

POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE CLIMATE GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria's efforts to tackle climate change face significant political, institutional, and economic problem. Although Nigeria has employed several climate policies and global commitments, the essence of its climate governance framework is limited by weak institutional capacity, policy enforcement gaps, limited fund, and continued dependence on fossil fuel revenues. Climate governance has become a major contemporary issue within modern global environmental politics owing to the increasing threat caused by climate change to human security, sustainable development, and ecological growth. Nigeria is the largest economy and one of the continent's major player oil-producing states, fraught with severe environmental challenges which include flooding, desertification, coastal erosion, deforestation, and energy insecurity. Despite various global commitments and local policy mechanism targeted to mitigating and adapting to climate change, the reality of climate governance in Nigeria remains limited by political and institutional challenges. This work underscored the political and institutional obstacles limiting climate governance in Nigeria. Based on qualitative analysis and Global Governance Theory and Dependency Theory Perspectives, the paper contends that climate governance reliability is fundamentally inhibited by weak institutions, policy inconsistency, corruption, inadequate climate financing, bureaucratic segmentation/fragmentation, and political and economic dependence on fossil fuel income. The study further highlights Nigeria's climate diplomacy in the context of international environmental regimes such as the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The paper concludes that upholding institutional capacity, increasing transparency, improving policy coordination and diversifying the economy beyond fossil fuel dependence are integral for sustainable climate governance in Nigeria.

Keywords: Climate governance, Nigeria, environmental politics, climate change, institutional capacity, sustainability, climate diplomacy.

Introduction

Nigeria's climate governance is limited by weak institutions and has the element of segmented coordination, and political objectives usually undermine climate action in favor of oil, security, and economic issues (Ayanlade & Jegede, 2016; Federal Ministry of Environment, 2021). With all the Climate Act of 2021, implementation still remains constraint owing to corruption, overlapping mandates, and weak fiscal backing (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021; World Bank, 2021). Climate change represents the most critical global challenge which exists today during the twenty-first century (IPCC, 2023). Sustainable development throughout the world experiences increasing challenges from rising global temperatures, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, desertification, and extreme weather events. Developing states, most especially those within Sub-Saharan Africa, remain disproportionate prone to climate change owing to weak adaptive capacities, poverty, infrastructural deficits, and institutional weaknesses (IPCC, 2022; Niang et al., 2014).

Nigeria experiences major climate-related problems which create obstacles for both its social systems and its economic development and internal progress. The northern region undergoes severe land degradation through desertification and drought while the southern riverine areas face destruction from flooding and erosion and rising sea levels (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2021; World Bank, 2021).

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment Africa stands as one of the most vulnerable regions to climate impacts despite its minimal contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2022).

The Nigerian government through its international environmental agreements participates in climate governance through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement. The country established domestic environmental systems with its National Climate Change Policy and Climate Change Act 2021 and renewable energy programs that advance environmental protection and greenhouse gas emission reduction.

The existing policy frameworks and international agreements together with Nigeria's climate governance system face substantial challenges from political and institutional shortcomings. The system faces multiple challenges which include weak institutional capabilities, erratic policy implementation, corruption, funding shortages, bureaucratic incompetence, excessive reliance on oil revenue, and ineffective environmental protection systems which restrict climate framework enforcement.

The research investigates the political and institutional barriers which hinder Nigeria's climate governance system. Experts presented that Nigeria needs international partnerships together with strong domestic institutions and political commitment and unified policy and sustainable economic development for effective climate governance.

Conceptual Clarifications

1 Climate Governance

Climate governance encompasses the various structures and institutions and legal frameworks and policy instruments and operational procedures which countries use to address climate change issues throughout their domestic boundaries and at national and regional and sub-regional and international territories. The framework establishes how governments interact with global organizations and private sector entities and civil society organizations and local communities to develop solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Climate governance has to do with the following viz: Climate mitigation strategies, Adaptation policies, Environmental control, Renewable energy transitions, Carbon reduction program, Global environmental negotiations, Climate financing mechanisms. The concept goes beyond governmental actions and recognizes the importance of multi-level governance which involve both sovereign state and non-sovereign state actors.

