

Environmental Sustainability: Examining the Importance and Challenges of Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria

A. O. Adeniyi^{1*}, Professor B. Abegunde²

¹Department of Jurisprudence and International Law, Faculty of Law, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

²Department of Jurisprudence and International Law, Faculty of Law, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

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*Corresponding author: A. O. Adeniyi

Department of Jurisprudence and International Law, Faculty of Law, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

Abstract

The hallmark of every nation, developed or developing, is sustainable development. Sustainable development is an emerging field of study concerned with development, which considers not only the present generation but also the future generation. It envisages economic development that does not compromise the capability or integrity of the environment in the sustenance of life, plants and animals as well as the ecosystem. Nigeria, like many other developing countries, is faced with environmental problems such as deforestation, erosion, flooding and desertification. These problems emanate from human activities created in the quest to achieve a higher level of development. The objective of this study is to examine how the environment can be protected to further the goals of sustainable development and examine the impacts of human activities on the environment and the implications on sustainable development. The study is doctrinal and the data are obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are statutes, Federal and State, International Conventions, Protocols and Agreements as well as judicial pronouncement. The secondary sources include textbooks, journals, newspapers and materials sourced from the internet. The study revealed that the environment in Nigeria is confronted with many challenges that should be addressed by law without which the goals of sustainable development are a mirage. The study concluded that Nigeria has, in fact, established and implemented a wide range of clearly defined, comprehensive and environmentally-friendly policies that are sustainable and enforceable. However, enforcement drive is very weak in Nigeria. It is recommended that any limitation placed on The National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (Establishment) Act be removed and more authority be given to the body on all environmental law enforcement.

Keywords: Sustainability, environment, environmental degradation, anthropogenic, sustainable development goals.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development (SD) emerged in the 1970s with the noble idea that individuals would favour development that enhances human wellbeing and social justice while protecting the environment.[1] It was originally conceived as a discourse of resistance, fusing radical environmental consciousness with a critical rethinking of a failed development enterprise by highlighting the scarcity and limits, affluence and poverty, global inequality and the environmental

viability of westernization. [2] The United Nations (UN) General Assembly observed as follows:

In underdeveloped nations, the majority of environmental issues stem from underdevelopment. Millions continue to live below the basic standards required for a dignified human existence, lacking sufficient food, clothing, shelter, education, health care and sanitation. Consequently, developing nations must redirect their resources towards development, bearing in mind their priorities and the need to safeguard and improve the environment. [3]

¹ L. I. Kotze and S. Adelman, 'Environmental Law and the Unsustainability of Sustainable Development: A Tale of Disenchantment and of Hope' (2023) 34 *Law and Critique* 234.

² J. Thornton and S. Beckwith, *Environmental Law* (1st edn, Sweet & Maxwell Limited, 1997) 57.

³ United Nations Documents: Gathering a Body of Global Agreements, from Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment Stockholm, June

From the second half of the 19th decade, western societies started to discover that their economic and industrial endeavours substantially affect the environment and social balance. [4] Man depends on the earth (environmental space) in order to attain the aim of meeting basic needs of life, which includes shelter, clothing and feeding. The process of meeting these needs did not pose any problem before the industrial revolution as man lived by the dictate of nature. Industrial revolution in Europe influenced not only the western world but also brought additional resources, particularly to developing nations. [5] The emerging countries, particularly those in Africa, became the sources of raw commodities to feed the industries in the West. Forestlands were gradually depleted to supply timber for construction activities while the lands were mined for solid minerals in such a way that the developing countries were subjected to severe environmental degradation. [6] The over-exploitation of the forest to meet increasing demand of the populace has severely depleted the resource base to the extent that some timber species have become scarce. [7] Environmental degradation lessens the dimensions of the environment to satisfy ecological and societal demands.

