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Investment in Tertiary Education as a Critical Driver of the Realisation of Nigeria's One-Trillion-Dollar Economy by 2030

Niyi Jacob Ogunode PhD [1]

[1] Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education. University of Abuja, Nigeria
E-mail: [1] niyijacobogunode@gmail.com
ORCID ID: [1] https://orcid.org/0009-0002-3381-8688

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria's ambition to build a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2030 requires more than financial capital, physical infrastructure and economic reforms. It requires a highly skilled, innovative and productive population capable of transforming available resources into sustainable economic value. Tertiary education occupies a strategic position in this process because universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and other tertiary institutions produce the professionals, entrepreneurs, researchers, teachers, technologists and administrators needed for national development. This paper examines how huge and strategic investment in tertiary education can contribute to the realisation of Nigeria's one-trillion-dollar economic ambition. The paper focuses on six major areas: development of a skilled workforce, promotion of research and innovation, entrepreneurship and employment creation, industrialisation and economic diversification, attraction of investment and improvement of global competitiveness, and strengthening of institutional capacity. Evidence from countries such as South Korea and Singapore demonstrates that sustained investment in education, skills, research and technology can support rapid economic transformation when education policies are connected to national development priorities. The paper argues that tertiary education should not be viewed merely as a consumer of public resources but as an important productive investment capable of generating human capital, knowledge, technology, enterprises and employment. It therefore suggests increased and sustainable funding, stronger university-industry collaboration, improved research financing, entrepreneurship development, modern infrastructure, staff development and closer alignment between tertiary education programmes and Nigeria's economic priorities.

1.0 Introduction

Nigeria's aspiration to achieve a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2030 represents a major national development objective. The ambition requires substantial expansion in production, investment, employment, infrastructure, innovation and productivity. The Federal Government's medium-term development planning has identified the one-trillion-dollar economy as a major target for 2030. However, achieving such an ambitious economic objective requires more than financial resources and physical infrastructure. The country needs people with the knowledge, skills, creativity and technological competence to manage resources, operate industries, create businesses and generate new economic opportunities.

Tertiary education is therefore central to the economic transformation agenda. Universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and other tertiary institutions constitute the highest level of the formal education system and are responsible for producing high-level manpower, conducting research and supporting innovation. The World Bank recognises tertiary education as an important contributor to human capital development, productivity, innovation and economic growth. Investment in tertiary education can increase the capacity of individuals to participate productively in the labour market while

also strengthening the wider institutional and technological environment necessary for economic development (World Bank, 2026).

For Nigeria, the relationship between tertiary education and economic development should be understood beyond the traditional idea of producing graduates for existing jobs. The modern tertiary institution should also produce knowledge, technologies, entrepreneurs, patents, innovations and solutions to national problems. A university that develops improved agricultural technologies, a polytechnic that produces locally adaptable machines, or a research centre that develops a new medical or digital technology is contributing directly to economic production.

The experience of countries that successfully transformed their economies provides important lessons. South Korea, for example, combined investment in education with technological development, industrialisation and economic reforms. The OECD notes that educational expansion and investment in human capital contributed to Korea's remarkable economic transformation (OECD, 2013). Singapore similarly developed a strong human-capital base through sustained investment in education and skills development and linked education closely to changing economic and labour-market requirements (World Bank, 2026). These experiences demonstrate that education becomes particularly powerful as an instrument of economic transformation when it is deliberately connected to national productivity and innovation.

Nigeria therefore needs to reconsider the way tertiary education is financed and managed. Funding should not be limited to salaries and routine administration. Investment should cover modern laboratories, digital infrastructure, research and development, staff training, postgraduate education, innovation centres, entrepreneurship programmes, technology transfer and collaboration with industries. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), for example, already supports infrastructure, research, academic staff development and other interventions across Nigerian tertiary institutions. Such investments need to be expanded, better coordinated and increasingly linked to measurable national development outcomes.

The central argument of this paper is that Nigeria cannot build a one-trillion-dollar economy without building the human and knowledge infrastructure capable of sustaining it. A large economy requires engineers to build industries, scientists to develop technologies, economists and financial experts to manage resources, teachers to produce future generations, medical professionals to maintain a healthy workforce, entrepreneurs to create enterprises and researchers to generate solutions. Tertiary education provides the institutional platform for developing this capacity. Investment in tertiary education should be regarded as a long-term economic investment rather than simply a social expenditure. When properly funded and effectively managed, tertiary institutions can contribute to productivity, employment, entrepreneurship, technological advancement, industrialisation and global competitiveness. These outcomes are essential to the realisation of Nigeria's economic ambition.

