



A Critical Analysis of Nigeria's Foreign Policy Alignment with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change

Ahmed Tijjani

Nigerian Airspace Management Agency, Nigeria

Email: tijjaniahmed05@gmail.com

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Prof. Benjamin Mwadi Makengo 

Abstract

This paper critically examines Nigeria's foreign policy through the lens of its commitment to the Paris Agreement on climate change. As climate change becomes an increasingly central issue in global diplomacy, Nigeria's positioning and engagement with the Paris Agreement serve as a reflection of its broader foreign policy drive. Through a qualitative analysis of policy documents, public declarations, and existing literature, the study explores the intersection of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives and the Paris Agreement on climate change. Findings reveal a significant gap between Nigeria's international commitments and domestic implementation, reflecting challenges related to governance, institutional coordination, and policy coherence. The paper concludes with recommendations to strengthen Nigeria's resolve for enhanced climate diplomacy, foreign policy alignment and domestic implementation.

Keywords: Nigeria, Foreign policy, Climate diplomacy, Paris agreement, National interest, Climate change

INTRODUCTION

Climate change has emerged as a defining issue of international politics, reshaping global alliances, trade, and diplomacy. For developing countries like Nigeria, climate diplomacy or the Paris Agreement presents both an opportunity and a challenge. The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015 at COP21, seeks to limit global temperature rise and promote sustainable development through nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

Nigeria's foreign policy historically emphasizes Africa as the centerpiece, economic diplomacy, and the protection of national interest. However, climate change introduces new dynamics, compelling states to integrate environmental sustainability into foreign policy frameworks. While Nigeria signed and ratified the Paris Agreement, questions remain regarding its implementation and the degree to which it informs foreign policy decisions.

Previous literature on Nigeria's foreign policy has focused on security, regional leadership, and economic interests, with limited attention to environmental diplomacy. Scholars such as [Ogaba \(2018\)](#) and [Nwankwo \(2020\)](#) highlight the need for an expanded foreign policy agenda that reflects contemporary global challenges, including climate change. This paper fills this gap by critically analyzing Nigeria's approach to the Paris Agreement within its constitutional foreign policy objectives.

The Research Problem

With the harsh effects of climate change being reported all around the world, Nigeria as a country is not without her own challenges caused by changes in the nation's climatic conditions. The country is currently experiencing drastic change in rainfall patterns, increased temperatures, drought, flooding, erosion, rising sea levels etc, which are all attributed to climate change. These incidences have devastating effects on the lives and properties of the people in the affected areas, thus with Nigeria's ratification of the Paris Agreement on climate change, it is important to know the extent to which the country has implemented its nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and understand how they align with the nation's foreign policy objectives. The problem of this study is that a good number of people are not aware of the impending

dangers of climate change and by extension, the Paris Agreement by different nations to fight climate change. Also a good number citizens are not aware of the steps Nigerian government is taking to address the challenges relating to climate change domestically and how those steps align with the nation's foreign policy objectives stipulated in the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria within the framework of the Paris Agreement. The lack of consciousness on climate change issues could hinder the public from playing their own role in the fight against climate change through mitigation and adaptation. Therefore, this study seeks to bring to light, the dangers of climate change to Nigeria, and the efforts of the Nigerian government in mitigating the harsh effects by identifying Nigeria's response to the Paris Agreement and how it aligns with Nigeria's foreign policy objectives.

The issues around the research problem led the researcher to raise some pertinent questions as to (1) what is the nature of the Paris Agreement on climate change? (2) To what extent has the Nigerian government adopted the Paris Agreement on climate change? (3) Has Nigeria's foreign policy response to the Paris Agreement on climate change yielded any results? (4) Is the Paris Agreement in Nigeria's national interest? The answers to these questions has help the researcher to achieve the aim of understanding how Nigeria has responded to the Paris Agreement, the extent of implementation and how it aligns with Nigeria's foreign policy objectives.

Scope and Limitation of Study

This study focuses on the general meaning and concept of climate change within the Paris Agreement regime ratified during the Buhari administration (2015-2023) and assess how the Paris Agreement aligns with Nigeria's national interest. One major challenge of the research work is the inability to access major state actors in the immediate past and present administration of Muhammadu Buhari and Ahmed Bola Tinubu respectively to obtain more data on the government's activities regarding the Paris Agreement however, the researcher has accessed some of the data by generating quantitative data via interview with stakeholders and professionals, surveys, federal governments websites, government documents and official social media handles of stakeholders to ascertain the efforts

made both locally and internationally in curbing the adverse effects of climate change. This has helped in overcoming some limitations to the study and providing the necessary data needed to carry out this study. Another limitation is the size of participants to be surveyed. There are not enough resources to carry-out a survey across the whole country that is why this research has chosen to carry-out an online survey to target a large and diverse group randomly across regions of the country.

