



## IN THIS ISSUE

- Welcome Message
- **Copenhagen Accord:** An Insufficient Accord to Starve-Off Global Climate Problems
- Global Warming and the Media
- Climate Change and its Impacts on the Environment
- **Climate Change:** A Root of Armed Conflict
- Climate Change and Persons with Disability (PWD)

## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY CORNER

- Tips for the Quarter
- Sayings on the Environment
- Environmental Tit-Bits

## EVENT

- **PUBLICATION:** The Law of Oil Pollution and Environmental Restoration

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## COPENHAGEN ACCORD:

# An Insufficient Accord to Starve-Off Global Climate Problems



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

I hope your New Year has started well and that your plans for 2010 are unfolding as expected. Our focus for this edition is Climate Change. Of course, the reason for that should be obvious... the much awaited 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference ("Copenhagen Summit") has just come and gone. In 2010, the Kyoto Protocol runs out. According to the Bali Road Map, a framework for climate change mitigation beyond 2010 was to be agreed at the Summit which held at the Bella Centre in Copenhagen Denmark between 7 and 18 December, 2009.



Dr. Olanrewaju Fagbohun

By Friday 18 December, media reports concluded that the talks were in disarray. What saved it from total collapse was the Copenhagen Accord put together by the US, China, Brazil and South Africa. It was "taken note of" but not "adopted" in a debate of all the participating countries the next day. The document recognised that Climate Change is one of the greatest challenges of the present day and that actions should be taken to keep temperature increases to below 2°C. The document does not contain any legally binding commitments for reducing C<sup>2</sup> emissions.

The Copenhagen Summit certainly failed to break a long standing

deadlock in international climate policy. Many countries and non-governmental organisations have described it as a huge disappointment. Yet, we cannot give up or walk away. What next after

Copenhagen? One of the laudable initiatives that has been ongoing prior to Copenhagen and which should continue with renewed vigour in the wake of government's inability to give a lead is the contribution of faith groups. Faith groups must be ready to give a lead and show how to save our planet. In this regard we have chosen three distinguished personalities as **"Our Man of the Quarter"**, the first is **Honourable Eziuche Chinwe Ubani** (together with other Members of the House of Representatives Committee on Climate Change) for consistently working with the Civil Society to push the Climate Change Agenda on the front burner in Nigeria; the second is **Honourable Commissioner for Environment Lagos State, Dr. Muiz Banire**, for his unrelenting efforts in giving priority to issues relating to climate change; the third is His Excellency, **Mr. Robert Scott Dewar, CMG**, the British High Commissioner to the Federal Republic of Nigeria for his efforts through the British Council. *Congratulations!*

These words from President Obama summed up the last the minute efforts at the climate conference at the Bella Center, near Copenhagen, in Denmark in 2009 to come up with a much needed political agreement acceptable to all the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change regarding the global climate problem.

Contextualizing the problem; the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) pointed out that all regions of the world will be affected by climate warming and a third of the earth's species will vanish if global temperatures continue to rise until they are 3.6 degrees above the average temperatures in the 1980s and '90s. On top of all of this, we are already seeing how natural catastrophes, earthquakes, hurricanes/typhoons, Tsunamis and twisters, droughts, floods and famines - are becoming more frequent, more intensive and more With the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century approaching a close, leaders from the US, China, India, Brazil and South Africa at the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP15) were able to work out an agreement recognized and

*Continued on Page 2*



# ELRI Briefly

## VISION

ELRI aspires to be recognized as a credible facilitator of superior scholarship and leadership in providing local and global information on environmental law, and the promotion of environmental rights in certain key areas for the benefit of individual citizens, indigenous communities and broader public policy.

## MISSION & OBJECTIVES

ELRI's mission and objectives is to achieve the following among others:

- Advance environmental protection and governance in Nigeria by influencing actions and initiatives that can serve as catalyst for the enhancement of environmental law and policy;
- Provide objective, non partisan analysis of law and policies, and deliver educational programs for the improvement of environmental protection and governance;
- Provide information services, advices and publication on environmental practices and programs as it affects sub-Saharan Africa;
- Provide training tools and support to citizens, organizations, government agencies, businesses, environmental managers, communities, indigenous peoples and other relevant stakeholders;
- Engage in sponsored research and related project pertaining to harmonization of laws and issues such as environmental justice, risk assessment and risk communication.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The ELRI structure is made up of the Governing Board, an Executive Committee, a Secretariat and Specialized Committees as may be required for specific purposes.

## GOVERNING BOARD

The Governing Board consists of a Chairman and other Principal Members, one of whom is the Executive Director of ELRI.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee is responsible to the Governing Board to which it reports concerning all its activities. The Executive Committee meets as many times as necessary for the effective discharge of its activities. The Executive Committee is the implementing organ of the decisions of the Governing Board.

## SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat operates under the supervision of the Executive Committee. The Secretariat carries out the day-to-day execution of activities of ELRI under the direction of the Executive Director. The Secretariat is made up of all staff of ELRI.

## SPECIALIZED COMMITTEE

Specialized Committees may from time to time be set-up for the effective discharge of the activities of the Institute.

## An Insufficient Accord to Starve-Off Global Climate Problems

Continued from Page 1

acceptable to the Parties. Copenhagen Accord as it is known, though fell short of the great expectations sequel the conference, has however been described by world leaders and a few others, as a positive attempt at a climate deal that could save the planet from the impending doom of consequences of climate change. For instance, COP15 President, Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen "I am satisfied. We have achieved a result. Now nations will need to sign on, and if they do so, they will support what has been agreed (in the Copenhagen Accord). This will have effect immediately." The accord goes against the grain of fears in many quarters before the conference as enunciated in Yvo de Boer's, the head of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) statement that "I don't think we can get a legally binding agreement by Copenhagen."

The important high points of the Copenhagen Accord is the setting of target of limiting global warming to a maximum 2 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial times. It also promises billions of dollars of aid for poor countries. It points the way towards a resolution of the fundamental conflict between U.S. and China over their so-called "common but differentiated" responsibilities to deal with global warming. That's important when it comes to climate and the global economy, the G-2 of the U.S. and China tower over the rest of the world. The Accord also recognized the crucial role of reducing emission from deforestation and forest degradation and the need to enhance removals of greenhouse gas emission by forests and agree on the need to provide positive incentives to such actions through the immediate establishment of a mechanism including REDD-plus, to enable the mobilization of financial resources from developed countries. Largely, the Copenhagen Accord represents a greater shift in global approach and tactics towards curbing or at best minimizing the consequences of climate change and global warming.

Other notable points of the Accord includes a collective commitment by developed countries to provide new and additional resources, including forestry and investments through international institutions, approaching USD 30 billion for the period 2010-2012 with balanced allocation between adaptation and mitigation. Funding for adaptation will be prioritized for the most vulnerable developing countries, such as the least developed countries, small island developing States and Africa. In the context of meaningful mitigation actions and



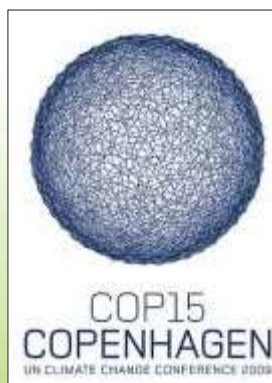
transparency on implementation, developed countries commit to a goal of mobilizing jointly USD 100 billion dollars a year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries.

