



## **Features of International Environmental Cooperation in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.**

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### **Abstract**

The paper discusses the features of international cooperation on environmental issues in Nigeria: the role of international agreements in the field of environmental ecology; basic principles of international cooperation in the field of environmental protection; environmental education in Nigeria; principles of environmental project management; and several measures aimed at reducing atmospheric pollution.

The issues of coordination both between the state and between international organizations dealing with similar problems, as well as issues of mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of environmental ecology are considered in the Research paper.

**Keywords:** *Ecology of the environment, International cooperation, Environmental education, International agreements, Principles of environmental protection.*

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### **Introduction**

The protection of environmentally clean natural resources such as water, air, soil and food is one of the main problems of international cooperation. This is due to the fact that the energy crisis and global warming, has regional and often global implications, and can be addressed only through the joint efforts of the international community. Such cooperation is possible if several countries concerned meet together and, having reached an agreement, arrive at some framework agreements on goals, objectives, methods of problem-solving and results, preparing further documentation and generally implementing projects, and presenting international standards in the field of environmental protection developed through cooperation.

On the other hand, as long as environmental pollution persists, the most successful way out of this situation is to join forces at the international level, as communication between countries provides a platform for the generation and dissemination of expertise and the sharing of related resources. For example, to address the problems associated with large-scale logging in the Amazon basin during logging, several South American countries meet regularly to exchange knowledge and experience among the various economic organizations in the region, logging authorities and organizations [1]. During such cooperation, it is easy to

obtain real resources, including information, financial support, and experts. It should be noted that increasing levels of economic activity in developed countries and, on the contrary, a significant deterioration in the financial situation of the local population (Aboriginals) have led to a reduction in the agricultural population in developing countries (see fig. 1), which was observed in all countries of the world in the XX century, the rapid urbanization of the population and the consequent increase in social (crime, see. fig. 2) and environmental problems, in particular the destruction of tropical forests (fig. 3), increased unhygienic conditions, etc. [2-4].

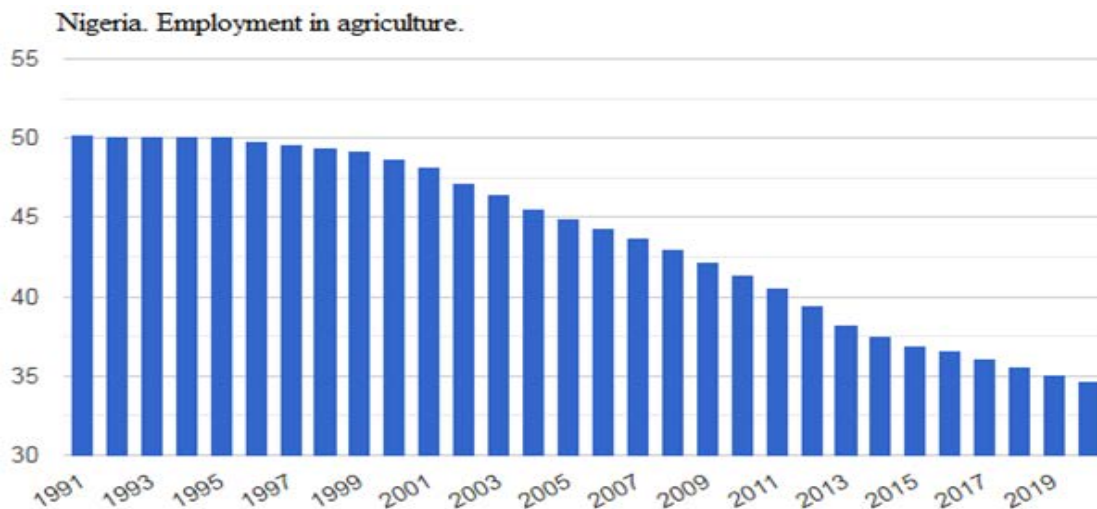


Figure: 1. The diagram of employment of the local population in agriculture [5].

