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The Impact of International Policies on Climate Change in African Nations: A Nigerian Perspective

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Abstract

This Research explores the impact of international policies on climate change within the context of African nations, with a specific focus on Nigeria. As one of the largest economies and most populous countries in Africa, Nigeria faces significant climate-related challenges, including rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, and increased frequency of extreme weather events. This abstract examines how international frameworks, such as the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), influence Nigeria's climate strategies and policies. It also discusses the roles of adaptation and mitigation strategies, including Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance climate resilience. Furthermore, the study evaluates the effectiveness of international financial mechanisms, technology transfer, and capacity-building initiatives in supporting Nigeria's climate goals. It critically analyzes the challenges posed by inadequate infrastructure, political instability, and socio-economic disparities, which hinder the implementation of international climate policies. In conclusion, the abstract posits some challenges of international climate change policies in Nigeria with adequate strategies for successful implementation in Nigeria requires a multi-faceted approach that integrates local knowledge, promotes stakeholder engagement, and foster collaboration between

government, civil society, and international partners. This research aims to contribute to the understanding of how global climate governance can effectively support the climate adaptation and mitigation efforts of African nations, particularly Nigeria.

Keywords: Policies, Climate Change, Mitigation, Sustainability and Adaptation.

Introduction

Climate change is one of the most pressing global challenges of our time, with profound implications for ecosystems, economies, and societies. For African nations, including Nigeria, the stakes are particularly high, as these countries are often the most vulnerable to climate impacts despite contributing minimally to global greenhouse gas emissions. The intersection of international climate policies and national interests is critical for understanding how Nigeria can navigate the complexities of climate change while pursuing sustainable development.

International climate policies, notably those established under frameworks like the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), aim to galvanize global action against climate change. These agreements emphasize the necessity for developed nations to take the lead in reducing emissions and offering financial and technological support to developing countries. In this context, Nigeria's role and response to international climate agreements are of paramount importance.

Global International Climate Change Conventions and Agreements Involving Nigeria

Nigeria, as a member of the global community, is actively engaged in various international climate change conventions and agreements. These frameworks are designed to address the global challenges posed by climate change, facilitate cooperation among nations, and promote sustainable development. Below are key global international climate change conventions and agreements that Nigeria is part of:

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

The UNFCCC, adopted in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, is the foundational treaty aimed at combating climate change and its impacts. Nigeria ratified the UNFCCC in 1994, committing to its principles, which include:

- **Mitigation of Climate Change**- Nigeria is obliged to report on its greenhouse gas emissions and to implement measures to reduce emissions.

- Adaptation- The convention encourages Nigeria to develop strategies to adapt to climate impacts, particularly in vulnerable sectors such as agriculture, water resources, and health.
- Technology Transfer: The UNFCCC facilitates the transfer of technology and financial resources from developed to developing countries, allowing Nigeria to access tools and funding necessary for climate action

Kyoto Protocol
Adopted in 1997 and entering into force in 2005, the Kyoto Protocol is an extension of the UNFCCC that commits its parties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. While Nigeria is not a binding participant in terms of emission reduction targets (as it is classified as a developing country), it benefits from the Protocol's mechanisms:
- Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) -Nigeria can engage in CDM projects that allow developed countries to invest in emission reduction projects in developing countries as a way to meet their own targets. This has enabled Nigeria to attract investments in renewable energy and sustainable development projects.

Paris Agreement
The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015 during the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21), represents a significant milestone in international climate governance. Nigeria ratified the Paris Agreement in 2016, aligning its national climate strategy with global efforts to limit global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius. Key aspects include
- Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs): Nigeria submitted its first NDC, committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% unconditionally and by 45% conditionally by 2030. This commitment reflects Nigeria's intention to balance economic growth with environmental sustainability.
- Climate Finance: The Agreement emphasizes the need for financial support to developing nations. Nigeria seeks to access international climate finance to implement its NDCs and enhance climate resilience.
- Global Stocktake: Nigeria participates in the global stocktake process, which assesses collective progress toward achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
Although primarily focused on biodiversity, the CBD has significant implications for climate change, particularly in relation to ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation and mitigation. Nigeria ratified the CBD in 1994 and has since engaged in initiatives that link biodiversity conservation with climate action, such as