For environmentalists and activists, although the Accord

demonstrates some kind of "progress" and a significant comedown from what obtains just a year ago, the trouble is, none of the agreement is good enough. Even though, nations can now set own emission reduction targets, this is a far cry from the earlier versions of a political agreement in Copenhagen which called for specific reductions by 2020 and 2050. The Copenhagen Accord also failed to set a deadline for signing and binding treaty. Activists also argued that the Accord's \$100 billion target fund fall short of the \$150 billion a year estimated by European Union (EU) will be needed by 2020, if noticeable progress were to be achieved in the global combat against climate change. Other question trailing the Copenhagen Accord dubbed "Flophenagen" by climate activists bothers on source of the funds. For example, Marc Gunther, a climate activist quipped "sure aid is promised to poor countries, but aside from some token amounts, no one can be sure where the money will come from or which countries would contribute what portion of the total".

Besides, there's dissent as well over the issue of deforestation and Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) plan contained in the Accord. Some environmentalists complain that the plan underemphasize the importance of protecting existing forests. According to Rosalind Reeve of the NGO Global Witness "with no provisions to monitor how countries are implementing REDD and applying safeguards, the REDD agreement is worth no more than the paper it is written on." Those aren't the only points of contention; activists also accused other developed nations, including those in the E.U., of also backing away from tough emissions cuts while casting blame on fast-growing developing nations for not doing their part. "Rich countries are clearly using the U.S. as

an excuse to put their national interests above alleviating the suffering of those millions of people killed, bereaved, made hungry or made homeless by climate change," said Antonio Hill, climate adviser for Oxfam. "Why would poor nations sign up to a climate deal that is all empty promises?"



**Dr. Anthony Kola-Olusanya**

Senior Lecturer, College of Human Resource Development and Lifelong Learning, Osun State University

"...act now! Your support for the environment counts".



**The Heads of State, Heads of Government, Ministers, and other heads of the following delegations present at the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2009 in Copenhagen:**

*In pursuit of the ultimate objective of the Convention as stated in its Article 2,*

*Being guided by the principles and provisions of the Convention,*

*Noting the results of work done by the two Ad hoc Working Groups,*

*Endorsing decision x/CP.15 on the Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action and decision x/CMP.5 that requests the Ad hoc Working Group on Further Commitments of Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol to continue its work,*

*Have agreed on this Copenhagen Accord which is operational immediately.*

# Copenhagen Accord

1. We underline that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. We emphasise our strong political will to urgently combat climate change in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. To achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention to stabilize greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, we shall, recognizing the scientific view that the increase in global temperature should be below 2 degrees Celsius, on the basis of equity and in the context of sustainable development, enhance our long-term cooperative action to combat climate change. We recognize the critical impacts of climate change and the potential impacts of response measures on countries particularly vulnerable to its adverse effects and stress the need to establish a comprehensive adaptation programme including international support.
2. We agree that deep cuts in global emissions are required according to science, and as documented by the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report with a view to reduce global emissions so as to hold the increase in global temperature below 2 degrees Celsius, and take action to meet this objective consistent with science and on the basis of equity. We should cooperate in achieving the peaking of global and national emissions as soon as possible, recognizing that the time frame for peaking will be longer in developing countries and bearing in mind that social and economic development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of developing countries and that a low-emission development strategy is indispensable to sustainable development.
3. Adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change and the potential impacts of response measures is a challenge faced by all countries. Enhanced action and international cooperation on adaptation is urgently required to ensure the implementation of the Convention by enabling and supporting the implementation of adaptation actions aimed at reducing vulnerability and building resilience in developing countries, especially in those that are particularly vulnerable, especially least developed countries, small island developing States and Africa. We agree that developed countries shall provide adequate, predictable and sustainable financial resources, technology and capacity-building to support the implementation of adaptation action in developing countries.
4. Annex I Parties commit to implement individually or jointly the quantified economy-wide emissions targets for 2020, to be submitted in the format given in Appendix I by Annex I Parties to the secretariat by 31 January 2010 for compilation in an INF document. Annex I Parties that are Party to the Kyoto Protocol will thereby further strengthen the emissions reductions initiated by the Kyoto Protocol. Delivery of reductions and financing by developed countries will be measured, reported and verified in accordance with existing and any further guidelines adopted by the Conference of the Parties, and will ensure that accounting of such targets and finance is rigorous, robust and transparent.
5. Non-Annex I Parties to the Convention will implement mitigation actions, including those to be submitted to the secretariat by non-Annex I Parties in the format given in Appendix II by 31 January 2010, for compilation in an INF document, consistent with Article 4.1 and Article 4.7 and in the context of sustainable development. Least developed countries and small island developing States may undertake actions voluntarily and on the basis of support. Mitigation actions subsequently taken and envisaged by Non-Annex I Parties, including national inventory reports, shall be communicated through national communications consistent with Article 12.1(b) every two years on the basis of guidelines to be adopted by the Conference of the Parties. Those mitigation actions in national communications or otherwise communicated to the Secretariat will be added to the list in appendix II. Mitigation actions taken by Non-Annex I Parties will be subject to their domestic measurement, reporting and verification the result of which will be reported through their national communications every two years. Non-Annex I Parties will communicate information on the implementation of their actions through National Communications, with provisions for international consultations and analysis under clearly defined guidelines that will ensure that national sovereignty is respected. Nationally appropriate mitigation actions seeking international support will be recorded in a registry along with relevant technology, finance and capacity building support. Those actions supported will be added to the list in appendix II. These supported nationally appropriate mitigation actions will be subject to international measurement, reporting and verification in accordance with guidelines adopted by the Conference of the Parties.
6. We recognize the crucial role of reducing emission from deforestation and forest degradation and the need to enhance removals of greenhouse gas emission by forests and agree on the need to provide positive incentives to such actions through the immediate establishment of a mechanism including REDD-plus, to enable the mobilization of financial resources from developed countries.
7. We decide to pursue various approaches, including opportunities to use markets, to enhance the cost-effectiveness of, and to promote mitigation actions. Developing countries, especially those with low emitting economies should be provided incentives to continue to develop on a low emission pathway.
8. Scaled up, new and additional, predictable and adequate funding as well as improved access shall be provided to developing countries, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, to enable and support enhanced action on mitigation, including substantial finance to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD-plus), adaptation, technology development and transfer and capacity-building, for enhanced implementation of the Convention. The collective commitment by developed countries is to provide new and additional resources, including forestry and investments through international institutions, approaching USD 30 billion for the period 2010 - 2012 with balanced allocation between adaptation and mitigation. Funding for adaptation will be prioritized for the most vulnerable developing countries, such as the least developed countries, small island developing States and Africa. In the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation, developed countries commit to a goal of mobilizing jointly USD 100 billion dollars a year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries. This funding will come from a wide variety of sources, public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources of finance. New multilateral funding for adaptation will be delivered through effective and efficient fund arrangements, with a governance structure providing for equal representation of developed and developing countries. A significant portion of such funding should flow through the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund.
9. To this end, a High Level Panel will be established under the guidance of and accountable to the Conference of the Parties to study the contribution of the potential sources of revenue, including alternative sources of finance, towards meeting this goal.
10. We decide that the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund shall be established as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention to support projects, programme, policies and other activities in developing countries related to mitigation including REDD-plus, adaptation, capacity-building, technology development and transfer.
11. In order to enhance action on development and transfer of technology we decide to establish a Technology Mechanism to accelerate technology development and transfer in support of action on adaptation and mitigation that will be guided by a country-driven approach and be based on national circumstances and priorities.
12. We call for an assessment of the implementation of this Accord to be completed by 2015, including in light of the Convention's ultimate objective. This would include consideration of strengthening the long-term goal referencing various matters presented by the science, including in relation to temperature rises of 1.5 degrees Celsius.