2.0 Conceptual Terms

Concept of Tertiary Education

Tertiary education refers to education provided after secondary or post-basic education for the purpose of developing advanced knowledge, professional competence, technical skills, research capacity and other forms of higher-level human capital. In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (2013) identifies tertiary education as education provided after post-basic education and includes universities, inter-university centres, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics, innovation enterprise institutions and specialised institutions such as colleges of agriculture and schools of health and technology. The concept can therefore be understood from a system perspective. Tertiary education is not limited to universities. It is a broad network of institutions with different but complementary mandates. Universities are strongly oriented towards advanced teaching, research, knowledge creation and professional education; polytechnics emphasise technological and practical competencies; colleges of education prepare teachers; while specialised institutions develop manpower for particular sectors. The Federal Ministry of Education similarly describes its tertiary education mission in terms of advancing Nigeria's economic growth and global competitiveness through accessible, relevant and quality tertiary education.

From a human-capital perspective, tertiary education is an investment in the knowledge, skills and capabilities of individuals. Its importance extends beyond obtaining certificates. A properly functioning

tertiary system develops people who can analyse problems, undertake research, use technology, manage organisations, create businesses and provide professional services. The World Bank describes tertiary education as instrumental in developing skills, preparing young people for employment, fostering economic growth and reducing poverty. It also associates a highly skilled post-secondary educated workforce with greater productivity, innovation and resilience to economic shocks (World-bank, 2026). From a knowledge and innovation perspective, tertiary education is a major producer and transmitter of knowledge. Universities and research-oriented institutions provide the environment in which new ideas are developed, tested and applied. This makes tertiary education particularly important in a knowledge economy where competitiveness depends increasingly on science, technology, innovation and the ability to adapt to changing economic conditions. The World Bank emphasises that tertiary education and skills systems are at the forefront of nurturing talent and fostering innovation needed to improve productivity and economic growth (World-bank, 2022).

The Nigerian policy perspective also gives tertiary education a clear developmental responsibility. The National Policy on Education (2022) states that its goals include contributing to national development through high-level manpower training, providing accessible and affordable quality learning, reducing skill shortages, and promoting scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service. This means that Nigerian tertiary institutions are expected not merely to produce graduates but to respond to labour-market needs and contribute directly to national development. In practical terms, therefore, tertiary education can be viewed as Nigeria's advanced human-capital and knowledge-production system. Its effectiveness should be judged not only by the number of graduates produced but also by the quality of graduates, research outputs, innovations, employability, entrepreneurship, technological applications, community services and contributions to national productivity.

Concept of the One-Trillion-Dollar Economy in Nigeria by 2030

The concept of a one-trillion-dollar economy refers to the ambition for Nigeria's economy, measured by its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), to reach approximately US$1 trillion by the year 2030. GDP represents the monetary value of goods and services produced within an economy over a specified period. Thus, the expression "one-trillion-dollar economy" principally represents a target for the size and productive capacity of the Nigerian economy, rather than simply the amount of money available to the government. The target has become an important component of Nigeria's current medium-term economic planning. The Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning reported in April 2026 that the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2026–2030 is being developed to implement the Nigeria Agenda 2050 and that the plan incorporates the target of achieving a $1 trillion economy by 2030. The Ministry also stated that the plan seeks to support double-digit GDP growth and significantly expand Nigeria's economic base.

The concept should therefore be understood as an economic transformation target, rather than simply a numerical GDP target. Reaching US$1 trillion would require significant expansion in productive activities across agriculture, manufacturing, energy, construction, transportation, financial services, telecommunications, digital services, creative industries and other sectors. The Federal Government has linked the ambition to investment, private-sector participation, economic reforms and expansion of productive capacity. In October 2025, the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning described the target as ambitious but achievable through strategic partnerships, noting that the private sector is expected to provide a major share of the investment required. Another important dimension is economic growth and productivity. The Federal Government has indicated that achieving the target will involve strong economic growth, with the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning stating in March 2026 that the government plans to pursue the objective through approximately 7% annual economic growth and the MTNDP 2026–2030. The implication is that Nigeria must expand the volume and value of what it produces, improve productivity and create conditions that encourage investment (Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning 2026).

