

**Development Planning in Nigeria: Reflections on the
National Economic Empowerment and Development
Strategy (NEEDS) 2003-2007**

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ABSTRACT Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999 with the enthusiasm to chat new political and socio-economic dispensation. The introduction of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) as a medium term planning strategy was a blueprint for new order. It contains all the envisaged policies and programmes of the federal government for the period 2003-2007 and far beyond, and serves as the fountain of the much-touted Obasanjo's reforms. NEEDS is not only a macro-economic plan document, but also a comprehensive vision, goals and principles of a new Nigeria that would be made possible through four key policies of wealth creation, employment generation, poverty eradication and value reorientation. This paper is a reflection on NEEDS. Using historical and content analysis methods, the paper explores common indices of development planning in the country. It reveals that NEEDS is not different from previous development plans in Nigeria, despite the claims to the contrary. While claiming to be a home-grown plan, it is very much in line with the wishes of the international agents of developed capitalist economies; there is lack of commitment of the leadership in pursuing plan objectives; corruption is still rife and priority in selecting plan projects is still poor. The paper recommends among others, the need for committed leadership, continuity with NEEDS II document, drawing adequate scale of preference in choosing policies and programmes, and determined efforts to break from the crutches of neo imperialist and neo colonial tendencies of the developed countries.