

The Modalities of Climate Change in Nigeria: The Legal and Institutional Framework

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Abstract: *Climate change poses severe and potentially irreversible risks to human populations and ecosystems globally, with developing nations bearing a disproportionate burden. Nigeria, given its geographical and socioeconomic vulnerabilities, ranks among the countries most exposed to its adverse effects yet remains critically underequipped in legal and institutional terms to confront it. This article examines the adequacy of Nigeria's existing legal and institutional framework for climate change regulation, arguing that the absence of dedicated climate legislation, the ineffectiveness of general environmental law provisions, and the poor implementation of government policy have created a governance vacuum that undermines the country's mitigation and adaptation capacity. Drawing on international climate law instruments including the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement and comparative domestic frameworks, it advocates for a comprehensive overhaul of Nigeria's climate governance architecture. It recommends the enactment of climate-specific legislation, the establishment of accountable institutional structures, dedicated climate financing, and the effective implementation of Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement as essential steps toward a legally robust and climate-resilient Nigeria.*

Keywords: modalities, climate change, Nigeria, legal, institutional framework

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation and largest economy, finds itself at a precarious intersection of vulnerability and inadequacy highly exposed to the devastating impacts of climate change, yet insufficiently equipped with the legal and institutional machinery required to confront them. The country contends with intensifying floods, prolonged droughts, advancing desertification, rising sea levels, and escalating temperatures, all of which threaten its ecosystems, agricultural base, infrastructure, and broader socioeconomic stability¹.

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Climate change is one of the major challenges of our time, exerting considerable stress on our societies and the natural environment. From shifting weather patterns threatening food production to rising sea levels increasing the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale. Over a century and a half of industrialization including deforestation, gas flaring, and certain farming methods has driven up the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to historically unprecedented levels. As populations, economies, and standards of living grow, so does the cumulative level of greenhouse gas emissions, leading to an unprecedented increase in atmospheric temperatures and the numerous negative effects of climate change that we experience today. Without drastic action now, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly. According to the 2014 World Climate Change Vulnerability Index by Verisk Maplecroft, Nigeria is among the ten most vulnerable countries to climate change globally. A study by the United States Agency for International Development concludes that, without strong mitigation and adaptation responses, climate change could cost Nigeria between 6 percent and 30 percent of its GDP by 2050, equating to between \$100 billion and \$460 billion².

Nigeria cannot afford a lackadaisical attitude towards climate change, as its effects are already being felt and will only intensify. Legal frameworks must lead the way in proscribing conduct that exacerbates climate change and in prescribing regulations necessary to protect humanity and the environment from its adverse effects.

Statement of Problem

Nigeria grapples with numerous challenges in effectively addressing climate change. These include ineffective implementation of existing climate policies, limited financial resources, fragmented coordination among governmental agencies and stakeholders, and insufficient legal provisions specifically tailored to address the complex and evolving nature of climate-related issues. Despite existing legal and institutional frameworks like the National Environmental Policy³ and the Climate Change Act of 2021,⁴ Nigeria faces significant challenges in effectively tackling climate change. The central question this article addresses is:

- i why do the issues associated with climate change continue unabated despite the legal and institutional framework nominally in place to tackle them?
- ii Could it be as a result of weak enforcement, fragmented governance, or inadequate funding?

Theoretical Framework

The study of climate change has evolved over nearly two centuries, originating around 1824 when French mathematician Jean Fourier linked carbon dioxide to the greenhouse effect⁵. What was once a scientific inquiry has transformed into the most significant environmental challenge of the 21st century, with implications not only for the environment but also for development⁶.

Meaning of Climate Change

The term "climate" typically denotes the statistical representation of weather conditions over a 30-year period, encompassing oceans, land surfaces, and ice sheets, and is distinguished from the transient nature of "weather".⁷ When we refer to "climate change," it broadly encompasses alterations in the Earth's weather, such as shifts in temperature, wind patterns, and rainfall, and notably involves the rise in the Earth's atmospheric temperature attributed to the increase of specific gases, particularly carbon dioxide⁸.

