

EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF NIGERIA'S PARTICIPATION IN PARIS AGREEMENT TOWARDS CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

BY

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Abstract

The study is designed to examine the impact of Nigeria's participation in Paris agreement towards climate change, which has become global in both its cause and effect and poses the most complex global policy problem. Climate change is defined as some observable variations in the climate system that is attributable to human activities. This study uses secondary sources obtained from government agencies and data submitted by Nigeria to the United Nations framework convention on climate change (UNFCCC), intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC), academic researches and recent submission on adaptation and mitigation as part of Nigeria's nationally determined contribution (NDC) to examine the impact of Nigeria participation in the Paris agreement. The research adopted liberalism as its theoretical framework due to its assumption that nations benefit from cooperation in an atmosphere of peace and harmony. It uses evidence-based facts; to discover that Nigeria will truly benefit from Paris agreement in achieving a low-carbon economy, increased agricultural productivity, which will help Nigeria to join a next wave of global climate actions. Recommendations were made which include: Strengthening national capacity at the Federal, State and Local Government levels to plan and respond effectively to climate change policies.

Key words: Climate Change, Paris Agreement, Climate Change Policy, National environmental Policy.

Introduction

The weight of scientific evidence indicates that human-induced global climate change is occurring and is having biophysical, social, economic and political impacts at local, national, regional and global scales. It is likely to become more severe over the coming decades. Like many developing countries, climate change has become a major threat to the attainment of sustainable human development in Nigeria. Climate change is global in both its cause and effect dimensions. As climate change is really a collective action problem, there is a built-in compulsion for addressing the root causes through international cooperation.

The complexity in understanding the international political economy of climate change is reflected in its temporal, spatial and conceptual dimensions. It is a stock rather than a flow pollution problem. Historical emissions from industrial countries are mixing with today's rapidly growing emissions from the developing countries. The impacts will manifest themselves fully in the decades to come, and future generations are

likely to suffer the most; yet scientists already attribute the trend of increased magnitude, frequency and severity of climate disasters of recent years to climate change (IPCC 2012). The main creators of the problem are the rich industrial countries, which are likely to suffer less; while the poor, such as Nigeria with the least contribution to the problem, will suffer the most. The phenomenon of climate change is staring everyone in the face, and actions to handle its impacts have become far more critical than before. It is thus becoming an issue of grave significance. It is as described by the United Nations General Secretary “a clear and present danger.” The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) recognizes adaptation as a critical option that countries should pursue to reduce the impacts of the change. At its 17th session, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention acknowledged that national adaptation planning can enable all developing countries to assess their vulnerabilities, mainstream climate change risks, and address their adaptation needs.

Therefore, the central aim and focus of the study is to expand research on climate change policies, particularly international agreement dimensions, which has not been covered particularly with reference to Paris agreement; and how such signatories into such agreements will benefits Nigeria in particular.

Internationalization of Climate Change through Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement requires all countries—developed and developing—to make

significant commitments to address climate change. Countries responsible for 97 percent of global emissions have already pledged their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for how they will address climate change. Countries will revisit their current pledges by 2020 and, ideally, strengthen their emissions reduction targets for 2030. The Paris Agreement includes a stronger transparency and accountability system for all countries—requiring reporting on greenhouse gas inventories and projections that are subject to a technical expert review and a multilateral examination. Countries will continue to provide climate finance to help the most vulnerable adapt to climate change and build low-carbon economies. While the Paris Agreement does not “solve” climate change, it allows us to start the next wave of global climate actions, creating a virtuous cycle for more aggressive action in the decades to come (OECD 2015).

In Paris on December 12, 2015, countries adopted an international agreement to address climate change that requires deeper emissions reduction commitments from all countries—developed and developing. Countries responsible for 97 percent of global emissions submitted their climate commitments prior to the conference. These commitments have been enshrined in over 160 countries with domestic ratification, acceptance, or approval. The agreement contains provisions to hold countries accountable to their commitments and mobilize greater investments to assist developing countries in building low-carbon, climate resilient economies. Encouragingly, businesses, investors, states, provinces, cities, financial institutions, and others have

also pledged actions to help governments implement the agreement and even exceed their commitments. (UNFCCC 2015).

