

Policyweekly

Harnessing COP29 Outcomes to Tackle Nigeria's Climate Crisis



Policy Recommendations

- 1 Nigeria's institutional capacity must be strengthened to ensure the effective delivery of climate initiatives.
- 2 There is a need for the Nigerian government to improve transparency and accountability in climate finance.
- 3 The Nigerian government must prioritise renewable energy in the just transition.
- 4 Climate-smart agricultural practices must be prioritised to safeguard food security.
- 5 Nigeria must enhance its disaster preparedness to mitigate the impacts of extreme weather events like floods and droughts.
- 6 The government should actively engage with the fund's administrators to secure resources for rebuilding infrastructure, compensating affected communities, and implementing long-term adaptation strategies.
- 7 Climate-resilient infrastructure is essential for reducing Nigeria's vulnerability to climate change.
- 8 Nigeria's climate strategies must prioritise the needs of vulnerable populations, including women, youth, and indigenous communities.
- 9 Nigeria must continue to advocate for equitable global climate policies.
- 10 Nigeria should explore alternative funding options, such as green bonds, carbon credits, and public-private partnerships.

Introduction

Climate change poses a significant threat to developing countries. This reality was at the forefront of discussions during the recently concluded [COP29](#), held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from November 11 to 22, 2024. The conference's central focus was mobilising support in climate finance and advocating for equitable funding mechanisms to support adaptation and mitigation efforts in vulnerable countries. For Nigeria, the stakes are particularly high. Ranked as one of the top 10 most vulnerable countries to climate change, the country faces intensifying climate threats that disrupt livelihoods and exacerbate insecurity. Rising temperatures have contributed to desertification in the north, shrinking agricultural yields and forcing thousands of pastoralists southward, often leading to violent resource conflicts. According to a report, desertification affects [35% of Nigeria's landmass](#), displacing millions of people. Meanwhile, the 2022 floods—

considered the worst in over a decade—affected 33 out of 36 states, displaced over 1.4 million people, and caused direct economic damages estimated at over \$6 billion. These events demonstrate how extreme weather impacts agricultural production, with losses estimated at 25% of Nigeria’s annual rice harvest, worsening food insecurity.

While COP29 was [short of the expected climate target](#), operationalising the Loss and Damage Fund and the agreement to [triple climate finance to developing countries](#) to \$300 billion annually by 2035 offers a potential boost for Nigeria’s climate action plans. But the question is, how prepared is Nigeria to capitalise on these opportunities and navigate the challenges ahead? This edition of the Nextier Policy Weekly looks at the implications of COP29 for Nigeria, examining the country’s preparedness to leverage the new funding mechanisms and implement ambitious climate action plans.

Climate-Insecurity Nexus in Nigeria

Nigeria is increasingly experiencing the devastating interplay between climate change and insecurity. The country’s diverse ecological zones are all affected by climate-induced environmental changes, creating challenges that heighten social, economic, and security issues. The connection between climate and insecurity in Nigeria is stark, as environmental stresses fuel resource competition, displacement, and violent conflict.

1. Desertification and Resource Conflicts:

The Sahelian region in northern Nigeria is rapidly becoming uninhabitable due to desertification. Thirty-five per cent of Nigeria’s total land area is [threatened by desert encroachment](#), with the region losing 0.6 kilometres of arable land annually. As grazing lands disappear, pastoralists are

forced to migrate southward in search of greener pastures, leading to clashes with farming communities over land and water resources. According to data from the Nextier Violent Conflicts Database, the herder-farmer conflicts have claimed over 2,374 lives between June 2020 and November. The loss of arable land also undermines food security, with northern states like Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa suffering from chronic hunger exacerbated by ongoing violence.

