

Climate Change, Leadership Challenges and Food Security in Nigeria: A Historical Reflection

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Abstract

Climate change is a normal part of the Earth's natural variability, which is related to interactions among the atmosphere, ocean, and land, as well as changes in the amount of solar radiation reaching the earth. This has been on for decades, but the rapidity at which it is occurring is what is alarming. This has in various ways affected agriculture and other related economic activities worldwide. In the case of Nigeria, the situation is alarming because of the neglect of the leadership to the early warning signs due to high level corruption and political rascality. The result is that while other countries have been able to experience the minimal effect through investment and control, Nigeria has been caught on aware, thus threatening not only food security, but human existence as well. This paper (from a historians point of view) thus seeks to examine the relationship between Climate change, leadership challenges and food security in Nigeria as well as the way forward.

Keywords: Climate Change, Global warming, Leadership Challenges, Food Security.

Introduction

The history and survival of any society is determined by the level of interaction between members of the society and the natural environment. This is because man in history does not live in vacuum, but operates within a particular environment. The consideration of the environment is of tremendous importance in any historical discourse especially in relation to demographic changes and the development of the economy of any region and the ability of the people to understand and influence it to their advantage. The relationship between man and the environment in an area is a dynamic one involving a two way flow of influence in which the environment affects man and in which his activities in turn leaves their imprint in form of distinctive cultural and socio-economic landscape⁶⁵. It is in line with this that the Marxian school of thought posits that the ability and capacity to understand, influence and/or change the environment depends largely on the level of the societies productive forces (mode of production); a force which itself is a product of the environment⁶⁶. Thus an understanding of the nature of the physical and natural environment, man's interaction with it over time, will give a clear picture of how the society has developed and the nature of inter group relations as well as the necessity to constantly maintain the environment.

The above emphasizes the link between the environment, human development and possible conflict once the relationship is distorted in anyway. Thus since environmental threats (in the view of this paper, unmanaged climate change/ environmental degradation) constitute threats to global peace and food security, there is therefore every need to begin the search for methods of ameliorating the situation (in the case of the Nigerian government as in most country, provisions are made to tackle this, in the form of Ecological fund). It is in this way, that Environmental security is central to world peace. This was clearly declared at the 1992 Rio de Janeiro summit, which revealed the centrality of the environment, its resources and maintenance to peace. This was clearly stated in the preamble of the Earth charter, which read thus:

We stand at a critical moment in Earth' history; a time when humanity must choose its future... we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustain able global society founded in respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace.⁶⁷

Similarly, The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops posits thus;

⁶⁵ Bingel B.A (1991), Historical Demography of the Nigeria Middle Belt A.D. 1400 – 1900; An Explanation of the Role of Historical and Environmental Factors in shaping the Population of Niger Province. Unpublished PhD Thesis, A.B.U, Zaria

⁶⁶ Kazlov G.A (ed) (1977), Political Economy:Capitalism. Progress Publishers, Moscow, Maurice Comforth (1952), Dialectical Materialism: Materialism and Dialectical Method. Lawrence and Wishart London.

⁶⁷ T.B Bakuk, (2005), "The Environment, Peace and conflict in Africa", in Shedrack Gaya Best (ed), Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa: A Reader (Ibadan: Spectrum Books),221.

The whole human race suffers as a result of environmental blight.... but in most countries...it is the poor and the powerless who most directly bear the burden of current environmental carelessness. Their lands and neighborhoods are more likely to be polluted or to host toxic dumps, their water to be undrinkable, their children to be harmed⁶⁸

From the above it is clear that the environment holds the key to human survival. This perhaps explains why almost all governments the world over showed interest in the 1992 parley. The belief that the world is challenged by the common crisis-global warming⁶⁹ and the positive perception that it is everyone's duty to join hands to combat environmental threats emphasizes the truism that the world even in the context of peace and security is a global village. In line with this, scholars have argued that climate change, as well as a combination of urbanization, agriculture, forestry and changes in the chemical composition of land, water and air are the drivers of global change. These physical changes in the earth system interact with socio-economic system to define the human environment. Thus of all these physical changes, none poses a greater threat to the human existence worldwide as well as challenge his continuous existence and interaction with the natural environment than climate change.

Definition of Scope and Concepts

Nigeria has a land area of 924,000sq km. She is described as the most populous country in Africa, with an estimated population of 150 million and average density of about 130 persons per square kilometer. Population has been growing at an estimated average of 2.9% per annum. The country's climate varies between semi arid in the north to tropical and humid in the south. The average rainfall ranges from about 500 mm/year in the north to over 2,000 mm/year in the south. Most rainfall occurs in well defined rainy seasons of four to five months (May to September) in the north and six to seven months(April to October) in the south and is typically concentrated in high intensity storms with high rates of runoff. The main rivers, Niger and Benue, converge in the central region thereafter flowing south as the Niger discharge into the Atlantic Ocean through an extensive delta area.

An analysis of the terrestrial network in the country indicates that Nigeria fall within what has been described as the final downstream country through which the Niger River flows, and also contains 28.3 percent (424,500 km²) of the basin area. The Niger Basin extends across 20 of the 36 States of Nigeria and comprises two main rivers, the Niger and the Benue, and 20 tributaries. Of Nigeria's major rivers, more than half are in the Niger River Basin. Their combined length accounts for almost 60 percent of the total length of all important rivers in Nigeria. Almost 60 percent of Nigeria's population, or about 67.6 million inhabitants, live in the Basin. These Nigerians comprise 80 percent of the population of the entire Basin. Given Nigeria's size and location, its agricultural production, both rain fed and irrigated, is substantial. The Lower Niger River and the Niger Delta hydrographic region of the Niger River Basin is approximately the Hydrologic Zone 5 in Nigeria. States in the Niger South Catchment include Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, parts of Edo, Anambra and Kogi States. At Lokoja, the Niger River enters the Lower Niger River segment, which includes the Niger Delta. Also at Lokoja before reaching the Niger Delta, the Niger River is joined by its major tributary, the Benue River, which originates in the highlands of Cameroon's Adamawa Plateau. From Lokoja, the Niger River takes a north to south direction for 200 km; it receives only a few small tributaries, including the Anambra, on the left bank, which drains a basin with significant rainfall. Onitsha is the last monitoring station on the river. The Lower Niger flows for another 100 km and the lower valley progressively transforms into the vast Niger Delta covering approximately 30,000 km², with no fewer than 30 outlets to the ocean. The main course of the Niger takes the name of Nun as it crosses the Niger Delta and discharges to the Gulf of Guinea, 4,200 km from its source in Guinea⁷⁰.