# Global Warming And The Media

**T**ackling climate change should be one of the easiest challenges globally: all the world is affected by a common problem. Unfortunately, nothing is simple. It is, ultimately, a political issue, not technical.

Years of mainstream opposition to accepting or tackling climate change (including immense lobbying and PR offensives by certain business interests) have only recently started to wane and lose credibility, such has been the influence of these groups in the mainstream.

Now things are changing. Many large businesses have distanced themselves from those previous positions. Some have even asked for governments to provide regulation and guidance on the matter. Media coverage has also increased. Almost daily news, stories of research, campaigns, films and other actions to address climate change fills the air. Saving money, reducing waste, even buying more (usually improved energy efficient items) is all now more "green".

Why the change? The body of scientific research affirming climate change concerns has increased. So too has the sophistication of grassroots campaigning. In addition, geopolitical and economic factors also seem significant. Energy security concerns e.g. Russia's flexing muscles, Middle East instability, China's increasing energy thirst and the global financial crisis have made fossil fuels more expensive and tackling climate change more palatable.

Yet, media coverage can fall foul to "false balancing". Sometimes, scientific uncertainty can be blown out of proportion. Other times, claims of a global conspiracy by scientists, the United Nations and environmental groups/lobbies, have been entertained by mainstream media, perhaps for "balance"; all such claims have been shown as wrong or misleading.

Climate talks, however, have had less coverage. Boring as they may be, they are crucial. For a number of years, some rich-country governments have stalled on their emission reduction commitments. They fear "unfair" economic competition and call for developing

countries such as China and India to be subject to greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets. But this is false balancing; developing countries were not the ones who pumped most of these long-lasting GHGs into the atmosphere over recent centuries. Development expert, Martin Khor, calculated that rich countries have already used up their fair share of emissions when factoring historic emissions with maximum allowable future emissions.

The climate talks in Copenhagen will be crucial for the world. But year after year, these annual talks have had a similar pattern: prime time media coverage from influential rich nations is limited at best. Closer to the time, sound-bite coverage increases, but context and background such as why developing countries are not subject to similar targets as industrialized nations barely feature (and when presented, it is often portrayed as developing country opinion, not a key principle agreed by all as a basis of any climate change mitigation framework many years ago).

A lot of valuable time has been wasted. The poor will suffer the most, and will be asked to pay the most to tackle this, despite it not being their fault. And assuming climate change impacts can be mitigated, rich countries and their mainstream media will somehow find a way to claim they saved the world.

**Anup Shah**

Editor Global Issues,

<http://www.globalissues.org>

**Links for further information:**

From Global Issues:

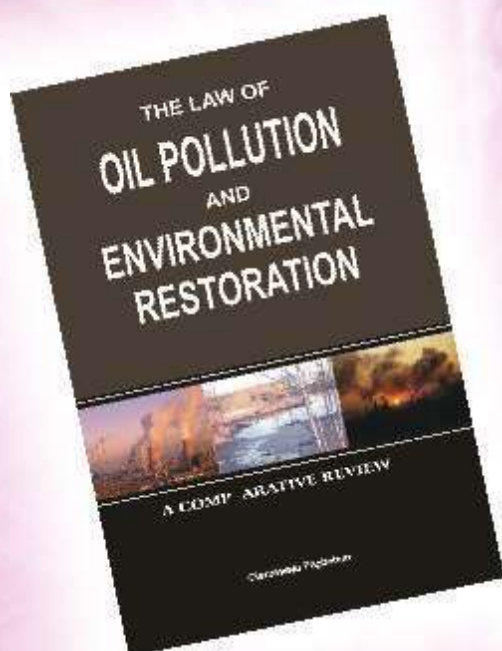
<http://www.globalissues.org/issue/178/climate-change-and-global-warming>

A news outlet that provides broader perspectives than most mainstream: Inter Press Service

<http://www.ipsnews.net>

A credible blog by leading climate scientists that also takes on false media reporting:

<http://realclimate.org>



## The Law of Oil Pollution and Environmental Restoration: A Comparative Review

By

**Professor Olanrewaju Fagbohun, Ph.D**

This over 550-page unique combination of comprehensive scope and practical focus is a single resource for all issues pertaining to oil pollution and environmental restoration. Topics covered include:

- Chapter 1** - General Introduction and Overview
- Chapter 2** - Definitions and Conceptual Clarification
- Chapter 3** - Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives
- Chapter 4** - The Oil Industry and its Impact on the Environment
- Chapter 5** - Interface between Restoration and Compensation
- Chapter 6** - Common Law and Environmental Restoration
- Chapter 7** - Statutory Framework for Restoration in Nigeria
- Chapter 8** - Role of the Judiciary and Other Institutional Frameworks
- Chapter 9** - Frameworks for Restoration in Selected Jurisdictions (15 other Countries covered)
- Chapter 10** - International Environmental Law and Oil Pollution
- Chapter 11** - Implementing an Effective Strategy for Environmental Restoration

**Foreword by His Excellency, Babatunde Raji Fashola, SAN**

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# Climate Change And Its Impact On The Environment



## CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change has become the most pressing environmental challenge of this generation. Many of its effects are now evident and increasing in severity each year. The successful reduction of greenhouse gas emissions will require all elements of society to take meaningful and timely action.

The principal greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), water vapor, oxides of nitrogen, methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), CFC's, ozone and others. The greenhouse gases are said to be mainly caused by human activity especially exhaust emissions from internal combustion engines, coal-burning, electric power generators' and innumerable other industrial processes.

Climate change is any long-term significant change in the "average weather" that a given region experiences. Average weather may include average temperature, precipitation and wind patterns. It involves changes in the variability or average state of the atmosphere over durations ranging from decades to millions of years. These changes can be caused by dynamic processes on earth, external forces including variations in sunlight intensity, and more recently by human activities.

## CLIMATE CHANGE FACTORS

Climate changes reflect variations within the Earth's atmosphere, processes in other parts of the Earth such as oceans and ice caps, and the effects of human activity. The external factors that can shape climate are often called climate forcing and include such processes as variations in solar radiation, the Earth's orbit, and greenhouse gas concentrations.

## VARIATIONS WITHIN THE EARTH'S CLIMATE

Weather is the day-to-day state of the atmosphere, and is a chaotic non-linear dynamic system. In contrast, *climate* the average state of weather is fairly stable and predictable. Climate includes the average

temperature, amount of precipitation, days of sunlight, and other variables that might be measured at any given site. However, there are also changes within the earth's environment that can affect the climate.