- Ecosystem Restoration: Projects aimed at restoring degraded ecosystems, which can enhance carbon sequestration and resilience to climate change.
- Sustainable Land Management: Nigeria's efforts to promote sustainable agricultural practices help mitigate climate impacts and preserve biodiversity.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes 17 SDGs, several of which are directly related to climate action. Nigeria supports the SDGs, particularly Goal 13, which calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. The integration of climate action into national development plans is essential for Nigeria to meet both its SDG and climate commitments.

African Union Agenda 2063
As part of the African Union, Nigeria is committed to Agenda 2063, which emphasizes sustainable development and climate resilience for the African continent. The Agenda seeks to enhance the capacity of African nations to respond to climate change through strategic frameworks and partnerships.

International Policies on Climate Change
International climate change policies are crucial frameworks established to address the global challenges posed by climate change. These policies aim to promote cooperation among nations, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and enhance resilience to climate impacts. Below are key international climate change policies, along with recent citations and references.
1. **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**
- Overview: The UNFCCC, adopted in 1992, provides a comprehensive framework for international cooperation on climate change. It aims to prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system by stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.
- Key Objectives
-To promote sustainable development and climate resilience.
-To facilitate the exchange of information and technology among countries.
- Mechanisms: The annual Conference of the Parties (COP) serves as the decision-making body, where parties assess progress and negotiate new commitments (UNFCCC, 2021).
2. Kyoto Protocol
- Overview: Adopted in 1997 and entering into force in 2005, the Kyoto Protocol was the first binding international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- Key Features

- Emission Reduction Targets: Developed countries committed to reducing their emissions by an average of 5.2% below 1990 levels during the first commitment period (2008-2012).

- Flexible Mechanisms: The Protocol introduced mechanisms such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which allows developed countries to invest in emission reduction projects in developing countries as a way to meet their targets (Bodansky et al., 2017).

3. Paris Agreement

- Overview: The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015 during COP21, represents a significant advancement in global climate policy. It aims to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius, with efforts to restrict it to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

- Key Features

- Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs): Each country submits and updates its climate action plans, outlining efforts to reduce emissions and adapt to climate impacts (UNFCCC, 2015). **- Global Stocktake:** A process occurring every five years to assess collective progress towards the Agreement's long-term goals (UNFCCC, 2021).

- Recent Developments: In 2021, COP26 highlighted the importance of enhanced NDCs, with many countries pledging to strengthen their commitments to reduce emissions (United Nations, 2021).

4. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

- Overview: The IPCC is a scientific body established in 1988 that assesses the latest research on climate change, its impacts, and potential adaptation and mitigation strategies.

- Key Functions

- Assessment Reports: The IPCC publishes comprehensive reports that synthesize scientific knowledge and inform international climate policy (IPCC, 2021).

- Special Reports: Focused reports, such as the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, provide critical insights into the urgent need for climate action (IPCC, 2018).

5. Green Climate Fund (GCF)

- Overview: Established in 2010 under the UNFCCC, the GCF aims to assist developing countries in their efforts to respond to climate change.

- Key Features

- Financial Support: The Fund provides funding for projects that reduce emissions and enhance resilience in vulnerable communities (GCF, 2021).

- Capacity Building: It focuses on building institutional capacities and facilitating technology transfer.

6. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

- Overview: The CBD, adopted in 1992, aims to conserve biodiversity and promote sustainable use of natural resources, with significant implications for climate change.

- Key Objectives

- To integrate biodiversity considerations into climate change policies and promote ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation and mitigation (CBD, 2021).

7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- Overview: The SDGs were adopted in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They include 17 goals aimed at addressing global challenges, including climate change.

- Key Goals Related to Climate Change

- Goal 13: Climate Action: Urges countries to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (United Nations, 2015).

- Goal 15: Life on Land: Aims to protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems while managing forests sustainably.

8. African Union Agenda 2063

- Overview: Agenda 2063 is a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the African continent, emphasizing sustainable development and climate resilience.