Greenhouse Effect and Climate Change refers to natural occurrence of transmutation in the plant world with the warming effect as one of the processes that make life possible on earth. However, emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) as a result of human activities has contributed to earths climate change in a negative manner – resulting in global warming (greenhouse gas emission food the food and agricultural sector contribute over 30 percent of

⁶⁸ Lenten Campaign (2011), Sustaining our Environment for Integral Human Development. Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria JDP/Caritas, Nigeria.

⁶⁹ Oloyede et al (2002), "Nigeria: Oil pollution, Community Dissatisfaction and Threat to National Peace and Security, Occasional Paper Series, Vol. 4, No. 4.

⁷⁰ Aletan A., Martins O. and Idowu O. A. (2011), Mitigating the Effects of Floods and Erosion In the Niger South Catchment Area through Integrated Flood Management (IFM). Proceedings of the Environmental Management Conference, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria, 2011

the current annual total emissions (deforestation 17.4%, agriculture 13.5%⁷¹). It is the contention in the forestry circle that to enhanced greenhouse emission aggravated by man's activities can lead to a change in the world's climate as these activities increase the concentration of the gaseous emissions in the atmosphere causing more heat to be reflected back to earth. In other wards, the gaseous releases from the forest trees (especially the old ones) and the releases from those burned by fire could aggravate the unconducive situation of the atmosphere and therefore make life difficult for man⁷².

Closely related to the above is the issue of Gas flaring, which is a major contributor to the stock of green house gases in the atmosphere thus adding sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and carcinogenic substances such as benazapyrene, dioxin, benzene and toluene to the climate chaos. Power generation by coal and Gas flaring in the Niger Delta are by far the main sources of Carbon dioxide emissions in Sub Saharan Africa. Continuation of gas flaring is a direct negation of the determination of the Nations of the world to combat climate change in practical terms. The country's attempt at curtailing this issue of gas flaring as are contribution to combating climate change and saving the world has been politicize and stalled by corruption. The first attempt at stopping gas flaring was in 1969, when the Federal government ordered the oil companies to install facilities that will utilize associated gas within five years of their commencement of operations. This was not achieved by the companies, which later played the government into shifting the date to 1979, which was also ignored by those involved. Again the goal post was shifted to 1984 as the zero flaring date with a stipulated fine for any company the fails to meet the deadline. In addition, an Associated Gas Re-Injection Act of 1979, No.9 was introduced, demanding oil companies operating in the country to produce detailed plans for Gas utilization as well as guarantee zero flares by January 1, 1984, unless they had case by case exemption obtainable from the Minister. By 1983, the Oil Multinationals again reasons why 1984 would not be feasible in meeting the deadline. The deadline was thereafter moved at the pleasure of the government in response to the pressure of the multinational corporations. These shifts were executive order not backed by law. In response to local and international pressure, the Federal governments again pledge to halt gas flaring in the country by 1st January, 2008. Shortly afterwards, (specifically on 17th December, 2007), another date was announced, this time December 31, 2008 was announced as the new date for zero flaring. Unfortunately, this is 2012 (almost four years after), Gas flaring takes place with reckless abundance in the country.

The Politics of Environmental Mismanagement and Food Security: Nigeria in Focus

Generally it has been established that climate change will impact on every aspect of the human society especially the water bodies. Apart from the oceans, seas, lakes and rivers and the animals and plants found in them, climate change will affect about 200 million people worldwide who are predominantly farmers, fishermen and aqua culturists. According to this source, some fish resources will become less abundant while important species may move to other areas where they are less available to fishers. This will thus make it harder for many fishing communities to continue to make a living from fish or to provide fish for feeding their families. Coastal communities may also be displaced by rising sea levels and will be forced to find new places to live and new means of livelihood. Humans, plants, live stocks and other aquatic resources will be exposed to new pest and diseases that flourish only at specific temperature and humidity. This will pose new risks for food security, food safety and human health⁷³.

According to World Health Organisation, no fewer than 154000 people die every year from effect of global warming. This according to the study would range from malaria to malnutrition and this would affect mostly children in developing nations of the world⁷⁴. By 2020, the number of deaths would almost double unless global warming is curbed. Although the environment has from time immemorial been under constant threat, but the recent trend of events indicates that the human society is in for probably the worst. There have been cases of floods, hurricanes and other natural disaster ravaging different parts of the world with devastating effects. At the international level, there was the devastating tsunami in December (26), 2004, that swept through Asia claiming lives and properties. In Indonesia alone over 130,000 people, over 500,000 were rendered homeless, while over 37,000 others were declared missing; Sri Lanka lost more than 31,000 lives, while 100,000 homes were damaged, alongside their crops and fishing boats. This singular act alone rendered more than 400,000 people jobless.

⁷¹ Food Agricultural Organisation, 2007.

⁷² Lenten Campaign (2011),..Op.cit

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Oyegbile O (2007), Another Kind of Terror; TELL Magazine Nigeria: Living in a Hostile Environment. No.40, October 1.

In Nigeria, there have been clear indications of such occurrences earlier than the Asia case as there has been a increase in the level of rainfall giving way to flood, erosion and environmental change, with the sea and erosion eating deep into the land. In the northern part of the country, the ferocious desert encroachment is on the increase, while soil erosion escalates.

Available records shows that, it had been established (long before now) that global climate change will have strong impact on Nigeria, particularly in the areas of agriculture, land use, energy, biodiversity, health and water resources. According to the Third and Fourth Assessments Reports of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, almost 2/3 of Nigeria's land cover is prone to drought and desertification, its water resources are under threat. This will among other things affect the rain-fed agriculture and fishing activities in the country. This is very worrisome when considered along the line that 2/3 of the country's population depend on agriculture, with a large chunk inhabiting the river banks⁷⁵.