## LIVESTOCK

According to a 2006 United Nations report, Livestock's Long Shadow, livestock is responsible for 18% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions as measured in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents. This however, includes land usage change, occasioned by deforestation on account of creating grazing land. In the Amazon Rainforest, 70% of forest is destroyed to make way for grazing, therefore forming a major factor in the 2006 UN FAO report, which was the first agricultural report to include land usage change into the radiative forcing of livestock. In addition to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, livestock produces 65% of human-induced nitrous oxide (which has 296 times the global warming potential of CO<sub>2</sub>) and 37% of human-induced methane (which has 23 times the global warming potential of CO<sub>2</sub>).

## OCEAN VARIABILITY

On the scale of decades, climate changes can also result from interaction of the atmosphere and oceans. Many climate fluctuations including not only the El Nino Southern oscillation (the best known) but also the Pacific decadal oscillation, the North Atlantic oscillation, and the Arctic oscillation owe their existence at least in part to different ways that heat can be stored in the oceans and

move between different reservoirs. On longer time scales, ocean processes such as thermohaline circulation play a key role in redistributing heat, and can dramatically affect climate.

The result of a current research using Nigeria as a case study states that the impact of climate change especially on rise of sea level may cost Nigeria a whopping N375 billion for protection in case of just one meter rise in sea level. Besides, an estimated population of 3.7 million people could also be forced to become refugees due to relocation resulting from the flooding of about 18,000 square kilometers of coastal areas.

The sun is the earth's primary energy source. Though about a third of this solar energy is reflected back into the universe by shimmering glaciers, water and other bright surfaces, the rest of the other two thirds are absorbed by the earth, warming land, oceans and the atmosphere. Much of this heat radiates back into the space while some of it is stored in the atmosphere. This process is called the greenhouse effect.

In the absence of the greenhouse effect, the earth's average temperature would be a chilling 18 degrees Celsius which would probably have made life on earth impossible. With the greenhouse effect, heat emitted from the earth is trapped in the atmosphere thus providing the earth with an average comfortable temperature of 14 degrees. This has been the Earth's temperature for millions of years. Thus, there is always a balance between the incoming sunlight and outgoing heat radiation. This 'negative feedback' stabilizes the radiation balance despite all the variations of temperature from one place to another and within the vertical column of the atmosphere.

This balance notwithstanding, the question that arises is, if the greenhouse effect works, what then is responsible for global warming? The problem is partly that over the last century, humans have been releasing more and more carbon dioxide thereby increasing the concentration of these gases. A further research result currently around 50 percent of the world's population live in cities (set to reach 60 percent by 2030), yet cities consume some 75 percent of the world's energy and are responsible for 80 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. Cities occupy a pivotal position as major energy consumers, but also as centres of innovation and new thinking.

## IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Impact of climate change on cities will manifest in various forms of sufferings in the areas of rising water levels undermining foundation, salt water contamination of ground water, damaged coast tourism

*Continued next Page*

**Besides, an estimated population of 3.7 million people could also be forced to become refugees due to relocation resulting from the flooding of about 18,000 square kilometers of coastal areas.**



The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Article 1 defines climate change as a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly, to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere, and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable periods. In addition, it describes climate system as the totality of the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere and geosphere and their interactions. The objective of the convention is to achieve the stabilization of green house gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

Acknowledging that Climate change is a potent threat to mankind and in keeping with one of the paragraphs of the preamble to this convention, many nations of the world have acknowledged that change in the earth's climate and its adverse effects are a common concern of humankind. Some human activities which can cause a change of climate and its deleterious effects to man are bush burning and firewood burning, automobile exhaust fumes, fumes from generators during industrial production, desertification and gas flaring. When atmospheric oxygen ( $O_2$ ) reacts with the carbon monoxide (CO) generated from these activities, it yields carbon dioxide ( $CO_2$ ). Ozone ( $O_3$ ) itself reacts with the CO to yield  $CO_2$ . It is the continuous carbon emissions that deplete the ozone layer, which acts as a protective cover for the earth from the harmful ultra-violet radiation from the sun, and consequently pose a dangerous threat to human existence.

Nigeria's energy production and

# Climate Change And Its Impact On

By Aghotse Anthony



consumption has been on a steady rise over the years with its emission amounting to over 90, 000 metric tons with  $CO_2$  emission from liquid sources and gas flaring accounting for over 30% and 50% respectively, from the data published by the World Resources. Nonetheless, government has put off

addressing the challenges that gas flaring poses to the environment.

The indiscriminate felling of trees for whatever purposes cannot but be harmful to man in the long run as deforestation depletes the sink and reservoir desirable to reduce green house gases. Far too many

*Continued from Page 5*

infrastructure and beaches inundation and loss of wetlands and lowland, increased erosion of shorelines and exacerbation of coastal flooding.

Sea level rise will submerge low lying areas and increase salinity in some ecosystems. Fish populations will change by migration while vegetation will adapt much more slowly. There will be a rise in the cost of protection of highly developed areas in Nigeria, oil development infrastructure and a total protection of all moderately developed areas at different sea level. Protection of the country's whole coastline is not economically feasible.

Others include increase salinity of estuaries, aquifer and soil, impairment of water quality, alteration of tidal ranges in rivers and bays, changes in locations where rivers deposit sediments change in the heights, frequencies and other characteristics of wave, decrease in amount of light reaching sea floor and, upsetting of fishery.

The life cycles of many wild plants and animals are closely linked to the passing of the

seasons; climatic changes can lead to interdependent pairs of species (e.g. a wild flower and its pollinating insect) losing synchronization, if, for example, one has a cycle dependent on day length and the other on temperature or precipitation. In principle, at least, this could lead to extinctions or changes in the distribution and abundance of species.

## REDUCTION OF IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

International links can be built between cities, even when states cannot agree. Focusing thematic activity on cities and their hinterlands will generate a fresh perspective of the challenges and potential solutions, and foster debates about what action is needed.

Cities bear a large responsibility for causing climate change and are therefore pivotal to alleviating climate change by moving from high energy use, wasteful economic model to one that conserves energy and minimizes waste by being more efficient. The relationship between climate change and cities would be of vital importance to the

future well-being of the human population during this century as climate change and urbanization interact.

This is because over 75 percent of energy consumption is directly related to cities and in many cases, cities are highly vulnerable to the impacts potential to instigate innovative solution (in the form of both adaptations and emissions reduction).

Among the several urban settlements and cities located along the nation's coastal zone that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change and may be over-run by flooding are Lagos, Warri, Sapele, Port Harcourt, Calabar, Badagry, Forcados, Brass, Abonema, Buguma, Burutu, Bonny and Opobo.

From the foregoing, it could be concluded with a very high degree of certainty that as this century proceeds, climate change will have an increasing impact on human society that will be living in cities, with a significant part of the impacts of climate being mediated through the experience and actions of the urban.

**Bimbo Otahumele**  
Legal Practitioner

*"...act now! Your support for the environment counts".*



# The Environment



unroadworthy vehicles, especially commercial vehicles with their exhausts emitting smoke and gaseous substances ply our roads and this ought to call for a re-appraisal of the modalities for the issuance of vehicles' Certificates of Roadworthiness by Vehicle Inspection Officers. Vehicles that constitute environmental and traffic hazards to society ought not be allowed to ply our roads as to endanger human lives.

