

GETTING TO ZERO: MOBILIZING PARLIAMENTS TO ACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Global Climate change and its attendant effects have continued to be on the increase. The resultant negative impact is of great concern to all the stakeholders as well as policy makers. Despite the positive roles of government and other relevant stakeholders to curtail the rapid increase of global warming climate change has continued to pose a great threat to agriculture, health as well as social and economic activities of the people. Little has been achieved and more need to be done. However, the Executive arm as well as the Legislature have continued to work audaciously to implement policies aimed at reducing the impact of climate change and global warming triggered by human activities.

To be credible, effective and legally enforceable, all international agreements and protocols on climate change are being transposed by the National Assembly into National legislation supported by appropriate legislation, budget allocation, and robust oversight. This puts the Parliament at the heart of the response to climate change.

More recently, the earth's climate has been studied by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an organization made up of many scientists who specialize in climate change. The IPCC issued four (4) reports over the recent years that have studied the connection between human activities and climate change. The most recent report "Climate Change 2007" declared that the consensus of the group is that 90% certainty global warming is directly related to green-house gas emissions.

In a study, by Leiserowitz 2007, the point was made that people's understanding of climate change is critical to addressing the issues because it is in the public domain that political pressure emerges. Public opinion is critical because it is a key component of the socio-political context in which policy makers operate. It can also fundamentally provide relevant information to political citizens about the dangers involved in negative human activities through all media outlets and town hall meetings.

The Federal Government of Nigeria, in 2015 carried out an extensive review of the hydrocarbon pollution restoration project in which gazette has been undertaken. There is also a project coordinating office in Port Harcourt. However, adequate funding of the project remain a huge obstacle to the success of the review.

The Federal Government, in 2016 launched the implementation of the United Nations Environmental Programme Report on the clean-up of Ogoni Land and other impacted areas of the Niger Delta. This is in a bid to reduce the impact of environmental degradation and the consequent delirious impact on climate change. It is a programme that has a 25-30 years timeline to achieve the desired results.

The Federal Government has continued to sustain enlightenment of the masses on indiscriminate cutting down of trees (appropriate sanction for offenders), open defecation, and indiscriminate discharge of refuse into water bodies. Citizens, especially women and children are encouraged to plant more trees instead of cutting them down.

The Parliament played a major role in the passage of the following Acts; Nigeria Climate Change Act 2021 and Petroleum Industry Act 2021. The main objective of the Climate Change Law is to provide an overarching legal framework for achieving Nigeria's long-term climate goals including a net-zero carbon emission target.

The Petroleum Industry Act 2021, (PIA) made provision to address the issues of environmental degradation and other related matters on petroleum exploration which increases the contamination of the land, air, and water bodies in the affected areas, it summaries as follows:

- License holders must set up a “Host Community Development Trust” to fund social and environmental projects in the communities in which facilities related to operations are located.
- Each license holder must make an **annual contribution to the trust of an amount equal to 3% of its operating expenditure** for the relevant operations from the previous year.
- The license holder must appoint a board of trustees (which does not necessarily include members of the host community) and a management committee (which must include one member of the host community) for each trust.
- Failure to comply with host community obligations under the PIA is a ground for license revocation.
- Existing host community projects must be transferred to the new PIA-established trusts. PIA-host community development trust obligations

appear to be added to the existing community levies (such as the Niger Delta Development Levy).

- As the representative of the people, the parliament is innovating in its environment, practice, by investing infrastructure to enable the transition to a greener and fairer economy (.i.e. e-parliament services, solar power generation, and procurement of less carbon emitting infrastructure i.e. Utility Vehicles, Computer, Servers, Network, Air Conditioners, etc.),

The IPU should ensure that;

- a. All efforts and measures are taken to establish a national legislative response to climate change that is consistent with national climate goals and the Paris agreement.
- b. Accelerate the ratification of and implementation of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto protocol.
- c. Strengthening oversight of national and international commitments, including government implementation of national legislation and enhancing transparency and accountability of climate change action.
- d. Raising awareness of climate change among parliamentarians and building cross-party support for addressing national climate risks.
- e. Financial support to assist less developed countries to implement national and international agreements/treaties on climate change.