Hence, climate within climate governance transcend a purely scientific conceptualization of the global climate system, framing it as a major and critical political, social, and economic arena. This perspective indicates that governing the climate is a complex web of interactions among a multitude of actors aiming to steer human activities within planetary boundaries. Central to this is the evolution from a state-centric, top-down model to a reality of “governance,” defined by a dispersed, non-hierarchical interaction across all social sectors and cadres.

Theoretical Framework

In this theoretical framework, there is the focus on Global Governance Theory and Dependency Theory to unravel the challenges of international relations and economics.

3.1 Global Governance Theory

This study uses Global Governance Theory and Dependency Theory to evaluate Nigeria’s climate governance challenges within the broader context of international relations and global political economy. These frameworks highlight complementary insights: Global Governance Theory examines the institutional mechanisms and cooperative arrangements through which states address transnational challenges, while Dependency Theory indicates the structural inequalities that dominate underdevelopment in the Global South.

1 Global Governance Theory

Global Governance Theory, as described by scholars such as James Rosenau (1999) and Ernst-Otto Czempiel (1992), evaluates how global institutions, regimes, and networks facilitate collective action in tackling global challenges. In the context of climate change, governance structures such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the Paris Agreement serve as platforms for states to negotiate commitments, establish norms, and coordinate policy responses. These institutions embody the principle of multilateral cooperation, seeking to harmonize national interests with global environmental imperatives.

Nevertheless, critical scholarship underscores the power asymmetries dominate in global governance schemes. Developed nations often dominate agenda-setting, financing, and technological innovation, thereby inhibits the influence and capacity of developing countries. For Nigeria, this imbalance is evident in limited access to climate finance, inadequate technological transfer, and restricted bargaining power in global negotiations. Consequently, Nigeria’s climate governance is shaped not only by local policy priorities but also by the structural limitation imposed by global governance institutions, which often privilege the interests of industrialized states.

2 Dependency Theory

Dependency Theory, advanced by André Gunder Frank (1967) and further built upon by Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto (1979), provides a critical lens for understanding the persistent economic and political inequalities between the Global North and the Global South. The theory opines that developing states are structurally dependent on core states, resulting in patterns of underdevelopment and vulnerability. This dependency is evident through unequal trade relations, reliance on primary commodity exports, and limited industrial diversification.

Applied to Nigeria, Dependency Theory indicates the country’s reliance on oil exports as a major feature of its economic structure. This dependence limited Nigeria’s ability to diversify its economy, invest in renewable energy, and develop resilient climate governance mechanisms. furthermore, the global demand for oil reinforces Nigeria’s subordinate position in the global economic system, making it susceptible to external shocks and restricting its capacity to pursue independent climate policies. Thus, Nigeria’s climate governance issues cannot be understood in isolation but must be situated within the broader dynamics of

dependency and structural inequality in the global economy (Agom, 2025; Okafor et al., 2025).

Overview of Climate Governance in Nigeria

1. Institutional Fragmentation and Weak Coordination

Nigeria's climate governance is characterized by overlapping mandates and poor coordination among institutions. A study reveals "significant gaps in Nigeria's climate change legal framework, including weak enforcement of environmental laws, institutional fragmentation, exclusionary governance provisions, and constitutional ouster clauses that undermine public interest litigation" (Oche & Olujobi, 2026, p. 5). This fragmentation creates internal competition among government ministries, which "dilutes international messaging and creates internal competition," directly hindering Nigeria's ability to secure favorable outcomes in climate negotiations (Afripoli, 2025). A cross-sectoral assessment further notes that "collaboration and alignment with national frameworks are also weak," exposing "structural and institutional weaknesses that undermine Nigeria's multilevel climate governance" (Frontiers, 2025).

The "Dormant" Climate Change Act 2021

2. Institutional Limitations

Nigeria's climate policy suffers from overlapping policies and weak coordination among its various institutions, which fuses its policy and creates internal rivalry. Despite major policies like the Petroleum Industry Act 2021, nebulous mandates limited effective implementation.

The Climate Change Act of 2021 has been largely not effective, with weak funding and limited political will bringing implementation to only about 10-15% of its objectives. Institutional limitation is the weaknesses within governmental and administrative systems that inhibits effective policy implementation. These may include:

The fossil fuel challenges is another issues the government fraught with, a direct conflict between its climate goals and its economic dependence on fossil fuels. This is crystal clear in its continued use of fossil fuel tax incentives, exploration programs, and inability to adopt a fossil fuel phase-out.