2. Flooding and Displacement:

Nigeria faces recurrent flooding, worsened by poor drainage systems and climate change-induced extreme rainfall. The 2022 floods displaced over 1.4 million people, submerged farmlands, and destroyed over 108,000 hectares of crops. States like Kogi, Anambra, and Bayelsa bore the brunt of the devastation. Displaced populations often migrate to urban centres, where competition for limited resources and infrastructure fuels crime and social tensions. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) in states like Benue face heightened vulnerabilities, with many turning to negative coping mechanisms, including engaging in criminal activities.

3. Coastal Erosion and Maritime Insecurity:

Nigeria’s coastal regions are increasingly threatened by rising sea levels and coastal erosion, which displace communities and disrupt livelihoods. According to a [study](#) by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, sea levels along the Nigerian coast are rising rapidly, threatening cities like Lagos and Port Harcourt. Coastal erosion affects millions, with states like Lagos, Cross River and Delta experiencing significant economic losses. The displacement caused by rising sea levels fuels tensions in already volatile Niger Delta communities, where unemployment and environmental

degradation from oil extraction have long created conditions for militancy. The rise in maritime piracy and kidnapping in the Gulf of Guinea, where Nigeria accounts for 90% of incidents, is linked to these vulnerabilities.

4. Food Security and Livelihood Challenges:

Climate change is significantly declining crop yields in Nigeria. Staple crops like maize, rice, and sorghum are particularly affected. This agricultural decline has exacerbated food insecurity, with [33.1 million Nigerians projected to be food insecure](#) in 2025, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Food scarcity intensifies rural poverty, which drives youth unemployment and pushes many into criminal activities, including banditry and insurgency. Climate-induced livelihood loss also contributes to human trafficking and irregular migration, particularly among vulnerable populations.

5. Energy Transition and Economic Disparities:

As Nigeria transitions to cleaner energy under its Energy Transition Plan, fossil fuel-dependent communities in the Niger Delta face economic uncertainty. Over 70% of the region's economy depends on oil and gas revenues, and the shift to renewables could exacerbate inequalities if not managed equitably. Youth unemployment and restiveness in these communities could increase, posing additional security risks.

Key Outcomes from COP29 for Nigeria

First, COP29 saw a landmark agreement to [triple climate finance for developing nations](#). The previous annual goal of \$100 billion was increased to \$300 billion annually by 2035, marking a breakthrough in global efforts to support climate adaptation and mitigation.

This commitment addresses the financing gap for countries disproportionately affected by climate change, including Nigeria. Then, the full operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund which was first conceptualised at COP27. The [total pledged financial support for the Fund](#), estimated at \$730 billion, is intended to compensate nations experiencing irreversible climate impacts, such as flooding, desertification, and coastal erosion. Nigeria is expected to be a beneficiary, particularly in managing the aftermath of extreme weather events like the devastating 2022 floods.

COP29 also underscored the urgency of [transitioning to renewable energy](#). While many nations called for a global phase-out of fossil fuels, the discussions highlighted the need for a just energy transition that ensures economic and social stability for fossil fuel-dependent economies like Nigeria. Commitments were made to provide targeted support to such nations to diversify their economies. Furthermore, the conference placed [renewed emphasis on sustainable land use](#) and agriculture. A new Global Climate Resilient Agriculture Initiative was launched to enhance food security in regions severely affected by climate variability. This initiative could help Nigeria sustain climate-smart farming practices, mitigate agricultural losses, and address food insecurity affecting millions. Additionally, developed countries committed to [accelerating technology transfer](#) to enable developing nations to adopt advanced climate solutions. Nigeria could benefit from access to technologies like drought-resistant crops, efficient irrigation systems, and early warning systems for extreme weather. This commitment aligns with the broader goal of helping vulnerable countries build resilience.

Challenges for Nigeria in Leveraging COP29 Outcomes

While the outcomes of COP29 offer substantial opportunities for Nigeria, the country faces

significant challenges in converting global commitments into tangible benefits. These obstacles span institutional, economic, and governance-related issues. Without addressing these issues, Nigeria risks not realising the potential of the agreements reached in Baku.