Research Assumptions

Since Nigeria became party to the Paris Agreement on climate change, it has become important for citizens to be aware of the issues and implications of climate change. Thus, Nigeria's involvement in this global partnership leaves the researcher with the following assumptions on the subject matter:

1. A good number of Nigerians are not aware of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change
2. Most Nigerians have climate change apathy thus they either do not believe that the world is facing a climate change crisis or they are just indifferent about the issues
3. For the fact that world leaders are coming together to partner on a united front to fight the harsh effects of climate change, it is in Nigeria's national interest to be a party to the Paris Agreement.
4. Nigeria will be meeting her foreign policy objectives by being a party to the Paris Agreement on climate change.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In trying to provide answers to our research questions, the researcher adopts a research method which is mostly qualitative and to some extent quantitative, thus the research will rely largely on the qualitative method. Qualitative research methods involve exploring and understanding complex phenomena by gathering non-numerical data such as words, images, and observations. These methods aim to uncover insights, patterns and meanings that can't be quantified easily. Thus, this work has relied mainly on government policy documents, Reports from international organizations and existing literature on the subject matter. The work was also aided by data generated through online surveys and interviews of stakeholders in environmental sciences. The

researcher adopted an unconventional approach by leveraging on the use of social media because all the major stakeholders in the subject matter of governance and climate change can be followed on social media platforms like X, Instagram and Facebook which all have accounts of world leaders, institutions and international organizations. Thus, the researcher could access some data directly from the Nigerian president, the Minister of Environment, the United Nations, UNFCCC, etc for necessary analysis in this work.

The emphasis on the qualitative methods is due to the fact that there is a lot of literature on issues of Nigeria's foreign policy, climate change and the Paris Agreement, therefore this research endeavor has relied greatly on sources mentioned above.

The sampling method adopted was the random sampling which was carried out online which targeted a diverse demography of respondents especially students at tertiary institutions and working-class adults in Nigeria to test their awareness on climate change issues. The survey helped to generate the required data and enabled the research to identify the knowledge gap on the subject matter (research topic) which in turn solves the research problem, answers some research questions and achieves set aim and objectives of the research.

Conceptual Clarification

In a bid to ensure clear understanding of the subject matter, it is necessary to identify the key concepts and explain them.

Foreign Policy

There is no consensus about a generally accepted definition of foreign policy therefore, a few scholarly definitions will be referenced. According to Wapmuk (2023, p. 3), "foreign policy is regarded as an array of activities that states engage in to change the behavior of other international actors and for advertising and promoting their national goals and objectives in the international community". This definition implies a power relationship among international actors in which the actors seek to promote their national interest in the international community. Also, Duke *et al.* (2018, p. 59) defined foreign policy of a State as "the general principles by which a State governs its relations to the international environment". According to Chibundu (2003, p. 1), the term

foreign policy can be seen as a “country’s response to the world outside or beyond its own frontiers or boundaries. That response may be friendly or aggressive, casual or intense, simple or complex, but it is always there”. This definition emphasizes on the word ‘response’ therefore the actions a nation takes in response to external forces can be seen as foreign policy. This assumption supports the claim that Nigeria’s signing and ratification of the Paris Agreement and its responses to the agreement is a form of Nigeria’s foreign policy.

Climate Change

Climate change is a global phenomenon that has become a topical issue in political discourse. Its impacts in the present and what it portends to cause in the near future needs urgent attention and sustainable solutions. It refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Such shifts can be natural, due to changes in the sun’s activity or large volcanic eruptions. But since 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas. (United Nations, n.d)

The above statement points to the fact that climate change has been occurring for a very long time, but the problem is that in most recent times, climate change is occurring at a very rapid rate which poses a clear and present danger to humanity (Hashmati, 2020).

Climate change affects every aspect of human life and the severity of its impact, if not addressed, will be catastrophic. This is the major reason world leaders and global civil society are building partnerships across international borders to address the challenges of climate change. This is why Ott (2001, p.227) is of the opinion that “it is perhaps not surprising that climate change is expected to be a fascinating policy area”.

Scientists and other stakeholders have helped in spreading awareness of the issues around climate change because a lot of individuals still see it as a distant problem. In Nigeria and other developing countries, the issue of climate change needs to be taken more seriously because poorer countries of the world are the most vulnerable and worst hit due to their lack of capacity to address the challenges. Based on world development indexes, it is known that “Third World” countries lack of care for the environment. This attitude of the people and

government needs to be changed if we are to succeed in addressing the issues of climate change. Problems of climate change cannot be addressed by individuals or professional bodies alone, but by governments, multinational organizations and global partnerships through proper policy direction and effective implementation. In 2016, Nigeria became party to the Paris Agreement on climate change which is an ambitious step towards addressing the issues associated with climate change, however it is left to be seen if being a party to the agreements has helped the country achieve any of its foreign policy objectives.

The Paris Agreement

The Paris agreement according to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, n.d) is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. The Paris Agreement is described as a landmark in the multilateral climate change process because, for the first time, a binding agreement brings all nations into a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects. Under this agreement adopted at the 21st United Nations (UN) conference of the parties, also known as COP21, countries committed to reducing global warming (increasing global temperature) to well below 2°C, or better still to 1.5°C, compared to pre-industrial levels. With an aim to reduce global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, member countries are required to make action plans in the form of commitments referred to as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The idea is to communicate plans of how countries intend to reduce their carbon emissions and adapt to climate change. Article 2 of the Paris Agreement (2015), affirms that:

1. This Agreement, in enhancing the implementation of the Convention, including its objective, aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, including by:
 - a. Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that

this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change;

- b. Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production; and
 - c. Making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.
2. This Agreement will be implemented to reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.