The Key Elements of Paris Agreement

The agreement in Paris was built on the foundations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Copenhagen and Cancun Agreements. This new agreement has set countries' minimum obligations, implemented mechanisms to spur additional action in developing countries, supported the most vulnerable countries in addressing climate change, and established systems to hold countries to their commitments. The Paris Agreement will be strengthened over time using its solid framework (UNFCCC 2015).

New Emission Reduction Target for Paris Agreement Signatories

Countries responsible for more than 80 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions made specific commitments to reduce their emissions by 2020 as a part of the Copenhagen and Cancun agreements. The Paris Agreement includes commitments that go beyond 2020, reflecting a greater level of ambition than in the previous commitments. Countries' emissions reduction commitments reflect their different levels of development and capabilities. For example, the United States and European Union have committed to economy-wide emissions reduction targets (e.g., cuts below 2005 levels), whereas developing countries and emerging economies have committed to targets that reflect their level of development and historic contribution to climate change (e.g.,

greenhouse gas intensity targets). The 192 countries responsible for more than 97 percent of the world's climate pollution have announced specific reduction plans also known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The Paris Agreement entered into force on November 4, 2016, one month after 55 parties representing 55 percent of global emissions joined. To date, 160 parties have formally joined the Agreement (UNFCCC 2015).

Assessing the Agreement Drive for Improved actions in the Years to come

Countries will need to re-visit their current pledges by 2020 and, ideally, strengthen their 2030 targets because they discovered that they can achieve more aggressive action than they envisioned at this moment. This will start a process in which countries outline their next set of commitments every five years—setting a framework for continuously ratcheting down emissions over time toward a long-term target of emissions neutrality. Beginning in 2018 and every five years thereafter, countries will have a chance to take stock of the aggregate effort of all national pledges to determine whether the world is on a path to keep the global average temperature to well under a 2 degrees Celsius rise from pre-industrial levels. This is one of the most critical outcomes of the Paris Agreement—a solid process for reassessing and deepening emissions reduction commitments every five years (UNFCCC 2015).

The Process of Tracking Level of Process and Commitment of Members

The Paris Agreement includes a stronger transparency and accountability system that holds governments accountable to their commitments. The new transparency regime is legally binding, and applies to all countries. Countries must report their greenhouse gas inventories and progress towards their emissions reduction targets every two years. The reports will also require reporting on adaptation and will provide assistance to developing countries that need help to improve their reporting. These national level reports will be subject to an independent “technical expert review.” Countries will then be subject to a “multilateral examination” to consider progress toward their targets. These strengthened tools will shine a spotlight on whether countries are following through with their commitments as we will have publicly available and regular opportunities to track progress. These transparency and accountability tools will be aided by the powerful domestic motivation to follow through on their new commitments, since countries have realized that acting on climate change is in their own national interest (Henson, 2014).

Assistance to Developing Countries towards Adapting to Climate Change

In Copenhagen, countries agreed to establish the multilateral Green Climate Fund (GCF) to help mobilize funding in developing countries to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Nearly \$11 billion has been pledged to the GCF from 31 countries, including a \$3 billion pledge from the United States. In addition, countries

agreed to help mobilize \$100 billion by 2020 through public and private financing to assist developing countries in reducing emissions and adapting to climate change. These investments help spur additional global action on climate change and help countries address its devastating impacts.

The Paris Agreement further catalyzes action and implementation over time, as developed countries have agreed to continue the existing collective mobilization commitment on finance (\$100 billion annually), through 2025. And prior to 2025, developed countries would set a new collective quantified goal of mobilizing at least \$100 billion for climate finance. Other countries are encouraged to also help mobilize finance. To provide predictability on climate finance, developed countries will communicate every two years on projected levels of public climate finance for developing countries, while developing countries will report on climate finance on a voluntary basis. Regular updates send a signal for where low-carbon investments can be made, and the resources available to help the most vulnerable communities adapt to climate change (Environmental Resources Management, 2017).

