



Legal and institutional mechanisms for addressing environmental degradation in Nigeria

Ogbonnah, Medobi Chinasa

Department of Private and Property Law, Faculty of Law, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Abstract

Environmental degradation remains a critical governance issue in Nigeria, manifesting in oil spills, deforestation, desert encroachment, ineffective waste disposal systems, and the decline of aquatic ecosystems. This article interrogates the existing legal and institutional arrangements aimed at mitigating environmental harm, with particular attention to constitutional provisions, environmental legislation, regulatory standards, and international obligations domesticated within the Nigerian legal system. It critically assesses the performance of key regulatory bodies, drawing attention to persistent challenges such as overlapping functions, weak enforcement structures, inadequate funding, and undue political influence. The study further examines how factors such as poor compliance culture, limited environmental data systems, and low levels of public participation undermine effective environmental governance, especially in relation to extractive industries and land-based sources of pollution. Adopting a doctrinal and analytical methodology, the article contends that although Nigeria possesses an extensive legislative framework for environmental protection, the real difficulty lies in its implementation and institutional coordination. It argues that improving enforcement capacity, ensuring regulatory autonomy, enhancing access to environmental information, and encouraging community involvement are crucial to achieving meaningful environmental protection. Ultimately, the article maintains that strengthening institutional accountability and ensuring policy coherence are indispensable for transforming environmental governance from a normative ideal into a functional reality within Nigeria's development trajectory.

Keywords: Environmental degradation, environmental governance, environmental policy, sustainability, regulatory mechanisms

Introduction

Environmental degradation has become a significant obstacle to sustainable development worldwide, with Nigeria facing particularly severe ecological pressures. The country grapples with widespread environmental problems, including oil pollution in the Niger Delta, deforestation within its rainforest zones, advancing desertification in the northern regions, erosion affecting both coastal and inland areas, and the proliferation of unmanaged urban and industrial waste^[1]. These challenges not only diminish environmental quality but also weaken economic productivity and deepen poverty, especially among communities that rely heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods^[2]. In this regard, the development of effective legal and institutional responses is essential for mitigating environmental harm and promoting sustainable development in Nigeria^[3].

Nigeria's environmental protection regime is anchored in a combination of constitutional provisions, statutory laws, and regulatory policies. Section 20 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) places an obligation on the state to safeguard and improve the environment for both present and future generations^[4]. This constitutional mandate is reinforced by key statutes such as the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (Establishment) Act 2007, the Environmental Impact Assessment Act 1992, and the Harmful Waste (Special Criminal Provisions, etc.) Act 1988, which collectively provide sector-specific and procedural controls over environmentally harmful activities^[5]. However, the existence of these legal instruments does not necessarily translate into effective environmental governance. Persistent issues such as overlapping institutional responsibilities, insufficient funding, limited

technical expertise, and weak enforcement capacity continue to undermine their practical impact^[6].

At the international level, Nigeria's environmental governance framework is shaped by its participation in key global instruments, including the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development 1992, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change 2015, and the Convention on Biological Diversity 1992. These instruments establish guiding principles and obligations that influence national policies and legislative reforms^[7]. Nonetheless, while ratification reflects formal commitment, actual implementation is often constrained by institutional weaknesses and political considerations.

Institutional structures remain central to the enforcement of environmental laws in Nigeria. Bodies such as the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), the Federal Ministry of Environment, and other sector-specific regulators are tasked with monitoring compliance, enforcing regulatory standards, and promoting environmental awareness^[8]. Despite these responsibilities, their effectiveness is frequently limited by administrative inefficiencies, political interference, and corruption, which collectively weaken enforcement outcomes^[9].

This article undertakes a critical assessment of Nigeria's legal and institutional framework for addressing environmental degradation. It evaluates the adequacy of existing statutory provisions, examines the performance of regulatory institutions, and considers the extent to which domestic laws align with international environmental obligations. By identifying key strengths, gaps, and implementation challenges, the study provides insights into the reforms and institutional improvements required to advance environmental sustainability in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Environmental Degradation

Environmental degradation generally refers to the deterioration of the natural environment through the depletion of natural resources, destruction of ecosystems, and pollution of air, water, and land resulting from human activities and natural processes. It reflects a decline in the quality and functionality of environmental systems necessary for sustaining life and economic activity^[10]. Scholars have observed that environmental degradation occurs when ecological balance is disrupted by activities such as industrial expansion, deforestation, oil exploration, urbanisation, and unsustainable agricultural practices^[11].

From a legal and policy perspective, environmental degradation is not merely a physical or ecological phenomenon but also a governance challenge. Weak regulatory frameworks, inadequate enforcement mechanisms, and ineffective institutional coordination often accelerate environmental decline^[12]. In developing countries, including Nigeria, the problem is aggravated by rapid population growth, poor waste management practices, and the exploitation of natural resources without adequate environmental safeguards^[13]. The consequences are far-reaching, affecting biodiversity, public health, food security, and long-term economic development.