The federal-state implementation gap create fewer than 20% of states budget lines for climate action, and many lack basic capacity to manage climate finance or measure emissions. Local governments equally lack resources and independent position to implement panaceas. Institutional limitations often reduce governance effectiveness and limit sustainable policy outputs.

3 Political Limitations

This involves political factors that limited climate policy implementation and environmental governance. These include: Weak regulatory agencies, poor policy coordination, bureaucratic inefficiency, inadequate technical expertise, corruption, limited funding, and weak implementation mechanisms. Political constraints shape the priorities and effectiveness of environmental governance systems.

Despite being hailed as landmark legislation, the Climate Change Act of 2021 remains largely unimplemented. Five years after its enactment, the law "remains largely dormant and has delivered little, citing weak implementation, poor funding, and inadequate protection for vulnerable communities" (The Guardian, 2026). The pioneer Director-General of the Climate Change Commission noted that implementation "has reached no more than 10 to 15 percent since the law was enacted," attributing the slow pace to a "lack of political will" (Dahiru, cited in The Guardian, 2026). Key concerns include unstable funding mechanisms: "there is no stable, dedicated funding base for climate action under the Act," with funding depending largely on government allocations and external support (Obani, cited in The Guardian, 2026). An earlier provision allocating a percentage of the ecological fund as a

dedicated source was removed from the final version (The Guardian, 2026, p. 12). A scholarly evaluation concludes that "while the Act lays a solid foundation for climate action, challenges remain in its implementation, particularly in securing adequate funding, building local capacity, and addressing the needs of marginalized populations" (Abah, 2025).

The Fossil Fuel Dilemma

Nigeria faces a fundamental contradiction between its climate commitments and its economic dependence on fossil fuels. CISLAC Executive Director Auwal Rafsanjani warned that "incentivising the fossil fuel industry on the one hand and pursuing a net-zero emission target on the other appears to be a contradiction of government strategy" (CISLAC, 2025). Despite ambitious climate policies including the Energy Transition Plan and a net-zero target by 2060, "Nigeria remains trapped in a fossil-fuel-heavy revenue model. The country's budget expectations still rise and fall on global oil prices" (Independent Newspaper, 2025). A recent study examining Nigeria's climate responsiveness concludes that the country is "marked by contradictory paths—promoting a low-carbon energy transition while simultaneously expanding fossil fuel development amid rising trend in CO₂ emissions" (Energy Research & Social Science, 2025).

The Federal-State Implementation Gap

Climate governance varies dramatically across Nigeria's 36 states. The 2025 Subnational Climate Governance Rating found that "14 out of 36 states scored average in Climate Governance Performance" (Down To Earth, 2025). Only "nine states have existing Climate Action Plans" (Down To Earth, 2025), and just "nine states have functional websites for the Ministry of Environment/Climate Change" (Down To Earth, 2025). While 23 states made provisions for climate projects in their 2025 budgets (improving from previous years), this remains insufficient (SCGPRR, 2026). The centralized structure of Nigeria's climate governance system has "limited the inclusion of Northern Nigeria's adaptation priorities within global negotiations, thereby widening regional vulnerability gaps" (Aminu & Suleiman, 2026).

International Constraints

The Vast Climate Finance Gap

The scale of Nigeria's climate finance needs is substantial. The country "requires \$17.7 billion annually to meet its climate goals," yet actual access remains dramatically lower (Abu, 2025). Between 2021 and 2022, Nigeria received approximately \$2.5 billion in climate finance—only about 14% of the annual requirement (BudgIT Foundation, 2026). An IMF analysis warns that "climate events significantly impact Nigeria's growth outlook, fiscal sustainability, balance of payments and financial sector, potentially undermining macroeconomic stability" (Darius, 2025). Estimates suggest that Nigeria may already be losing "close to \$100 billion every year to climate shocks," and if adaptation does not scale, "GDP could shrink by as much as 11 percent by 2050" (Abu, 2025). The energy transition alone requires approximately "\$1.9 trillion in investments" (Oni, cited in The Guardian, 2025). Nigeria's updated NDC further estimates that the country requires "\$177 billion to meet its mitigation and adaptation commitments by 2030" (Abubakar, 2025).