Assessing the Prospects and the Possibility of Achieving Climate Change through Paris Agreement

Since the 2009 Copenhagen Accord, nations have rolled up their sleeves and implemented domestic actions to move toward low-carbon economies, including renewable energy targets, cap-and-trade programs, and sector-specific policies. For example, more than 160 countries now have renewable energy targets and policies. China has just announced a new

set of domestic actions including plans for a national cap-and-trade program, and climate policies have been adopted in the vast majority of the world's major economies. Countries have realized that it is in their own interest to cut their carbon pollution. They have concluded that, far from destroying the economy, domestic climate action produces real benefits for their citizens, including new jobs, reduced poverty, and lower mortality rates. And as natural disasters increase in frequency and intensity, they have seen that not addressing climate change has real and lasting consequences.

While the Paris Agreement may not eradicate climate change challenges, it puts us much closer to a safer trajectory and highlights the path forward. Before the Copenhagen Accord, we were potentially headed for an increase in global average temperatures of 5 degrees Celsius (9 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels by 2100. The commitments from the Copenhagen Accord were estimated to bring this temperature increase down to 3.6 degrees Celsius (6.5 degrees Fahrenheit). The commitments submitted in advance of the Paris climate summit put us on a path to a 2.7 degrees Celsius (4.9 degrees Fahrenheit) temperature rise by the end of the century, closer to the 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) goal (UNFCCC 2015).

The Paris Agreement will now allow us to start the next wave of global climate actions. This agreement ensures that the national pledges are the floor—not the ceiling—of ambition. It will have five-year reviews under a single global transparency system with flexibility for developing countries that need

it. It will spur countries to undertake even deeper cuts before 2030 and mobilize resources to help countries implement even stronger domestic reforms. Aggressive climate targets are still within reach if countries enact a virtuous cycle of ever more aggressive climate action as outlined in the Paris Agreement. Now that we have the first global climate agreement with commitments from all countries, it is time to roll up our sleeves to ensure future cycles of climate commitments can become more and more ambitious over time.

Climate Change

Climate change refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity and is widely recognized as the most serious environmental threat facing our planet today. According to IPCC (2007), the changes in climate are attributed directly or indirectly to human activities and alter the composition of the global atmosphere over comparable time periods. These changes occur due to variations in different climate parameters such as cloud cover, precipitation, temperature and vapor pressure, etc (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2003).

Although there are still debates among scholars with regard to whether climate change is induced by anthropogenic activities or is as a result of natural climate variability, the balance of scientific opinion is that changes in the composition of the atmosphere are attributed to human activities that lead to global warming (IPCC, 2001; 2007; 2014).

However, the IPCC report (2014) argues that the total anthropogenic GHG emissions have

continued to increase from 1970 to 2010, with the highest amount noted between 2000 and 2010. The report further notes that the release of CO₂ into the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels and industrial activities contributed about 78% of the total GHG emissions from 1970 to 2010, with a similar increase from the period 2000 to 2010 (IPCC; 2001pp 640; 2007 pp 639). The rising temperatures heat the land mass and the surrounding oceans, causing increases in surface temperatures and changes in precipitation, which are important drivers of global climate change. Whilst the trends and patterns of climate change projections are generally consistent, they are subject to varying degrees of uncertainty due to limitations in measurements and knowledge of the interactivity between earth systems (Adesina et al. 2010).

Methodology

This research design is documentary type. The design and nature or type of this Study will be conducted through the use of official documents from relevant areas of the study as the source of information. Furthermore, the research will relied on secondary data to be generated from relevant sources such as journals, reports, empirical studies, and relevant reports from Federal ministries, departments and agencies on climate change, and some relevant international agencies with focus on global climate change.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts liberalism as it theoretical framework in this study. The theory argue that nations benefit from cooperation in an atmosphere of peace and harmony. Along

these lines, some argue that without funding for adaptation, which is in an article of Paris agreement, many vulnerable developing countries might not remain viable partners in trade and investment. Further, climate-induced migration may engender conflicts within and across regions. With this understanding, adaptation funding is viewed as inducing developing countries to go for mitigation (OECD, 2015). Self-interest dictates that industrial countries should provide funding for adaptation.