Critically, environmental degradation raises fundamental questions about the relationship between development and environmental protection. While industrialisation and resource extraction contribute significantly to national economic growth, they frequently generate ecological costs that are borne disproportionately by local communities^[14]. This dilemma is particularly evident in regions such as the Niger Delta, where oil exploration has resulted in extensive pollution of land and waterways^[15].

Consequently, contemporary environmental law increasingly emphasises preventive and precautionary approaches aimed at reducing environmental harm before it occurs. International environmental principles, including sustainable development and the precautionary principle, have shaped domestic legal responses to environmental degradation^[16]. These principles encourage states to adopt proactive regulatory measures that balance economic progress with ecological preservation, thereby ensuring that environmental resources remain available for present and future generations.

Environmental Governance

Environmental governance refers to the collection of legal norms, institutional arrangements, policies, and decision-making processes through which environmental resources are managed and protected. It encompasses the roles played by governmental agencies, international organisations, civil society, and private actors in regulating activities that affect the environment^[17]. At its core, environmental governance seeks to coordinate regulatory efforts and promote accountability in order to ensure that environmental protection forms an integral part of economic and social development^[18].

The concept has gained increasing prominence in response to the growing complexity of environmental challenges. Modern environmental problems such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution transcend national boundaries and require coordinated governance mechanisms that combine domestic legislation with international cooperation^[19]. Consequently, environmental governance is not limited to formal legal rules; it also includes policy

frameworks, administrative practices, and participatory mechanisms designed to facilitate environmental management^[20].

Critically, effective environmental governance depends on the capacity and independence of regulatory institutions. Where institutions lack technical expertise, financial resources, or political autonomy, environmental laws often remain largely symbolic^[21]. In many developing countries, governance challenges are compounded by fragmented regulatory mandates, weak monitoring systems, and inadequate enforcement of environmental standards^[22]. These weaknesses frequently allow environmentally harmful activities to persist despite the existence of elaborate statutory frameworks.

In Nigeria, environmental governance involves multiple institutions, including the Federal Ministry of Environment, the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), and sector-specific regulators responsible for monitoring industrial and resource extraction activities^[23]. While these institutions are designed to promote environmental protection, their effectiveness has been constrained by institutional overlap, limited funding, and insufficient coordination between federal and state authorities^[24].

Environmental governance represents a holistic approach to environmental management that integrates legal regulation, institutional capacity, and public participation. Strengthening these elements is essential for ensuring that environmental laws translate into meaningful protection of ecological systems and sustainable use of natural resources.

Constitutional Basis for Environmental Protection in Nigeria

The constitutional framework forms the foundational basis for environmental protection in Nigeria. Although the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) does not explicitly provide a justiciable fundamental right to a clean and healthy environment, it nevertheless establishes guiding principles that impose environmental responsibilities on the state. Section 20 of the Constitution provides that the state shall protect and improve the environment and safeguard the water, air, land, forest, and wildlife of Nigeria^[25]. This provision reflects a clear constitutional commitment to environmental protection, even though its placement within the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy raises questions about its enforceability.

The non-justiciable nature of these directive principles under section 6^[6](c) of the Constitution has generated significant scholarly debate^[26]. Some commentators argue that the constitutional obligation to protect the environment is largely aspirational because courts cannot directly enforce it against the state^[27]. Others maintain that the provision still performs an important normative function by guiding legislative action and shaping environmental policy^[28]. Consequently, while section 20 may not create enforceable rights on its own, it provides a constitutional foundation upon which environmental legislation and regulatory policies are built.

Despite these limitations, Nigerian courts have occasionally relied on broader fundamental rights provisions to advance environmental protection. In particular, the rights to life and human dignity have been interpreted in some jurisdictions to encompass environmental considerations where environmental harm threatens human survival and well-being^[29]. Comparative jurisprudence demonstrates that

courts increasingly recognise the interdependence between environmental quality and fundamental human rights^[30]. This approach has influenced legal advocacy strategies in Nigeria, especially in cases involving pollution from extractive industries.

A significant development in this regard emerged from the landmark decision in *Gbemre v Shell Petroleum Development Company*,^[31] where the Federal High Court recognised that gas flaring violated the constitutional rights to life and dignity of affected communities. Although enforcement of the judgment faced practical challenges, the case remains an important example of judicial willingness to connect environmental harm with constitutional rights.

Nigeria's constitutional commitment to environmental protection is also reinforced by regional human rights obligations. Article 24 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights guarantees all peoples the right to a general satisfactory environment favourable to their development^[32]. Through the African Charter (Ratification and Enforcement) Act, this right forms part of Nigerian law and can be invoked before domestic courts^[33]. The African Commission further strengthened this principle in the *SERAC v Nigeria* decision, where it held that the Nigerian government failed to protect the environmental rights of communities in the Niger Delta^[34].