In line with the above, years back, it was alerted that that the government should take measures to combat these impending dangers, because in the northern part of the country, especially Sokoto, Kebbi, Jigawa, Maiduguri, the stable ecosystem of the Sahel and Sudan Savannah were already vulnerable. Climate change emphasized the existing pattern of aridity and heightened the tendencies of drought, desert encroachment, depletion of mineral and land degradation. In the same vein, rise in sea level had reinforced flooding propensities of the coastal south if Nigeria with specific refers to area around Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross Rivers, Kogi, Niger, Edo, Enugu, Anambra among others. The result of this has been an increase in water and land erosion, losing of properties, poverty, acid and salt accumulation as well as a reduction in the viability and quality of land. The attendant consequences are food insecurity and decline in agricultural activities, malnutrition and hunger as these depend on adequate rainfall and other climatic elements.

It is in realization of the above fact and the urgent need to combat the effect of global warming/ climate change that most countries of the world set aside particular fund to help in time of such occurrence. It is a constitutional provision that one per cent of the federally accrued revenue be set aside for tackling ecological challenges that include desertification, drought and soil erosion, among others. In the case of Nigeria, this fund referred to as Ecological Fund is an intervention facility put in place by the Federal Government to mitigate ecological problems which are of enormous proportions in all parts of the country; especially those exceeding the financial capabilities of states and local authorities. It is not exclusive to any state and since its establishment in 1981, there is no state that has not benefited from the fund⁷⁶. Although most people are not aware of this fund, but it takes a large chunk of the country's resources and have been treated like the security votes, which was always shrouded by secrecy (The agency, by convention, coordinates all issues relating to management of ecological fund, a statutory facility to which three percent of the nation's total oil earnings is paid and disbursed to tackle ecological problems in the country (this amounts to over 4 billion naira every month). For example during the eight years of the country's return to democracy (i.e, 1999 – 2007), the administration of president Olusegun Obasanjo disbursed over N150 billion to state governors, local government chairmen and the administration of the Federal Capital Territory to fight environmental related problems⁷⁷. Thus anytime there was flood, coastal and gully erosions, drought and desertification, there was always fund from the presidency to tackle these problems.

The impression from the office of the Nigeria Ecological Fund and the various states/local government areas is that the fund has also been used in fighting air pollution related problems, spillage and municipal waste, construction and control of major beaches including the bar Beach and the Ogunpa River in Ibadan and construction of modern incinerators across the country⁷⁸. At various times in the history of Nigeria, state government had gone to various bodies to secure loan to tackle ecological problems in their states. For instance, Lagos state was said to have secured \$60 million (N7.6 billion) facility to boost its drainage system to reduce flooding, which troubles the state all year round in 2007; Anambra had to source over N2.5 billion to curb the menace of erosion in the state. In fact as at 2007, the state had no fewer than 1000 erosion sites with 500 very active. Kebbi state as at 2007, claims that it spends not less than N400 million annually to combat desertification (desertification is the major all season environmental malaise plaguing most of the northern part of the

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Nigerian Officials Spend N400bn Of Ecological funds On Cars in 10 years - Senate panel , Daily Trust, <http://africanspotlight.com/wp-content>, October 8, 2012

⁷⁷ Yishau O, (2007), "Tokenism" TELL Nigeria: Living in a Hostile Environment. No.40, October 1.

⁷⁸ Ibid

country)⁷⁹. The table below summarizes the allocation during the first three and half years of the country's return to democratic rule. These monies were allocated to the various tiers of governments and there was the general impression that the funds were adequately utilized for the purposes they were meant for, while in some other cases, those in authority argued that the funds were not enough, and that for them to make the environment safe for human activities there was the need for them to go and borrow more from the international world. Thus the table below gives a summary of what the state governors and their local government counterparts claimed to have spent on Ecological matters especially as it relates to construction of drainages, dam, erosion channels and in some cases dredging of canals and other water ways.

Table I: Allocation and Expenditure on Ecological / Flood Control, 1992 - 2002⁸⁰

no	States	Revenue Allocated	Amount on Ecology
1	Abia	24,265,494,738.88	307,400,000.00
2	Adamawa	25,065,557,081.45	560 million
3	Akwa Ibom	65,898,071,799.79	****
4	Anambra	25,286,548,849.13	1.368 billion
5	Bauchi	26,637,916,288.36	863 million (no break down)
6	Bayelsa	53,411,541,496.46	299.5 million (Only 20% of work completed)
7	Benue	28,468,066,654.51	975,000,000
8	Borno	29,060,657,896.12	183,000,000(no breakdown)
9	Cross River	23,763,908,881.00	717228417.00
10	Delta	83,001,612,184.10	****
11	Ebonyi	20,872,847,309.90	971136760.50***
12	Edo	24,842,562,304.75	****
13	Ekiti	19,973,776,800.49	270069425.00
14	Enugu	22,673,040,330.32	****
15	Gombe	20,442,406,732.97	78,000,000***
16	Imo	28,480,482,257.14	1272551810.85
17	Jigawa	25,864,398,628.00	17,517,000.00
18	Kaduna	32,075,605,917.66	****
19	Kano	37,356,313,230.31	466,018,625.00
20	Katsina	29,872,814,940.02	236,000,000.00
21	Kebbi	23,844,487,064.07	71750000.00
22	Kogi	24,657,877,602.49	672 million*
23	Kwara	22,594,092,415.53	572 million**
24	Lagos	46,067,561,971.81	6,393,981,108.00**
25	Nasarawa	20,321,509,971.81	258,500,000.00
26	Niger	27,743,656,665.94	692,116,946.00
27	Ogun	25,501,387,675.16	34.7 million***
28	Ondo	36,599,060,338.44	358,092,2035
29	Osun	23,372,289,012.58	****
30	Oyo	29,698,027,702.00	****
31	Plateau	23,590,990,710.07	1176.686 billion*
32	Rivers	62,044,136,925.62	321 million
33	Sokoto	24,515,239,084.00	495,150,000.00
34	Taraba	23,383,695,134.00	****
35	Yobe	23,584,567,436.51	****
36	Zamfara	22,609,401,799.71	****
	FCT Abuja		111,300,000.00*

⁷⁹ Sulieman T (2007), The Desert Gains Ground, TELL Nigeria: Living in a Hostile Environment. No.40, October 1.