The notion of sustainable growth formed the basis of the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Brazil in 1992. The goal of environmental sustainability of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is a basic part of the requirements for the achievement of the overall goals of equitable development. [8] The sustainable use of the environment implies preservation of the environment from both national and anthropogenic assaults that can impede the lives of generations yet unborn. [9] The environment has continued to suffer anthropogenic

assaults despite the existence of both domestic and international legal frameworks. The challenges of environment in Nigeria include pollution, waste disposal and management, deforestation, desertification, erosion, flooding, cross-border migration of hazardous wastes, global trade in endangered species. [10] The challenges cannot be glossed over otherwise they will be a great slur in the realisation of the goals of sustainable development goals in Nigeria.

2.0 Historical Evolution of Sustainable Development

The 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm was the first World Conference to make the environment a major issue. [11] The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the "Earth Summit" took place in Rio de Janeiro was another major event in the development of Environmental Law globally. [12] The Conference, which took place two decades after Stockholm Conference, was to focus on the impact of human socio-economic activities on the environment. The Conference highlighted how different social, economic and environmental factors are interdependent and evolve together and how success in one section requires action in other sectors to be sustained over time. [13] The United Nations in 2002 convened the world Summit on sustainable development and it took place in Johannesburg, South Africa between 26th August and 4th September 2002.

The Summit adopted a political declaration and implementation plan, which included provisions covering a set of activities and measures to be taken in order to achieve development that takes into account respect for the environment. [14] The United Nations demonstrated its commitment to the realization of the

1972 <www.un-documents.net> accessed 11 June 2026. Environmental challenges relate generally to industrialization and technological development in the industrialized countries. See also Proclamation number 4 of the 1972 United Nations Conference on Human Environment

⁴J. A. Du Pisani, 'Sustainable Development: Historical Roots of the Concepts' (2006) www.tandfonline.com> accessed 10 June 2026.

⁵ A. F. C. Wallace, 'Industrial Revolution' (2022) <www.britannica.com> accessed 10 June 2026. Degradation means qualitative and quantitative deterioration of environmental components, adversely affecting human beings and organisms.

⁶ J. A. Fuwape, 'The Impacts of Forest Industries and Wood Utilization on the Environment' (2003) <www.fao.org> accessed 10 June 2026.

⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸ S. Kumar and N. Kumar and S. Vivekadhis, 'Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development (SDGs): Addressing Unfinished Agenda and Strengthening Sustainable Development and Partnership' (2016) 41 (1) *Indian Journal of Community*

Medicine <www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov> accessed 11 June 2026.

⁹ A. T. Akinjobi, 'Human Right: The Environment and Sustainable Development in Nigeria' in M.O.U. Gasiokwu (ed) *Ecology: Concept, Politics and Legislation* (Chenglo Books, 2013) 462.

¹⁰ S. I. Omofonmwan and G. I. Osa-Edoh, 'The Challenges of Environmental Problems in Nigeria' (2008) 23 (1) *Journal of Human Ecology* 54 - Nigeria has a total land area of 983,213 km² occupied by about 200millions of people. The activities of these people have left indelible mark on the landscape.

¹¹ L.D Guruswany and M.Z Leach, *International Environmental Law in a Nutshell* (5th ed, West Academic Publishing, 2017)

¹² B.C Dorin, 'History of the Concept of Sustainable Development: Literature Review' (2008) <www.researchgate.net> accessed 12 June 2026.

¹³ D.E. Alexander, 'United Nations Conference on Environment and Development' <www.link.springer.com> accessed on 12 June 2026.

¹⁴ 2002: A/CONF.199/20

goals of sustainable development by convening another summit in sustainable development in 2012 at Rio de Janeiro from 13 to 22 June 2012. The 2012 Conference was a Conference of action and implementation of the previous decisions from 1992. The Conference was held sequel to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution. [15] At the conference, member states decided to launch a process to develop a set of sustainable development goals, building on the millennium development goals and converging with the post-2015 development agenda. [16] The concept of sustainable development goal was spearheaded by the United Nations through deliberative process involving 193 member states, as well as global civil society, the goals are contained in paragraph 54 United Nations Resolution A/RES/70/1 of September 2015.[17] The resolution is a broader intergovernmental agreement that acts as the post-2015 development agenda (successor to the millennium development goals).