The one-trillion-dollar concept also has a structural transformation dimension. Nigeria cannot sustainably achieve a larger economy simply by increasing consumption or depending heavily on crude-oil revenues. The economy needs greater productive capacity and diversification. Recent government planning discussions have identified areas including renewable energy, agro-processing, manufacturing, digital economy and technical and vocational education as important areas for investment and economic

transformation. A further dimension is employment and improved living standards. A larger GDP is most meaningful when economic expansion translates into productive employment, higher incomes, improved public services and better living conditions. Consequently, the success of the one-trillion-dollar ambition should not be measured solely by the size of GDP. It should also be assessed in terms of whether economic growth creates decent jobs, raises productivity, reduces poverty, improves infrastructure and expands opportunities for Nigerians (Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning (2026, April 10).

The one-trillion-dollar economy is fundamentally a human-capital challenge as well as an investment challenge. Industries, technology companies, research institutions, hospitals, financial institutions, government agencies and other productive sectors require skilled personnel. The World Bank notes that tertiary education systems are central to creating jobs, building human capital and stimulating innovation.

Nigeria's ambition to build a **US$1 trillion economy by 2030** is one of the most ambitious economic development targets in the country's recent history. The Federal Government has incorporated the target into its medium-term development planning and has linked its achievement to sustained economic growth, investment, productivity, industrialisation, innovation and private-sector development. The Federal Government has also indicated that achieving the target will require very substantial private and public investment and a significant expansion of productive economic activity. From the perspective of tertiary education, however, capital investment alone cannot produce a trillion-dollar economy without corresponding investment in the people who will operate, manage, innovate and expand that economy. Universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and other tertiary institutions produce the engineers, scientists, teachers, doctors, economists, entrepreneurs, ICT specialists, managers, agricultural experts and public administrators required for economic transformation. The World Bank similarly identifies tertiary education as instrumental to developing skills, preparing young people for employment, fostering economic growth and reducing poverty.

Pillars of Nigeria's US$1 Trillion Economy Vision by 2030

Nigeria's **US$1 trillion economy target for 2030** is being pursued through the **Renewed Hope Plan 2026–2030**, which is intended to align with the long-term Nigeria Agenda 2050. The Federal Government describes the plan as a framework for accelerating growth, creating jobs, improving human capital, expanding infrastructure, strengthening food security and improving social protection.

The major pillars can be outlined as follows:

Economic diversification and productivity

Moving the economy beyond excessive dependence on crude oil by expanding agriculture, manufacturing, mining, services and other productive sectors.

Private-sector-led investment and enterprise development

Creating an environment in which businesses and investors can expand production, create jobs and drive economic growth. The government has specifically emphasised private-sector participation in achieving the economic target.

Infrastructure development

Expanding and improving electricity, transportation, housing, irrigation, digital connectivity and other infrastructure necessary for productive economic activity.

Human-capital development

Strengthening education, skills development, healthcare and workforce productivity so that Nigerians possess the capabilities required by a modern economy.

Agriculture and food security

Increasing agricultural productivity, strengthening food production and developing agricultural value chains. Government has also highlighted interventions such as solar-powered irrigation to reduce farmers' energy costs and expand production.

Industrialisation and manufacturing

Expanding domestic manufacturing, encouraging local production, improving value addition and reducing excessive dependence on imported goods. Nigeria Agenda 2050 identifies industrialisation and manufacturing as major components of economic transformation.

Digital transformation, science and technology

Expanding the digital economy and using technology, innovation and science to improve productivity and create new economic opportunities. Nigeria Agenda 2050 specifically identifies science and technology and digital transformation under its infrastructure and development framework.

Energy and natural resources development

Improving energy supply while making better use of Nigeria's oil, gas, solid minerals and renewable-energy resources. Reliable energy is essential for industrial and economic expansion.

Security and a stable macroeconomic environment

Strengthening national security, improving fiscal and monetary stability, and creating conditions that encourage investment and productive economic activity.

Governance, planning, monitoring and accountability

Improving institutional effectiveness, implementation, data-driven decision-making and monitoring of government programmes. The Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning has explicitly placed **planning, monitoring and evaluation** at the centre of the 2030 economic agenda.