I. Institutional Weaknesses and Policy Implementation:

One of the most persistent challenges for Nigeria is the weakness of its institutional framework in addressing climate change. Nigeria has developed progressive policies to address climate challenges, such as the Climate Change Act of 2021 and the Energy Transition Plan. However, implementation has been inconsistent due to fragmented governance and bureaucratic delays. Key structures, like the National Climate Change Council, mandated to oversee the coordination of climate initiatives, have experienced delays in becoming fully operational. This lack of coherence across ministries—such as the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Power, and Ministry of Agriculture—often results in overlapping mandates and poorly aligned priorities. Without streamlined processes and clear leadership, Nigeria may struggle to effectively channel the resources and technical support pledged at COP29.

II. Corruption and Mismanagement of Climate Finance:

Corruption remains a significant challenge in Nigeria's public sector, and climate finance is not immune to this systemic issue. Transparency International has consistently ranked Nigeria poorly in its Corruption Perceptions Index, raising concerns about the potential misuse of funds earmarked for climate projects such as the Loss and Damage Fund and the Green Climate Fund. For Nigeria to fully benefit from COP29's financial commitments, it must establish robust mechanisms for monitoring and accountability, including independent audits

and greater involvement of civil society organisations.

III. Dependence on Fossil Fuels:

Nigeria's economy relies heavily on oil and gas, accounting for over 70% of government revenue and nearly 90% of export earnings. This dependency makes it economically and politically difficult to pivot toward renewable energy. A rapid transition risks destabilising the Niger Delta, a region where communities are deeply reliant on oil-related livelihoods. Without careful planning, the transition could increase unemployment and exacerbate social unrest. The just energy transition emphasised at COP29 underscores the importance of balancing economic stability with climate goals, but Nigeria must develop concrete strategies to diversify its economy and protect vulnerable populations.

IV. Limited Access to Climate Finance:

Accessing the financial resources pledged at COP29 presents its challenges. While the tripling of climate finance to \$300 billion annually by 2035 is a welcome development, Nigeria may struggle to navigate the complex application processes required to access these funds. Developing high-quality project proposals that meet international standards requires technical expertise often lacking at the state and local government levels. Additionally, lengthy approval timelines can delay the rollout of critical projects, leaving communities vulnerable to ongoing climate impacts. Addressing these barriers will require significant investments in capacity-building and better coordination with international funding agencies.

V. Debt Sustainability Concerns:

Many climate finance mechanisms include loans rather than grants, raising concerns about Nigeria's growing debt burden. As of 2024,

Nigeria's total [public debt](#) is estimated at ₦121.67 trillion (\$91.46 billion), with debt servicing consuming a significant share of government revenues. Adding new loan obligations to finance climate projects could further strain the national budget, potentially diverting resources from other essential sectors like education and healthcare. To mitigate these risks, Nigeria must advocate for more grant-based funding and explore alternative financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships and green bonds.

VI. Vulnerability of Local Communities:

While Nigeria's participation in COP29 reflects national commitments to global climate goals, there is often a disconnect between high-level discussions and the realities faced by vulnerable communities on the ground. For example, many of Nigeria's climate policies and initiatives are designed at the federal level, with limited input from affected populations. Communities displaced by floods or desertification often lack access to emergency relief and long-term support. Marginalised groups, including women, youth, and indigenous populations, are frequently excluded from decision-making processes, even though they bear the brunt of climate impacts. Bridging this gap will require Nigeria to adopt a more inclusive approach, ensuring climate strategies are grounded in the realities of those most affected.

Recommendations

To leverage the outcomes of COP29 and address its pressing climate challenges, Nigeria must adopt a proactive, inclusive, and sustainable approach. The commitments made at the global level offer immense potential,

but realising their benefits will require strong governance, effective implementation, and collaboration across sectors. Below are some strategic recommendations for Nigeria to align its policies and actions with the opportunities presented at COP29.