The SDGs build on the principles agreed upon under Resolution A/RES/66/288 popularly known as the 'future we want'. It is a non-binding document released as a result of Rio+20 conference held in 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. [18] In 2015, the United Nations held another summit on sustainable development in New York between 25 and 27 September 2015. At the three-day summit, more than 150 nation leaders gathered at United Nations headquarters to formally approve an ambitious new agenda for sustainable development. The new plan, tagged "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development by 2030" included a declaration of 17 goals. [19]

3.0 Highlights of Sustainable Development Goals

The environmental conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 will be remembered throughout human history as the event that ended the fixation on economic growth. The pursuit of sustainable development has gained global attention in recent times due to growing awareness and concerns about long-term economic growth and development. Sustainable development is a dynamic process that involves adapting institutions, technology, and investment to meet both the demands of the present and the future. [20] Development is traditionally understood to be the process by which a nation provides

for all its citizens' basic needs, including housing, food and health and gives them the chance to participate in the process through innovations in science and technology as well as gainful employment. [21]

International environmental law promotes the idea of sustainable development, which advocates a striking balance between environmental preservation and economic growths. It is founded on the precautionary principle of International environmental law, which stipulates that where there is a risk of significant or irreversible harm, environmental management must account for scientific uncertainty. [22] The idea of sustainable development is to adapt material advancement to the limitations of natural equilibrium, not to advocate zero growth. [23] The principle is based on the fact that our actions must take into account effects on the environment, the economy and society and that what we should do today should not compromise the well-being of future generations. Sustainable development is a human created chance to improve or unimprove real estate to support or maintain especially over a long period. [24] The vast majority agree that the Brundtland Report from 1987 was where the word "sustainable development" first appeared. It was described as "development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the global goals were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. [25] The roadmap to an improved and more sustainable future for everybody is laid out in the sustainable development goals. They tackle the world's problems, such as those pertaining to poverty, inequality, the environment, climate change, peace and justice. The accomplishment of all 17 goals by 2030 is crucial if we are to leave no one behind because they are all interconnected. [26] Finding sustainable solutions for growth holds the potentials to help reduce poverty, foster development and preserve the environment. The conference was attended by 193 member states of the United Nations and more than 150 world leaders agreed on the agenda for transforming the

¹⁵ United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/64/336 of 24 December 2009

¹⁶ 2012: A/CONF.216/5

¹⁷ General Assembly, 'Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' <www.un.org> accessed 13 June 2026.

¹⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁹ 2015: Resolution A/RES/70/1

²⁰ S.O. Oyedepo, 'Towards Achieving Energy for Sustainable Development in Nigeria' (2014) 34 *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews* 256

²¹ O. G. Amokaye, *Environmental Law and Practice in Nigeria* (1st edn, University of Lagos Press, 2004)

²² N. F. Unuigbo, *Eco-Anthropocentrism and Sustainable Development in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region* (Ambik Press, 2020)

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ *Ibid*

²⁵ UNDP, 'What are the Sustainable Development Goals' (2024) <www.undp.org/sustainable-development> accessed 13 June 2026.

²⁶ United Nations, 'Take Action for the Sustainable Development Goals' (2024) <www.un.org> accessed 13 June 2026.

world by the year 2030. [27] The agenda consists of seventeen (17) goals [28], which summarily are:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, sustainable industry and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries sustainable
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Conserve the use of oceans
15. Protect, restore and promote the use of the ecosystems to combat desertification, land degradation and loss of biodiversity
16. Promote peace for all and provide access to justice for all and build effective and accountable institutions at all costs
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