Barriers to Accessing International Climate Funds

Systemic barriers severely constrain Nigeria's ability to access global climate finance. A comprehensive analysis identifies "weak monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) systems, limited project-preparation capacity, governance fragmentation, and inadequate fiscal incentives" as key obstacles (Abubakar, 2025). According to a Green Climate Fund (GCF) readiness proposal, Nigeria faces multiple critical gaps: "low level of readiness for climate finance," "lack of human, technical and institutional capacity" preventing the National Designated Authority from coordinating effectively with the GCF, "absence of policies and frameworks such as the no-objection procedure and sound coordination mechanism," "no

pipeline of projects for the GCF," and "no concept note has been submitted to the GCF" (GCF, 2024). A Nigerian scientist lamented that "Nigeria has been applying for the funding but has not met the required standards due to poor coordination," noting that the country lacks the "capacity, poor coordination systems" needed to meet international requirements (Leadership, 2025).

The barriers are particularly acute at the sub-national level. States face "weak public financial management systems, limited technical capacity to prepare bankable projects, fragmented governance structures, and bureaucratic bottlenecks that frustrate access to multilateral funds like the Green Climate Fund," with the result that "billions of dollars in global climate finance remain untapped, while states and communities bear the brunt of climate shocks" (Abu, 2025).

Dependency on Technology Transfer

Nigeria remains heavily dependent on imported clean energy technologies, creating significant vulnerabilities. A Science Direct study identifies multiple technological barriers: "old grid infrastructures, poor grid maintenance, inadequate generation and transmitting capacity, shortage of critical carbon mitigation technologies, reliance on imported technologies, poor integration of renewable energy into national grid, poor research, development, and innovation, and inadequate skilled manpower" (Energy Research & Social Science, 2025). The absence of local manufacturing capacity means "Nigeria lacks the technology and skills required" for renewable energy deployment, and "technology transfer will also help to reduce the cost of renewable energy deployment, which is also another major barrier" (Business Day, 2023).

External policy shifts exacerbate this dependency. Experts have warned that proposed rollbacks of the US Inflation Reduction Act "will lead to reduced access to clean energy technologies, which is crucial for emerging markets like Nigeria," with expected increases in technology costs that will make it "challenging for Nigeria to attain its energy transition goals" (Oni, cited in The Guardian, 2025). Despite possessing a robust legal and policy framework—including the Climate Change Act 2021, the Energy Transition Plan, and an updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)—Nigeria's climate governance remains deeply ineffective. Below identify persistent structural, political, and institutional weaknesses. Nigeria is a country with several policy frameworks combating climate change and waving the sustainability flag high. It has got a catalog of plans scribbled down:

- National Climate Change Policy
- Fresh-off-the-press Climate Change Act 2021
- Those hype-filled Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
- A Renewable Energy Master Plan that promises solar panels and wind farms
- Plan of Action, which might as well be their climate to-do list

Political Constraints to Climate Governance in Nigeria

Nigeria's climate governance is limited by various political factors that undermine the effective implementation of environmental policies. These include dependence on fossil fuel income, weak political commitment, corruption and governance deficits, and policy inconsistency. Equally, these challenges indicate the complex interplay between economic interests, institutional weaknesses, and governance structures that limit Nigeria's ability to fight for sustainable climate objectives.

1 Dependence on Fossil Fuel Revenues

Nigeria's economy remains heavily dependent on petroleum revenues, which account for the majority of government income and foreign exchange earnings (Sala-i-Martin & Subramanian, 2013). This dependence makes the transition to renewable energy and undermines climate policy implementation to be complex. The oil sector, dominated by multinational corporations, exerts significant political influence, while employment and

patronage networks tied to the industry reinforce resistance to diversification. consequently, climate policies are frequently subordinated to short-term economic imperatives, with political actors prioritizing revenue generation over long-term sustainability. This structural reliance on fossil fuels provides a policy environment in which climate governance is marginalized and reform efforts encounter entrenched opposition.