The Paris Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change and by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degree Celsius. (UNFCCC, n.d)

The major goals of the agreement are

- a) The binding of countries to voluntarily make their own specific commitments that would enable them to reduce their climate pollution while updating and strengthening their commitments towards a greener future every five years.
- b) It also made provisions for developed countries like the US, UK, and Germany to support developing countries like Nigeria and small island states such as Cape Verde and Cuba in their efforts towards managing and surviving the effects of climate change.
- c) Countries under the agreement are also expected to be transparent, keep inventories of greenhouse gas emissions, monitor and report their efforts, and progress towards the Paris agreement goals.

In their Nationally Determined Contributions, countries communicate actions they will take to reduce their Greenhouse Gas emissions to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement. Countries also communicate in the NDCs actions they will take to build resilience to adapt to the impacts of rising temperatures (UNFCCC, n.d). Nigeria has always been committed to the partnerships and

engagements with the United Nations and other international organizations therefore Nigeria signed the Paris Agreement on the 22nd of September 2016 and ratified it on May 16, 2017. As a party to the Paris agreement, Nigeria came up with its NDCs in 2015, which is also committed to cutting its carbon emissions unconditionally by 20 percent or conditionally by 45 percent with international support by 2030. Other targets it set as part of its NDCs include: ending gas flaring by 2030, make for efficient gas generators, ensure 30 percent energy efficiency by 2030 (2 percent per year), make for a transport shift from car to bus, improve electricity grid and engage in climate-smart agriculture and reforestation.

Nigeria is commitment to the Paris agreement and sustainable development goal which are all in the country's national interest.

National Interest

National interest is a fundamental aspect of any country's foreign policy drive. It is the sum total of the domestic challenges and aspirations which a state puts into consideration when interacting with other states. This is in line with Hubert H. Humphrey argument that "foreign policy is really domestic policy with its hat on" ([Tar and Wapmuk, 2023](#)) while others like [Rostow \(1957\)](#) see national interest as self-preservation, militarily and ideologically from an American point of view. In general, national interest can be seen as a country's goals and priorities in its relations with other nations influenced by its need to ensure security, economic prosperity, political stability and cultural/ideological promotion.

In relation to foreign policy, national interest serves as a guiding principle that shapes a states strategy and actions on the global stage. Nigeria foreign policy objectives are clearly spelled out in Section 19 of the country's 1999 Constitution. It states that "The foreign policy objectives shall be - (a) promotion and protection of the national interest;" even though it didn't mention what the national interest is. If we agree that domestic priorities shape foreign policy, we can then say that security, economic prosperity, the fight against corruption and the efforts to mitigate/adapt to climate change are all in the national interest of Nigeria.

Climate diplomacy

Climate diplomacy is simply the process of international negotiations, agreements and cooperation among nations to address issues of climate change around the world. It involves governments, international organizations, and NGOs working together to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to climate impacts and support sustainable development. The aim of climate diplomacy is to establish binding or voluntary commitments using treaties like the Paris Agreement which seeks to promote a collective interest of member states.

The process of climate diplomacy comes with some challenges which include conflicting national interests in areas like economic growth and emission cuts; mistrust between developed and developing countries; and enforcement of non-binding and even binding commitments. The success of climate diplomacy depends greatly on compromise, transparency and real political will.

The current global climate diplomacy regime is governed by the UNFCCC through the Paris Agreement with key milestones from the COP29 in climate finance (\$300 billion annually by 2035 to support developing countries), carbon market advancement, loss and damage funds, and gender inclusion, (Carbon Brief, 2024). Nigeria is also party to the Paris Agreement and also played an active and vocal role at the last COP29, held in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2024. As a developing nation faced with the harsh effects of climate change, Nigeria's participation focused on advocating for climate justice, securing adequate climate finance and pushing for stronger global commitments to address the needs of African and other developing nations.

Effects of Climate Change in Nigeria

To understand the need for Nigeria's concern about climate change which has led to the signing of the Paris Agreement and development of Nationally Determined Commitments, it is important to know how climate change affects Nigeria and its citizens. As a global phenomenon, climate change and global warming affect every single part of the globe. As earlier mentioned, the poorest countries in the developing world are most affected that is why the former Minister of State, Sharon Ikeazor, Esq, expressed in the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Adaptation Communication to the UNFCCC that "Climate Change has become a critical issue of our time and we are at a defining moment in its history" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021, P. 3).

Nigeria is also witnessing changes in its climatic conditions with increased temperatures; variable rainfall; rise in sea levels and flooding; drought and desertification; land degradation; more frequent extreme weather events; affected freshwater resources and loss of biodiversity (Ebele and Emodi, 2016). Thus, the impact of climate change is multidimensional and affects different parts of the country based on peculiarities of the different geo-political regions.

The Federal Ministry of Environment reports that the Northwest and the Northeast are the most vulnerable. The combination of rising heat and less rain has hastened desert encroachment, with loss of the wetlands and fast reduction in the amount of surface water, flora and fauna resources on land. The Southwest and the South-south on the other hand are relatively less vulnerable than other parts of the country. In the Southern part of Nigeria, the South-south geo-political zone (Niger Delta) is most prone to sea level rise, increases precipitation, coastal erosion, flooding and loss of land. This has caused the displacement of many settlements.