4.0 Challenges of Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria

The challenges of environment in Nigeria are both anthropogenic and natural in nature. The major portions of the anthropogenically induced challenges are traceable to economic activities of man. The anthropogenically induced challenges of the environment in Nigeria include environmental pollution,

erosion, deforestation, desertification, insecurity and conflicts, lack of proper waste management and disposal, over cultivation of land and overgrazing. The natural challenges of the environment include climate change, flooding and land tremor. The sustainable development goals (SDGs) bring about opportunities and it poses challenges for our country and nations around the world. The challenges of sustainable development in Nigeria are as follows:

4.1 Environmental Pollution

Environmental pollution is the contamination of the physical and biological components of the earth/atmospheric system to such an extent that normal environmental processes are adversely affected. [29] Environmental pollution in Nigeria manifests in the form of air pollution, water pollution and soil pollution. The diverse manifestation of environmental pollution in Nigeria has incapacitated the capability of human and natural resources in the goals of sustainable development. The environment, which is the major component for sustainable development, becomes sterile and lame in performance. In Nigeria, environmental pollution is visible mainly in the southern part of the country and the urban cities all over Nigeria. Environmental pollution is more precarious in the Niger-Delta area of Nigeria, which belongs to the South-South geo-political zone. The Southeast and generally the area referred to as the Niger-Delta area is the oil producing area in Nigeria as the land is blessed with both onshore and offshore crude oil deposits.

The exploration and exploitation of oil in the area have always resulted in air pollution, water pollution and soil pollution. Air pollution may be defined as any atmospheric condition in which certain substances are present in such concentrations that they can produce undesirable effects on man and his environment. [30] Water pollution refers to the presence of excessive amounts of a hazard (pollutants) in water in such a way that it is no longer suitable for drinking, bathing or other uses. [31] In the Niger-Delta area which is the oil-producing area, the air is polluted from the activities of oil producing companies and specifically by gas flaring. In the urban centre's, air pollution occurs from the activities of industries that depend on fossil fuels in the process of power generation. [32] Other causes of air pollution in Nigeria include indiscriminate burning of

²⁷ O. Olagunju, Prospects and Challenges of Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria, Low Carbon Economy as Solution for Mitigating Climate Change Impacts: A Case Study of Lagos State (2018) available at <www.grin.com> accessed 13 June 2026

²⁸ World Health Organization, 'United Nations Sustainable Development Summit' (2015) available at <www.who.int> accessed 14 June 2026.

²⁹ I. V Muralikrishna, 'Environmental Pollution' (2017) available at <www.sciencedirect.com> accessed 14 June 2026

³⁰ M. Admassu, and M Wubeshet, 'Lecture Notes for Environmental Health Science Students: Air Pollution' (2006) available at <www.cartercentre.org> accessed 15 June 2026.

³¹ N. S Olaniran, 'Environment and Health: An Introduction' in Olaniran, N.S *et al.*, (Eds) *Environment and Health* (Macmillian Nigeria Publication Company 1995) 35

³² S. Ogunleye, 'Pollution: An Environmental Malediction in the Niger-Delta' in A Osuntokun (Ed),

refuse, transportation, bush burning and solid minerals exploitation especially in places blessed with rich deposit of solid minerals such as Zamfara State, Niger State, Osun State, Plateau State etc. Water pollution hampers the supply of water for domestic use and renders the people jobless by destroying marine and aquatic living resources of the people who are predominantly anglers. [33] Soil pollution occurs not only in the oil producing areas in Nigeria, even though it is more prevalent there, it occurs also in all the communities in Nigeria especially in the process of farming. In the oil producing areas, oil pollution, just like in the case of water pollution arises from oil spillage. In Nigeria, oil spillage arising from the activities of Mobil oil producing company and Shell British Petroleum (now Royal Dutch Shell) has rendered the soil environment in Ogoni-land barren and therefore making farming activities impossible. [34]