2 Weak Political Commitment

Historically, political commitment to climate governance in Nigeria is limited. Climate change seldomly features prominently in electoral campaigns or party manifestos, reflecting its low prioritization within the national political agenda (Agom, 2025). Successive administrations have introduced climate-related policies, such as the Climate Change Act of 2021, which established the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), and Nigeria's pledge to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060. However, implementation has been erratic, with climate strategies often sidelined in favor of more immediate concerns such as security and economic growth. The Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) further illustrates this contradiction, as it reinforces investment in fossil fuels while neglecting renewable energy development. This lack of sustained political will has resulted in decentralized policy implementation and limited progress toward Nigeria's climate objectives.

3 Corruption and Governance Deficits

Corruption remains a pervasive issue in Nigeria's governance system and significantly neglecting climate policy implementation. Mismanagement and diversion of public funds, especially within the oil and gas sector, weaken the capacity of institutions to deliver on climate commitments (Transparency International, 2024). Climate finance mechanisms are often undermined, while regulatory implementation is compromised by rent-seeking character and weak accountability structures. These governance deficits erode public trust and inhibit the effectiveness of climate programs, including renewable energy projects and infrastructure development. As a result of this, corruption not only diverts resources away from climate priorities but also entrenches inefficiencies that prevent Nigeria's integration toward sustainable energy policies.

4 Policy Inconsistency

Nigeria's climate governance is further limited by policy inconsistency and institutional segmentation. Often changes in political leadership and administrative priorities have resulted in a shifting policy landscape, where climate programs lack continuity and coherence (Okafor et al., 2025). Coordination across ministries and agencies is often feeble, leading to repeated efforts, duplicating/conflicting mandates, and gaps in enforcement. For instance, while the Climate Change Act enables a framework for national coordination, overlapping functions with energy and environmental ministries have led to inefficiencies. This inconsistency neglects Nigeria's ability to meet global commitments and weakens its credibility in international climate negotiations. Sustained progress demands institutional stability, flexible and clear policy alignment, and accurate inter-ministerial coordination.

Institutional Constraints to Climate Governance in Nigeria

Nigeria's climate governance is significantly inhibited by institutional weaknesses that limit the effective model, coordination, and implementation of climate policies. These limitations include feeble institutional capacity, bureaucratic segmentation, limited climate financing, and inadequate technology. Equally, they illustrate the structural issues that neglect Nigeria's effort to meet both local and international climate commitments.

1 Weak Institutional Capacity

Nigeria's environmental institutions fraught with persistent challenges of limited capacity, limited resources, and overlapping mandates. Agencies which include the Federal Ministry of Environment, the Energy Commission of Nigeria, and the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC) frequently operate with segmented authority, resulting in

duplication of functions and weak coordination (Agom, 2025). With the existence of legal mechanisms such as the Climate Change Act of 2021, enforcement models remain underdeveloped, with insufficient monitoring and sanctions. Climate-related projects are often underfunded, especially in comparison to subsidies allotted to the petroleum sector. Institutional deficits also goes to technical expertise, infrastructure, and data management systems, all of which are integral for effective climate decision and enforcement. The feeble coordination of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change also illustrates the inadequate of institutional coherence, as meetings are erratic and collaboration across agencies remains restricted.

2 Bureaucratic Fragmentation

Climate governance in Nigeria is featured by bureaucratic segmentation, with functions dispersed across multiple ministries and agencies. The Federal Ministry of Environment, the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), and the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) each play functions in climate policy, while the Energy Commission of Nigeria targets separate energy-related programs. This dispersion of authority provides administrative challenges and policy incoherence, as agencies frequently pursue overlapping or conflicting objectives (Okafor et al., 2025). Fiscal limitations worsen these issues, with climate governance receiving little and inconsistent budgetary support. At the sub-national level, fewer than 20 percent of Nigerian states have established climate budget lines, reflecting the uneven prioritization of climate challenges across the federation. For example, from oil-producing states which include Rivers and Delta, as well as agrarian states, indicate the differences in climate policy enforcement and financing, evaluating the fragmented nature of Nigeria's climate governance system.