⁸⁰ See Analysis,(2002), The Governors as Tin Gods” Vol.I, No.2, August; Analysis, (2003), After Three and Half Years in Office: Where are the Projects” Vol.2, No.1, January. For further information see Information on this issue was obtained from , Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation Abuja (2002), Office of the Accountant General of the Federation A

Key;

*** - This stands for projects, whose amount were not stated; **** - Represents unavailability of figures for such project.**

The position of the paper is that there seems to be a complete disconnect between whatever those in authority claim to have invested in ecological matters and the reality on ground. This is because as it is today, there are no evidence to show that such huge resources have been sank into such project. This is because the situation has not improved in anyway, no the ecological situation in the country is growing from worse to worst as will be revealed as the paper unfolds.

Ignoring the Warning Sign: Focus on Some Selected States in Nigeria

Available statistics and recent revelations in the country's political scene have exposed the fact that most of these monies meant for ecological related problems went into individual pockets. This was the case in 2003, when the former governor of Plateau state, was accused (and later owned up) to diverting N1.6 billion Ecological Fund meant for the state, on the directive of the ruling party, much of which was later spent on campaign during the 2003 elections⁸¹. The effect is that despite the huge spending, cases of flooding and erosion taking over communities kept on increasing by the day. This is shown in the table below, which shows that for a very long time, there are symptoms and outright cases of environmental degradation that have been manifesting, with those in authority paying little or no attention to this, with lots of monies claimed to have been pumped into such projects.

Table II: Selected States which manifested symptoms⁸²

s/no	States	Year	Effects on the Society
1	Abia	2007	Several homes were swept away, schools, places of worship affected. Over 20,000 persons in the six communities swept away by gully which grows at 500 meters yearly.
2	Anambra	2007	All 177 communities have erosion /flooding problems as 1,000 feet deep, 3,000 ft wide and about 30,000 – 40,000ft long gully crisscrossing Nanka, Agulu, Awgbu, Ubaha and Enugu villages. More than 1000 person and well over 4000 families lost their ancestral homeland
3	Borno	„	21 villages in Gwarzo L.G.A flooded, unspecified number of people killed
4	Calabar	„	Minimal
5	Delta	Uptill date	Most of the farming areas have always witnessed flooding
6	Ebonyi	2006/07	Landslides and gullies rendered many homeless
7	Edo	Till Date	Illushi and parts of Anegbette area have always been flooded
8	Enugu	2006/07	Several homes, farmlands, churches and roads washed away. More than 250 families, numbering close to 1,500 rendered homeless.
9	Gombe	2004	Over 20 people died and thousand rendered homeless, a situation that has not changed much.
10	Imo	Up to 2007	Had over 34 gully erosion sites ravaging the area(as at 2007 N3 billion was set aside to combat erosion)
11	Kaduna	2003	Close to 10,000 people were reported drowned in different parts of the state in 2003. The problem of flood has not been fully combated till date.
12	Kebbi	2007	Flood rendered more than 3000 people homeless. Farms and animals lost.
13	Kogi	Till Date	Areas around the River Niger have always experienced this flood leading to loss of live, farmlands and properties.
14	Lagos	Up till date	It is a yearly issue. Apart from the popular beach surge, areas like oloosa and Idi Araba in Mushin, Ilaje in Bariga, Shomolu, Orile Iganmu, Amukoko, Itire, Illasamaja, Ijeshatedo, Agbado Crossing, Ijora Badia, Isheri-Oshun, Ajegunle in Kosofe and Adeniran Ogunsanyan in Surulere as hot spots.
15	Plateau	2007	47 died in five Local government along Wase Basin, over 200 other settlements on the basin under threat.
16	Rivers	2007	Animals (piggeries and poultries) destroyed, Homes always flooded and about 350,000 hectares of farmlands affected annually
17	Sokoto	2007	Over 5000 peOple rendered homeless and settlements destroyed
18	Zamfara	2006	Hundreds of settlements washed away and thousands rendered homeless.

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² The cases in this table were put together by the author from different documents, news analysis as well as personal experience.

The operations of Nigeria's Ecological Fund Office (EFO) have been a controversial one, especially in recent times. Headed by a permanent secretary, the EFO is supposed to identify ecological problems of the various regions of the country and apply resources of the Fund to manage them. Of recent, there have been complaints that the Fund's resources were not being used by beneficiaries to address ecological issues, such as land erosion, desertification and degradation due to resource exploitation, like crude oil and tin mining. There have also been suggestions that political considerations, rather than actual environmental factors, have been the deciding parameters in choosing which regions should benefit from such resources. The latter appears to have been borne by the Trust's in-depth investigation of the issue. According to the findings, President Jonathan's hometown, Otuoke in Bayelsa State, got ecological fund projects worth 5 billion naira for 2011, far more than nine other northern states considered to be facing serious ecological problems during the period combined. The second biggest beneficiary is Kaduna, home state of the vice president, Alhaji Mohammed Namadi Sambo⁸³. Of particular significance is the fact that ecologically devastated states like Yobe, Borno, Katsina, Jigawa, among others, did not benefit from a single project. Lagos State, which only recently suffered a huge and deadly surge of the Atlantic Ocean, was left out too. The Ecological Fund Office, according to the report, explained that states left out in 2011 had benefitted in earlier considerations.

Recently, investigations of the Senate public accounts committee probing the ecological funds and other Federal special accounts unearth large-scale fraud. The committee investigation has found out that state governments and Federal officials have misused of about N400 billion meant to tackle ecological problems over the past 10 years, spending the monies on cars and other unrelated projects⁸⁴. In July this year (2012), the committee uncovered fraud of 2.060 billion naira in payments to 38 contractors and 14 consultants in respect of a program to develop tree nurseries and produce seedlings to cover the 36 states. Most of the projects were either abandoned or had below 15% completion rate; although all the contract sums had been paid and scheduled completion dates missed⁸⁵.