4.2 Poverty

Poverty is an age long phenomenon that has ravaged the society, it encompasses inadequate income and denial of necessities of life, such as education, health services, clean water and sanitation, which are essential for human survival, dignity and realisation of one's potential. One of the major challenges facing development in Nigeria is sustainable means of livelihood and putting an end to poverty across the country. Poverty has been classified into three: absolute, relative and subjective. [35] Poverty is a state or condition in which a person or community lacks the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living. [36] Absolute poverty is when household income is below a certain level, which makes it impossible for the person or family to meet basic needs of life including food, shelter, safe drinking water, education, healthcare etc. [37] poverty often causes people to put relatively more pressure on the environment thereby over-exploiting which might affect future use. [38] As of present, poverty in Nigeria is on the increase as rich people continue to get richer and poor people get poorer. There is a wide gap between the rich and the poor in Nigeria. The prices of basic commodities

in Nigeria continue to be on the increase, which makes it difficult for an average Nigerian citizen to purchase foodstuffs for their families as many States of the Federation have failed to implement the national minimum wage and those who have implemented are paying salaries of workers in percentage claiming unavailability of funds. Poverty is a great barrier militating against the ability of the people to exploit resources in a sustainable manner. The objective of sustainable development is to reduce over-exploitation of natural, in order that the future generation can also exploit them as the high rate of poverty in Nigeria is responsible for widespread of environmental degradation.

4.3 Unemployment

Youth unemployment is increasingly recognized as a driver of instability and violence in many African countries. [39] Young people are the force that drives the economy of a nation positively or negatively. Unemployment is a term referring to individuals who are employable and actively seeking a job but are unable to find a job and included in this group are those people in the workforce who are working but do not have an appropriate job. [40] The unemployment of youth is associated with an increase of the risk of political instability. [41] When large numbers of youth are unemployed, their quest to survive may make them to become willing tool in the hands of maverick and disgruntled politicians who may want to use them for anti-social and clandestine political activities. [42] These youths are provided with weapons, which they use against their opponents, the weapons remains with them after election and the youth are abandoned. Upon abandonment, the youth resorts to using the said weapons to destabilise the society, destroying lives and properties, which has a negative impact on economic development. Unemployment makes the youths to resort to vocation that will generate quick money at the expense of the environment. [43] The truth of the matter is that, sustainable development is attainable if youths are gainfully employed in society. Hence, it is necessary to

Environmental Problems of the Niger-Delta. (Intec Printers Limited, 2000) 38

³³F. W Owa, 'Water Pollution: Sources, Effects, Control and Management' (2014) 3 *Journal of International Letters of Natural Sciences*

³⁴ A. A. Kadafa, 'Oil Exploration and Spillage in the Niger Delta of Nigeria' (2012) 2 (3) *Civil and Environmental Research* 38

³⁵ M. K Imam-Tamim, 'Challenges of Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Legal Perspectives' (2014) <www.researchgate.net> accessed 15 June 2026.

³⁶ J. Chen, 'What is Poverty?' (2020) <www.investopedia.com> accessed 16 June 2026

³⁷ Habitat for Humanity, 'Absolute Poverty' (2017) <www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk> accessed 16 June 2026.

³⁸ N. D Bharadwaj, 'The Relationship between Poverty and the Environment' (2016) available at <www.voicesofyouth.org> accessed 16 June 2026.

³⁹ P.S Cizero, 'Youth Unemployment in the Great Lakes Region: A Challenge for Peace Building and Sustainable Development' (2015) 4 (1) *Great Insights Magazine*

⁴⁰ CFI, 'What is Unemployment' (2021) available at <www.poratefinanceinstitute.com> accessed 16 June 2026.

⁴¹ *Ibid*

⁴² R. E. Chukwudiso, N. H. Uchenna & N. I. Jide, 'Youth Unemployment and Sustainable development in Nigeria' (2023) 2 (2) *International Journal of Public Administration* 299

⁴³ W. A. Adebayo, *Contemporary Issues in International Environmental Law* (1st edn, Ekiti State University Press, 2017)

implement dynamic economic policies in order to lower the unemployment rate and increase employment in order to achieve sustainable economic growth.