3 Inadequate Climate Financing

Effective climate governance demands substantial financial investment, yet Nigeria fraught with persistent limitations in climate financing. Sectors which include renewable energy, flood control, climate-smart agriculture, and environmental infrastructure remain underfunded, restricting the country's effort to enforce comprehensive climate mechanisms (World Bank, 2024). Although global climate finance mechanisms exist, Nigeria's access to these funds is limited by weak institutional capacity, bureaucratic limitations, and intractable administrative procedures. Local financing is further limited by the prioritization of petroleum subsidies, which divert resources away from climate policies. Consequently, chronic funding gap hampers Nigeria's ability to build resilience against climate impacts and transition toward sustainable energy paradigms.

4 Technological Limitations

Nigeria significantly faced with technological deficits in climate monitoring, renewable energy development, and environmental management. Data collection and analysis remain ineffective, limiting the country's effort to develop effective early warning systems and disaster preparedness strategies (Agom, 2025). Renewable energy technologies are majorly largely imported, creating dependence on foreign actors and raising costs that inhibits widespread adoption. The lack of local technological innovation and industrial capacity further limit Nigeria's ability to scale up renewable energy projects and integrate climate-smart panaceas into national development programs. These technological restrictions not only weaken Nigeria's adaptive efforts but equally reinforce its dependence on fossil fuels, thereby neglecting long-term climate governance targets.

Climate Change Impacts in Nigeria

1 Flooding

In Nigeria, flooding is one of the most devastating climate-related hazards. In 2022, floods displaced over 1.4 million people, destroyed 52,509 houses, and damaged 74,767 farmlands across 27 states (National Bureau of Statistics & NEMA, 2023). States such as

Kogi, Bayelsa, Anambra, Rivers, and Lagos are majorly susceptible due to their riverine and coastal geography. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) reported that in 2025 alone, floods caused 241 deaths and affected more than 433,000 persons throughout the federation, with devastated losses in agriculture and infrastructure. These recurrence floods limited food security, displace communities, and strain public health systems.

2 Desertification

Northern Nigeria is facing rapid desert encroachment, particularly in the eleven frontline states bordering the Niger Republic. Remote sensing studies indicate that sand dune coverage has doubled between 1990 and 2015, advancing at an average rate of 15.2 km² annually (Ibrahim et al., 2022). Approximately 35% of Nigeria's land area is faced with desertification, leading to loss of arable land and threatening the livelihoods of millions of farmers (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2021). This environmental degradation worsens resource conflicts, particularly between farmers and pastoralists, and increases poverty in the semi-arid north.

3 Food Insecurity

Climate change has significantly exacerbated Nigeria's food insecurity. Irregular rainfall, droughts, and floods dwindle agricultural productivity, with subsistence farmers—who produce over 70% of Nigeria's food—most affected (World Bank, 2022). A systematic review found that climate-induced floods and droughts often erode topsoil, damage crops, and reduce productivity, contributing to higher food prices and widespread hunger (Akinkuolie et al., 2025). The FAO projects that 35 million Nigerians could experience acute hunger during the 2026 lean season if urgent reactions are not enforced (FAO, 2026). Food insecurity is majorly severe in rural areas, where poverty and restricted adaptive capacity compound susceptibility.

4 Energy Challenges

Nigeria's energy sector majorly depends on fossil fuels, which account for over 80% of the national energy mix (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2025). Despite contributing only 0.33% of global carbon emissions, Nigeria's dependence on oil and gas revenues makes it highly vulnerable to international energy transition. Declining oil demand affecting government budgets and employment, while poor electricity infrastructure leaves millions without reliable power (Omoju, 2025). Rural households continue to depend on kerosene, firewood, and coal, while urban households depend on generators owing to limited electricity supply. These energy challenges inhibit Nigeria's ability to achieve its net-zero target by 2060 and inhibit progress toward sustainable development.

International Climate Diplomacy

1 Nigeria's Engagement at COP Meetings

Nigeria has increasingly played a visible role in recent UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties (COPs). At COP28 in Dubai, Nigeria joined calls for an international transition away from fossil fuels, though the final text ceased short of binding targets. At COP29 in Baku, Nigerian negotiators criticized limited climate finance pledges, jettisoned the proposed \$300 billion annual commitment by 2035 as insufficient for developing countries. At COP30 in Belém, Brazil, Nigeria positioned itself as a regional leader, submitting its third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) and unveiling a green integration plan. Nigeria also sought to host COP32 in 2027, though the African Group of Negotiators endorsed Ethiopia in place of Nigeria.