The situation in the country is even more worrisome when considered in the light of the recent revelation by the Nigerian Metrological Agency (NIMET), that the recent disaster would have been averted if some state governors had heeded it advice. The Agency posited that drawing from a March, 2012 prediction by the Nigerian Metrological Agency (NIMET), the Agency wrote to 15 state governors on the dangers of the coming flood and what needs to be done. This was ignored and the letters not acknowledged⁸⁶.

Climate Change and it's Impact on Food Security

Most of the areas affected by the recent flood disaster constitute what has been referred to as the food basket of the nation. They are the major food producing area of the nation, as such the flooding has destroyed their crops and agricultural activities in general. It is quite evident that most of the affected states are the major food baskets of the country. Analysts have described the situation thus;

Many farmlands that ought to be either in planting or harvesting season are now many feet under water. Germinating crops have been overtaken by water and are presumably rotting away, while soil nutrients are being flushed away. The lives of some farmers are being saved, though some were lost, their farms and investments are already laid to waste. Properties and investments may be lost, but lives are important and must be rescued⁸⁷.

One of such area is the Ibaji Igala (an area noted for vast land farming, sharing boundary with Delta, Kogi, Anambra and Edo states) The area is about 40 kilometers long and sixteen kilometer wide (i.e. 64sq.km) in the west it is bounded by the river Niger, while in the east it is bounded by five bodies of water-Iyachu, Ata'kpa, Ikpako, Achikwu and Uko⁸⁸. These are distributaries of river Anambra and during the annual flood season (August - October) when the Niger over-flows it banks they are joined by the two parent rivers - the Niger and

⁸³ Nigeria Officials..op.cit.

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Chukwuma M, Emeka A, Joseph O and Ojeaga E (2012), How 15 governors ignored NIMET's warning on flood . GUARDIAN, Thursday, 15 November

⁸⁷ Anaro B and Idowu B,(2012), Flood: Stark Hunger Stares Nigerians At The Face Next Year Starvation in Nigeria. LEADERSHIP, October, 14.

⁸⁸ The names of some of these rivers with time came to connote names of settlements in the area.

Anambra⁸⁹. It is important to note that the natural providence of river network in the area has been of tremendous importance in the establishment of trade links with adjoining communities. By their location, the annual Niger flood brings in a great amount of alluvial soil annually and this keeps the land very fertile for agricultural activities, aiding rich harvest. The fertility of the soil in this area was a factor that aided the early settlers to settle as well as take control of the trade network along the Niger. With the rich deposit of alluvial soil, the people cultivated agricultural crops like yams, rice, maize, okra, potatoes, cassava, tomatoes, and beans⁹⁰. According to colonial assessment report by Brooke, N.J. (1920) Igala yam trade alone for 1920 amounted to about £66,666. out of an estimated total of £81,046.⁹¹

According to Kogi State Ministry of Information, and Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) an estimated 152, 575 hectares of farmlands were destroyed in 344 communities which were completely submerged by the flood, while one local government in Katsina recording the loss of over 146 farmlands to the floods. It is the same scenario in Bassa local government where the Idoma farming along the River Benue in Mozum lost everything, including their houses, to the flood.

In Delta state no fewer than 59 communities were affected as a result of the River Niger overflowing its banks, with more than 200 houses destroyed and several families displaced by the ravaging flood. Apart from residential buildings, the flood also damaged the Customary Court building, police staff quarters and the official residence. The communities most affected in the area include, Aboh, the council headquarter, Benekuku, Ase, Asaba-Ase, Okpai and Lagos-Iyede. It is a clear fact that hunger is already staring the faces of the people due to the large number of farms destroyed by the flood. Most of the victims are still camped in schools⁹².

In the case of Edo, the rapid flood sacked about 26 communities with a population of over 350,000 persons in the state (in some other cases the population is estimated at 500,000 persons⁹³), destroyed virtually everything in the affected areas. Houses, household items and farmlands were submerged. In the Etsako area, the palace of the Daudu of Usumegbe and that of the village head of Udaba, were among the buildings submerged in the flood. The rehabilitation centre in Ekperi Grammar School, Ugbekpe Ekperi held over 60,000 displaced persons brought in from Yuluwa village, Ofukpo, Agbabu, Iguzi-Ofukpe, Udaba, Unudoboh, Udaba-Ogho, Anegette all in Etsako Central. In Agenebode, the headquarters of Etsako East Local Government area, the situation was the same. Ilushi, Urho, Urhowa and Inyelen in Esan South East Local Government Area have all been cut off by flood, with the only road leading to these communities washed away⁹⁴. In reaction, the state governor, who flew in a helicopter and rode in canoe to inspected the flooded areas, responded thus; .

This incident is the first of its kind...The entire area is in a terrible shape. We could not even get any where to land with the helicopter because everywhere is now water. I am particularly surprised because I passed through these communities a few months back. I have never witnessed this sort of thing all my life. I understand that it has not happened like this before. This is a serious natural disaster which is affecting several communities...Farmlands have been destroyed, property have been lost. I saw dead goats and sheep floating in the river. I had to paddle a canoe to be able to move round the affected areas. The entire building of a Church is right inside the water, it is unbelievable. This is nature that is angry; we can only pray that God will take control and the water will recede so that people will reclaim their farmlands.....Of course there are immediate and long terms social and economic consequences but in the long run, I believe both the State and Federal governments will begin to look at both the long and short term solutions should this kind of thing happen again. We should look into how to protect the communities along the River Niger and perhaps River Benue....We have serious humanitarian challenges and I think the immediate one is to provide food and places for people to sleep. We are going to release money immediately to procure food and mattresses and ensure that we get people of integrity to manage it to ensure that every body that is affected gets some relief⁹⁵.

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Okogie, G.C; Esan Native laws and customs. Yaba, 1960; Bradbury, R.E;The Benin Kingdom and the Edo speaking people of southwestern Nigeria. I.A.I, London 1957; 62-3

⁹¹ Lokoprof 67/1920, "Assessment report on Ibaji District", N.J., A.D.O. 1920:18.