The progressive incursion of the sahara desert into the Northern Region and the attendant probable harmful effects need urgent attention.

The National Climate Change Assessment Report in 2007 revealed that China's average yearly temperature could rise between 1.3 - 2.1 degrees by 2020. The projection that her coastal areas would face serious challenges due to rising water levels and extreme weather patterns likely to increase are already evident from the recent floods, snowstorms, hurricane and earthquake that struck China with calamitous humanitarian consequences, most of which are direct consequences of the ozone layer depletion. It should become the collective responsibility of

our States and their citizens to show sensitivity to the environment, in furtherance of the determination of State Parties to the Convention to protect the environment, for present and future generations as stated in the preamble.

To this end, it is expected that States should enact effective environmental legislation that the environmental standards, management objectives and priorities should reflect environmental and developmental contexts to which they apply.

For example, the government of Lagos State in Nigeria, has been planting trees and flowers to beautify the environment. A greener Lagos is becoming a better Lagos. There is a Ministry of the Environment headed by a Commissioner. Citizens in the state observe a monthly environmental sanitation exercise on the last Saturday of every month from 7am to 10am during which the citizenry engage in cleaning of their houses and the environment and government's trucks and those of its agencies cart away waste generated therefrom.

Besides, there are special courts at the State's secretariat Alausa, Ikeja where environmental offences are tried and offenders accordingly punished to serve as deterrent to others.

Other States ought to follow this initiative for the general well-being of citizens in conformity with the World Health Organisation's definition of health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Further, there ought to be constitutional provisions that will not only engender but also sustain environmental issues in the national consciousness.

As leaders of many countries of the world converge on Copenhagen, Denmark for the 15<sup>th</sup> United Nations Climate Change Conference, they should please call to mind, in their deliberations and negotiations aimed at making the conference a success the monumental statement that:

**The indiscriminate felling of trees for whatever purposes cannot but be harmful to man in the long run as deforestation depletes the sink and reservoir desirable to reduce green house gases.**

**"People in the end shape the environment, If a better environment is passed down- To future generations, It will be because of the values and Actions of people- all of us- today."**

*E.H. Rabbim & Bm. D. Schwartz, Pollution Crisis (1972).*

*Anthony Aghotse  
Nigeria Maritime  
Administration & Safety  
Agency (NIMASA)*

*"...act now! Your support for the environment counts".*

## Environmental Tit-Bits

*Today we're seeing that climate change is about more than a few unseasonably mild winters or hot summers. It's about the chain of natural catastrophes and devastating weather patterns that global warming is beginning to set off around the world... the frequency and intensity of which are breaking records thousands of years old.*

**U.S President Barack Obama**

### Asia

*Asia Peat land Loss 'Helps Drive Warming' Says Scientists*

Prelude to the presentation on the sidelines of the UN climate talks, a network of scientists branded Southeast Asia as the world leader in greenhouse gases which seep from degraded peat soils. Peat lands comprise compacted carbon from vegetation, deposited over thousands of years. The carbon is safely stored when the soil is covered with water, but starts to be released as a greenhouse gas when the land is exposed to air. They become very big sources of carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide.

### BANGKOK

*Biodiversity of the Mekong Region at Risk*

Reports from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) say that the rich and unique biodiversity of the Mekong region, which had been discovered only in recent years, is likely to be at risk by environmental impacts that climate change is expected to bring.

### CHINA

*Houses Toppled As 4.9-Quake Hits Southwest China*

Local authorities in China have reported that a moderate earthquake had hit southwest China Monday, November 2, 2009, injuring 28 people, toppling more than 1,000 houses, and killing hundreds of livestock. The US Geological Survey had earlier reported on its website that the 4.9 magnitude quake hit Yunnan province earlier on Monday morning not far from popular tourist destination Dali, striking at a depth of 35 kilometers (22 miles).

### Africa

#### ETHIOPIA

*Giant Crack in Africa Will Create a New Ocean*

Researchers have confirmed that a 35-mile rift in the desert of Ethiopia will likely become a new ocean. The crack, 20 feet wide in spots, opened in 2005 and some geologists believed then that it would



## Environmental Tit-Bits

spawn a new ocean. But that view was controversial, and the rift had not been well studied.

A new study conducted by an international team of scientists and reported in the *Journal Geophysical Research Letters*, finds the processes creating the rift are nearly identical to what goes on at the bottom of oceans, a further indication of the possibility of a sea in the region's future.

### NAIROBI

#### *Kenya under Serious Water Threat*

Flash floods caused by four days of torrential rains have displaced more than 15,000 people in the southwestern town of El-Waq near the Kenyan border and submerged most homes and businesses. Most of the town is under water, with people moving to higher ground around the town.

### NAIROBI

#### *Illegal Fishing in Lake Victoria Threatens the Livelihood of 3.5 Million People*

The livelihoods of 3.5 million East Africans who depend directly on Lake Victoria are threatened by illegal fishing, overfishing, climate change and pollution. Lake Victoria the largest inland fishery East Africa valued at \$400 million annually.

### NIGERIA

#### *Shell Ignites New Gas Flare at Gbarantoru, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State*

Gbarantoru community is an Ijaw town in Ekpemama Kingdom of Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. It is located on the outskirts of Yenagoa, the State capital. Reports say that Shell Petroleum Development Company which has been operating in the community for many years has commenced a gas flare thereby causing environmental discomfort to the people of the community.

Culled from [www.eraaction.org](http://www.eraaction.org)

### NIGERIA

#### *Energy Boost*

Nigeria to receive the sum of 300 million USD from the World Bank to boost its electricity endeavours. *CNN International*

### NAMIBIA

#### *Ancient Trees Cut Down Illegally*

Acting on a tip-off from the public, the Namibian Directorate of Forestry has confiscated hundreds of African Leadwood trees, illegally harvested four months ago in the Okombahe communal area.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200911130214.html>

### SOUTH AFRICA

#### *Capetown: Rain a Threat to Food Prices*

Experts have warned that record rainfalls and widespread crop damage caused by

## TIPS FOR THE QUARTER

Let us realize that our everyday actions when it comes to climate change do matter. Ultimately, it is up to all of us to save our environment, our planet needs us lets protect it.

We can protect our environment in a lot of simple ways so our tip for this quarter is how to engage in activities that preserve the environment they include:

- **Airing your clothes.** Washing your clothes and airing them outdoors instead of using a dryer is often enough for the clothes.
- **Washing our hairbrushes and combs.** Washing our hairbrushes and combs with shampoo rather than throwing them away.
- **Hand-wash silk and rayon.** Silk, rayon and wool clothing can be hand-washed you don't have to dry-clean them.
- **Bake in heat-retaining dishes.** When baking, choose heat-retaining glass or ceramic dishes instead of metallic ones, so you can set your oven 25 degrees lower.
- **Turn off appliances.** Some extension cords have a power switch so you can easily turn off devices with one switch when you leave your house.
- **Use cotton cloth nappies instead of paper towels.** Bring a towel to your office and quit using paper towels when washing hands.
- **Use reusable cleaning equipment.** Use reusable and washable cleaning equipment instead of disposable ones.

## SAYINGS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

"The air, the water and the ground are free gifts to man and no one has the power to portion them out in parcels. Man must drink and breathe and walk and therefore each man has a right to his share of each."