The UNFCCC defines climate change as a shift in climate directly or indirectly attributed to human activity that alters the global atmosphere's composition, distinct from natural climate variability over similar time periods. However, the definition provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has gained broader acceptance, as it acknowledges both human and natural causes by identifying climate change as changes in the mean and/or variability of climate properties persisting for decades or longer, whether influenced by natural variability or human activity.⁹

Impacts of Climate Change in Nigeria

Nigeria has witnessed a gradual temperature increase since 1901, intensifying notably from the early 1970s. Between 1901 and 2005, the country experienced a 1.1-degree celsius rise in average temperature, with projections indicating a potential temperature surge of between 2.5 and 4.5 degrees Celsius by 2100. A 2014 World Climate Change Vulnerability Index by Verisk Maplecroft designates Nigeria among the ten most vulnerable countries globally,¹¹ while the United States Agency for International Development warns that without robust mitigation and adaptation measures, climate change could cost Nigeria between 6 percent and 30 percent of its GDP by 2050.¹²

Rise in Sea Levels

Sea levels are reported to be rising at a rate of approximately 3.5mm per year, with projections suggesting a potential rise of up to 2 meters by 2100.¹³ The rise in sea levels is a significant concern for coastal cities such as Bonny, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Warri, and Calabar, which are situated at an altitude of less than 10 meters above sea level. This phenomenon could lead to the displacement of approximately 14 million individuals, and the submergence of the Niger Delta's entire oil and gas infrastructure a sector that provides 75 percent of Nigeria's export earnings and 80 percent of government revenue.¹⁴

Drought, Desertification and Extreme Weather Events

there has been a general decline in rainfall in Nigeria, particularly in the northern region, over the years. Since the 1970s, the amount of rainfall has decreased by 88mm, with data collected between 1901 and 2005 showing a sharp decline in rainfall that corresponds to the period of rapid temperature increase in Nigeria. However, coastal cities like Brass, Calabar, and Warri have experienced a slight increase in rainfall, a notable effect of climate change where coastal areas can experience unusual changes in rainfall while continental interiors experience a decline.

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The ramifications of climate change extend beyond environmental concerns, intersecting with heightened political instability worldwide. Notably, the Somalian and Syrian civil conflicts have been linked to famine and drought exacerbated by climate change.¹⁵ The United States military identifies climate change as a significant national security threat, warning of potential redrawn geopolitical landscapes and intensified conflicts and resource scarcities in vulnerable nations.¹⁶

In Nigeria, the enduring clashes between herdsman and farmers, resulting in substantial casualties, can be traced back to climate change-induced impacts in the northern regions, compelling a reevaluation of mitigation and adaptation strategies to address these complex challenges. The migration of herdsman southward in search of grazing pasture for their cattle often leads to conflicts with local farmers as they encroach upon farmlands due to diminishing grazing spaces.

Impact of Climate Change on Health

Climate change exerts a myriad of adverse effects on human health in developing nations like Nigeria. Heightened temperatures and escalating water stress contribute to increased instances of heat exhaustion, skin cancer, and inflammatory respiratory diseases. Floods resulting from rising sea levels exacerbate the vulnerability of impoverished communities to diseases such as malaria, typhoid fever, cholera, and pneumonia. In 2009, rising temperatures were implicated in a meningitis outbreak that claimed over 209 lives in Nigeria and Niger Republic within a single week.¹⁷

Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture

Climate change poses significant threats to agriculture, potentially leading to widespread decreases in productivity. In Yobe State in northeastern Nigeria, approximately 25,000 to 30,000 hectares of land have been engulfed by sand dunes and desert encroachment. Rain-fed agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa faces the prospect of yield reductions of up to 50 percent due to climate change-induced challenges.¹⁸

Impact of Climate Change on Energy

Climate change adversely affects the supply of secure, affordable, and sustainable energy in Nigeria. Hydropower is particularly vulnerable, as reduced river flow and higher temperatures diminish hydroelectricity capacity. The Kainji Dam hydropower project in Nigeria has experienced significant performance reductions due to drought, resulting in decreased power supply.¹⁹

Causes of Climate Change

The Greenhouse Effect

As the Earth's surface warms, it emits thermal radiation. The rest is absorbed by greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere, which act like a blanket, trapping heat and radiating it back to the Earth's surface. Without this greenhouse effect, the Earth's average surface temperature would be approximately -18°C, compared to the current average

of 15°C.²⁰

Natural Causes of Climate Change

Before the industrial revolution, changes in the Earth's climate were primarily driven by natural factors, including variations in solar output and shifts in the Earth's orbital pattern around the sun. However, recent scientific measurements demonstrate that these natural factors cannot account for the observed rapid warming of recent decades.