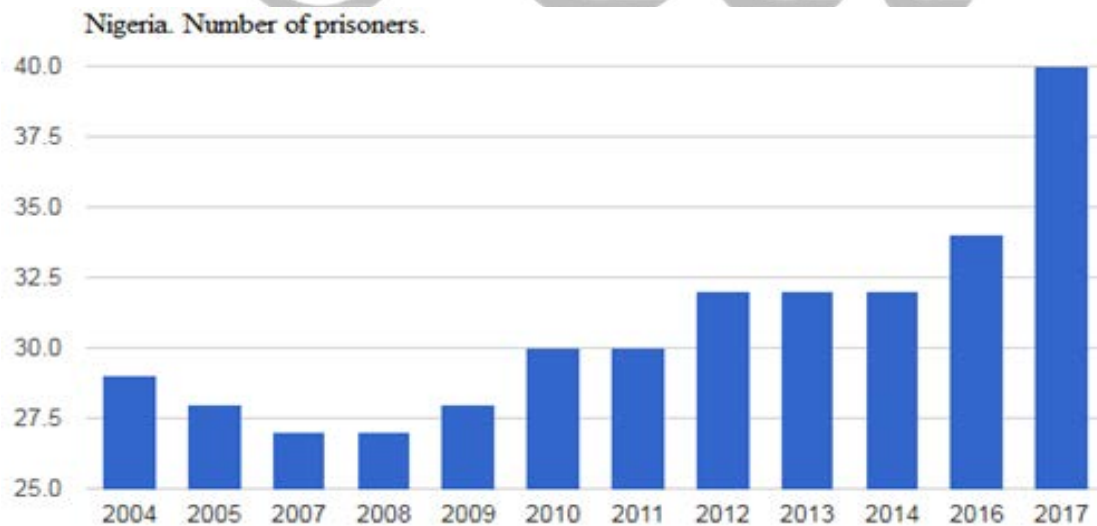


Figure: 2. Chart of growth in crime in Nigeria [5].

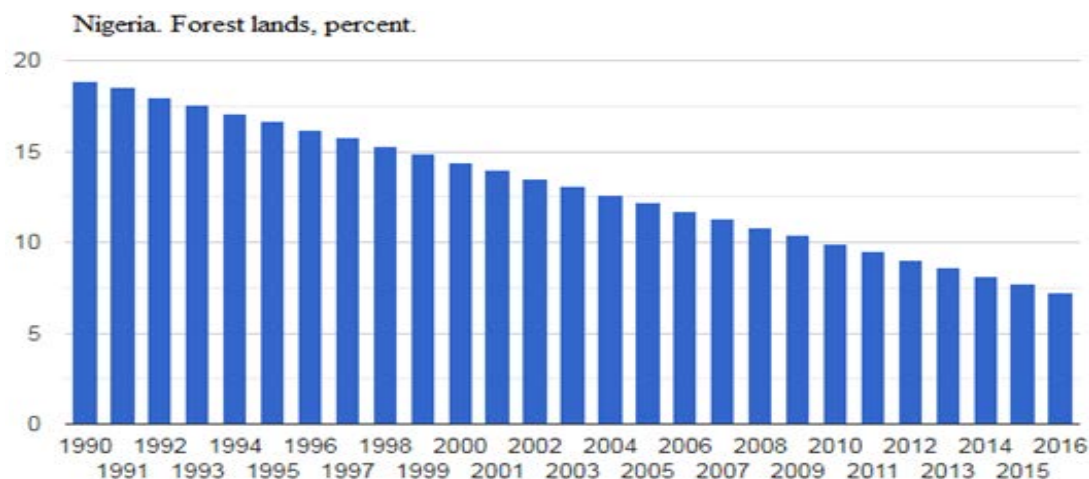


Figure: 3. Diagram of deforestation in Nigeria [5].

Indeed, the impoverishment of the local smallholder population necessitates the sale of their smallholdings, as they cannot withstand the competition from large landowners. In this case, they go to the city, increasing the urban population, but due to lack of education they cannot find employment (work), and therefore cannot rent decent housing and settle in urban slums (Makoko in Lagos, Nigeria) and increase the unemployment and social and environmental pressure on the city (see Fig. 4). Besides, environmental problems in developing countries, particularly the environmental damage caused by uncontrolled industrialization on the one hand, and the uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources on the other, make the livelihoods of the indigenous peoples of these regions threatened. Such «development» of regions of some developing countries requires urgent action within the framework of global cooperation, as it can lead not only to environmental problems in the said regions but also to negative social consequences.