*James Fennimore Cooper (1789-1851), The Prairie 1827*

"To be whole. To be complete. Wilderness reminds us what it means to be human, what we are connected to rather than what we are separate from."

*Terry Tempest Williams, testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Forest & Public Lands Management regarding the Utah Public Lands Management Act of 1995. Washington, D.C. July 13, 1995.*

"The use of sea and air is common to all; neither can a title to the ocean belong to any people or private persons, forasmuch as neither nature nor public use and custom permit any possession thereof."

*Elizabeth I of England (1533-1603)*

The thing about protecting our natural resources is ... "When the wells dry, we know the worth of water."

*Benjamin Franklin, (1706-1790), Poor Richard's Almanac.*

"If we use resources productively and take to heart the lessons learned from coping with the energy crisis, we face a future confronted only, as Pogo, once said, by insurmountable opportunities. The many crises facing us should be seen, then, not as threats, but as chances to remake the future so it serves all beings."

*L. Hunter Lovins and Amory B. Lovins, Utne Reader, November-December, 1989.*

## Climate Change: A Root Of Armed Conflict

Climate change presents an all encompassing threat to human health, to global food supply, to peace and to security. However, the risks of climate change to social systems are as much about the characteristics of those systems as it is about changes in environmental systems. The extent to which global warming constitutes a threat to human security is determined by the level of vulnerability of the affected society. Owing to the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, current trends in climate change will not appreciably alter over the next half century even if drastic action is taken now. climate change will produce unique types and modes of conflict, redefine the value of important resources and

create new challenges to maintaining social order and stability.

The issue of climate change and armed conflict is characterized by two paradoxes that have passed by largely unnoticed by the public debate. First, the many processes associated with global warming, which have truly started to appear only over the last fifteen years, have occurred during a time when the world is witnessing a dramatic reduction in the frequency and severity of armed conflict. While we should not conclude about current and future links based on this simplistic comparison, the opposing trends nonetheless deserve some consideration. Second, the empirical foundation for a general relationship between resource scarcity and armed conflict is indicative at best, and numerous questions regarding the

proposed causal association remain unanswered.

Increased scarcity and variability of renewable resources, sea-level rise, and intensification of natural disaster are natural consequences of climate change. These consequences could produce two types of conflict: Cold Wars and Hot Wars. Cold wars will occur as warming draws countries into possible conflict due to expanding interests in exploiting new resources and territories (inter-state conflict). Hot wars will break out as warming expands and intensifies dry areas, increasing interests in exploiting new resources (intra-state conflict).

Conflict is not inevitable, but it will also be the consequence of how states, international institutions and people react to

*Continued on Page 12*

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## Climate Change And Persons With Disability (PWD) In Nigeria

Climate change is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability, observed over comparable time periods. The cause of global warming over the last century has not only been a topic of heated debate, it has remained one which will occupy the center stage for sometime to come with very over-reaching economic and societal implications.

The current warming trend is of particular significance because the present scientific consensus on climate change is not only unequivocal that the warming is real but also that most of it is largely human induced (which emit excessive greenhouse gases (GHG)) and, proceeding at a rate that is unprecedented in the past 1300 years. The human activity include especially exhaust emissions from internal combustion engines, coal-burning, electric power generators and innumerable other industrial processes. The debate therefore, has largely shifted to finding ways to reduce the further impact and how to adapt to change that has occurred already. Several scientific predictions as to the possible effects of climate change include:

- melting polar ice caps which cause rising sea levels and coastal flooding, erosions, tsunami, etc resulting in migration, lack of shelter, etc.
- warmer temperatures.
- oxygen depletion resulting in adverse effect on the ecosystem as well as other positive and negative feed backs.

Africa's key economic sectors are vulnerable to climate change. This vulnerability is compounded by existing challenges, including poverty, natural disaster, high cost of food stuffs, poor governance, lack of democracy and political will, lack of institutional framework, political conflicts and very fragile States, etc. Nigeria's vulnerability, for instance, could be traced to low capacity and technological know-how, long coastal area, high population density, dependence on climate sensitive sectors and high dependence on the unstable international oil market for her socio-economic development.

In Nigeria, rising temperature will result in spread of diseases like cerebrospinal meningitis (CSM), malaria and other related illnesses. The environment is already witnessing desertification, flooding, water

salinity with serious consequences on health, damage to infrastructures, social dislocation, etc. The global attempt to reduce these impacts led to the UNFCCC and the Protocol. The issue of climate change is undoubtedly critical to our President's Seven Point Agenda as well as to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Millennium Development Goals as it can erode achievement(s) made in these areas and even impede further achievements. If the ordinary persons are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, then the PWD suffer double jeopardy. The UNFCCC and its Protocol are not PWD friendly. The government established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as part of the initial response to climate change to help evaluate and articulate our national response to the challenge. The National Climate Change Roundtable Forum may be said to be the government's first landmark stride to advance our national drive towards tackling the impact of climate change.

Nigeria's participation in proffering solution to the problem of climate change has become imperative. Climate change concerns and activities must be integrated into our development plan and be adequately provided for in the national budget. Such funds should be monitored. In research and provision of adequate information in environmental issues government must take the lead. Effective communication is fundamental. Similarly, participatory approach by our government (ie the government involving all stakeholders) will make the policy-makers more sensitive to the people's expectations 'apacity building becomes very relevant. The PWD must embrace training, capacity building, and research. This requires the cooperation of both the government and the PWD

In addition, Nigeria, (and Africa too) must first put her house in order by addressing the existing internal challenges like poor governance, lack of democracy, etc. Its time Nigeria took very proactive steps with respect to climate change.

Also, the PWD and other Civil Society Organizations must take advantage of the opportunity created by our government through the Special Climate Unit. PWD can key into this to advocate for mainstreaming disability into climate change adaptation strategy. Beyond politics, Copenhagen must produce a fair and balance treaty.

There must be special consideration for the PWD at Copenhagen. Politics should be de-emphasized. Copenhagen must not only produce increased priority to the developing world adaptation (and especially the PWD) in the Climate Change negotiations, it must also give birth to new and more predictable and sustainable resources and policies to support both adaptation and mitigation.

**Erimma Orie**  
(Legal Practitioner)

## Environmental Tit-Bits

severe drought in the Western Cape are threatening to drive up food prices, force farms to shut down, and could cost thousands of people their jobs.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200911130214.html>

### CANADA

#### Canada Faces E-Waste Management Crisis

More than 140,000 tonnes of computer equipment, phones, television sets, stereos, and small home appliances accumulate in Canadian landfills each year. That is equivalent to the weight of about 28,000 adult African elephants or enough uncrushed electronic waste to fill up the Toronto Skydome every 15 years. An estimated 4,750 tonnes of lead is contained in personal computers and television sets disposed each year in Canada.

### U.K

#### Climate Change Is Set To Make Insurance More Expensive and Harder To Obtain

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) says that predicted rises in temperatures in the UK looked set to "significantly" increase the cost to insurers of flood and windstorm damage. It warns that this would feed through into higher premiums for consumers. It would also mean insurers had to hold more capital in reserve for potential losses, which could lead to reduction in the availability of insurance covers.