- Key Features

- Climate Change Adaptation: The Agenda highlights the need for integrating climate considerations into national and regional development plans (African Union, 2015).

Impacts of International Policies on Climate Change in Nigeria

International climate change policies significantly affect Nigeria, a nation that faces various environmental challenges exacerbated by climate change. As a developing country, Nigeria's engagement with global climate agreements influences its climate action strategies, economic development, and resilience efforts. This detailed exploration outlines the impacts of international policies on climate change in Nigeria, supported by recent citations and references.

1. **Mitigation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

International agreements, particularly the Paris Agreement, play a crucial role in shaping Nigeria's climate mitigation strategies. Under its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Nigeria has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% unconditionally and 45% conditionally by 2030 (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2021).

- Impact: These commitments compel Nigeria to adopt more sustainable energy practices, such as promoting renewable energy sources and enhancing energy

efficiency. The Energy Commission of Nigeria has noted that increasing the share of renewables in the energy mix is vital for achieving these targets (Energy Commission of Nigeria, 2020).

2. Access to Climate Finance

International climate policies facilitate access to climate finance, essential for implementing Nigeria's climate action plans. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) and other financial mechanisms provide funding for projects aimed at reducing vulnerability to climate impacts.

- Impact: Nigeria has been able to secure funding for various climate initiatives, such as the Nigeria Erosion and Watershed Management Project, which aims to combat soil erosion and enhance land productivity (World Bank, 2021). Access to these funds is crucial for implementing adaptation strategies and building resilience in vulnerable communities.

3. Technology Transfer and Capacity Building

International policies promote technology transfer and capacity building, enabling Nigeria to enhance its climate resilience. Programs under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) facilitate the sharing of technology and expertise between developed and developing countries.

- Impact: Nigeria has benefited from capacity-building initiatives that enhance its institutional frameworks and technical capabilities. For instance, the Nigeria Climate Change Adaptation Project has focused on strengthening local capacities to implement climate adaptation strategies (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2020). Improved technical expertise is critical for effectively responding to climate change impacts.

4. Influence on National Policies and Frameworks

International agreements shape Nigeria's national policies and strategies related to climate change. The National Climate Change Policy and the National Climate Change Action Plan are influenced by commitments made under international frameworks.

- Impact: These policies emphasize integrated approaches to climate change, promoting sustainable development while addressing environmental challenges. The National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action on Climate Change for Nigeria (NASPA-CC) outlines specific actions to enhance resilience in vulnerable sectors such as agriculture, water resources, and health (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2011).

5.Impacts on Vulnerable Communities

International climate policies also focus on addressing the needs of vulnerable communities, which is particularly relevant in Nigeria, where a significant portion of the population relies on climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture.

- Impact: Policies that promote climate justice and equitable access to resources can help improve the livelihoods of vulnerable populations. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has implemented programs aimed at enhancing the resilience of smallholder farmers in Nigeria through sustainable agricultural practices (UNDP, 2020).

6. Global Climate Commitments and Domestic Actions

Nigeria's participation in international climate agreements influences its domestic climate actions and commitments. By aligning with global climate goals, Nigeria is encouraged to adopt more ambitious national policies and strategies.

- Impact: The pressure to meet international commitments has led to increased governmental focus on climate change, resulting in the establishment of the National Council on Climate Change to coordinate climate actions and policy implementation (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2021).

Challenges Presented by International Climate Change Policies in Addressing Climate Change in Nigeria

While international climate change policies provide frameworks and support for Nigeria's efforts to combat climate change, several challenges complicate their effective implementation. These challenges stem from socio-economic, political, and institutional factors that affect Nigeria's capacity to meet international commitments. Below is a detailed exploration of these challenges, supported by recent citations and references.

1. Limited Financial Resources

One of the most significant challenges Nigeria faces in implementing international climate change policies is the lack of adequate financial resources. Although international agreements like the Paris Agreement emphasize climate finance, accessing these funds can be complex and competitive.