Climate change also has adverse effects on various sectors of the Nigerian life. In the agricultural sector, Huma Haider Independent Consultant (2019) reported that "over 70% of the country's population is engaged in agriculture as their primary source occupation and means of livelihood" (UNFCCC, 2019). With reduced levels of rainfall, higher temperatures, drought and desertification in the Northern part of the country where farming is a dominant economic activity, farmlands are reduced and less fertile thereby lowering agricultural productivity. In the Southern part of the country, climate change affects nature and characteristics of freshwater resources; also, sea level rise and extreme weather will affect the ability to fish. The viability of inland fisheries is also threatened by increased cases of shrinking rivers and lakes. The forests are also affected by strong winds and erosion which reduces the amount of forest resources like wood, cane and herbs. A combination of low agricultural yield reduced fishing and low levels of forest resources can be a

huge source of food insecurity in the country, thus leading to hunger, illnesses and a drop in economic activities that sustains livelihoods.

Due to its multidimensional nature, other sectors like Health, Economy and Energy are not left out in the challenges that climate change brings. Direct health impacts can be caused by extreme weather events such as heat waves. Indirect effects of climate change can come from malnutrition due to food shortage; the spread of infectious diseases and food/water borne illnesses; increased air pollution. On the economy, which is largely influenced by agricultural activities, the reduction in agricultural, fishing and forest activities surely reduces the general output of the country; this in effect affects the Gross Domestic Product. In addition, extreme weather conditions such as flood can undermine economic growth through production and infrastructural losses and the need for extraordinary spending ([Federal Government of Nigeria, 2016](#)). Lastly, climate change is expected to negatively impact the already limited electrical power supply in Nigeria through impacts on hydroelectric and thermal generation ([Ebele and Emodi, 2016](#)). Power infrastructure like sub-stations and power lines can be damaged and cut power supply in areas where rainfall intensity is increased.

Climate change affects different groups of people differently but the most vulnerable are mostly women and children. In the rural areas of Northern Nigeria, women engage and rely on subsistence farming supported by regular rainfall. With a reduction in rainfall and increased threat of drought, women might not be able to support the family. Increased food insecurity and hunger also affect children's ability to learn in schools. Lastly, the security impact of climate change is one with the potential of causing large scale conflicts that could cost lives and property as resources such as land and water increasingly diminishing coupled with the rapid pace of urbanization. Increased levels of desert encroachment and drought have forced large migration from the more arid lands for areas with more arable land and water. This has usually caused conflict over limited resources between the migrants and the residence. Also, herders have been forced to move Southwards in search for grazing lands, this act has led to the so called farmer-herder conflict that has spiraled into

inter-ethnic conflicts between the Fulani and other ethnic groups who are predominantly farmers.

The Buhari Administration Foreign Policy and Climate Change

At the inception of the Buhari administration, the president had committed to tackling climate change to help Nigeria grow a sustainable economy while bring down its carbon emission. The former president Muhammadu Buhari had a special interest on the issues around climate change as the former Minister of environment, Mohammed H. Abdullahi, described him as the “Conservator General and Nigeria’s number Climate Change champion...” ([Abdullahi, 2022](#)). Former President Buhari in an Op-Ed in The Washington Post noted that based on the United Nations reports, Africa is the continent worst affected by climate change despite contributing the least to it. ([Buhari, 2022](#)). Based on these facts, the former president stated, at the United Nations General Assembly in 2019 that “On climate change Nigeria stands resolutely with the international community in observing agreed carbon emission targets which I signed in 2015”. The Buhari Administration strongly believed that there is a connection between climate change, insecurity and the economic woes of the country and addressing the challenges of climate change will go a long way in achieving the administration’s foreign policy targets.

The Buhari Administration’s foreign policy direction was hinged on the internal dynamics of insecurity, corruption and an ailing economy as pointed out in [Tar and Wapmuk \(2023\)](#). The former president Buhari had a reputation of integrity thus the Administration was to capitalize on this goodwill to advance its national interest in the international community. The president focused on strengthening relations with Nigeria’s neighbors and jointly fighting Boko Haram, promoted intra-African trade and re-established cordial relationships with the world powers like the U.S and also emerging powers like China. While the Americans and Europeans helped Nigeria in its efforts to fight insecurity and corruption by selling military hardware (which was previously denied) and recovery of stolen funds respectively, the Chinese helped to finance the administrations infrastructural development drive. Thus these achievements were in conformity with the administration’s foreign policy agenda.

In relation to the Paris Agreement on climate change, which has been a landmark in global partnerships to address climate change, the administration had been very much committed to it. Climate change is increasingly becoming a serious challenge to Nigeria's socio-economic development. Various manifestations of its impact are evident in Nigeria, which include increased drought and food scarcity instigated by irregularities in rainfall, flooding, and desertification. Desertification is promoting economic and social instability in northern Nigeria. It already results in higher levels of impoverishment among herders and farmers, thereby providing an opening for radical movements. Therefore, it is in Nigeria's national interest to be a party to the Paris Agreement.