### UK

#### Tornado in Hampshire Causes Chaos

Hampshire police recorded incidents of trees falling on properties, cars and roads as a result of the tornado which caused chaos. Shop worker, Samantha Pritchard from Twyford post office in the village saw the tornado go past. All the leaves were swirling around in circles in the road and it was raining so heavily. The tornado was accompanied by strong winds and torrential rain, with several inches falling in minutes in Winchester.

### WASHINGTON

#### David Suzuki Bags Award for "Right Livelihood"

A Canadian scientist dedicated to informing the world about the grave threats posed by climate change has been named one of four "Right Livelihood Award" winners this year. David Suzuki was awarded the prize for his lifetime advocacy of the socially responsible use of science, and for his massive contribution to raising awareness about the perils of climate change and building public support for policies to address it.

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Seeking essentially to reconcile worldwide economic development with environmental protection, the summit was at that time the largest gathering of world leaders in history, with 117 heads of state and representatives of 178 countries in attendance. In addition, some 2,400 representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also attended, with 17,000 people at the parallel NGO "Global Forum", who had so-called Consultative Status.

The place of the Summit in environmental history is not overstated, given that it resulted in several major outputs, notably: *The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*; *Agenda 21*; *The UN Convention on Biological Diversity*; and, *The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* an international treaty aimed at stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. The principal instrument of this treaty is the Kyoto Protocol, which has over the years become much better known than the UNFCCC itself.

However, central as the Earth Summit was in the chronicle of environmental events, the critical turning point in Nigeria's environmental history probably came some five years earlier with the discovery in July 1988, of a toxic waste dump at the Koko port in the Niger Delta. The ship bearing the cargo, imported by some unscrupulous Italian businessmen working in league with Nigerian collaborators aboard the vessel, *MV Baruluk*, discharged its 561 containers of toxic waste at the Nana family compound.

The Koko discovery, which subsequently became an international diplomatic incident and galvanised public interest and awareness on

*Continued on Page 11*

## The Media And Climate Change

Many would situate the birth of the contemporary global environmental movement as an outcome of the uniquely successful United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) *The Earth Summit* held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The *Earth Summit*, for most people involved in any way with issues pertaining to the Environment, had represented a watershed of sorts and a landmark in the global efforts to put that subject on the front burner of global discourse.

**We have taken our environment for granted that it will always be there to meet our needs. If our environmental foundations are depleted, our economy may well decline with some implications for our socio-economic fabric.**

### WORD SEARCH

Find the words in the puzzle that are outcomes of climate change  
Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally - backwards or forwards.

Z	N	G	L	W	B	V	R	R	D	R	O	U	G	H	T
T	A	E	H	C	L	Z	E	R	K	N	U	S	Y	E	B
L	L	C	G	N	K	T	G	D	G	H	B	K	R	L	G
L	L	X	P	M	A	H	R	B	K	P	D	U	A	N	T
A	A	T	T	W	M	H	G	N	M	W	T	N	I	W	T
B	F	K	B	C	D	K	E	P	V	A	K	D	Q	G	E
O	N	K	G	K	N	G	R	A	R	E	O	G	R	F	R
L	I	J	L	N	P	F	R	E	T	O	Z	L	E	T	E
G	A	D	R	T	I	P	P	E	L	W	Z	N	H	M	H
D	R	I	S	E	P	M	L	F	E	L	A	N	T	N	P
R	H	Z	C	N	E	E	R	R	M	N	N	V	A	F	S
Y	K	T	M	T	V	G	L	A	N	P	H	Z	E	P	O
N	M	Y	R	E	L	A	M	Y	W	L	V	O	W	M	M
E	C	J	L	A	L	S	N	Q	C	M	K	R	U	L	T
S	N	M	B	C	E	G	F	D	E	S	E	R	T	S	A
S	N	Y	L	L	F	F	M	C	X	C	N	D	R	N	G

Atmosphere,  
Earth,  
Heat,  
Sun,  
Drought,  
Global,  
Rainfall,  
Water,  
Dryness,  
Greenhouse,  
Rise,  
Weather,  
Gas,  
Level,  
Warming,  
Blanket,  
Flooding,  
Heat Wave,  
Temperature,  
Desert,



Continued from Page 10

the domestic front leading eventually to the establishment of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA), showcased the critical role which the media could play in the process of environmental regulation.

It was to the credit of the Nigerian media that after a group of non-governmental organisations had tried unsuccessfully to arouse official interest in this shipload of toxic materials already sailing towards Nigeria's ports after being rejected by several other countries, it was only the publication of an investigative report in a national newspaper that eventually blew the lid on the ill-fated deal, and roused the public indignation that compelled serious action by the Nigerian government.

In academic terms, the widely acknowledged functions of the media are basically to **inform, educate and entertain**. However, it is generally acknowledged that the real power of the media lies in its ability not only to set public agenda, but also to shape popular thinking and activity in respect of the stated subject matter.

In his presentation on *The agenda setting role of the Mass Media in the shaping of public opinion*, Maxwell McCombs of the University of Texas at Austin, the United States, writes:

*"The power of the news media to set a nation's agenda, to focus public attention on a few key public issues is an immense and well documented influence. Not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the news media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news."*

In the celebrated 1992 publication *Public Opinion*, Walter Lippmann began with a chapter he titled *The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads*, where he noted that "The news media are a primary source of those pictures in our heads about the larger world of public affairs, a world that for most citizens is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind."

In essence, Lippmann was simply saying that for most people, their knowledge of the world is largely based on what the media decide to tell them. More specifically, he added, "the result of this mediated view of the world is that the priorities of the media strongly influence the priorities of the public; and, it is mainly those elements that are prominent on the media agenda, that become prominent in the public mind."

However, the issue of the Media - Environment Agenda tie-in can readily be illustrated through the now dominant issue of Climate Change, as highlighted by Professor Jacqueline McGlade, Director, European Environment Agency (EEA) at an international conference to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's Aarhus Convention.

According to Prof. McGlade, "When the strategic challenges arising from Climate Change are considered, it becomes clear that fundamental changes are needed in the way we

live. In order to bring about these changes, the public needs to be properly informed and empowered to participate in political debates at all levels, as well as being empowered to change their own ways of living". She stated further,

*"We need to move beyond conventional systems of data collection and management. It is no longer sufficient to develop passive lists or reports with which to 'inform' citizens. We need to engage with the woman on the street, in the field, in the river or on the mountain and ask how they can 'inform' us."*

The consequences of failure to engage or partner effectively with the media could be very grave, as revealed by comments credited to a Former Minister for Environment, Housing and Urban Development in Nigeria. "We have taken our environment for granted that it will always be there to meet our needs. If our environmental foundations are depleted, our economy may well decline with some implications for our socio-economic fabric."

Indeed, the publication *'Managing The Nigerian Environment for Sustainable Development: Challenges and Opportunities'* already states that "Recent evidence points to the fact that our interaction with the environment is creating a number of serious problems, including land degradation, flooding, drought, desertification, sheet, gully and coastal erosion, as well as the loss of biodiversity. Other problems are poor environmental health and safety, urban waste, pollution, climate change and ozone depletion." Essentially, the report



simply emphasizes the imperative of a partnership/engagement if the nation's goals of environmental sustainability are to be attained.