3.0 Investment in Tertiary Education as a Critical Driver of Nigeria's One-Trillion-Dollar Economy by 2030

Huge and strategically managed investment in tertiary education should not be regarded simply as expenditure on classrooms, laboratories or staff salaries. It should be regarded as investment in Nigeria's productive capacity. Six major ways through which such investment can support the realisation of the $1 trillion economic ambition are discussed below.

Huge investment will develop a highly skilled and productive workforce

The most direct contribution of increased investment in tertiary education is the development of the human capital required to operate a modern economy. A $1 trillion economy cannot be built predominantly around an unskilled or poorly skilled labour force. Nigeria requires large numbers of competent engineers, medical professionals, ICT experts, agricultural scientists, teachers, economists, architects, accountants, technicians, entrepreneurs and other professionals capable of working productively in increasingly sophisticated industries. Investment should therefore go beyond increasing student enrolment. It should finance quality teaching, modern laboratories, digital infrastructure, practical training, industry-based learning, academic staff development, technical and vocational programmes and lifelong learning. The World Bank observes that tertiary education is essential for developing a highly skilled workforce, and that tertiary graduates experience significant earnings advantages while skilled workers are more productive and better positioned to respond to economic shocks. Similarly, the World Bank's recent Human Capital Index Plus evidence indicates that Nigeria's education pillar remains below the median for lower-middle-income countries and estimates that increasing effective years of schooling could raise labour earnings by about 20% over the long term. For Nigeria, this means that investment in tertiary education should be deliberately connected to the sectors expected to drive the $1 trillion economy. Universities should produce more specialists in artificial intelligence, software development, renewable energy, manufacturing, biotechnology, medicine, agriculture, logistics, financial technology and other high-productivity areas. Polytechnics should strengthen advanced technical and technological skills, while colleges of education should prepare teachers capable of transmitting these competencies throughout the education system. A trillion-dollar economy ultimately requires a trillion-dollar quality of human capacity behind it.

Investment in tertiary education will strengthen research, innovation and technological development

A second major pathway is through **research and innovation**. Modern economies are increasingly driven by knowledge, technology and the ability to convert research findings into commercially useful products and services. Nigeria cannot achieve rapid structural transformation if its universities merely reproduce existing knowledge without generating solutions to national economic problems. Large investment in tertiary institutions can provide modern laboratories, research grants, innovation centres, technology parks, digital infrastructure, research databases and competitive funding for multidisciplinary research. It can also strengthen university-industry partnerships so that research findings move from laboratories into factories, farms, hospitals, financial institutions and technology companies. Ogunode and Yahaya (2024) and Musa. (2022) specifically identifies tertiary education and research as producing benefits through increased productivity and innovation. It notes that economic

research demonstrates significant private and social returns from investment in tertiary education, including higher employment and earnings, productivity, innovation and more effective institutions. The Bank further emphasises that tertiary education is vital for human capital development and innovation and that strategic investment can generate productivity growth and economic transformation. Nigeria already possesses a major institutional mechanism for supporting this function through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund). Its mandate includes funding infrastructure, equipment, research and publications, and academic staff development. Its current intervention areas explicitly include agriculture and food security, health, transport, power and energy, ICT, space science, science and engineering, industry and infrastructure, education and human capital, and economic development and globalisation. The strategic challenge is to expand and better coordinate such investments so that research increasingly produces patents, technologies, start-ups, commercial products, improved production systems and policy solutions.

Investment will promote entrepreneurship, start-ups and employment creation

Tertiary institutions will to become centres of entrepreneurship and employment creation rather than merely institutions for producing job seekers vis investment. Nigeria's large youthful population makes employment creation particularly important. The $1 trillion ambition requires millions of Nigerians to participate productively in formal enterprises, technology businesses, manufacturing, agriculture, creative industries and professional services. Huge investment can support entrepreneurship centres, business incubators, innovation hubs, enterprise development programmes, university-based venture funds, technology-transfer offices and practical entrepreneurship education. Students should be trained not only to search for employment but also to identify economic problems, develop solutions and establish enterprises around those solutions. This is particularly important because the Ogunode Ukozor, and Ayoko, (2023a) identifies human capital knowledge, skills and health as central to job creation and economic prosperity. Skilled and innovative people are better positioned to obtain employment and create businesses that generate employment for others. Nigeria's recent human-capital evidence also shows that deficits in education and workforce skills have substantial consequences for future earnings, while interventions that improve skills and business practices can increase productivity and innovation. For example, a university agricultural technology centre could develop low-cost irrigation equipment and support students to commercialise it. A polytechnic could develop locally produced machinery for agro-processing. A university ICT centre could incubate fintech, artificial intelligence or software enterprises. Such activities transform tertiary institutions from consumers of public resources into producers of knowledge, technologies, enterprises and employment.