1. Strengthen Institutional Frameworks and Policy Implementation:

Nigeria's institutional capacity must be strengthened to ensure the effective delivery of climate initiatives. The operationalisation of the National Climate Change Council (NCCC) is essential to coordinating the implementation of the Climate Change Act (2021) and aligning efforts across federal, state, and local levels. This council should act as a central body to monitor progress, integrate climate action into broader development plans, and facilitate access to international funding. In addition, government agencies must collaborate closely to avoid duplication of efforts. For instance, the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Power should align their mandates to deliver comprehensive solutions, such as combining renewable energy expansion with climate-smart agricultural initiatives. Capacity-building programs for state and local governments are also critical to ensuring that climate policies reach grassroots levels, where they are most needed.

2. Improve Transparency and Accountability in Climate Finance:

To gain the trust of international donors and maximise access to global climate finance, Nigeria must establish robust mechanisms for tracking and managing funds. Transparent reporting systems should be developed to document the use

of climate finance, ensuring that resources are allocated to the most affected regions and communities. Independent audits, enhanced public financial management systems, and the involvement of civil society organisations in monitoring can help minimise corruption and mismanagement. Additionally, Nigeria should adopt international best practices for managing funds from mechanisms like the Loss and Damage Fund and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to demonstrate accountability and attract future investments.

3. **Prioritise Renewable Energy in the Just Transition:**

Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan (ETP), which aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060, must be implemented inclusively to balance climate goals with social and economic realities. Renewable energy projects, such as off-grid solar power and wind energy, should be scaled up to address energy poverty while reducing dependence on fossil fuels. To ensure a just transition, the government must engage communities in oil-producing regions, such as the Niger Delta, to create alternative livelihood opportunities. Investments in vocational training, green jobs, and community development programs can mitigate the social impacts of the energy transition. Public-private partnerships should be encouraged to attract investment and accelerate the deployment of renewable energy infrastructure.

4. **Scale Up Climate-Resilient Agriculture:**

Given agriculture's critical role in Nigeria's economy, climate-smart agricultural practices must be prioritised to safeguard food security. Programs focused on developing and distributing drought-resistant crop varieties, efficient irrigation systems, and weather forecasting tools can help farmers adapt to changing climatic conditions. The government should collaborate with international

organisations, such as the Global Climate Resilient Agriculture Initiative, to secure funding and technical support for these efforts. Extension services that provide training on climate-smart techniques to farmers, especially in vulnerable regions, will be essential in reducing crop losses and improving productivity.

5. **Strengthen Disaster Preparedness and Early Warning Systems:**

Nigeria must enhance its disaster preparedness to mitigate the impacts of extreme weather events like floods and droughts. Investing in early warning systems and community-based disaster management plans can significantly reduce the loss of lives and property. Collaboration with international partners to deploy advanced forecasting technologies is critical for anticipating and managing climate risks. State governments should also establish emergency response teams equipped to handle disasters promptly and efficiently, particularly in flood-prone areas such as Kogi, Anambra, and Bayelsa states.

6. **Expand Access to Loss and Damage Resources:**

The operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund presents an opportunity for Nigeria to address the economic and social costs of irreversible climate impacts. The government should actively engage with the fund's administrators to secure resources for rebuilding infrastructure, compensating affected communities, and implementing long-term adaptation strategies. To enhance Nigeria's eligibility, the government must develop detailed proposals that quantify the damages caused by climate events and outline how the funds will be used to achieve measurable outcomes. Regular consultation with international funding agencies and technical experts can improve the quality of these applications.

7. Invest in Resilient Infrastructure Development:

Climate-resilient infrastructure is essential for reducing Nigeria's vulnerability to climate change. Investments in flood control systems, such as levees, dams, and drainage networks, are urgently needed to protect communities in flood-prone areas. Roads, bridges, and housing should be constructed or retrofitted to withstand extreme weather conditions. Adopting green building standards can ensure that new infrastructure is sustainable and resilient. The government should prioritise partnerships with development banks and private sector investors to finance these large-scale projects.