Figure: 4. Makoko in Nigeria. Makoko about a century ago was a fishing village, which was founded by people from neighbouring Benin. The slum population is now populated by migrant workers from across West Africa.

International cooperation in the field of environmental protection is based on several accepted norms of international law, which focus on the protection of the global environment. Its originality is linked to the principle that each State should not allow its territory to be used

in a manner that would harm the territory of other States. Since then, international environmental law has been expanded by several legally binding international agreements. These agreements cover a wide range of issues: from the pollution of land, sea and atmosphere to wildlife and biodiversity protection. Its main events and key constitutional moments were the 1972 United Nations Convention on the Human Environment in Stockholm and the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro [6, 7]. In the 1990s, environmental issues related to economic development were discussed internationally as a global issue. As a result, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was held in Brazil in June 1992, which adopted the Agenda 21 Action Plan, based on the concept of sustainable development. Subsequently, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Declaration of Principles on Forest Management were also adopted. Later, with the development of international cooperation, a number of other global framework programs were adopted aimed at solving global environmental problems. These programs include the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Kyoto Protocol and the Biosafety Convention in Cartagena, Colombia [7].

In a world of competing jurisdictions and multi-tiered governments, environmental problems are not unique to a single State or region. For example, pollution causes damage in a region, which eventually also affects neighbouring areas. Besides, environmental problems are common to several countries. This applies to most issues even if they are local and within national boundaries. Environmental problems are found all over the world, and this is the reason for the widespread interest of policymakers, which they demonstrate in the world [8]. Several problems can, in some cases, be addressed by national authorities and, at first glance, there may not be an urgent need for international cooperation. However, the fact that many regions and countries face the same problems is a major reason for cooperation. Benchmarking helps to identify the main causes and problems and can facilitate the dissemination of policies, technologies and the sharing of best practices [9]. Besides, depending on the extent to which a problem requires substantial scientific and technological funding, international cooperation can facilitate the acquisition and sharing of knowledge, as well as reducing costs and improving overall efficiency. Thus, the most valuable contribution of international cooperation can be said to be the acquisition of intellectual capital, financing, information and technology, which facilitates the economic integration of all countries of cooperation.

The goal of international cooperation in the field of environmental protection is to preserve the environment as a platform for the natural habitation of humankind. It is therefore

essential that all countries, including Nigeria, that share a common environment establish and strengthen environmental management mechanisms. Moreover, since the development of any country depends on a healthy environment, and sustainable development requires the preservation of the local environment, including air, water and soil, and since environmental protection at the local level is a prerequisite for progress in basic services, developing countries such as Nigeria will ultimately need to address not only their local environmental problems but also the global challenges facing the entire world's population. Thus, cooperation for the preservation of the natural ecology of our planet has become an agreement between countries, providing the necessary mechanism for their implementation, while sustainable policies have also been singled out within each country as a policy instrument supporting these agreements. Only in this way will we be able to provide an optimal and effective solution to the environmental problems of the world as a whole.

### **1.1 The role of international agreements in the field of environmental ecology**

Harmonization of international agreements in the environmental field is one of the main ways in which the world community can emerge from the environmental crisis. It is generally recognized that an exit strategy can be achieved only through the unity of action of all States in the field of environmental protection. Today, no country can solve its environmental problems alone or cooperate with a small group of countries. Clear coordinated efforts by all States are needed, as a form of coordination among them on a strict international legal basis. The environment can be considered as part of the common heritage of mankind, as some cycles and mechanisms of nature operate beyond national boundaries [10]. Actions in one country often have a direct impact on another as seen in several instances. International treaties and conventions help to ensure the sustainable use of shared resources as well as the overall and effective management of environmental problems, including global warming and the conservation of biodiversity. Nigeria is a party to several regional and international agreements.