2 Nigeria's NDC Commitments

- Nigeria's NDC 3.0 (2025) commits to:
- **32% emissions reduction by 2035** relative to business-as-usual.
- **Net-zero by 2060**, anchored in the Climate Change Act and Just Transition Plan.

-Mitigation priorities: cutting 60% of fugitive emissions from oil and gas, planting 25 million trees annually, scaling renewables to supply over 50% of electricity by 2030, and expanding clean transport (30% electric vehicles by 2035).

-Adaptation priorities: climate-smart agriculture, resilient health systems, water security, and ecosystem protection.

With all these ambitious targets, Nigeria's emissions profile remains dominated by the energy sector, which contributes over 50% of total GHG emissions.

3 Climate Finance Gap

Nigeria's climate finance flows are far below its needs. In 2021/22, only \$2.5 billion was mobilized for climate action, compared to an estimated \$27.2 billion annual requirement. This gap is worsened by fossil fuel subsidies, which reached \$9.3 billion in 2022, dwindling climate investments. Loss and damage from floods in the same year cost an estimated \$6.7 billion, indicating the response for scaling finance. Other evaluations place Nigeria's financing vacuum even higher, at \$177.7 billion annually, based on methodology.

4 External Policy Shocks

Global climate diplomacy is also designed by foreign developments. The U.S. Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) initially provided \$1 trillion in incentives for clean energy, strengthening global finance flows. However, subsequent policy rollbacks and unclear in U.S. climate leadership risk neglecting global momentum, weakening trust in climate finance efforts, and inhibiting investment in global south such as Nigeria.

5 Critical Analysis

Nigeria's diplomacy reflects two strategy: fighting for equitable climate finance while defending its economic policy on fossil fuels. This tension makes negotiations to be intractable, as Nigeria seeks visibility of gas as a "transition fuel" while simultaneously committing to ambitious renewable pursuits. The credibility of Nigeria's global climate diplomacy will depend on its efforts to translate NDC commitments into measurable local action, secure effective financing, and leverage foreign shocks in international climate policy.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the political and institutional constraints to climate governance in Nigeria, as well as the impacts of climate change and the country's role in global climate diplomacy. The evaluation indicates that Nigeria's climate governance is neglected by dependence on fossil fuel revenues, weak institutional capacity, corruption, policy inconsistency, and inadequate financing. These issues are compounded by technological limitations and low public enlightenment, which collectively inhibit Nigeria's ability to meet its climate abilities. Theoretically, the study contributes to the literature by applying Global Governance Theory and Dependency Theory to Nigeria's climate governance context. Global Governance Theory highlights the role of international institutions and cooperative frameworks, while Dependency Theory examines structural inequalities that perpetuate Nigeria's reliance on fossil fuels and constrain its capacity to implement climate policies. Equally, these models provide a comprehensive lens for understanding Nigeria's climate governance challenges. From a policy perspective, the study recommends strengthening institutions, aids flexibility, expanding renewable energy investment, improving access to climate finance, and promoting public awareness. These measures are integral for bridging the gap between Nigeria's global commitments and domestic enforcement. The study acknowledges limitations, particularly the reliance on secondary data and the absence of extensive field-based evidence.

Recommendations

In line with the above, the following are hereby recommended:

1. Nigeria should enhance the capacity and coordination of its climate governance institutions. This requires streamlining mandates across agencies which include viz:

National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), the Federal Ministry of Environment, and the Energy Commission of Nigeria to limiting duplication and fragmentation.

2. Adequate anti-corruption measures are critical to improving climate governance. Flexibility in climate finance allocation and monitoring mechanisms must be embedded within Nigeria's public financial management systems.
3. Nigeria should focus on investment in renewable energy sources which include solar, wind, and hydropower to diversify its energy mix and limit dependence on fossil fuels. Increasing renewable energy infrastructure will not only reduce emissions but also increase energy access and aid economic growth.
4. Public sensitization and community interaction are important for advancing climate governance. Environmental education programs should be transitioned into school curricula, while community-based programs can support grassroots engagement in sustainable practices.

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