Looking closely at the provisions of the Paris Agreement and the Buhari's Administration's foreign policy concerns of insecurity, fight against corruption and the economy, Nigeria has a lot to gain from the agreement as it aims to support developing countries financially, technologically and to build capacity to address the peculiar climate change challenges in different countries. The Paris Agreement also aligns with Nigeria's foreign policy objectives which are enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria as it serves in promoting the country's national interest to attract funds for mitigation, adaptation and loss/damages, technology transfer and capacity building; the Agreement has also helped Nigeria in promoting African integration and unity as Nigeria has been a strong voice in advocating for climate justice for Africa as the lowest contributors to green-house gases but the most vulnerable; the Paris Agreement enables Nigeria to cooperate with the international community; respect for international law and obligations as the Paris Agreement is binding on all the parties; and promotion of a just world order. Despite these policies and strategies, the federal government has not found it easy in achieving its set targets. Climate change still poses a huge threat to the country. This significantly affects its economic development in areas such as agriculture and food security, drought in arid regions in northern Nigeria, flooding and sea-level rise in coastal communities, soil erosion and landslides in mainly southern Nigeria. The farmer/herder conflict is also largely caused by the impact of climate change.

Need for International Cooperation

As the issue of climate change continues to be at the forefront of national and international political discussions, the need for global cooperation cannot be over emphasized. Nigeria must engage with the rest of the world on this matter because if we act in isolation, we'll never get to where we need to be. But if we work together, we can accomplish great things. There is much to learn from each other as there are great challenges to be addressed (Idowu, 2018). The most developed countries in the world who happen to be the largest emitters of carbon dioxide are looking to be leaders in the global fight against climate change. China and the USA are the largest emitters. According to Ritchie (2019), Although China currently emits the highest levels of Co₂ annually, it has emitted far less than the United States over the past three centuries. Cumulative carbon dioxide emissions in the U.S reached 367 billion metric tons by 2018. Thus, there is a need for developing countries to hold the Big Emitters accountable to be responsible and come to the aid of the more vulnerable countries of the Third World countries through cooperation. Gbadegesin, (2021) is of the view that the Biden administration has an incredible opportunity to both cement its status as a leader on climate change and promote expansive green development across Africa. The United States can support its African partners by mobilizing U.S. development capital for local funds and prioritizing investments that help African economies become more resilient against climate change. Nigeria is in critical need of global cooperation in areas relating to financing, technology and capacity-building which the Paris Agreement caters for. The Paris Agreement provides a framework for financial, technical and capacity building support to those countries who need it.

a) Finance: The Paris Agreement reaffirms that developed countries should take the lead in providing financial assistance to countries that are less endowed and more vulnerable, while for the first time also encouraging voluntary contributions by other Parties. Climate finance is needed for mitigation, because large-scale investments are required to significantly reduce emissions. Climate finance is equally important for adaptation, as significant financial resources are needed to adapt to the adverse effects and reduce the impacts of a changing climate. (UNFCCC, n.d). One of the

major challenges in tackling climate change issues is the cost of implementation of mitigation and adaptation policies. According to a 2010 report on National Environmental, Economic and Development Study for Climate Change in Nigeria, Nigeria's energy sector requires about US\$874 million in 2020 and US\$1.41 billion in 2050 as additional investments per year for the reduction of emissions to meet the non-binding emission reduction target of 25%. This translates to about US\$174.8 million in 2020 and US\$280 million in 2050 per year to reduce emissions by 5% in the energy sector.

b) Technology: The Paris Agreement speaks of the vision of fully realizing technology development and transfer for both improving resilience to climate change and reducing GHG emissions. It establishes a technology framework to provide overarching guidance to the well-functioning Technology Mechanism. The mechanism is accelerating technology development and transfer through its policy and implementation arms.

c) Capacity-Building: Not all developing countries have sufficient capacities to deal with many of the challenges brought by climate change. As a result, the Paris Agreement places great emphasis on climate-related capacity-building for developing countries and requests all developed countries to enhance support for capacity-building actions in developing countries.

Nigeria's NDC at a Glance

Article 4, Section 2 of the Paris Agreement states that, "Each Party shall prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions that it intends to achieve. Parties shall pursue domestic mitigation measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of such contributions". Thus, the NDCs are an integral part of the Paris Agreement. A report submitted to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change, titled Sectorial Plans for Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions, (2015), Nigeria prepared its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC). Following approval by H.E. President Buhari and submission to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Nigeria presented its INDC at the Conference of Parties (COP) 21 in Paris in December 2015. In March 2017, H.E. President

Buhari ratified the Paris Agreement, paving the way for a new era of action on climate change ([Federal Ministry of Environment, 2017](#)). Since the submission of the INDC, the Nigerian government has been taking steps to convert ambition to implementable policies. The report goes on to show that "The Federal Ministry of Environment has already developed an NDC implementation road-map, setting out the requirements for implementation, in addition to roles, responsibilities, and time-frames. The road-map broadly reflects the ongoing efforts at the international level to streamline NDC implementation and establish the systems and processes that are needed in country to support its development and delivery" ([Federal Ministry of Environment, 2020](#)).

Nigeria's NDC as indicated in the above report is sectoral, it seeks to address climate change issues in areas of power, transport, industry, agriculture and oil and gas, land use and forests, and waste management. The NDC sector plans, covering more than 80% of the Nigerian economy and associated emissions, provide further detail on how Nigeria intends to deliver on the contributions detailed in its NDC" ([Federal Ministry of Environment, 2020](#)). Thus, the Nigerian NDC is focused on the delivery of direct development benefits and sustainable growth of the economy. Nigeria unconditionally pledged a 20% reduction on Business as Usual (BAU) emissions by 2030, and a 45% conditional commitment which can be achieved with financial assistance, technology transfer and capacity building. Nigeria presented these ambitious pledges to the Paris climate conference, showing that it is committed to leading on sustainable development.

