicators of governance identified by the World Bank, questioning and challenging the status of governance in Nigeria.

A Quick Recap

So far, we have looked at the concepts of re-engineering, governance, and national productivity. We have seen that both re-engineering and governance are processes. We have also seen that the total productivity of a nation is directly related to its efficient and effective use of all its assets. Thus, the productivity of each and every one of us, as well as that of our individual companies, contributes to the overall productivity of our nation, Nigeria.

Re-engineering Governance for Increased Productivity in our respective businesses

To re-engineer your company's governance for increased productivity, focus on clarifying roles and responsibilities, streamlining decision-making processes, promoting transparency and accountability, and fostering a performance-driven culture. This includes ensuring the board is skilled and diverse, monitoring performance, and utilizing technology to enhance governance practices.

- 1. Clarify Roles and Responsibilities:**
 - Board's Role:** Define the board's role in strategy, risk management, and monitoring corporate performance.
 - Executive Management:** Ensure clear accountability for implementing strategies and achieving performance goals.
 - Employee Roles:** Communicate expectations and responsibilities clearly at all levels to foster a shared understanding of how each role contributes to overall productivity.
- 2. Streamline Decision-Making Processes:**
 - Efficient Decision-Making:** Establish clear processes for making decisions, ensuring they are timely and effective.
 - Reduce Red Tape:** Identify and eliminate unnecessary steps or approvals to improve speed and efficiency.
- 3. Promote Transparency and Accountability:**
 - Open Communication:** Foster a culture of open dialogue and transparency within the organization.
 - Performance Measurement:** Regularly monitor and evaluate performance against key performance indicators (KPIs) to identify areas for improvement.
 - Accountability:** Hold individuals and teams accountable for their performance and contributions.
- 4. Foster a Performance-Driven Culture:**
 - Performance Management:** Implement performance management systems that align individual goals with the company's strategic objectives.
 - Employee Engagement:** Use technology and communication strategies to keep employees engaged and informed about the company's goals and performance.

Continuous Improvement: Encourage a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, where employees are empowered to find solutions and make recommendations.

5. Utilize Technology:

AI and ML: Utilize AI and machine learning tools to analyze data, monitor employee engagement, and identify areas for improvement.

Cloud Computing: Leverage cloud computing networks to streamline administrative processes and improve communication.

Re-engineering Governance for National Productivity

On a national level, it is almost impossible to discuss public governance without being seen as political. Hence, genuine discussion has almost eluded Nigerians. Our challenges with national productivity date back to the First Republic when the elevation of politics over governance completely distracted our leaders, leading to the bloody end of the First Republic and eventually the civil war.

Nigeria's leaders have underperformed, with pockets of brilliance being inadequate and largely unable to meet the expectations of the people. The data has been confusing, used by various governments to justify their misrule. While their data may look good, they are too poor for the potentials of the country and speak more to underdevelopment than development.

A growth rate of 3.5% may be good on paper, but Nigeria has the potential to grow at a double-digit rate, given its enormous human and material resources. Moreover, any GDP growth based on the oil sector is largely unhealthy for the country.

The World Bank's Human Capital Index ranks Nigeria 152 out of 157 countries. In 2023, Nigeria was the 39th largest economy globally based on nominal GDP; it is ranked 154th globally in 2023 based on GDP per capita, showing very low national productivity.

At the root of this is public governance, which has reduced our overall capacity to maximize our full potential as a people. It is therefore imperative for us as a nation to re-engineer public governance to ensure productivity.

Improving public governance in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach that addresses various aspects of governance, including institutional, policy, and leadership dimensions. To enhance national productivity, Nigeria should focus on strengthening its institutions, promoting transparency and accountability, and encouraging citizen participation in governance.

Institutional reforms are crucial to this endeavor. By enhancing the capacity and independence of institutions such as the judiciary, legislature, and civil service, Nigeria can promote a more efficient and effective governance system. Additionally, implementing measures to increase transparency and accountability can help build trust and confidence in government institutions.

Policy reforms can also play a significant role in promoting national productivity. Streamlining regulations can reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks and promote business growth, while investing in critical infrastructure such as transportation, energy, and digital infrastructure can support economic development. Furthermore, developing policies that promote innovation, entrepreneurship, and research can help drive economic growth and competitiveness.

Effective leadership is also essential for promoting national productivity. Appointing leaders based on merit, rather than nepotism or cronyism, can help ensure that government institutions are led by competent and visionary individuals. Fostering a leadership style that promotes productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness can also help drive economic growth and development.

Investing in human capital is another critical aspect of promoting national productivity. By investing in education, training, and capacity building, Nigeria can develop the skills and competencies of its citizens, enabling them to contribute more effectively to the economy. Providing capacity building support to institutions can also help enhance their effectiveness and efficiency.

Overall, improving public governance in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that addresses various aspects of governance, including institutional, policy, and leadership dimensions. By implementing these reforms, Nigeria can promote national productivity, drive economic growth, and improve the well-being of its citizens.

Once again, I wish to thank the Almighty God for the grace of this opportunity to share my ideas on this pertinent topic. I also thank the President and Chairman-in-Council of the Nigerian Society of Engineers, Engr. Margaret Aina Oguntala, FNSE, for not only sustaining the giant strides of the society but also improving those strides significantly.

Finally, I thank the indefatigable Chairman of the Abeokuta Branch, our own Engr. Olumayowa Idowu, his entire team, as well as all members of the society, for this opportunity.

I wish you a successful tenure.

Signed,
Engr. Dideolu Falobi, FNSE, FCIoD
Managing Director, Kresta Laurel Limited.

SUMMARY

The lecture "Re-engineering Governance for National Productivity" emphasizes the importance of good governance in enhancing national productivity. The speaker defines key concepts such as re-engineering, governance, and national productivity, and highlights the significance of clarifying roles and responsibilities, streamlining decision-making processes, promoting transparency and accountability, and fostering a performance-driven culture.

The lecture also discusses Nigeria's challenges with national productivity, citing poor governance, corruption, and inadequate leadership. The speaker argues that Nigeria has the potential to grow at a double-digit rate but is currently underperforming. To address this, the speaker recommends re-engineering public governance to ensure productivity.

Key Takeaways

1. Re-engineering governance is essential for national productivity.
2. Good governance involves clarifying roles and responsibilities, streamlining decision-making processes, promoting transparency and accountability, and fostering a performance-driven culture.
3. Nigeria's poor governance and corruption have hindered national productivity.

4. Institutional reforms, policy reforms, and effective leadership are crucial for promoting national productivity.
5. Investing in human capital and promoting citizen participation in governance can also contribute to national productivity.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen institutions and promote transparency and accountability.
2. Implement policy reforms to streamline regulations and promote business growth.
3. Invest in critical infrastructure and human capital.
4. Foster effective leadership and promote merit-based appointments.
5. Encourage citizen participation in governance and promote a culture of productivity and efficiency.

REFERENCES

1. Wikipedia
2. www.iod.com
3. Tradingeconomics.com
4. Worldbank.org
5. "Governance: A very Brief Introduction" by Bevir Mark (2012).
6. Productivity.gov.ng
7. iiste.org
8. Nigerianstat.gov.ng
9. Nura Ibrahim, 2024 "Quality of Public Governance and revenue generation in Nigeria" International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation (Volume 11 (5)).
10. Frcnigeria.gov.ng