Notable among areas in which the roles of the media could be paramount are:

**a) The Niger Delta crisis:** The upsurge in violent crime and youth restiveness in Nigeria's Niger Delta region which forced a shut-in of some 1.4 million barrels of oil daily, has cost the nation not only a substantial chunk of its foreign exchange earnings, it has also taken a deadly toll on security, mortality and economic activity in the entire region. At the very core of this conflict and the resulting descent into militancy in the region is the loss of environmental resources, such as polluted waterways and farmlands from oil spills; destruction of air quality through gas flaring; and, the loss of livelihoods through decline in economic activities.

Effective grassroots communications through appropriate media strategies could play a crucial role in stemming this slide to violence.

**b) Changing weather patterns and variability:** Among the most graphic illustrations of how much of a role the Media could play in

shaping public opinion and moderating local agenda in favour of sustainable community relationships, are the consequences of changing weather patterns and variability on local communities and regions, where an effective media intervention could either pre-empt or moderate reactions to conflict issues among contending communities.

Weather changes, given their impact on mainly agrarian communities, would ideally be mitigated by among others, efficient public enlightenment strategies that would enable affected communities to better cope with the situation.

**c) Also, patterns of land cover changes** between 1976 and 1995 strongly indicate loss of prime arable lands with the Cereal producing Sudan-Savannah ecology transiting to pure Sahel, while the Sahara is spreading according to some estimates by up to 0.6 kilometres yearly and, root and tuber productive ecology of the Guinea Savannah is giving way to Sudan Savannah grassland.

The place of appropriate media strategies is obviously crucial in addressing the impact of such trends, which have implications for the economy and livelihoods of affected communities. Such targeted campaigns could effectively encourage pre-emptive actions like acquisition of new skills, relocation to less impacted areas and, mobilisation of external support and financial assistance.

## CONCLUSION

Over the past few years, major changes on the technological front have unfolded a whole new outlook for the way the media works and its implications as a vehicle for mobilising social change.

The relationship between the media and the environment is one that can best be described as symbiotic, given that ultimately, the two concepts rest on the need to inform, educate and, sometimes to entertain as a means of, achieving the desired goal of a better life not only for ourselves, but also for our unborn generations for whom we are holding the Earth in trust.

However, in the words of McCombs, "because attitudes and behaviour are usually governed by cognitions – what a person knows, thinks, or believes, the agenda setting role of the media implies a potentially massive influence whose full dimensions and consequences have yet to be appreciated and exploited."

Nevertheless, it is these potentials that position the media most appropriately as a key partner in the global campaign to boost humanity and the Earth's health and wellbeing.

**By Paul Okunlola**

Editor, The Guardian Newspaper



## Climate Change: A Root Of Armed Conflict

(Continued from Page 8)

changes in climate. A recent research by International Alert (2007) came to the conclusion that understanding the influence of climate change on conflict requires tracing the 'consequences of consequences' (2007:7). Four key links are identified: political instability, economic weakness, food insecurity and mass migration.

In a highly influential article, *The Coming Anarchy*, Robert D. Kaplan (1994) envisioned the core foreign-policy challenge for the twenty-first century as the 'political and strategic impact of surging populations, spreading disease, deforestation and soil erosion, water depletion, air pollution, and possibly, rising sea levels - developments that will prompt mass migration and, in turn, incite group conflicts'. More recently, a report from Christian Aid (2007: 2) claims that an estimated 1 billion people will be forced to leave their homes between now and 2050, which might 'destabilize whole regions where increasingly desperate populations compete for dwindling food and water'. Along the same lines, Thomas Homer-Dixon (2007) similarly argues that 'climate change will help produce ... insurgencies, genocide, guerrilla attacks, gang warfare, and global terrorism'. More dramatic still, a report to the Pentagon on implications of climate change for US national security sketches scenarios of epic proportions, including the risk of reverting to a Hobbesian state of nature whereby humanity would be engaged in 'constant battles for diminishing resources' (Schwartz & Randall, 2003: 16). A report by eleven retired US Generals and Admirals has added military authority to the issue, arguing that 'Climate change can act as a threat multiplier for instability in some of the most volatile regions of the world' and that this 'presents significant national security challenges for the United States' (CNA, 2007: 1). The UK Treasury-commissioned Stern Review (2006) and the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC,

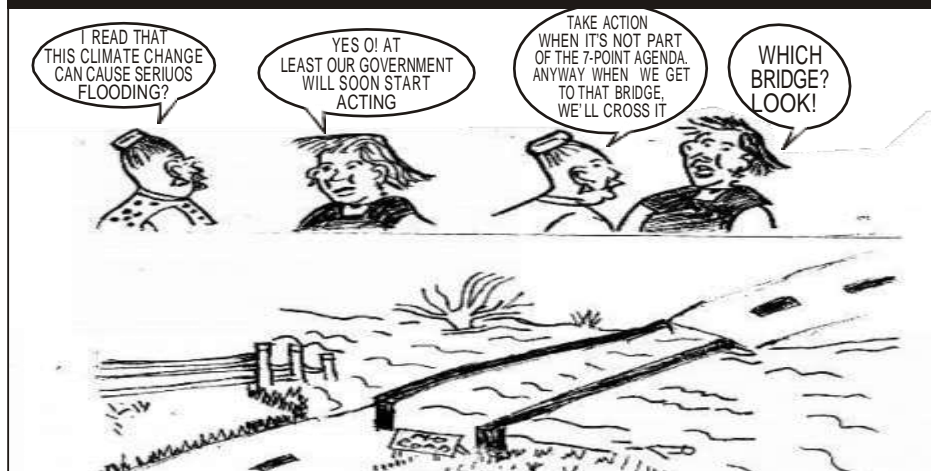
2007) are generally more cautious in their references to conflict, but warn against potentially dire societal consequences of climate change.

In sum, climate change may increase the risk of armed conflict only under certain conditions and in interaction with several socio-political factors. At least five social effects of climate change - whether due to a dwindling resource base, intensification of natural disasters, rising sea level, or a combination of the three - have been suggested as crucial intermediating catalysts of organized violence. First, increasing scarcity of renewable resources in subsistence-economy societies may cause unemployment, loss of livelihood, and loss of economic activity (Ohlsson, 2003), thus decreasing state income (Homer-Dixon, 1999). Second, increasing resource competition in heterogeneous societies may attract opportunistic elites who intensify social cleavages - particularly ethnic identities - and make the population more vulnerable to radicalization (Kahl, 2006). Third, reduced state income may hinder public goods delivery, reduce political legitimacy, and give rise to political challengers (Homer-Dixon, 1999). Fourth, efforts to adjust to a changing climate - or to remove the causes of global warming - may have inadvertent side effects that could spur tension and conflict. Additionally, the high-profile climate change issue may serve as a scapegoat or rallying point for actors with hidden agendas (Goldstone, 2001; Salehyan, 2008). Finally, worsened environmental conditions may force people to migrate in large masses, thereby increasing environmental stress in the receiving area and increase the potential for radicalization and ethnic hatreds (Reuveny, 2007).

By Qudus A. Mumuny

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[http://sitesources.worldbank.org/INTRANETSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/SDCCWorkingPaper\\_Conflict.pdf](http://sitesources.worldbank.org/INTRANETSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/SDCCWorkingPaper_Conflict.pdf)

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- Mr Gregory Enahoro, Esq.,  
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