Human Causes of Climate Change

Over the past 250 years, human activities have significantly increased the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, disrupting the Earth's energy balance and leading to climate change. Key human drivers include the burning of fossil fuels (responsible for approximately 25 percent of world greenhouse gas emissions), deforestation and agricultural practices (accounting for approximately 14 percent of emissions), urbanization, and gas flaring. Gas flaring remains a particularly significant contributor in Nigeria: although technically illegal, it was responsible for approximately 48 million tonnes of emissions in 2010, persisting due to low penalties and weak enforcement.²¹

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Climate change mitigation involves taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or remove greenhouse gases already present in the atmosphere, achieved through improvements in energy efficiency, decarbonization of the energy system, reforestation, and carbon pricing mechanisms. Climate change adaptation, on the other hand, refers to actions aimed at minimizing the negative effects of climate change and building resilience—recognizing that even significant mitigation efforts will not prevent all climate change, making adaptation an essential and complementary response.²²

LEGAL FRAME WORK

Legislation and Its Function in the Administration of Climate Change Principles

The relationship between law and climate change is both foundational and indispensable. Law functions as a system of enforceable rules that regulate human conduct and impose consequences for non-compliance. In the context of climate change a crisis driven overwhelmingly by human behaviour law can proscribe conduct that exacerbates environmental harm, prescribe standards for emissions reduction, allocate responsibility for climate-induced losses, and create institutional frameworks capable of coordinating responses across sectors and jurisdictions.²³

The Role of Legislation in Addressing Climate Change

Legislation constitutes the primary normative instrument through which states operationalize their climate commitments, taking two broad forms: international legislation, consisting of treaties, conventions, and protocols; and national legislation, encompassing primary legislation enacted by parliament and secondary legislation issued by the executive in the form of regulations and statutory instruments.²⁴

The challenges encountered in international efforts to address climate change underscore the imperative for stronger national legislation to complement and bolster global initiatives most prominently illustrated by the United States' withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol and its periodic threats to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, despite initially signing both.²⁵

The Role of Litigation in the Fight Against Climate Change

Litigation is gaining recognition as a crucial complementary tool in the fight against climate change. Beyond seeking compensation for damages, litigation acts as a catalyst for transparency and accountability by compelling governments and corporations to disclose information about their environmental impacts.²⁶

In the realm of international law, the "no harm principle" and the principle of "state responsibility" underpin climate change litigation, underscoring the obligation of states to prevent and mitigate harm caused by activities contributing to climate change.²⁷

Climate change also profoundly affects essential human rights like the right to life, health, food, shelter, and water. Although human rights laws are not explicitly formulated to address climate change, they can serve as a vital tool in climate change litigation, offering legal avenues for individuals or groups to seek redress for the harms inflicted by climate change.²⁸

i. Administrative Actions

Administrative litigation challenges specific governmental decisions such as the licensing of emissions-intensive projects on the grounds of incompatibility with climate law obligations. Such cases have been brought against coal-fired power plants in Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.²⁹

ii. Information Disclosure

In *German Federation for the Environment and Nature Conservation (BUND) and German Watch v Federal Republic of Germany*,³⁰ two NGOs successfully invoked the German Access to Environmental Information Act to compel the government to release information on the climate impacts of German export credits, establishing that access to environmental information is a justiciable right.³¹

iii. Legislative and Policy Enforcement

In the landmark *Urgenda Foundation case* in the Netherlands,³² the Hague District Court ordered the Dutch government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, on the basis of a duty of care to protect citizens from the foreseeable dangers of climate change. In *Massachusetts v EPA*,³³ the US Supreme Court confirmed that the Environmental Protection Agency had authority and obligation to regulate greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act.