Investment will support industrialisation and economic diversification

Ihrough industrial transformation and diversification of Nigeria's economic base. The country cannot sustainably achieve a trillion-dollar economy by relying excessively on crude-oil revenues. The economy needs stronger manufacturing, agriculture, agro-processing, pharmaceuticals, construction, digital services, renewable energy, transportation, creative industries and other productive sectors. Tertiary institutions can supply the technical knowledge, research capacity and skilled personnel needed for these sectors. Investment in engineering faculties, agricultural research centres, medical schools, technology institutes and polytechnics can support the development of local productive capacity (Ogunode, Olaoye, & Yakubu, 2023). TETFund's thematic intervention structure already recognises the connection between tertiary education and areas such as agriculture, energy, transport, ICT, science and engineering, industry and infrastructure. This relationship is important because Nigeria's economic transformation requires a movement from a largely resource-dependent economy toward a knowledge-intensive and production-oriented economy. The World Bank's analysis of Nigeria emphasises that sustainable economic expansion requires stronger productivity growth and structural transformation. Unvestment in tertiary education should be deliberately aligned with national industrial priorities. Universities should undertake research that improves manufacturing processes; agricultural institutions should support mechanisation and value addition; polytechnics should produce technicians for modern industries; and business schools should develop managers capable of running globally competitive Nigerian enterprises (Gambo &Fasanmi, 2019).

Investment will attract foreign investment and strengthen Nigeria's global competitiveness

The improvement of Nigeria's investment attractiveness and international competitiveness. International investors do not look only at natural resources and market size. They also consider whether a country has competent workers, reliable institutions, technological capabilities, research capacity and a workforce capable of operating modern enterprises. A well-funded tertiary education system can therefore become part of Nigeria's investment infrastructure. Multinational companies are more likely to establish research centres, production facilities and technology operations where they can recruit skilled graduates and collaborate with universities. Strong universities can also attract international students, scholars, research grants and institutional partnerships, creating additional economic value. The World Bank identifies tertiary education as a foundation for innovation, productivity and economic growth and stresses the importance of aligning skills with current and future labour-market requirements. Nwafor, Uchendu, and Akani, (2015) similarly argues that investment in higher education research capacity, applied research, tertiary skills and employability can support sustainable employment and inclusive economic growth in Africa. Nigeria should therefore move from seeing internationalisation merely as sending academics and students abroad to developing globally competitive domestic universities. Investment in laboratories, digital research infrastructure, international accreditation, postgraduate education, research collaboration and competitive remuneration for scholars can help Nigerian institutions become attractive partners for international universities and corporations. This can contribute indirectly to foreign direct investment, technology transfer and export of knowledge-based services.

Investment will strengthen the wider education system and produce long-term institutional capacity

The multiplier effect of tertiary education on the **entire national development system**. Universities, colleges of education and other tertiary institutions do not only train workers for private companies; they train the teachers, administrators, policymakers, health professionals, researchers, judges, economists, engineers and public managers who operate the country's institutions. A weak tertiary system therefore eventually produces weaknesses throughout the wider economy. Conversely, a strong tertiary system can improve the quality of the institutions that manage economic development. Maduewesi, (2011) notes that the benefits of effective tertiary education include not only higher employment and productivity but also more effective public administration, greater civic engagement, social stability and improved health outcomes. This is particularly important for Nigeria because the $1 trillion ambition requires capable institutions to design policies, manage infrastructure, regulate industries, collect revenue, administer public programmes and monitor development projects. Investment in tertiary education should consequently include postgraduate education, professional development, educational leadership, public-policy research and institutional governance. TETFund's mandate already recognises academic staff training and development as one of the areas requiring support. The next step should be to ensure that investments are linked to measurable national outcomes: better graduates, stronger research, more patents, more enterprises, higher productivity, stronger public institutions and increased economic output.