Cooperation among States, within regions and at the international level is essential for the protection of environmental resources and the peaceful use of such resources in a sustainable manner. For example, the River Niger originates in Guinea (see fig. 5) and extends over a distance of 4,180 km through Mali, the Republic of Niger and Nigeria. Since the Niger River basin is shared by 10 countries, water management is internationally coordinated by the Niger Basin Authority (NBA). A major NBA initiative has been the adoption and implementation of the Sustainable Development Action Plan [11], which most notably includes the management of several hydroelectric and agricultural dams built along the river. When one country wants to construct a dam, it must develop plans for NBA

decision, as the representatives of each Niger River Basin country are part of the NBA, each country has the opportunity to comment on water development plans.



Figure: 5. Illustration to the question of the formation of the Niger River Basin in Nigeria and other neighbouring countries.

The NBA supports a strong legal framework for cooperation in water resources management and encourages cooperation on potential investments between countries with river borders. The NBA has its responsibilities in ensuring that water use in the Niger River makes sense for the entire basin and is in the interest of local communities. The NBA has made progress in many joint projects, such as the Niger Hycos of Niger, which collect and collate data from NBA member countries. There is also a riverbank protection project. Furthermore, bilateral joint initiatives are being implemented between the countries of the basin. For example, a joint project between Mali and Guinea in the upper Niger basin [12], was initiated in response to a pollution incident in upper Guinea that affected the supply of drinking water in Bamako, the capital of Mali. Accordingly, Mali, Niger and Nigeria have taken steps at the national level to implement adaptation planning for climate change. Mali and Niger developed National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). This is a requirement for the least developed countries that are signatories to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Nigeria, which is not the least developed country, was not obliged to prepare a NAPA. However, with the support of UNDP and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Nigeria prepared a similar document in 2010 as her National Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (NASPA) [12]. Regional and international cooperation allows for the sharing of knowledge, responsibilities, experience and technical know-how on environmental issues and lack of cooperation between countries can lead to resource conflicts, regional instability, and the unsustainable use of environmental resources. For example, the earlier existence of dams on

the River Niger, combined with climate variability, in the past has led to misunderstandings between countries sharing the river. The Seling Dam project in 1982 coincided with a drought period, and downstream countries believed that Mali had conserved water, resulting in lower river flows. Such incidents can now be dealt with by the NBA as data are collected and transmitted between countries [12].

As a rule, nature knows no State borders, it is universal and unified. Therefore, disruptions in one country's ecosystem will inevitably trigger reactions in neighbouring countries. If, for example, Nigerian industries or other countries emit flue gases into the atmosphere with an unacceptably high proportion of harmful contaminants, these emissions will not adversely affect only the environmental health of these countries, but also causes considerable damage to the flora and fauna of neighbouring countries. All other components of the natural environment (river flow, marine waters, migratory species of animals, etc.) do not recognize State boundaries. As seen, the high priority of the environmental factor in international relations is constantly increasing due to the progressive deterioration of the biosphere.

### **1.2 Basic principles of international cooperation in the field of environmental protection**

International cooperation in the field of environmental protection is governed by international environmental law, which is based on universally recognized principles and norms [10]. The United Nations International Conference on the Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) made some important contributions to the development of these principles. Other related international cooperation includes; Malmo Declaration, 2000; World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002, Johannesburg, South Africa; Rio + 20, 2012: Adopted by Brazil in Rio de Janeiro; Paris Agreement, 2016, etc. Accordingly, in the history of the development of the basic environmental principles of international cooperation, the land mark Cooperation, in particular, was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992) [13].

The conference hosted a meeting of 114 heads of state and representatives of 1600 non-governmental organizations. It was undoubtedly the most impressive environmental forum in the 20th century. Five key documents were approved at the conference: the Declaration of Rio de Janeiro on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, Statement of Principles for the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests, Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention on Biological Diversity, etc. The most important achievement of the United Nations Conference was the recognition of the following facts: "the problems of the environment and economic development cannot be