⁹² LEADERSHIP (2012), Flood Submerges 59 Communities In Delta, August, 29

⁹³ Ochoga P (2012) Flood: Sacked Communities In Edo Get N100m Relief Materials; LEADERSHIP, August, 25

⁹⁴ ABU N et al, (2012), Floods Of Fury Across The States. LEADERSHIP, August, 29.

⁹⁵ ABU N et al, Ibid

In the case of Niger state, no fewer than 663,000 persons were displaced while the flood ravaged over 500 communities in the area. The victims are now in over nine camps set up by the state government. According to the State Emergency Management Agency NSEMA over Forty-nine lives were lost to the flood incidents, (as at 29/09/2012). The State Emergency Management Agency also confirmed that out of the 500 communities affected by the flood, 117 villages were totally submerged, with the villagers all relocated to the nine camps⁹⁶. In the case of Bayelsa state, Over 90 per cent of the area was submerged by flood, leading to over three quarters of the people of the state affected. In this case, the National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA) had to set up three refugee camps in conjunction with the state government to house the over 10,000 internally displaced persons identified in Yenagoa. The immediate effect was that there was an immediate increase in the prices of food items due to the high rate of inflation in the area, which increased by over 200 per cent. For instance, a bag of garri immediately went for about N20,000 instead of N10,000 sold before the floods⁹⁷. In the case of Taraba and Cross Rivers states an estimated total of 25,428 persons were displaced and about 79 communities wrecked (Taraba alone had 13,428 persons displaced after floods ravaged 30 communities)⁹⁸.

In Anambra state more than 76,000 victims were affected by the devastating floods that hit about 200 communities in eight local government areas of Anambra State⁹⁹. The four local government areas that were worst affected includes Anambra West, Ayamelum, Anambra East and Ogbaru. These were completely submerged in water, while others like Awka North, Ihiala, Onitsha North and Onitsha South suffered various degrees of destruction. The number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) ran into thousands with an estimated 10,000 homes fully or partially submerged. Leading industries in south of the Onitsha Metropolis were under water and no longer operational (including the three industries President Goodluck Jonathan commissioned on August 30). Homes, farmlands and livelihoods and productivity estimated at billions of naira were lost. Most of the victims evacuated were hosted in fifteen (15) IDP camps, namely, Sharon House, Bishop Crowder School, the Army Barracks, New Bethel Primary School, and Onitsha-South LGA premises in Onitsha; Health Centre Umueje, Community Primary School Igbakwu, the Skills Acquisition Centre Anaku, in Ayamelum LGA; St. Augustine Catholic Church and Unity Primary School Umuoba Anam; General Hospital Umuleri, and St Joseph Secondary School, Aguleri, all in Otuocha and Schools in Ossomala, Atani and St. Gregory Church Odekpe in the Ogbaru LGA¹⁰⁰. Statistics showed that about 1.2 million people in Anambra State (mostly farmers) were affected by the flood¹⁰¹. Historical data shows that the last time the state experienced such was in 1969 and it took about three months for the situation to return to normalcy¹⁰². The situation under which these people are kept most often expose them to danger of robbers, rapist as well as ritualists. This was the case when some people suspected to be robbers have invaded the Crowder Memorial Primary School, Onitsha, where 950 flood victims were camped and carted away some of the food items and cash donated to them¹⁰³.

The situation facing the country is disastrous, when considered in the light that although Nigeria is endowed with bountiful natural resources; 91 million hectares of land of mangrove and tropical forests in the South and the savannah and sahel in the North support a variety of food and cash crops, however, only 42 per cent is put to use. It is thus ironical that Nigeria, once a country self-sufficient in food and a major exporter of farm produce has since become a major importer of food items, raw and processed. The blame is the neglect of agriculture, spiked by bumper revenues from oil that swamped earnings from cocoa, rubber, groundnuts, oil palm. Until recent years focus had shifted from agriculture and many farmers had to shift their line of businesses as assessing credit became harder.

The situation will affect the morale of agriculturists, because they have become indebted to the banks. For instance, the Central Bank of Nigeria's second quarter report for 2012 revealed that N1.591 billion was granted to 13,363 farmers under the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS). Food crops received 75 per cent, the

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ NIMASA Disburses N50m Relief Items to Bayelsa Flood Victims, This Day Live, 2, November, 2012.

⁹⁸ Abu F and Obe E, (2012), Floods displaced 25,000 residents in Taraba, C'River – NEMA; PUNCH, Sept. 19.

⁹⁹ Obe E (2012), Military, others evacuate 76,000 Anambra flood victims

October 2, <http://www.punchng.com/news/military-others-evacuate-76000-anambra-flood-victims/>

¹⁰⁰ ADVERTORIAL 06 October 2012 FLOOD DISASTER IN ANAMBRA STATE

¹⁰¹ Tony Okafor, (2012), Flooding: Suicide on the increase in Anambra Nigerian Compass, Tuesday, 02 October 2012 22:22

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Ujumadu Vincent, (2012), Robbers invade flood victims' camp in Anambra; Vanguard, October 8,

largest share of the funds. A total of 12,018 food crops farmers had assessed N1.192 billion under the scheme¹⁰⁴. It was most of these farmers that were worst hit by the devastating flood and this has resulted in most of the t farmers' committing suicide, as a way of avoiding the embarrassment of their creditors.

Planning for Natural Disaster (Climate Change/ Global Warming): Examples From the Western World.

