Title of Article: Democratic Governance and Human Development Sustainability in Nigeria

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Abstract: This paper argued that the focus on human and social capital advancement which embodies development should form the basis upon which we appraise the success or otherwise of democratic governance in Nigeria since the return to civilian rule in 1999. This is borne out of the fact that the utility of democratic governance is measured by the values, concerns and priorities of the people as well as their active participation in the pursuit of development and economic transformation. As such, it is manifestly clear that over the past 14 years, since the return to democratic rule in Nigeria, the nation’s ‘leadership’ has consistently failed to deliver on the instrumental value of meeting the social needs of the people for improved quality of life. This is evidently manifested by its poor human development indicators which include widespread poverty, unemployment, poor health conditions; uneven income distribution, inadequate literacy rates, and low life expectancy. Coupled with this is the realization that the policies of government are not pro poor policies that addresses the very foundational needs of the people in terms of access to qualitative education, healthcare, employment opportunities and security. Consequently, it is very disturbing that the governance process allows relative amount of political freedoms and little or no amount of economic freedoms. In fact, what we have as democracy is nothing more than the “democratization of disempowerment” characterized by poverty, inequality, and lack of government accountability and transparency.

Today, public interests, well-being and empowerment of the people are not the measure of all things that underlie governance to the extent that government agenda and policies are undemocratic and have largely been an exercise in alienation. The paper sums with the conclusion that for democratic governance to thrive and be consolidated in Nigeria, it is essential to first address the state of the material conditions of the people through aggregating their common interests and conscientiously strive for the attainment of these goals.

Keywords: Governance, Human Development, Social Needs, Public Policy.