considered separately" (principle 4), "States must cooperate in a spirit of inclusive partnership in order to preserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem" (principle 7), "Peace, development and environmental protection are interrelated and inseparable" (principle 25). It was recommended to develop an environmental strategy taking into account the state of the world community [6, 10]. A decade later, an informal 2002 Earth Summit called Rio + 10 was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, with the goal of bringing together leaders of governments, business and NGOs to agree on a range of measures to achieve similar goals. At the Rio + 10 Conference, sustainable development was recognized as a primary goal for institutions at the national, regional and international levels. In this regard, the need to better mainstream sustainable development issues in the work of all relevant United Nations agencies, programs and funds was emphasized. The discussion also highlighted the role of institutions in accelerating efforts to bridge the gap between international financial institutions and multilateral development banks and the rest of the United Nations system. The Rio + 20 Conference, hosted by Brazil in Rio de Janeiro, is a 20-year follow-up to the 1992 UNCED Earth Summit in the same city in Johannesburg. The conference was dedicated to Agenda 21 and the 1992 Earth Summit Outcome Document. It was considered revolutionary in the sense that it essentially created the term sustainable development and the global environmental agenda for the next 20 years. Next is the Paris Agreement, which builds on the Paris Convention in 2016 and engages all countries for the first time in an ambitious effort to combat and adapt to climate change, with broader support to help developing countries adapt to climate change measures. Thus, it charts a new course in the global effort to combat climate change.

### **1.3. Nigeria's Participation and Development in International Environmental Cooperation.**

To promote environmental sustainability under international agreements, Nigeria has developed the 1999 National Environmental Policy (revised guidance document in 2016), a key policy document for sustainable development. In this document, policies and programs for broad environmental categories relate to forestry, biodiversity, pollution control, land degradation, water management, climate change, marine and coastal environment, clean energy, and environmental crime. Nigeria has participated in various environmental conferences and has signed several environmental treaties and conventions [6] as shown in table 1. These treaties and conventions signed by Nigeria and other countries are aimed at regulating several activities ranging from intercontinental movements of hazardous wastes to problems related to deforestation, global warming, prohibition and cessation of trade in endangered species of birds, animals and insects and protection of wetlands [6, 14-15]. These agreements [14], theoretically cover almost all aspects of human impact on the environment.



Table: 1

Nigeria's Treaties and Conventions on the Environment.		
Title of treaty or convention	Year of signing	Year of enforcement
African Convention on the conservation of nature and natural resources.	1968	1974
Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage.	1972	1975
Convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora (CITES).	1973	1987
Vienna Convention for the protection of the Ozone layer and the Montreal protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer.	1985	1988
Amendment to the Convention on the Control of Trans boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal.	2004	2019
International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage.	2010	2011
Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.	2004	2005
Amendments to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.	2007	2016
International convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa.	1994	1997
Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	2004	2004
Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter.	2010	2010
The Kyoto Protocol to the UN convention on climate change.	1997	1997

The Nigerian government also takes pollution and degradation of the environment seriously. Various national and regional initiatives have been undertaken at all levels of government with efforts to promote environmental sustainability in the context of national sustainable development [13, 15]. The Government has successfully put in place some institutional arrangements for environmental governance. The Federal Ministry of Environment is mandated to ensure a quality environment favourable to the health and well-being of fauna and flora; to promote the sustainable use of natural resources, and to restore and maintain the ecosystem, raising public awareness and promoting understanding of, inter alia, the inter-linkages between the environments.

Besides, specialized agencies have been established to focus more on some specific environmental issues. These include the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) and the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), which were established in 2006 and 2007 respectively (Nigeria Rio Summit Report, 2012). NOSDRA has the mandate to implement the national oil spill contingency plan, and NESREA is responsible for ensuring compliance with all environmental laws, guidelines, policies, standards and regulations in Nigeria, and ensure compliance with all international environmental agreements, protocols, conventions and treaties which Nigeria signed [13]. To address climate change, Nigeria has put in place institutional structures and

policies for national implementation of the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol and other instruments. The Government is also concerned with environmental protection and sustainable development of the Niger Delta, which is the country's crude oil base. One of the main concerns of the federal government of Nigeria is the steady decline in the area of national forests (see fig.6), and efforts to ensure sustainable forest management. For this purpose, based on the development of appropriate strategies and an action plan, appropriate actions and programs aimed at preserving forest lands are being undertaken. The severe environmental and socio-economic impacts of desertification and drought in Nigeria have also prompted the government to implement catchment irrigation projects that broadly demonstrate its commitment to promoting sustainable agricultural and rural development.