Challenge of Implementing Nigeria's NDC of The Paris Agreement

Going through a number of literature on climate change, the common challenge that hinders progress is the cost of implementation of NDC's which are divided into different sectors. Therefore, finance is critical in the implementation of mitigation and adaptation action plans set out in countries NDC's. According to NEEDS for Climate Change, Nigeria's energy sector requires about US\$874 million in 2020 and US\$1.41 billion in 2050 as additional investments per year for the reduction of emissions to meet the non-binding

emission reduction target of 25%. This translates to about US\$174.8 million in 2020 and US\$280 million in 2050 per year to reduce emissions by 5% in the energy sector. Also, in the land use and forestry sector, it has been reported that it will require total or cumulative investments over the years of US\$2.9 billion and US\$4.8 billion in 2020 and 2050 respectively in the afforestation sector, While The transport sector will require about US\$5.33 billion and US\$9.69 billion per year by 2020 and 2050 respectively. A total or cumulative investments over the years of US\$1.78 billion and US\$2.98 billion in 2020 and 2050 respectively in agroforestry for climate change mitigation. From the above, cost estimates from just three sectors (Energy sector, Land and forestry sector and transport sector) total \$10 billion for 2020, while the National Budget for 2020 was \$28.6 billion. (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2010). This means that the National budget alone cannot finance the implementation of the NDCs, hence the need to seek multiple sources of finance to fund both mitigation and adaptation programs to tackle climate change.

The current economic situation in Nigeria is not favorable enough to take on the huge cost of implementing programs to fight the adverse effects of climate change. The light at the end of the tunnel lies in the fact that Nigeria involvement in global partnerships and agreements could help in closing to financial gap by offering foreign aid to Nigeria to meet up to its commitments. The Paris Agreement has in it, provision for financing developing countries in need by the more developed and endowed countries. This feet will go a long way in helping the government to fund and implement projects that helps to mitigate and adapt to the harsh effects of climate change.

Another challenge has to do with lack of implementation of government policy which has become a trait of the Nigerian polity. Official rhetoric often highlights Nigeria's commitment to environmental sustainability. However, this rhetoric is not always matched by coherent foreign policy actions or budgetary allocations. Nigeria has demonstrated strong diplomatic commitment by ratifying the Paris Agreement and submitting its NDC's. However, actual implementation lags due to the lack of political will.

Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted to guide in the understanding and explanation of this study is the Regime Theory, an approach within international relations theory which seeks to explain the occurrence of co-operation among States by focusing on the role that regimes play in mitigating international anarchy and overcoming various collective action problems among States. Keohane (1993, p.23), defines regime theory as a theory for explaining and understanding international cooperation intending the coordination and harmonization of interest among nations. Hurrell (1993, p. 50) puts up a similar argument that regime theories introduce the possibility of cooperation in an environment of anarchy in which sovereign states are struggling for power and interest. Having establish that this theory helps to understand cooperation among nations to address a common problem despite the international system being in anarchy, Nigeria has joined 195 other countries to address a common global challenge of climate change.

At different level of international relations, be it regional, continental or global, different regimes (states) have set their differences aside to achieve a common goal. The reality of climate change and frequency of its unpleasant consequences constitute significant threats to human lives across different regions of the world. The adverse outcome of climate change has necessitated global concerns and efforts at mitigating its effects as well as advocacy for measures that would restrict human actions that induce climate change (Kelechi *et al.*, 2021). Climate change has brought about a new dimension to global politics as the world is witnessing increased cooperation among developed and developing nations. The Paris Agreement, which is a landmark binding international agreement to address climate change and its adverse effects, has brought together 196 countries of the world, each with their nationally determined commitments, to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Thus, in trying to understand why Nigeria and the rest of the world is party to the Paris Agreement, the Regime Theory is suitable guide.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

In response to the Paris Agreement, Nigeria's government under the Buhari administration has made concerted efforts to address the issues around

climate change. The former President, Muhammadu Buhari had been very consistent and committed to the Paris Agreement that Nigeria participated in every Conference of Parties (COP) during his time as President (2015 to 2023). Nigeria, acting within its principle of ‘the promotion of international cooperation conducive to the consolidation of world peace and security, mutual respect and friendship among all peoples and states’, Nigeria joined 195 other countries to sign and ratify the Paris Agreement which was established in 2015 and came into full effect in 2016. In line with Article 4 of the Paris Agreement, Nigeria has developed its nationally determined commitments (NDC) to tackle climate change issues in key sectors namely, energy, industry, agriculture, transportation, forestry and waste management. Nigeria has also established legal and institutional frameworks to help to realize its climate change mitigation objectives. The Climate Change Act, 2021 provides a framework for mainstreaming of Climate Change actions, provide for a system of carbon budgeting and the establishment of the National Council on Climate Change ([The Climate Change Act, 2021](#)) “which shall be vested with powers to make policies and decisions on all matters concerning climate change in Nigeria”. (Sec 3(1), [Climate Change Act, 2021](#)).