4.4 Climate Change

Climate change is the most significant challenge to achieving sustainable development and it threatens to drag millions of people into grinding poverty. [44] Climate change and development are inseparable. Climate change is the consequence of current global production and consumption patterns and the resulting increase in greenhouse gas emissions. [45] Climate change and environment degradation are among the greatest challenges facing humanity. Greenhouse gas emissions and over exploitation of natural resources are at the root of the problem and are causing rise in global temperatures. [46] Climate change also known as global warming is the global phenomenon created predominantly by burning fossil fuels, which add heat-trapping gases to earth's atmosphere. It is the phenomenon of climate transformation characterized by the changes in the usual climate of the planet. [47]

Adverse weather or poor climatic conditions have constrained people to behave in ways detrimental to environmental welfare. A phase of drought will reduce agricultural abundance and in order to keep up with production, farmers are forced to plunder natural resources for monetary gains. It should be accepted that climate change is caused by human activity. Climate change affects the quality of life of the population in many different ways.

4.5 Lack of Financial Resources

Generally, the sustainable development goals will require a lot to see the achievement. The world is currently facing extremely difficult challenges to sustainable development and environmental management. Global recession is hindrance to financing sustainable development goals. Finance is a major constraint in achieving the sustainable development goals. Nigeria is already plagued with issues like corruption, mismanagement of funds and diversion of funds. It is pertinent to point out that corruption undermines government's ability to serve their people.

Corruption acts as a brake on development, depriving millions of people around the country their rights, services and employment, which they desperately need and deserve. [48] When corruption prevails in any society, development is threatened. Lack of accountability among public employees, despite the huge reliance of crude oil and natural gas for economic growth is one factor militating against the achievement of sustainable development. [49] Closely linked to the aforementioned is the high cost of governance as government revenues are mostly spent on the government itself.

Goal 2 of the sustainable development goal, which is putting an end to hunger and achieving food security, cannot be achieved in the face of corruption. The embezzlement of funds meant for feeding refugees in Internally Displaced camps, makes the resident face hunger and disease on a daily basis. [50] These and many more are the cases of embezzling and mismanagement of funds meant to lift people from poverty in Nigeria. Again, was the palliative meant to relieve people from severe hunger during corona virus pandemic that was hoarded in private warehouses across States in Nigeria? [51]

4.6 Conflicts and Insecurity

Conflicts and insecurity from 2009 till date in Nigeria and particularly in the Northern part of Nigeria have continued to hamper the efforts of Nigeria towards the goals of sustainable development. Conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria are now a daily occurrence not only in the northern part of Nigeria but across all the States of the Federation. In the Northern part, communities, especially the farming communities in Benue, Zamfara and major States have been destroyed by the carnage of herdsmen while the survivors are forced to relocate to the internally displaced camps. Insecurity is a feeling of inadequacy (not being good enough) and uncertainty. [52]

Insecurity of lives and properties has been a daily occurrence in Nigeria for the past few years. Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity [53] ranging from kidnapping for ransom,

⁴⁴ R. Kyte, 'Climate Change is a Challenge for Sustainable Development' (2014) <www.worldbank.org> accessed 16 June 2026.

⁴⁵ ECA, 'Climate Change Poses Serious Challenge Towards Achieving Sustainable Development Goals' (2019) <www.reliefweb.int> accessed 16 June 2026.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*

⁴⁷ ACFID, 'Climate Change' (2021) <www.worlddivision.com.au> accessed 16 June 2026.

⁴⁸ UNODC, 'Corruption and Sustainable Development' (2021) <www.anticorruptionday.org> accessed 16 June 2026.

⁴⁹ A. Yunusa, M. Ezekiel, O. A. Abduljabbar, 'Challenges of Achieving the Sustainable Development

Goals in Nigeria' (2023) <www.ncce.gov.ng> accessed 16 June 2026.

⁵⁰ Y. Kazeem, 'An \$8 Million Refugee Fund Scandal Shows Buhari's Anti-Corruption Drive is not Going to Plan' (2016) *QUARTZ Africa* <www.qz.com> accessed 16 June 2026.