4.0 Lessons from Countries That Used Education to Accelerate Development

The international experience provides strong evidence that sustained investment in human capital can accompany dramatic economic transformation. South Korea is perhaps one of the clearest examples. The World Bank reports that Korea's transformation was associated with sustained investment in education, infrastructure and technology alongside sound economic management; between 1980 and 2024, its real GDP grew at an average annual rate of 5.6%. The OECD likewise concludes that gains in educational attainment contributed to Korea's rapid growth and that growth was driven partly by capital accumulation, heavy investment in education and an expanding labour supply. Historical evidence shows that Korea's expansion of education after the Korean War supported the development of labour-intensive industries during the 1960s.

Singapore provides another useful lesson. The World Bank describes Singapore as a global leader in human capital and links its performance to robust investment in people and lifelong learning. The country has also developed SkillsFuture to continuously align skills development with the needs of employers and the changing economy. Singapore demonstrates that education investment becomes more

powerful when it is connected directly to workforce development, technological change and national economic strategy.

The lesson for Nigeria is not that the country should copy South Korea or Singapore mechanically. Rather, Nigeria should learn the underlying principle: economic transformation becomes sustainable when investment in physical capital is accompanied by sustained investment in human capital, knowledge, skills, research and innovation.

5.0 Suggestions

1) Government should substantially increase investment in tertiary education. Funding should cover infrastructure, laboratories, libraries, digital facilities, research, staff development and postgraduate education rather than concentrating mainly on recurrent expenditure.
2) Tertiary education funding should be linked to national economic priorities. Universities, polytechnics and colleges of education should be encouraged to develop programmes and research projects that support agriculture, manufacturing, ICT, renewable energy, healthcare, transportation, construction and other sectors capable of expanding Nigeria's productive capacity.
3) Research and innovation funding should be strengthened. Competitive research grants should be provided for projects capable of producing technologies, patents, commercial products, policy solutions and improved production methods. Greater attention should also be given to converting research findings into practical economic applications.
4) University-industry partnerships should be expanded. Tertiary institutions should work closely with private companies, government agencies and development organisations to ensure that training and research respond to real economic needs. Students should have greater opportunities for internships, industrial attachments and practical problem-solving.
5) Entrepreneurship education should become more practical. Students should be supported to establish enterprises based on their knowledge and skills. Innovation hubs, business incubators, technology-transfer centres and university enterprise funds should be strengthened to help promising ideas become sustainable businesses.
6) Academic staff development should receive greater attention. Nigeria needs lecturers and researchers who are internationally competitive and capable of producing high-quality research. Funding for postgraduate training, conferences, research collaboration, digital resources and professional development should therefore be sustained.
7) Technical and technological education should be strengthened. Polytechnics and technical programmes should receive adequate equipment and modern facilities to produce technicians and technologists needed by manufacturing, construction, agriculture, energy and other productive sectors.
8) Tertiary institutions should be encouraged to generate additional revenue without compromising their academic mission. Consultancy, professional training, patents, research commercialisation, continuing education and partnerships with industry can provide additional resources for institutional development.
9) Investment should be accompanied by accountability. Government and tertiary institutions should establish measurable indicators for evaluating educational investment, including graduate employability, research outputs, patents, innovations, start-ups, industry partnerships and contributions to local and national economic development.

6.0 Conclusion

The ambition to build a one-trillion-dollar Nigerian economy by 2030 cannot be achieved through economic policies alone. The country needs a strong human-capital foundation capable of converting investment, natural resources and infrastructure into productivity and sustainable economic value. Tertiary education provides one of the most important foundations for developing this capacity.

Huge investment in tertiary education can help Nigeria develop a skilled workforce, strengthen research and innovation, promote entrepreneurship and employment, support industrialisation and diversification, attract investment and improve institutional capacity. The experiences of South Korea and Singapore demonstrate that sustained investment in education, skills, research and technology can

contribute significantly to economic transformation when properly integrated into national development strategies.

Nigeria should therefore treat tertiary education as an economic investment rather than merely a budgetary obligation. The objective should not simply be to produce more graduates but to produce graduates who can create value, researchers who can solve national problems, entrepreneurs who can establish enterprises and institutions that can generate knowledge and technology. If properly funded, managed and connected to national economic priorities, Nigeria's tertiary education system can become one of the strongest engines for achieving the one-trillion-dollar economic ambition by 2030.

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