Nigeria takes the challenge of climate change seriously. There is a Department of Climate Change Unit (DCC) in the Federal Ministry of Environment Abuja, which was created to implement the Convention and the protocol activities. It also coordinates the activities of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change whose membership are drawn from the Ministries of Finance, Agriculture, and Water Resources; Energy Commission, Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Foreign Affairs, Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NIMET), Industry, NGOs (Nigerian Environmental Study/Action Team), and the Academia ([National Council on Climate Change, 2022](#)).

In the course of this research, it has further been found that The Paris Agreement is a foreign policy issue and the agreement is in alignment with Nigeria’s foreign policy objectives and principles. While analyzing the data gathered, Nigeria’s foreign policy objectives, which is clearly stated in Section 19 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, was

places against the key element and provisions of the Paris Agreement to reveal that the Paris Agreement is a path to promoting Nigeria’s national interest. By addressing Nigeria’s climate change challenges such as drought, flooding, erosion, rise in sea levels, irregular rainfall pattern and so on, which have far reaching implication for lives and properties, health, agriculture and quality of life. It is definitely in Nigeria’s best interest to be a party to the Paris Agreement on climate change. The Paris Agreement has also helped in the promotion of African integration and support for African unity directly or indirectly. There has been visible solidarity among African nations, as leaders like former President Buhari pushed for climate justice since Africa is the least contributor to the human induced climate change facing the world today. The objectives of promotion of international cooperation and respect for international treaty is exemplified in Nigeria’s participation along with 195 other countries of the world and also Nigeria’s compliance to the binding agreement and requirements of the Paris Agreement. As earlier mentioned, Nigeria’s push for climate justice and more funding for African countries and the developing world will go a long way in achieving Nigeria’s foreign policy objective of Promotion of a just world order.

Nigeria’s foreign policy has been characterized as being consistent because since independence in 1960, Africa has being the centerpiece of Nigeria’s foreign policy. Therefore, this research has found that Nigeria has maintained its foreign policy principle of being ‘Afrocentric’ with regards to the Paris Agreement on climate change. Apart pursuing Nigeria’s national interest, the Buhari administration has been a strong voice in the fight for climate justice for African countries. In every address he made on the international state regarding the Paris Agreement and climate change, the President and his Vice President, Prof Yemi Osinbajo has promoted African interest to get more funding to address the continents climate change challenges being the least emitters and also the issue of allowing African countries to extract their oil resources to gain the necessary national revenue for economic development while still transitioning to cleaner sources of energy. At the Climate Action Summit, UNGA, 2019, President Buhari pushed for the revival of the Lake Chad Basin which has shrunk significantly from its original size due to

climate change. Also, at the Conference of Parties 27 (COP27), 2022, President Buhari stated that “Africa is the continent worst affected by climate change despite contributing the least to it”. He also stressed the need for compensation for loss and damages and advised the Western negotiators to avoid creating a “climate of mistrust” by directing a greater share of funding and investments to Africa and other developing nation’s efforts in the fight against climate change.

There is poor awareness in Nigeria on the issue of climate change and by extension, the Paris Agreement. In this research process, a survey was taken in order to ascertain the level of awareness on the Paris Agreement, the source of information on the Paris Agreement and whether people believed in the Paris Agreement addressing Nigeria’s climate change challenges. It was found that more Nigerians are not aware of the Paris Agreement; among those that are aware, majority come across the information on the Paris Agreement and climate change from social media as against the mainstream media when a large number of Nigerians do not have access to the internet; and lastly, among those that are aware of the Paris Agreement, most of them do not believe that the Paris agreement will solve Nigeria climate change problems. Thus one of the major aim of this research work is to help create that awareness and provide information on the actions and responses of Nigeria and its foreign policy towards the Paris agreement.

This research work has also found that the Paris Agreement, through member countries nationally determined commitments has the potential of boosting Nigeria’s economy and enabling sustainable development. One of the fundamental provisions of the Paris Agreement is for developed countries of the West to assist developing countries with funding, technology and capacity building. All these areas of assistance could help in attracting foreign exchange to strengthen Nigeria’s currency, aid in technology transfer and capacity building, all of which will develop skills and man-power in different sectors of the economy.

The agricultural sector is also of great importance to Nigeria as a larger portion of the population rely on farming for their survival and also, the farming activities of the rural areas contribute immensely to

the total agricultural output of the country. Thus the Paris Agreement through its financial, technological and capacity building assistance will enable smart and data driven agriculture to prevent losses and boost yield.

The research has also found that the critics of the Regime Theory may have been right when they claimed that proponents of the regime theory did not identify the power relationship when states come together to cooperate on common issues. As earlier mentioned, numerous initiatives for cooperation would reflect the interest of powerful states instead of weak and small states. (Ari, 2018). This might be true in the case of the Paris Agreement as the ‘developed’ countries who contribute the most to human induced climate change expect developing countries to cut-back on the extraction of oil resources which they rely on for national revenues to advance their development. Also, as the saying goes, “to whom much is given, much is expected”. Part of the major provisions of the Paris Agreement ensures that developed countries provide financial, technological and capacity building assistance to developing or poorer nations. This will establish a power relationship in which the richer countries influences the poorer countries behavior.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria’ foreign policy has been an interesting journey with both highs and lows since independence till date. From inception, Nigeria has always been a friendly nation to its neighbors and the larger part of the world. Nigeria has never been known to have a natural enemy except for the rivalry between Nigeria and Ghana which is over football and Jollof-rice. Despite its stance on non-alignment, Nigeria was seen to tilt towards Britain in terms of foreign relations but by the time of the civil war and the dynamics therein, Nigeria opted to make other friends from the Eastern bloc who could serve the countries interest in times of war. In era of multipolarism a neoliberal economic world order, Nigeria has made more friends and partnership in the international community in order to promote her national interest and achieve common goals.