8. Foster Inclusive and Community-Led Climate Action:

Nigeria's climate strategies must prioritise the needs of vulnerable populations, including women, youth, and indigenous communities. Climate change disproportionately affects these groups yet is often excluded from decision-making processes. Community-based adaptation programs should be expanded to empower local populations to take ownership of climate initiatives. For example, engaging communities in reforestation projects, such as the Great Green Wall, can create jobs while combating desertification. Participatory planning processes incorporating local knowledge and perspectives can ensure that climate actions are effective and equitable.

9. Advocate for Equitable Global Climate Policies:

Nigeria must continue to lead in regional and international climate negotiations. As a prominent African Group of Negotiators (AGN) member, Nigeria can advocate for fair access to climate finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building support. The government should work closely with other African nations to present a unified voice at global forums, ensuring

the continent's priorities are adequately represented. Strengthening alliances with countries facing similar challenges can amplify Nigeria's influence in shaping global climate policies.

10. Explore Innovative Financing Mechanisms:

To complement international climate finance, Nigeria should explore alternative funding options, such as green bonds, carbon credits, and public-private partnerships. Green bonds, in particular, have successfully financed sustainable projects in other countries and could be leveraged to support Nigeria's renewable energy, reforestation, and infrastructure development. The government can attract additional resources to accelerate climate action by creating an enabling environment for private-sector investment. Streamlining regulatory frameworks and offering incentives for green investments can further boost private sector participation.

Conclusion

The outcomes of COP29 present Nigeria with a unique opportunity to address its climate vulnerabilities and foster sustainable development. Nigeria can turn these global commitments into actionable solutions by strengthening institutions, embracing renewable energy, and prioritising vulnerable populations. However, success will depend on the country's ability to navigate challenges, build partnerships, and adopt innovative approaches to financing and implementation. Strategic action today will mitigate climate impacts and set Nigeria on a path toward resilience and prosperity

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Accelerating State Security Trust Funds for Addressing Insecurity in the Southeast

State Security Trust Funds (SSTFs) have mushroomed across the Southeast in the last two years, with governments launching new frameworks for SSTFs. In February 2024, Governor Peter Mbah of Enugu State inaugurated the Enugu SSTF, followed by a media launch of the



The Urgency of Peacebuilding in the South East of Nigeria

A comprehensive but simplified idea of peacebuilding by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies is given as the development of constructive personal, group and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national and racial boundaries to resolve issues of injustice



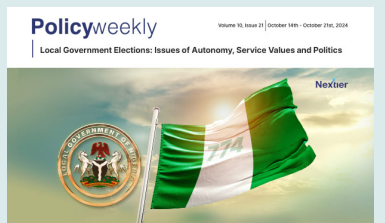
Navigating Misinformation in the Sahel: Regional Impacts and Nigeria's Stake

The Sahel has become an essential theatre of operation for foreign influence. Russia and China, responding to strategic and economic interests, have used misinformation and disinformation to extend their influence at the expense of, or in rivalry with, Western powers,



UNGA 79 and the Future of Stability in the Sahel

The 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA79), held in September 2024, is remarkable in many ways, two of which are important for Africa. The first remarkable significance of UNGA79 is the adoption of the Pact for the Future as an outcome document of



Local Government Elections: Issues of Autonomy, Service Values and Politics

The high-wire politics around local government elections in Nigeria since the reaffirmation of local government financial autonomy by the Supreme Court on July 11, 2024, points to fundamental questions about the value of local government first, as a legitimate service-providing entity



The Nigerian Peace Accord: A Symbolic Gesture or Pathway to Electoral Justice?

Electoral violence is a critical challenge that undermines democratic processes globally. In many countries, elections marred by violence threaten the legitimacy of the electoral outcomes and often lead to widespread instability. Nigeria's electoral history is riddled with