In Nigeria, the case of *Jonah Gbemre v Shell Petroleum Development Company Nigeria Ltd and 2 Others* established that continued gas flaring violated the constitutional rights to life and dignity of Niger Delta communities, creating an important domestic precedent for rights-based climate litigation.

iv. Protection, Loss and Damage

In Saúl Luciano Lliuya v RWE AG,³⁴ a Peruvian farmer filed suit against Germany's largest energy producer for its proportionate contribution to glacial melting threatening his community. While the lower court dismissed the claim, the case on appeal continues to shape the developing jurisprudence on climate liability.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The UNFCCC, concluded at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 and entering into force on 21 March 1994, represents the foundational instrument of the international climate change legal regime.³⁵ Its principal objective, enshrined in Article 2, is the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at levels sufficient to prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. The UNFCCC operates on the foundational principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" under Article 3(1), acknowledging that all states bear responsibility for climate action but that the nature of that responsibility must reflect historical contributions to emissions and current capacity.³⁶ Commitments under the UNFCCC

Under the UNFCCC, Annex I countries voluntarily committed to returning their greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000 and are subject to stringent reporting requirements.³⁷ Annex II countries assumed additional obligations to provide financial resources and facilitate technology transfer to developing countries.⁴⁷ Developing countries, including Nigeria, are not required to reduce emission levels unless developed countries supply adequate funding and technology.³⁸

The Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol, adopted on 11 December 1997 and entering into force on 16 February 2005, is the first international agreement imposing legally binding commitments to limit greenhouse gas emissions. It required developed countries to reduce their combined emissions of six greenhouse gases by an average of 5.2 percent below 1990 levels during the first commitment period of 2008 to 2012.³⁹

To assist developed countries in meeting these targets cost-effectively, the Protocol created three market-based flexibility mechanisms: the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), Joint Implementation (JI), and international Emissions Trading.⁴⁰ The CDM was particularly significant for developing countries like Nigeria as it created a mechanism for attracting climate-friendly investment and technology transfer, though Nigeria's participation was ultimately limited by regulatory hurdles and inadequate project development capacity.

The Kyoto Protocol achieved mixed success. While some states met their targets the United Kingdom reduced its emissions by 27.8 percent below 1990 levels the refusal of the United States to ratify and Canada's subsequent withdrawal severely impaired its overall effectiveness.⁴¹

The Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement, adopted on 12 December 2015 and entering into force on 4 November 2016, represents the most significant development in international climate law since the UNFCCC itself. Unlike the Kyoto Protocol's top-down approach, the Paris Agreement adopts a bottom-up architecture in which all parties are required to submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) setting out their respective climate targets and actions.⁴²

The Agreement's central temperature goal, set out in Article 2, is to hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with efforts to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.⁴³ Article 4(2) mandates parties to prepare, communicate, and update their NDCs regularly, with each successive NDC expected to represent a higher level of ambition.⁴⁴

Critically, while parties are legally bound to prepare and communicate NDCs, the NDCs themselves are not legally binding under international law the Agreement relies instead on a transparency and accountability framework to create political pressure for implementation. This procedural-substantive distinction is the principal structural weakness of the Paris Agreement.⁴⁵ Nigeria ratified the Paris Agreement in May 2017 and submitted its NDC, committing to an unconditional 20 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below business-as-usual by 2030, rising to 45 percent conditional on adequate international support. The implementation of these commitments has been severely hampered by insufficient domestic legislation, weak institutional coordination, and inadequate financing.

Legal and Institutional Framework for Better Modalities for the Regulation of Climate Change in Nigeria

Nigeria's climate change governance architecture rests on a combination of domestic legislation, constitutional provisions, international treaty commitments, and an evolving body of environmental policies and regulations. This chapter critically examines the substantive content, institutional structures, and implementation challenges of Nigeria's climate change legal framework, and proposes concrete reforms for a more effective and resilient governance architecture.

The Climate Change Act 2021 and the Establishment of the National Council on Climate Change The Climate Change Act 2021 ("the Act") constitutes the cornerstone of Nigeria's domestic climate governance architecture. The Act was passed by the National Assembly and signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari in 2021, comprising 36 sections organized into eight parts.

Part I—Objectives and Net-Zero Commitment

Part I sets out the Act's objectives to provide a framework for achieving low greenhouse gas emissions, inclusive green growth, and sustainable economic development.⁴⁶ Most significantly, the Act affirms Nigeria's commitment to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions between

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2050 and 2070,⁴⁷ providing the overarching long-term benchmark against which all domestic climate policy must be evaluated.