⁵¹ I. O. Eranga, 'Covid-19 Pandemic in Nigeria: Palliative Measures and the Politics of Vulnerability' (2020) 9 (2) *International Journal of Maternal and Child Health and AIDS*

⁵² D. Brennan, 'Signs of Insecurity' (2020) <www.webmd.com> accessed 16 June 2026.

⁵³ O. J. Nwamaka and D.K Stephen, 'Insecurity and Sustainable Development In Nigeria: In Context of

destruction of crops of farmlands in all the States across Nigeria. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) provides that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. [54] The alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria has increased the crime rate and terrorist attacks in different parts of the country leaving unpalatable consequences for the nation’s economy and business growth. [55] Armed banditry, Boko haram, Fulani herdsmen are impediments to booming economy of a nation. The atrocities perpetrated by the dare-devil Fulani herdsmen and bandits have become a threat to national security and development of Nigeria because it has caused a lot of set-back for the country bringing about scarcity of foods as farmers no longer want to go to their farm for fear of being kidnapped.

In addition, their increased operation has caused a diversion and taken away government’s attention on some key areas of the economy. In the State where insecurity is prevalent in Nigeria, their economy is grounded, as people are afraid to go about their daily activities for fear of being kidnapped or killed. In the affected States, agricultural productivity has been hampered while the resources that should be deployed for sustainable development are being used to cater for the needs of the displaced people.

5.0 Blueprint for Sustainable Development

In order to protect resources for the benefit of future generations, we must embrace sustainable development agenda. Adopting this idea will help us keep the ecology in balance. [56] Achieving sustainable development is providing for present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. It is our civic duty to use our natural resources responsibly since many of them have a finite supply. In essence, economic, social and environmental protection is important for sustainable development. Working towards progress while keeping in mind how important it is to take care of the environment we live in is known as “sustainable development”. The fundamental tenet of sustainable development is to address today’s demand while considering those of tomorrow. [57] The goals of sustainable development are to strike a balance between social, environmental and economic demands. Sustainability is essential to a country’s growth and

development because it fosters social and economic advancement, which in turn leads to environmental sustainability. [58] Sustainable development is no longer rhetoric but a cliché for all nations aspiring to stay afloat and be developed. The following blueprint is imperative for Nigeria.

5.1 Emphasizes Ecological Farming Practices

Sustainable development is crucial because it ensures that the expanding population does not strain mother earth and meets the demands of future generations. it encourages eco-friendly agricultural practices including crop rotation and effective seeding methods. The main objective is to increase food production in a sustainable manner and to enhance food security. [59]

5.2 Mitigation of Climate Change

As a result of the overuse of fossil fuels and the destruction of animal habitats, we are dealing with the issue of climate change. Sustainable development practices contribute significantly to the prevention of climate change. It encourages cutting back on the use of fossil fuels, which spew greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Lowered greenhouse gas emissions and sustainable development are essential for mitigating climate change. [60]

5.3 Sustainable Biodiversity

Biodiversity also refers to the variety of life and its processes. It includes the variety of living organisms the genetic difference among them, the communities and ecosystem in which they occur, and the ecological and evolutionary processes that keep them functioning, yet ever changing and adapting. [61] All other living things will continue to have homes and habitats if the sustainable approaches are adhered to. Naturally, biodiversity maintenance and protection are aided by sustainable development since it places a strong emphasis on ecosystem preservation. Sustainable development helps to preserve and improve both the natural and built environments in which we live. It includes conservation of natural resources, cutting down on waste and pollution and assisting in the adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

Terrorism’ 2018 7(2) *Asian journal of Economics, Business and Accounting*

⁵⁴ Section 14 (2) (b)

⁵⁵ *Ibid*

⁵⁶ J. Sharma, ‘Importance of Sustainable Development and its Objectives’ (2024) <www.shiksha.com/online-courses> accessed 17 June 2026.