Available evidence shows that since the prediction of harsh environmental conditions, due to climate change, most countries of the world have continued to plan ahead to be able to cope with the situation. In most cases, emergency camps, well furnished with all gadgets to make life comfortable have been put in place; in other instance, energy and other material have been put in place to make sure life return to normalcy almost immediately. From the United Kingdom to India, Japan to the United States, governments have in response to the menacing effects of climate change set out far-reaching regulations that seek to promote biodiversity and sustainable development. This rules-based approach not only guarantees transparency and predictability, but also ensures that the complex regulations required to safeguard the environment conform to international best practices. Unfortunately, policy makers in Nigeria seem averse to the rules-based approach to regulation. They instead, prefer a procurement-driven approach that allows for administrative discretion and one that achieves little or no regulation¹⁰⁵. In the case of Britain, in 2008, the UK passed the Climate Change Act, a legislation that introduced the world's first long-term legally binding framework to tackle the dangers of climate change. The Act, among other things, created a new approach to managing and responding to climate change in the UK by setting ambitious, legally binding targets and strengthening the institutional framework for environmental social governance. The Act sets a target of at least an 80% cut in greenhouse gas emissions in the UK by 2050. This target is against a 1990 baseline. A carbon budgeting system that caps emissions over five-year periods would ensure that the UK stays on track for the 2050 target. The Act also creates the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) – a new independent, expert body to advise the Government on the level of carbon budgets and on where cost-effective savings can be made. Most importantly, the Act requires the Government to report to Parliament at least every five years on the risks to the UK of climate change, and to publish a program setting out how these will be addressed¹⁰⁶.

In the case of the United States of America, which Nigeria represents in the African continent. Some of the preparedness of the US has been summarized thus;

- Since 1979, the US has acquired more than seven times as much new energy from all net increases in energy from supply. Of that new supply, more has come from renewable (now some 11-12 % of total primary supply) than from non renewable. During 1976-86 inclusive, energy savings expanded US energy availability by seven times as much as nuclear power did and during 1984-86, by nearly thirteenfold.
- Because of the reductions in energy intensity achieved since 1973, the annual US energy bill has recently been around \$430 billion instead of around \$580 billion – a saving of about \$150 billion per year. However, if the US were now as efficient in aggregate as its competitors in Europe and Japan, it would be saving approximately an additional \$200 billion per year. And simply choosing the best energy buys for the rest of the country could yield a cumulative net saving of several trillions of today's dollars – enough to pay of the entire National Debt
- By 1986, the US energy saving achieved since 1973 – chiefly in the oil and gas – was producing two-fifths more energy each year than the domestic oil industry, which took a century to build.
- Over the years, the country has continually build on grain production/reserve and as at 1990, it was estimated that for the next thirty years the country will spend between \$500 and \$1,000 billion¹⁰⁷.
- There is already made plans relocation of population in times of occurrences. Also the Us Governments at various times have engaged scientists in research to forestall some of these occurrences, although some have been changed, results have shown that the early acts of most of these have saved the country much money at the end of the day. A good example in this respect was president Reagan's decision to go ahead with the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI)

¹⁰⁴ Central Bank of Nigeria's (2012), Second Quarterly Report.

¹⁰⁵ Ese Owie (2012), Flood Disasters, Environmental Policy and Sustainable Development in Nigeria --- Sahara Reporters - CommentaryPosted: October 19, 2012 - 12:10

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁷ Goldemberg J, Policy Responses to Global Warming in Leggett J (1990), Global Warming: The GreenPeace Report,Oxford University Press , New York.

It is thus not surprising that with all the hurricanes and other related disasters, the country has witnessed of recent, both resources and the personnel were on ground to either rescue the victims or evacuate them to places already prepared for such or they were able to restore normalcy almost immediately (the most recent being the case of hurricane sandy during which over 7 million people were cut off electricity supply, which was restored in less than one week). The same applies to the cases of both China and Japan where similar occurrences had taken place. The situation is completely different in Nigeria, where government and government agencies continue to blame the people for the problems of the flooding. In most cases, it is ridiculous to hear the body in charge of natural disaster, complaining that they had earlier warned the people of an impending danger and had warned them to move out of the area. The question one is tempted to ask here is; Where are they to move to, when no adequate provisions were not made? Most of these people have never left the shore of their ancestral home land, they don't know any rich man or senator in Abuja, Lagos or Kaduna to whom they can run to. This is the terrible situation the people find themselves. Probably, the government may want the world to believe that the camps (schools) most of these homeland Refugees are occupying are the places they had earlier advised them to move to?

The Nigerian (Federal and State) Government: Playing the Ostrich or Genuine

The recent action by the federal and state government has once more brought to the fore the cosmetic and patch patch approach of the state to issues of national concern. In her usual commando style, the federal government (as a way to bring succour and rehabilitate the displaced), said it will release N17.6 billion to the flood affected states. The money (according to the government) allocated for the mitigation of the effects of the flood on Nigerians, would be shared among the states which have been divided into categories depending on how badly they were affected. In the words of the President, while states will receive N13.3 billion, the Federal Government agencies will receive N4.3 billion. The breakdown shows that category A states will receive N500 million each; category B states, N400 million each; category C states, N300 million each, and category D states, N250 million each. (Category A states include Adamawa, Anambra, Bayelsa, Benue, Delta, Kogi, Oyo and Plateau, while Category B states include Bauchi, Cross River, Edo, Imo, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, Nasarawa, Niger and Taraba. Category C states are: Abia, Ebonyi, Gombe, Katsina, Kwara, Ogun, Ondo and Rivers, while Category D states include Akwa- Ibom, Borno, Ekiti, Enugu, Kebbi, Osun, Sokoto, Yobe, Zamfara and Federal Capital Territory). The President said to further intensify their intervention activities, the following agencies of the Federal Government have also been allocated funds as follows: Ministry of Works, N2.6 billion; National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), N1.1 billion; Ministry of Environment, N350million; National Commission for Refugees, N150 million; and technical committee on flood's impact assessment, N100 million. The believe of the government is that with these funds being doled out, it would be directed at the right quarters helping farmers and inhabitants of the flooded areas settle back¹⁰⁸. The disappointment of most Nigerians was summarized in the position as made known by Owie thus;

There were floods. Lives were lost. Property was destroyed. Victims are still living on a wing and a prayer. The government threw N17.6b at them. Curiously, throughout the recent national broadcast on measures being put in place to stem the tide, climate change – the primary cause of the problem – was not mentioned. This blatant omission can only be suggestive of a seeming cognitive confusion among policy makers as to the scope and reach of environmental regulation in Nigeria....A classic example of the procurement-driven approach to environmental regulation in Nigeria is the process that led to the birth of The National Committee on Ecological Problems – the Ecological Funds Office. The Fund was originally established in 1981 through the Federation Account Act. Decrees 36 of 1984 and 106 of 1992 have subsequently modified the enabling Act respectively. It was, most recently modified by the Allocation of Revenue/Federation Account etc (modification) order of 8th July 2002. In 1981, the Fund received 1% of the proceeds in the Federation Account. This was reviewed upwards to 2% in 1992. This fund is meant to provide resources for the amelioration of ecological problems such as flood, drought, and oil pollution, amongst others. The enabling statutes have over the years placed the Fund under the control of the President; to be disbursed and managed in accordance with such directives as may be issued from time to time. None of the enabling Statutes made any effort to establish a legal regime for an efficient and effective regulatory framework for environment and sustainable development. The primary objective was, regrettably, procurement and disbursement of funds¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁸ Anaro B and Idowu B,(2012), Flood

¹⁰⁹ Owie..Op.cit.