Part II—The National Council on Climate Change (NCCC)

Part II establishes the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC) the apex policy-making body for climate governance, chaired by the President of the Federal Republic.⁴⁸ The Council's functions include coordinating the implementation of sectoral targets and guidelines for regulating greenhouse gas emissions; approving and overseeing the implementation of the National Climate Change Action Plan; administering the Climate Change Fund; ensuring the mainstreaming of climate change into national development plans; and recommending legislative, policy, and appropriation measures for climate change mitigation and adaptation.⁴⁹

Part III—The Climate Change Secretariat

Part III provides for the administrative and technical Secretariat of the Council, headed by a Director-General and supported by six Zonal Coordinators from Nigeria's geo-political zones and State Directors for each state of the federation.⁵⁰ The Secretariat's functions include advising and assisting the Council; coordinating the preparation and update of Nigeria's NDCs; and monitoring, verifying, and reporting on the national greenhouse gas emissions profile in relation to the national carbon budget.⁵¹

Part IV—The Climate Change Fund

Part IV establishes the Climate Change Fund as the primary financing mechanism for implementing the Act's objectives.⁵² The Fund is to be credited with National Assembly appropriations, receipts from international climate finance mechanisms, funding due to Nigeria for meeting its NDC targets, and fines levied on entities for non-compliance with climate obligations.⁵³

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended)

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) does not contain an explicit, directly justiciable right to a clean and healthy environment in its Chapter IV fundamental rights provisions. Environmental protection is addressed instead in Chapter II under the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, Section 20 of which provides that the state shall protect and improve the environment. However, by virtue of Section 6(6)(c) of the Constitution, these provisions are not justiciable citizens cannot enforce them directly through the courts.

Notwithstanding this limitation, the constitutional case of *A.G. Ondo State v A.G. Federation* (2002) 9 NWLR (Pt.772) 222 established that environmental law falls within the concurrent legislative list, creating space for subnational climate legislation at state level. The case of *Jonah Gbemre v Shell Petroleum Development Company Nigeria Ltd and 2 Others* (Suit No. FHC/B/CS/53/05) remains the most significant judicial intervention on environmental rights in Nigeria: The Federal High Court held that continued gas flaring violated the constitutional rights

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to life and dignity under sections 33 and 34 of the 1999 Constitution, reading those rights expansively to encompass the right to a clean and healthy environment. This jurisprudential development, reinforced by the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act, creates a pathway for constitutional climate litigation that remains underutilized.

International Agreements

Nigeria is a party to all three foundational instruments of the international climate change legal regime the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement and has thereby assumed specific obligations under international law that must be translated into domestic legal and policy action. Nigeria's engagement with the Clean Development Mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol was limited by regulatory hurdles and inadequate project development capacity. Under the Paris Agreement, which Nigeria ratified in May 2017, Nigeria's NDC commitments on mitigation and adaptation have been severely hampered in implementation by insufficient domestic legislation, weak institutional coordination, and inadequate financing.

Challenges of the Legal and Institutional Framework

i. Weak Enforcement Mechanisms

The most pervasive challenge afflicting Nigeria's climate legislation is weak enforcement. Regulatory agencies including NESREA are chronically underfunded, inadequately staffed, and subject to political interference. Penalties for non-compliance are generally low and rarely imposed. Gas flaring, technically illegal since 1984, continues unabated producing approximately 48 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually precisely because penalties are negligible and enforcement is weak.

ii. Fragmented Institutional Coordination

Climate change requires coordinated action across energy, transport, agriculture, health, urban planning, water resources, and fiscal policy. Nigeria's institutional landscape is characterized by a proliferation of agencies with overlapping mandates, unclear lines of authority, and insufficient mechanisms for inter-agency coordination. The Federal Ministry of Environment, NESREA, the Department of Climate Change, the Energy Commission of Nigeria, and numerous other bodies frequently operate in silos, with limited information sharing and contradictory policy signals.