Taken together, these constitutional and regional frameworks provide an important normative basis for environmental protection in Nigeria. While limitations remain regarding the direct enforceability of certain provisions, the constitutional structure nonetheless influences legislative development, judicial interpretation, and public policy aimed at mitigating environmental degradation.

Statutory Framework for Environmental Regulation

Nigeria's statutory framework for environmental regulation has evolved over time in response to growing ecological concerns arising from industrialisation, urban expansion, and resource exploitation. While constitutional provisions establish a general commitment to environmental protection, it is primarily through legislative enactments that concrete regulatory standards and enforcement mechanisms are developed. These statutes provide the legal basis for controlling pollution, regulating industrial activities, and ensuring that development projects comply with environmental standards^[35].

One of the most significant pieces of environmental legislation in Nigeria is the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (Establishment) Act 2007. The Act established the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) as the principal federal body responsible for enforcing environmental laws, regulations, and standards across the country^[36]. NESREA is empowered to monitor environmental compliance, issue permits, conduct inspections, and impose sanctions for violations of environmental regulations. Through subsidiary regulations issued under the Act, the agency has introduced standards covering areas such as waste management, air quality control, and industrial pollution^[37].

Another important legislative instrument is the Environmental Impact Assessment Act 1992, which requires that major development projects undergo environmental assessment before commencement^[38]. The Act aims to ensure that environmental considerations are integrated into planning and decision-making processes, thereby preventing

or minimising ecological harm. By mandating public participation and environmental review procedures, the Act promotes transparency and accountability in development activities that may significantly affect the environment^[39].

The Harmful Waste (Special Criminal Provisions, etc.) Act 1988 also forms a critical part of Nigeria's environmental regulatory regime. Enacted in response to the infamous dumping of toxic waste in Koko, Delta State, the Act criminalises the importation, transport, and disposal of hazardous waste within Nigerian territory^[40]. It imposes severe penalties, including life imprisonment, for individuals or corporations involved in the illegal handling of harmful waste.

In addition to these statutes, sector-specific legislation regulates environmental practices in key industries. For instance, the Petroleum Industry Act 2021 introduces provisions relating to environmental management and remediation within the oil and gas sector^[41]. Similarly, the Oil in Navigable Waters Act addresses marine pollution by prohibiting the discharge of oil into territorial waters and prescribing liability for violations^[42].

Despite the existence of an extensive statutory framework, challenges remain in ensuring effective enforcement and coordination among regulatory bodies. Overlapping mandates, limited institutional capacity, and inadequate monitoring mechanisms often undermine the effectiveness of environmental laws. Nevertheless, these statutes collectively form the backbone of Nigeria's legal response to environmental degradation and provide the foundation upon which regulatory institutions operate.

Institutional Mechanisms for Environmental Governance in Nigeria

Effective environmental governance in Nigeria depends not only on the existence of legal rules but also on the capacity and coordination of institutions responsible for implementing and enforcing those rules. Institutional mechanisms provide the administrative structure through which environmental policies are formulated, monitored, and enforced. These institutions are expected to regulate activities that may harm the environment, promote compliance with environmental standards, and ensure that sustainable development objectives are integrated into national planning processes^[43].

At the federal level, the Federal Ministry of Environment plays a central role in environmental policy formulation and coordination. Established to provide national leadership on environmental matters, the Ministry is responsible for developing environmental policies, supervising regulatory agencies, and ensuring compliance with international environmental obligations undertaken by Nigeria^[44]. Its responsibilities also include the implementation of programmes addressing climate change, biodiversity conservation, desertification control, and pollution management.

Another key institution is the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), which serves as the principal regulatory body responsible for enforcing environmental laws and standards across most sectors of the Nigerian economy^[45]. NESREA monitors industrial activities, conducts inspections, and enforces environmental regulations aimed at controlling pollution and promoting sustainable environmental practices. Through regulatory guidelines and compliance monitoring, the agency seeks to address environmental degradation arising from manufacturing, waste disposal, and other industrial activities.

In addition to federal agencies, environmental governance in Nigeria also involves several specialised and sector-based institutions. For instance, agencies within the petroleum sector are responsible for overseeing environmental management in oil and gas operations, particularly in the Niger Delta region where resource extraction has generated serious ecological concerns ^[46]. At the subnational level, state environmental protection agencies complement federal efforts by implementing environmental policies and enforcing environmental regulations within their respective jurisdictions ^[47].