In addition, in 2016, the federal government set itself a political target for biological diversity, taking into account the relevant provision of the Convention on Biological Diversity. To achieve this, priority programs are being implemented to expand the network of national parks and reserves and collect data on the flora and fauna of Nigeria. In addition, in an effort to ensure the sustainable use of our coastal waters and adjacent lands, the government has developed an action plan to combat water pollution and conserve biodiversity in the Niger Delta region in the country. Nigeria is also prioritizing its freshwater resources in response to growing concerns about the increasing pressure on water supply systems from poor water use, which affects both water quality and quantity. In this regard, the government, through the Ministry of Water Resources and Rural Development, is implementing programs aimed at protecting the quality and ensuring the supply of fresh water in the country.

The Nigerian government has also developed approaches to protect and manage the environmental impacts and human health risks associated with the exploration and production of oil and natural gas in the Niger Delta. The federal government of Nigeria has enacted laws and regulations so that the exploration and production of petroleum resources, both onshore and offshore, can be controlled by legal systems designed to minimize environmental impacts and human health risks [16]. The international community, as well as the government of Nigeria, have recognized that desertification is a global economic, social and environmental problem for many countries in all regions of the world, and it cannot cope with this problem alone without involving other states [17]. To this end, the Government of Nigeria has facilitated the involvement of other actors, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations, NGOs, community-based organizations and private investors for collaboration in environmental protection in the country.

### 1.4. Environmental Education in Nigeria

Environmental education (EE) plays an important role in creating knowledge and positive attitudes and behaviour towards the environment among members of society [18]. It helps to educate people and better understand their nature and the consequences of their actions. According to Thathong, 2012 [19], since education can help find new ways to cultivate positive attitudes and attributes to overcome environmentally destructive behavior, it can lead to individual desire and willingness to take action for the environment. The need for EE is essential and compulsory for the education system in Nigeria. The need or demand for EE is due to the result of discrimination of the negative human actions on the environment, which causes environmental injustice, land degradation, and pollution, which ultimately leads to ecological collapse - agricultural land degradation, pollution of the river and coastal marine basins, and the degradation of fish stocks, with a negative impact on the population. This is due to the fact that many Nigerians do not have knowledge of the environment, even though they have some access to general education (see Figure 6), and therefore they do not understand the values of nature and do not perceive the problem that arises between a person and environment.