This theory is relevant to this study in view of the voluntary nature and spirit of international cooperation to tackle Climate change challenges which led to Paris agreement declaration. Because liberal theorists are optimistic about ability of diplomacy in solving problems, It accentuates mutual benefits and international cooperation and role of international organizations and nongovernmental actors for shaping state preferences and policy choices such as the one formulated by nations, like Paris agreement which is focus of this study hence this theory is relevant base on it prepositions as outlined under the theory. The theory is relevant as its capable of explaining and understanding global climate change politics, particularly given its assumptions about which domestic institutions, interests and practices are key issues of international relations that attracts global interest in key environmental and climate change policies such as Paris agreement that notably and increasingly focused on attempts to influence domestic practices, policies and policy-making processes in what is referred as nationally

determined contribution (NDC) in the Paris agreement.

The impact of Nigeria participation in Paris Agreement for Climate Change Policy

the benefits of Nigeria's participation in the Paris agreement it has been observed in that regards as expressed by President Muhammadu Buhari, on January 2021 to the international community of Nigeria's preparedness to galvanize relevant stakeholders for climate action, and readiness to support regional, continental and global multilateral processes for the attainment of the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Speaking at a Virtual Leaders Summit on Climate change, the President said the fight to redress the impact was the responsibility of all countries and stakeholders, congratulating President Joe Biden of the United States who organized the virtual submit for renewed interest in the Paris Agreement (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021).

It has also been realized concerning the benefits of Nigeria participation as evident not only in the above assertion and commitment by the president bounding Nigeria to the agreement but due to fact that the issue of Climate Change has taken the front burner globally, as its effects can be seen and felt all around us; ranging from increased atmospheric temperature to irregular rainfall patterns as well as sea-level rise owing to the melting of glacial ice. In the face of these challenges, the president believed In addition to bringing about abundant green economic opportunities to the Nigerian economy, the Paris agreement will further complements the larger transition

process of global economies to low carbon development Pathways.

The President said the Summit would prove beneficial and instrumental in galvanizing high-level political support for the implementation of the Paris Agreement and it is as well as inviting more countries and stakeholders to take more climate-oriented responsibilities. President Buhari told world leaders that Nigeria was one of the most vulnerable nations, and it had started undertaking major environmentally sound and climate-friendly programs while treading the path of sustainability.

He said, "We are expeditiously implementing programmes that stimulate gradual transition away from the use of wood stoves to kerosene, Liquefied Natural Gas, biogas, and electricity. The immediate effects include healthy competition among private sector players leading to higher productivity, employment, and faster service delivery. In the Agriculture production and supply chain sector, we are targeting improved efficiency and productivity through the provision of accurate and timely weather forecasting to farmers, supply of drought tolerant and early maturing crop varieties, and promoting empowerment towards the diversification of sources of livelihoods.

Beyond ending gas flaring by 2030, the oil and gas sector has undertaken steps for diversification; risk management system; insurance hedging; research and development and emergency/crisis planning. "The President further said that the overall outcome of the highlighted actions had translated into food supply livelihoods, reduced poverty, decreased vulnerability to

health challenges, and higher quality of life. He said, “Nigeria will benefit from this Circular Economy and Sustainable Production and Consumption models in order to expedite the attainment of the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.”

Climate action has suffered from the myopia of political leadership globally, and Nigeria is no exception. Security, health and governance challenges are viewed as more imminent and having more potential for devastation. However, the above has outlined that while climate change effects are gradual; the impacts of climate change will be more widespread and will have detrimental socioeconomic and health consequences.

Underpinning the effective implementation of the solutions discussed is the collection and use of good quality data. Accurate population data and reliable forecasts are critical to understanding how the energy infrastructure should be developed. Developing a sector-by-sector inventory of the GHG emitters is necessary for reliable carbon accounting. A better understanding of site-specific solar insolation and wind speeds will aid the selection of optimal sites for renewable energy projects. Field trials on crop production in local ecosystems will highlight the crops that are most vulnerable to the changing climate and identify areas of research focus.