So far, it is clear that most of the succor have not got to the people, while there are alarm of embezzlement and neglect of victims in most camps. The real issue which is the food insecurity the country will face is currently not been addressed. Currently, the country, with a population of about 150 million people, can only boast of about 20 silos with a combined storage capacity of 300 000 tonnes. Also, the Strategic Grains Reserve Storage Programme, which is designed to provide relief in time of national disasters such as drought and war, is still not well-equipped to handle food emergency situations¹¹⁰. This has been basically even before the flood the waning government's interest in agriculture in the last three decades have led to a marked decline in agricultural production in the country, compelling the nation to resort to food imports for survival. The development had also increased the number of hungry people in the country. Now that the real farmers are out of their farms and farming areas, what is the future of the country's agriculture and food security?

The above picture is alarming and intimidating when considered in the light of the fact that the United Nations Industrial Organisation (UNIDO) recently raised an alarm that world (Nigeria inclusive) would soon have a serious food crisis. The United Nations Industrial Organisation (UNIDO) position is summarized thus;

the imminent food crisis might provoke political unrests across the world,.... efforts to forestall the crisis would necessitate a radical reform of the international food system... the food crisis for Nigeria included unprecedented food price increases which..would mostly affect very poor citizens, who usually spent up to 80 per cent of their incomes on food...staple food prices would more than double in the next 20 years, leading to a unique reversal in human development. (Citing figures of the National Bureau of Statistics, the UNIDO noted that "Nigeria has no business importing food items but the problem has to do with the non-implementation of the budget). Nigeria spent roughly N300 billion annually on the importation of food and beverages (It is sad to note that Malaysia came to Nigeria few years ago to get oil palm seedlings but now, the country is the largest exporter of palm oil in the world. This is because the Malaysian government has been devoting about 25 per cent of its budget to agriculture in the last 25 years,)¹¹¹.

In more specific terms, the latest FAO report on global food prices projected that Nigeria would spend about N802 billion on the importation of food items this year (2012) (that was before the flood disaster) alone to augment the shortfall in the local food supply. The FAO reports blamed the high amount on the rising food prices across the world, adding that the figure was 20 per cent higher than what Nigeria spent on food imports in 2010. On the worldwide level, the UN agency said that the global food import bill was expected to climax to a record of 1.29 trillion U.S. dollars (about N193.5 trillion) this year (2012). As a result,(even before the flood and displacement) most agricultural organisations, including the FAO, have been calling on developing countries, particularly those in Africa and Asia, to invest more in agriculture to enable them to survive the imminent global food crisis¹¹². The series of warnings bring to the fore food security issues and Nigeria's plans to ensure food security, which as it is today is gloomy.

Conclusion and the way forward

And as global warming threatens on a daily basis, a combative response is most needed. As aspects of environmental insecurity, global warming, pollution and other forms of environmental degradation, resource conflicts etc must be jointly tackled to ensure that the delicate balance separating human survival and extinction is maintained. It is in line with this that the paper makes the following suggestions;

The people must be well educated on the issue of global warming/climate change and its effect on the society. The National Orientation Agency must as a matter of urgency, begin a vigorous campaign with audio-visual materials to tell Nigerians the effect of the situation and why we must protect the environment.

Government must embark on serious tree campaign exercise,, unlike what they have been doing, where trees are only planted on World Environment Day's and other special days. Seedlings must be genuinely distributed and planting done on massive scale. The politics revolving around the stoppage of gas flaring must stop and genuine and concise steps by taken.

¹¹⁰ Adeoti V (2011), Global food crisis: Any way out for Nigeria? www.peoplesdaily-online.com/.../16677-global-food-crisis-any-way-...

¹¹¹ Adeoti V (2011), Global food crisis

¹¹² Ibid

There should be a policy by the government that backs the creation of emergency centers or camps in case of such occurrences. A situation where people are kept in classroom and open field in the name of Relief Camps is unacceptable. The situation is even worse when considered in the light of the fact that most schools were closed during this period and academic activities disrupted. This another way of pulling the nation backward academically.

Although for accountability purpose, the EFO has been under the presidency, however, it is clear that the presidency itself has not been too transparent in its dealings especially as it relates to the management and disbursements of the EFO resources. Thus the suggestion here is that the EFO be under the work of the Ministry of the Environment (which its activities are related to) and not under the Presidency.

Accountability and transparency in the operations of EFO and the managements of the ecological funds is crucial, and would require the involvement of a representative voice in its affairs. Legislators of ecologically challenged communities, from the local government councilors to the members of the state House of Assembly to those in the National Assembly need to constitute themselves into a powerful bloc to demand that there should be equity in the decision making process pertaining to EFO activities. The current practice, in which the Presidency dictates on the basis of political consideration more than every other criterion that ignores the ecological facts on the ground, is not proper.

Civil society organizations genuinely involved in identifying and calling attention to ecological problems should also lend their voice. A new legal framework of the EFO to transform it into a more accountable organ should be introduced. For instance, a regulation requiring the EFO, or any organ that might replace it, to make periodic and audited report to the National Assembly and the people, should be included in the amendment to the operations of the EFO.

The EFO's National Committee on Ecological Problems (NCEP) should have its membership drawn from as diverse as the country's ecological fault lines permit. It should also be able to do its work professionally, without the heavy political influence that currently limits its input in addressing the real ecological issues facing the different regions of the country.

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