- Impact: Nigeria's reliance on oil revenues, which fluctuates with global market prices, constrains its ability to invest in climate adaptation and mitigation projects. The World Bank (2020) notes that Nigeria's economic vulnerabilities limit its fiscal space for climate action, making it difficult to mobilize the necessary funds for effective implementation of climate initiatives.

2. Institutional Weaknesses

The effectiveness of climate policies often relies on strong institutions capable of coordinating and implementing actions. In Nigeria, institutional weaknesses pose significant challenges.

- Impact: Various agencies are involved in climate governance, leading to overlaps in mandates and inadequate coordination. According to a report by the Nigerian Environmental Policy and Advocacy Centre (2021), poor institutional

capacity hampers the execution of climate projects and the monitoring of progress, undermining Nigeria's ability to fulfill its international commitments.

3. Bureaucratic Hurdles

Navigating bureaucratic processes to access international climate finance and support can be cumbersome and time-consuming. Complex application procedures and unclear eligibility criteria can deter potential funding opportunities.

- Impact: Many Nigerian stakeholders report difficulties in accessing funds from mechanisms like the Green Climate Fund (GCF) due to bureaucratic red tape. This situation has been highlighted by the Nigerian Climate Change Summit (2021), which indicated that inadequate knowledge of application processes among local actors further exacerbates this challenge.

4. Data and Knowledge Gaps

Effective climate action relies on accurate data and robust scientific knowledge. In Nigeria, significant gaps in data collection, analysis, and dissemination hinder informed decision-making.

- Impact: The lack of comprehensive data on greenhouse gas emissions, climate vulnerabilities, and adaptation needs makes it challenging for Nigeria to develop targeted policies and measure progress. The National Policy on Climate Change (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2011) acknowledges the need for improved data collection and management systems, yet implementation remains inadequate.

5. Socio-Economic Vulnerabilities

Nigeria's socio-economic context presents additional challenges to implementing international climate policies. High levels of poverty, unemployment, and dependence on climate-sensitive sectors, such as agriculture, exacerbate vulnerability to climate change impacts.

- Impact: Vulnerable populations, particularly in rural areas, often lack access to resources and information necessary for adapting to climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2021) underscores that socio-economic factors significantly influence the capacity of communities to respond to climate-related risks, thereby complicating the implementation of international climate agreements.

6. Political Will and Governance Issues

Political will is crucial for the successful implementation of climate policies. In Nigeria, governance issues, including corruption and lack of accountability, can undermine climate action.

- Impact: The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (2021) ranks Nigeria low in terms of governance and accountability, which raises concerns about the effective use of climate finance and resources. Political

instability and changing governmental priorities can lead to inconsistent climate policies and hinder long-term planning (Nigerian Environmental Policy and Advocacy Centre, 2021).

7. Public Awareness and Engagement

Public awareness and engagement are essential for effective climate action. However, limited awareness of climate change issues and international commitments among the general population can impede progress.

- Impact: A lack of understanding of climate change impacts and policies can result in insufficient public support for climate initiatives. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)(2020) emphasizes the need for increasing public awareness and education on climate change to foster community engagement and participation in climate actions.

Strategies for Mitigating Climate Change by International Policies in Nigeria

International climate change policies play a crucial role in shaping Nigeria's strategies for mitigating climate change. These strategies are designed to align with global commitments while addressing the unique environmental, social, and economic contexts of Nigeria. Below is a detailed exploration of these mitigation strategies, supported by recent citations and references.

1. Adoption of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

Under the Paris Agreement, Nigeria has committed to submitting and updating its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which outline its plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- Strategy: Nigeria's NDCs include a target to reduce emissions by 20% unconditionally and 45% conditionally by 2030, focusing on sectors such as energy, agriculture, and waste management (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2021).

- Impact: This commitment encourages the development of policies and programs that promote renewable energy, improve energy efficiency, and enhance sustainable agricultural practices. The Nigerian government has initiated various projects to meet these targets, including investments in solar energy and biomass technologies (Nigerian Energy Commission, 2020).

2. Promotion of Renewable Energy

International climate policies emphasize the transition to renewable energy as a vital strategy for mitigating climate change. Nigeria has significant renewable energy potential, particularly in solar, wind, and hydropower.