The world has been facing common challenges and there has been needs for cooperation among different countries of the world on issues like

economic and sustainable development, disease control, security, global terrorism and climate change. As a topical issue in the international space, climate change has been at the fore front because it poses a clear and present danger to human existence. As the world breaks its heat records successively, there is greater concerns to reduce global temperature to pre-industrial levels. Therefore, the Paris Agreement on climate change has taken full effect to combat the harsh effects of climate change.

In line with its principles and foreign policy objectives, Nigeria has never rejected multilateral agreements for the protection of the environment because Nigeria, just like other nations, suffer from the adverse effects of climate change. Currently, Nigeria is party to the Paris Agreement along with 195 other countries and is fully committed to the provisions of the agreement. Nigeria has developed her Nationally Determined Commitments in conformity to the Paris Agreement and has established legal and institutional frameworks to steam-line climate action. Now the ball is in Nigeria court to transform its efforts into measureable successes.

In trying to mitigate the effects of climate change, Nigeria still face some challenges. On a personal level Nigeria must educate its citizenry to establish a conscious society on the environment and climate change because the more aware people are to the issues around climate change the better armed they would be in the fight against climate change. The sub-nationals have to take-up an active role in the fight against climate change by establishing legal and institutional frameworks based on their peculiarities. Despite these challenges, Nigeria's leadership role on the African continent has been exemplary and has achieved more financing and climate justice. It also has the potential of improving Nigeria's image in the international community and give the nation a seat at the decision-making table of international affairs.

Recommendations

The findings in this research work has led the researcher to come up with the following recommendations:

1). Strengthen Government Agencies in Providing Relief Funds: Every year, Nigeria experiences devastating flooding, drought,

irregular rainfall patterns and sea-level rise. These incidences usually causes loss of lives, property and livelihoods. Therefore, there is a need for the Nigerian government to set aside relief funds for such losses. Floods have washed away many homes and farmland in different parts of the country, destroying shelter and sources of livelihood. With the success achieved in the COP27 which agreed to establish a Loss and Damages fund, Nigeria can access this funds and add to the pool of resources to cater for citizens affected by the harsh effects of climate change.

2). Ensuring Commitment by State Governments: The Federal government must ensure that sub-national come-up with their own commitment based on their peculiar challenges. Presently, state governments have weaker institutions and hardly have any framework to address climate change challenges. State governments need to be encouraged to develop a strategy to combat the effects of climate change. For example, the Northern part of Nigeria is prone to desertification and extreme temperatures. Thus, an afforestation drive must be set in motion to support the Great Green Wall initiative so as to curb desert encroachment and provide more cover against extreme heat waves.

3). Legal Framework for State Government: Just like the Climate Change Act, 2021, state governments, through their State Assemblies should establish bye-laws to streamline efforts at curbing the effects of climate change. People who are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change reside in the rural areas of the different state, this is the reason why state governments must take the issue of climate change much more seriously.

4). Carry the Next Generation Along: By infusing discussions on climate change in schools curricula, young people will develop a consciousness on climate change from their formative years. In the past, primary schools encouraged to formation of clubs like The Environmental Conservation Club. These activities must be revived to further make children more interested in protecting the environment.

5). Increase Public Awareness Campaigns: One of the major challenges in the fight against climate change is the poor level of awareness by the citizenry. The Nigerian government in partnership

with civil society need to step-up on public awareness campaigns to disseminate more information about climate change and the need to protect the environment across the nooks and crannies of the country. As most people do not have access to the internet or social media, the public and private sectors should put out more TV and radio programs in local languages so that the information on climate change can be passed to all and sundry. Extension workers can also be engaged to physically visit villages to pass on vital information to support smart agriculture to improve yields and avoid losses.

6). Leadership Role: Nigeria must continue in the path of leadership for the African Continent and the developing world regarding climate change. This will help in achieving Nigeria's foreign policy objectives and give the country greater respect and leverage in decision making on the regional and global stage.

7). Push for Climate Financing and Climate Justice: Nigeria has already been advancing this course but the pressure must be sustained. Through calls for increased funding and investment to address climate change by President Buhari, the Conference of Parties 27 approved the establishment of Loss and Damages Fund for developing countries because Africa is the least emitter and the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Also, there is pressure on developing countries with oil reserves to cut back on oil production in order to achieve net-zero carbon emissions. This will greatly affect revenues and funding for development. Nigeria must continue pushing back against the pressure because the oil production in all the African countries combined contributes and insignificant fraction of the Green House Gases emitted by the highly industrialized countries of the West.

8). Good Governance: Nigeria has been battling the issue of good governance. With high rate of corruption, wastage, and financial misappropriation in the public sector, development efforts have been frustrated, thereby stifling the growth process of the country. If the Nigerian government focuses more on strengthening its institutions, tackling corruption, block leakages and avoid waste, the programs and policies put in place to address climate change will be properly

implement and the adverse effects of climate change will be mitigated.

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