⁵⁷ Geeks, ‘Importance of Sustainable Development’ (2024) <www.geeksforgeeks.org/importance-of-sustainable-development> accessed 17 June 2026.

⁵⁸ A. Talan & A. N. Pathak & R. D. Tyagi, ‘The Need, Role and Significance of Sustainability’ (2020)

<www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002> accessed 17 June 2026.

⁵⁹ D. V. J. Bell & Y. A. Cheung, ‘Introduction to Sustainable Development’ (2002) *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems*

⁶⁰ I. Ahmad, ‘Importance of Sustainable Development’ (2023) <www.pw.live/exams/commerce/importance-of-sustainable-development> accessed 17 June 2026.

⁶¹ R. F. Noss and A. Y. Carpenter, *Saving Nature’s Legacy: Protecting and Restoring Biodiversity* (Island Press, 1994)

5.4 Stability of Finances

The employment of renewable energy sources can bolster national economies more than the usage of fossil fuels, of which the earth can only contain so much, as sustainable development ensures continuous growth. [62] It is important in establishing a resilient, robust and competitive economy. Achieving financial success is a complex process that affects every aspect of the society. Sustainable development entails making certain that there is enough space and funding for the purpose of expansion and ensures that sensible laws are in place to encourage creativity and that financial risks are reduced.[63]

5.5 Conservation of Natural Resources

Businesses and nations can expand in ways that respond to the problems presented by climate change with the aid of sustainable development methods. Communities can prosper and vital natural resources are preserved for not only the present generations but also future generations. [64] It helps to encourage robust, dynamic and healthy communities. It entails keeping up a high standard of development that represents the needs of the community and promotes its social, cultural and health well-being in addition to ensuring a supply of housing to fulfill the demands of the present and future generations. [65]

5.6 Prevention of Environmental Pollution

The pollution of the environment can be prevented through clean energy, prohibition of gas flaring, as it is a major source of industrial pollution. There is need for adequate monitoring of industries to ensure effluent control because in the course of industrial manufacturing, a variety of poisonous compounds, organic and inorganic substances, toxic solvents and volatile organic chemicals may be released. Lastly, there must be adequate enforcement of laws to ensure polluters pay for environmental degradation.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The challenges of environmental protection and sustainable development are no doubt in-exhaustive because environmental issues are imminent, considering the fact that the environment belongs to both humans and

non-humans, which make use of the earth resources. To this end, urgent attention needs to be paid to the environment to ensure its sustainability. Confronting the environmental sustainability issues in Nigeria necessitates comprehensive solutions, efficacious policies, heightened public awareness and international collaboration. Implementing sustainable behaviours, conservation initiatives and adopting renewable energy are crucial for alleviating environmental degradation and fostering a more sustainable future for the nation. The success of these initiatives and the assurance of their effects depend on the effectiveness of current environmental protection regulations. The study makes the following recommendations for probable implementation.

- a. It is recommended that a new legislation with specific details should be enacted apart from the provision in the Constitution, (which is non-justiceable) incorporating sustainable development as a means to environmental protection.
- b. There is a need for awareness program to be embarked upon by environmental agencies, for instance, the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) and other agencies such as the National Orientation Agency ((NOA) for the purpose of creating awareness on the dangers posed to human health and the environment by polluting the environment.
- c. Availability of more jobs will reduce the rate of environmental degradation thereby boosting sustainable development in Nigeria.
- d. The commitment of Governors and other Government officials to sustainable development goals will help to alleviate poverty and bring about development and an enabling environment that will boost business and environmental growth.
- e. The federal and state governments should take proactive approach to flush out the criminals from the forestlands.

⁶² Geeks, 'Importance of Sustainable Development' (2024) <www.geeksforgeeks.org/importance-of-sustainable-development> accessed 17 June 2026.

⁶³ L. Steinbrink, 'What is Sustainable Development and Why is it so Important' (2019)

<www.blog.emeraldbe.com/new_blog/sustainable_development_important> accessed 17 June 2026.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*

⁶⁵ *Ibid*