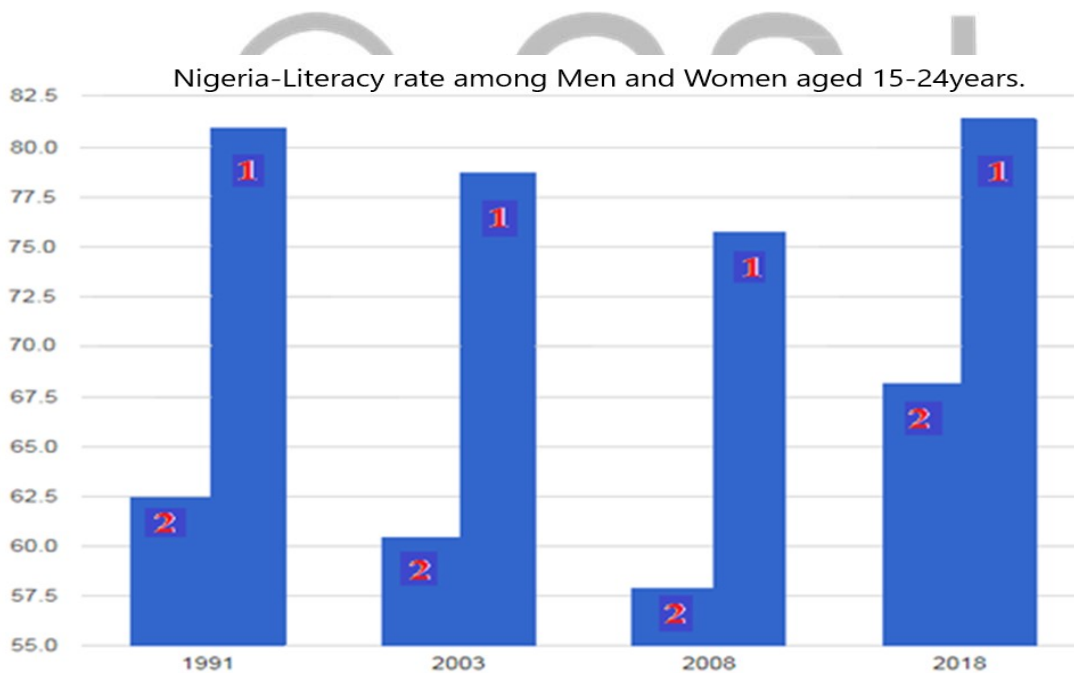


Figure: 6. Chart of the literacy rate among men (1) and women (2) aged 15 - 24 years. The resulting minimum is apparently due to the 2008 world crisis [5].

Environmental protection in Nigeria has long been enshrined in Nigerian legislation and in a formal institutional framework to address the various environmental challenges facing the society. According to Jackson, 2013 [20], Nigeria's environmental efforts have been undertaken since the British colonial rule in the 1900s through regulations. Besides, during this period, some elements of environmental protection were introduced in the

educational sector (schools) through the inclusion of an environmental component in several disciplines taught at schools. According to Aabove, 2011 [21], the West African Examination Board already in the 1950s developed a curriculum that was used in teaching biology in schools containing environmental elements such as soil conservation. After that, ecology was taught in schools in the form of studying a number of natural subjects containing basic environmental concepts, terms and basic laws, due to the fact that environmental protection was one of the main topics at international forums. This has led Nigeria to start a robust EE programme as early as the 1970s in response to the proposals of the World Environmental Summits [18]. The Koko incident in 1988, when toxic waste was dumped in the Koko Port, Delta State, by foreign nationals, revealed a low level of environmental awareness among the population. This scenario led to concerted efforts by the Nigeria Conservation Foundation NCF in 1988 to encourage the Federal Government to lead the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) (currently Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERC)) to include environmental education elements in the agenda of the Review Conference on Civic Education [22]. Subsequently, UNESCO sponsored a national workshop on the integration of EE elements into the national school curriculum. Accordingly, following the efforts of the NCF to ensure EE in Nigeria curriculum, a National Strategy for Environmental Education was developed and adopted by the Federal Government [18]. Universities and colleges in Nigeria began to contribute to the establishment of Environmental institutes to produce scientists that would ensure the effective achievement of the objectives of environmental education, among which is the «Environmental Education Programme» in the University of Benin, presented in 2007 under the auspices of the Department of Health, Environmental Education and Human Kinetics, all with the focus on issues related to environmental management and education [21]. It should be noted that the presence of bachelors, masters and doctors of ecology in the country does not guarantee that the idea of environmental protection will be accepted by the population. These professionals can communicate information to the public if the Federal Government in general and the State and Local Governments, in particular, facilitate the dissemination of this information with adequate funding for environmental programmes. However, it was necessary to reach out to the population not only through information programmes but also by making them to participate directly in those programmes, using tax systems, fines and other fiscal methods.

### **1.5. Benefits of International Cooperation in Nigeria**

The obvious fact is that regional and international cooperation facilitates the exchange of knowledge; responsibilities, experience and technical know-how on environmental issues, and Nigeria using similar experiences, can also benefit from such cooperation. The Urban Basic Services Programme (UBS) [23], is being implemented in the country to promote the

integration of environmental infrastructure, water, sanitation, drainage and solid waste management. The project involves the identification of key areas in some Nigerian cities and the development of a package of programmes for the advancement of women and children. Besides, the project is funded by a UNICEF grant of \$ 3 million from the United Nations Children's Fund. Concerning background air pollution monitoring, the Federal Government of Nigeria was able to establish a regional environmental monitoring station in Oshogbo in 1993 under the auspices of the Global Atmospheric Watch (GAW) programme of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The station monitors background air pollution.