Together, these developments can be the foundation of technological and policy innovation that can realize low-carbon growth in Nigeria. The sectors that will be developed as a result (renewable energy, waste management, and research) will help to alleviate unemployment and economic

stagnation; low-carbon sectors have been shown to grow faster than the wider economy. Financing these efforts will be a challenge but there are many climate funds dedicated to pursuing mitigation and adaptation in developing countries that were established under the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement. Designing policies and projects that satisfy the eligibility criteria for these funds will provide access to much-needed financing.

According to Oduwu (2017, many of the Nigeria’s commitments are conditional upon receiving adequate financial, technical and capacity building support from other signatories, but the Paris Agreement will also provide opportunities for Nigeria to harness its huge resource potential to achieve the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. Addressing climate change in Nigeria in line with nationally determined contributions, will create significant market opportunities on the continent, especially for the private sector and institutional investors. It will also assist in direct benefits which are referred to as avoided climate change impacts, in both monetary and physical terms, from climate change mitigation and adaptation action. According to OECD 2015 reports, with an abundance of solar, wind, and geothermal resources,

Nigeria already has a comparative advantage in renewables. The falling costs of green technologies provide a propitious moment to be on the delivery end of the new energy revolution. Beyond the energy sector, food and land use systems—including the agriculture and

forestry sectors—are integral to Nigeria’s economy, accounting for 70 percent of livelihoods and almost one-quarter of the country’s GDP. In fact, new business opportunities in sustainable food and land use systems could deliver \$3billion annually to the country. These opportunities,

which includes forest ecosystem services and restoration of degraded land, and increased agricultural yields, enhanced supply chain efficiency, improvements and enhanced value-adding

capacity. Technical and financial support to Nigeria could help Nigeria also to benefits from

enhancing farmers’ resilience, water availability, and livelihoods. Such sustainable food and

land use approaches can deliver multiple co-benefits, from reducing rural poverty, to boosting

food security and improving population health, to protecting and regenerating natural capital.

Conclusion

Climate change is an adverse environmental phenomenon that is causing enormous concern all over the world. It refers to some anomalies in the climate system that is a result of human activities. Nigeria is facing enormous Climate change which propelled it to join international community to participate in Paris agreement. It is expected that the Paris agreements will be milestone as it is

possible to promote and actualize the strategies for limiting and adapting to the impacts of climate change in Nigeria and globally provided cost-effective and sustainable collaboration between governments, development partners and stakeholders which can be assured for mitigating the consequences of incessant climate change on the environment and the livelihoods of all.

5.4 Recommendation

This study points to the fact that Nigeria needs to adopt a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to the issues of climate change within its national development context than what currently obtains in order to achieve its goal and objectives of joining Paris agreement. The following recommendations are suggested:

1. Finalizing a National Climate Change Policy and Response Strategy for the country;
2. Finalizing and launching the National Strategic Climate Change Trust Fund;
3. Significant national efforts are needed to ensure that climate change concerns are properly integrated into the country’s development plan which currently constitutes the country’s blueprint for sustainable rapid socio-economic development.
4. Commissioning an extensive study for an up-to-date GHG emission

- profile, projection and mitigation strategies;
5. Undertaking detailed costing of adaptation initiatives for planning purposes;
 6. Developing and implementing a well-formulated action plan and process for the mainstreaming of climate change into national development plans,
 7. Strengthening national capacity at the Federal, State and Local Government levels to plan and respond effectively to climate change impacts, with evidence-based and well-researched information.
 8. There should be more proactive measures in dealing with the problems of climate change. The non-governmental organization should form pressure groups to challenge government on the issue of enforcement of environmental laws especially to arrest those who set bushes on fire.
 9. Climate change is not to be left to government alone. We should start with the kind of energy we consume in our private homes. The type of electric bulbs we use in the house; we should also use vehicles that do not emit black smokes, we should engage in tree planting by making sure that each one tree that is cut is replaced.

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