iii. Inadequate Climate Finance

Nigeria's NDC implementation requires substantial financing estimated at approximately \$177.79 billion by 2030 in the country's updated NDC. Domestic public finance for climate action has been woefully inadequate, reflecting both general fiscal constraints and the low prioritization of climate expenditure within government budgets. Access to international climate finance through vehicles such as the Green Climate Fund has also been limited, partly due to capacity constraints in preparing and implementing projects to the standards required by international funding institutions.

iv. Policy Inconsistency and Implementation Gaps

Nigeria has produced an extensive body of climate-related policies including the National Environmental Policy 2004, the National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action for Climate

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Change in Nigeria (NASPA-CCN), the National Agricultural Resilience Framework 2014, and the Nigerian Biofuels Policy and Incentives 2007 none of which has been effectively implemented.

The persistent gap between policy formulation and implementation reflects the broader governance deficit of adopting policies without adequate financing, implementation capacity, monitoring frameworks, or accountability mechanisms. Consequences of Poor Implementation. The consequences of Nigeria's failure to implement an effective climate governance framework are already manifesting across the country with devastating effect.

The continued degradation of the Niger Delta through gas flaring and oil spills, rising sea levels threatening coastal cities, advancing desertification in the north, escalating farmer-herdsmen conflicts, and catastrophic urban flooding collectively represent a compounding developmental, economic, and security crisis. The USAID projection that climate change could cost Nigeria between 6 and 30 percent of GDP by 2050 underscores the magnitude of the governance failure at stake.

The Ouster Clause in the Constitution and Its Implications

The operation of Section 6(6)(c) of the 1999 Constitution, which renders Chapter II Fundamental Objectives non-justiciable, significantly weakens the legal foundation for climate change governance by removing the prospect of direct constitutional climate litigation. This contrasts sharply with Kenya's Constitution of 2010, which in Section 42 expressly guarantees every citizen the right to a clean and healthy environment as a directly enforceable right, and has generated a significant body of environmental rights jurisprudence holding the government accountable. Constitutional reform to make the right to a clean and healthy environment directly justiciable in Nigeria as recommended by several constitutional law scholars would fundamentally strengthen Nigeria's climate governance architecture.

Recommendations for a Better Modality

The foregoing analysis makes clear that Nigeria requires not merely incremental reform but a fundamental strengthening of its legal and institutional climate governance architecture. The following recommendations are advanced:

The Climate Change Act 2021 should be fully operationalized through the prompt promulgation of implementing regulations, appointment of qualified Secretariat leadership, and capitalization of the Climate Change Fund at levels commensurate with Nigeria's NDC financing needs. Nigeria should pursue constitutional amendment to entrench a directly justiciable right to a clean and healthy environment in Chapter IV of the 1999 Constitution, removing the barrier created by Section 6(6)(c). Enforcement capacity must be dramatically strengthened: NESREA and other environmental regulatory agencies must be insulated from political interference, adequately funded, and empowered to impose meaningful penalties for non-compliance. Gas flaring elimination timelines must be enforced through credible sanctions.

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Nigeria must develop a comprehensive strategy for accessing international climate finance, including through the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund, requiring investment in project development capacity and fiduciary management systems.

Public participation mechanisms must be institutionalized across the climate governance framework to ensure that affected communities, civil society, the private sector, and academia have meaningful roles in climate policy development and accountability. Nigeria should pursue full domestication of its Paris Agreement commitments through sector-specific legislation establishing enforceable emissions standards for the oil and gas, transport, agriculture, and energy sectors consistent with NDC targets and the Act's net-zero trajectory.

This chapter has demonstrated that while the enactment of the Climate Change Act 2021 represents a significant legislative achievement, the architecture for effective climate governance in Nigeria remains incomplete, underfunded, and inadequately enforced. Addressing these structural deficiencies through constitutional reform, institutional strengthening, enhanced financing, and genuine enforcement is not merely a legal imperative but a developmental, economic, and humanitarian one. The concluding chapter summarizes the key findings and contributions of this article

CONCLUSION

The climate system has experienced significant warming since the industrial era, driven by increased greenhouse gas emissions from human activities. This has led to widespread environmental changes and severe impacts on ecosystems and human societies. In Nigeria, climate change has resulted in increased weather-related disasters, reduced agricultural productivity, and negative effects on various sectors, emphasizing the need for comprehensive climate action and legal reforms.

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