- Strategy: The Renewable Energy Master Plan (REMP) aims to increase the share of renewable energy in Nigeria’s energy mix to 30% by 2030 (Federal Ministry of Power, 2020).

- Impact: By expanding renewable energy sources, Nigeria can reduce its reliance on fossil fuels, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and enhance energy security. Recent projects, such as the Solar Power Naija initiative, aim to provide solar energy solutions to rural communities (Federal Ministry of Power, 2021).

3. Enhancing Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency is a critical component of Nigeria's climate change mitigation efforts. International agreements encourage the implementation of energy efficiency standards and practices.

- Strategy: Nigeria has developed the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP), which sets targets for improving energy efficiency across various sectors, including residential, commercial, and industrial (Energy Commission of Nigeria, 2021).

- Impact: Implementing energy efficiency measures can significantly reduce energy consumption and emissions. The adoption of energy-efficient appliances and technologies is promoted through awareness campaigns and incentives

4. Sustainable Agriculture Practices

Agriculture is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Nigeria. International policies support the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices to mitigate these emissions.

- Strategy: The National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action on Climate Change for Nigeria (NASPA-CC) promotes sustainable land use practices, agroforestry, and climate-smart agriculture to enhance food security and reduce emissions (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2011).

- Impact: By improving agricultural practices, Nigeria can increase resilience to climate impacts while reducing emissions from the agricultural sector. Initiatives such as the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program aim to educate farmers on sustainable techniques (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2021).

5. Waste Management and Recycling

Improving waste management practices is essential for reducing emissions from landfills and promoting a circular economy. International policies encourage sustainable waste management strategies.

- Strategy: Nigeria's National Policy on Solid Waste Management emphasizes the importance of reducing waste generation, promoting recycling, and enhancing waste treatment methods (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2020).

- Impact: Effective waste management can significantly reduce methane emissions from landfills. Programs focused on recycling and composting are being implemented in urban areas to minimize waste and promote resource recovery.

6. Afforestation and Reforestation

International climate policies advocate for afforestation and reforestation as strategies to enhance carbon sequestration. Nigeria is part of the Bonn Challenge, which aims to restore 150 million hectares of deforested and degraded land globally by 2020.

- **Strategy:** Nigeria's National Forest Policy promotes afforestation and reforestation initiatives to combat deforestation and promote sustainable forest management (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2018).
- **Impact:** These initiatives contribute to restoring ecosystems, enhancing biodiversity, and sequestering carbon, thus mitigating climate change. The Great Green Wall Initiative is one such project aimed at combating desertification and restoring degraded landscapes across northern Nigeria (Nigerian Forestry Research Institute, 2021).

7. Climate Finance and Technology Transfer

International climate agreements emphasize the importance of climate finance and technology transfer to support developing countries in their mitigation efforts.

- **Strategy:** Nigeria actively seeks funding from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and other international sources to implement climate projects and enhance technological capabilities (GCF, 2021).
- **Impact:** Access to climate finance enables Nigeria to invest in renewable energy projects, enhance agricultural resilience, and improve infrastructure for climate adaptation and mitigation.

Conclusion

Nigeria's engagement with global international climate change conventions and agreements reflects its commitment to addressing climate change while pursuing sustainable development. Through participation in the UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol, Paris Agreement, and other frameworks, Nigeria seeks to leverage international support, technology transfer, and financial resources to implement effective climate strategies. As the country navigates its climate challenges, these global agreements provide a framework for action and cooperation that is essential for achieving long-term resilience and sustainability.

The impacts of international policies on climate change in Nigeria are multifaceted, influencing mitigation efforts, access to finance, technology transfer, and the development of national policies. While international agreements provide critical frameworks for action, the successful implementation of these policies depends on Nigeria's ability to leverage resources, build capacity, and engage vulnerable communities. As Nigeria continues to navigate the challenges posed by climate change, international cooperation and commitments will remain essential for

achieving sustainable development and enhancing resilience. Nigeria aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while fostering sustainable development. Continued engagement with international partners and effective implementation of these strategies are essential for Nigeria to achieve its climate goals and enhance resilience to climate impacts.

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