Under the requirements of the Montreal Protocol and the provisions of the global Agenda, 21 for the phase-out of ozone-depleting substances, ODS, the phase-out of ozone-depleting substances in Nigeria requires that priority be given to programmes in line with our reference in [23], being implemented by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency. Ongoing activities include: institutional strengthening for the phase-out of ODS in Nigeria with a grant of \$3 million from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization Trust Fund, and the establishment of an institutional mechanism to coordinate national efforts to protect the ozone layer. The 2016 Climate Change Vulnerability Index (CCVI) published by UK-based Maplecroft classifies Nigeria as a high-risk country in the south and extreme risk in the north. Climate change could lead to a loss of GDP of 6% to 30% by 2050 in the amount of \$ 100 to 460 billion if adaptation is not implemented, as experienced in 2020 (Nigeria's economy contracted 6.1% year-on-year in the second quarter of the year (2020), according to the latest reports from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics), there could potentially be 2 to 11% of Nigeria's GDP, which will hinder the achievement of the national development goal of becoming one of the top 20 economies in the world.

The Geographic Information System (GIS) programme is being implemented through bilateral cooperation with the World Bank through the Bank-assisted Environmental Management Project in Nigeria [23]. GIS enhances the ability to monitor environmental components. As a result of this programme, soil erosion monitoring points (SEMP) have been set up in six ecological zones of the country. These efforts also include local and foreign training of technical and managerial manpower requirements. Besides, several ongoing programmes and projects have been launched to address the problem of deforestation [23]. The main funding agencies are the African Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank. The forestry project initiated in 1987 with the assistance of ADB continues to operate with a \$100 million loan. In the past, external sources of financing under various international environmental conventions for specific projects, including projects of bilateral or multilateral partners and regional development banks, constitute an important source of funding for activities, related to combating desertification in Nigeria (Nigeria National Action Plan,

2012). It is expected that such permanent possibilities will allow rendering significant assistance in the implementation of the projects of the Strategic Action Plan for the «Great Green Wall». The available external financing mechanisms can be considered in the following categories: Global Mechanism; International organizations such as Food and Agriculture Organization FAO, United Nations System Development Program UNDP, United Nations Environment Program UNEP, International Fund for Agricultural Development IFAD, World Meteorological Organization WMO, etc. who can be involved in specific projects/programs identified in the context of combating desertification under the UNCCD; bilateral assistance; multilateral assistance: World Bank, European Union, African Development Bank, World Bank; and assistance from the Global Environment Facility GEF.

### **Conclusion**

The global environment is clearly facing many environmental challenges. These problems include population explosion; loss of biodiversity; climate change; ozone depletion; air and water pollution, etc. [7]. Nigeria also had its share in this global issue with notable contributions to addressing these global challenges. Since these problems are of a trans boundary nature and transcend the national borders of different States, the states in the international system began to engage in serious international cooperation in the bid to find solutions to these disturbing environmental challenges. Therefore, over the years, within the framework of international conferences, various efforts have been made to develop common platforms based on which acceptable conditions of solving these problems could be obtained. During these conferences, the international community was able to enact and enforce a plethora of international environmental laws that govern the use of natural resources in an environmentally sound manner. Obviously, regional and international cooperation facilitates the exchange of knowledge, responsibilities, experience and technical know-how in solving environmental problems, and Nigeria, it should be noted, took advantage of this cooperation and have benefited from this cooperation, allowing her to receive adequate financial and technical support from this cooperation now and in future.

It is also believed that lack of cooperation between countries can lead to conflicts over the use of resources, regional instability and, ultimately, the degradation of the industries that use those resources. Improved coordination among multilateral environmental organizations, especially in the area of human development, more efficient use of financial resources would avoid unnecessary duplication of different organizations dealing with the same problems. This will enhance the optimal use of available human resources in government, scientific and academic community, helping to ensure the effective use of limited opportunities and access to the most skilled workforce.

The Government of Nigeria is also taking pollution and environmental degradation seriously, establishing a governance system at all levels to promote environmental sustainability as part of its national sustainable development agenda. At the same time, the government has successfully put in place some institutional mechanisms and trained human resources to deal optimally with environmental problems. However, despite the progress made, further development and intensification of international cooperation, both bilateral and multilateral, including organizations of the United Nations system, are required to address the environmental crisis in Nigeria.

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