Despite the existence of these institutional mechanisms, significant challenges continue to hinder effective environmental governance in Nigeria. These challenges include institutional overlap, limited technical expertise, inadequate funding, and weak enforcement capacity ^[48]. Furthermore, poor coordination between federal and state institutions often results in regulatory gaps and inconsistent implementation of environmental policies ^[49]. Strengthening institutional capacity, improving inter-agency collaboration, and enhancing transparency and accountability remain essential for ensuring that environmental governance mechanisms function effectively in addressing Nigeria's environmental challenges.

Judicial Enforcement of Environmental Protection Laws

Judicial enforcement constitutes an essential mechanism for ensuring compliance with environmental protection laws in Nigeria. While legislative and regulatory institutions establish the rules governing environmental conduct, it is ultimately the judiciary that interprets these rules and determines the legal consequences of their violation. Courts therefore play a critical role in resolving environmental disputes, enforcing statutory obligations, and safeguarding the rights of individuals and communities affected by environmental harm ^[50].

One of the principal avenues for judicial enforcement in Nigeria is through civil litigation initiated by affected individuals or communities. Victims of environmental damage may seek judicial remedies such as injunctions, damages, or orders compelling compliance with environmental standards ^[51]. However, access to justice in environmental matters has historically been constrained by restrictive rules on locus standi. Nigerian courts traditionally required litigants to demonstrate a direct and personal interest in the subject matter of the dispute, a requirement that often limited the ability of public interest groups to initiate environmental actions ^[52].

Despite these limitations, judicial attitudes toward environmental protection have gradually evolved. In certain cases, Nigerian courts have demonstrated a willingness to interpret legal provisions in a manner that recognises the broader public interest in environmental preservation. A notable example is *Gbemre v Shell Petroleum Development Company*, ^[53] where the Federal High Court held that gas flaring violated the constitutional rights to life and human dignity of residents in the Niger Delta. The decision represented an important step toward linking environmental protection with fundamental human rights.

Regional human rights jurisprudence has also influenced judicial enforcement of environmental protection in Nigeria. The decision of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in *Social and Economic Rights Action Centre (SERAC) v Nigeria* ^[54], established that governments have an obligation not only to refrain from environmental harm but also to prevent third parties from causing

ecological damage that threatens the well-being of communities. This decision emphasised the duty of states to regulate private actors, particularly multinational corporations operating in environmentally sensitive regions. Nevertheless, several challenges continue to hinder effective judicial enforcement of environmental laws in Nigeria. Litigation is often expensive and time-consuming, discouraging affected communities from pursuing legal remedies ^[55]. In addition, enforcement of court judgments, particularly against powerful corporate actors, can be difficult where regulatory institutions lack sufficient capacity or political support ^[56]. The technical complexity of environmental disputes further complicates judicial proceedings, as courts frequently require specialised scientific evidence to establish causation and assess environmental damage ^[57].

Despite these challenges, the judiciary remains a vital component of environmental governance. Through progressive interpretation of statutory provisions and human rights principles, courts can strengthen environmental accountability and provide remedies for victims of environmental harm. Effective judicial enforcement therefore complements legislative and institutional efforts aimed at mitigating environmental degradation and promoting sustainable environmental management in Nigeria.

International Environmental Obligations and their Influence on Nigerian Law

International environmental law significantly shapes Nigeria's environmental protection regime. As a member of the global community, Nigeria is party to multilateral agreements addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution ^[58]. These treaties set principles and obligations that influence domestic legislation and policy, reflecting Nigeria's commitment to ecological protection and sustainable development.

A central principle in international environmental governance is sustainable development, which balances economic growth with environmental preservation ^[59]. This principle, articulated in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, encourages integration of environmental considerations into national development planning ^[60]. Nigeria has implemented this commitment through legislation and policies regulating pollution, conserving biodiversity, and promoting responsible resource management.

Nigeria is also a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which require states to conserve natural resources, mitigate environmental degradation, and adopt measures against climate change ^[61]. While international treaties require domestic legislation to be enforceable, they nonetheless guide judicial reasoning, legislative drafting, and policy formulation ^[62].

Challenges in the Implementation of Environmental Laws and Policies in Nigeria

Despite the existence of a robust legal and institutional framework, the implementation of environmental laws and policies in Nigeria faces persistent and systemic challenges. One major obstacle is institutional overlap and fragmentation. Multiple federal and state agencies, including the Federal Ministry of Environment, NESREA, and sector-specific regulators, often have overlapping mandates, leading to coordination gaps, conflicting directives, and inefficiencies in enforcement ^[63].

Limited institutional capacity further undermines regulatory effectiveness. Many environmental agencies lack sufficient technical expertise, financial resources, and trained personnel to monitor compliance, conduct inspections, and enforce environmental standards effectively^[64]. This is particularly evident in the Niger Delta, where oil exploration and gas flaring have persisted despite clear statutory prohibitions^[65]. Weak monitoring mechanisms mean that violations often go undetected, and offenders evade penalties, reducing the deterrent effect of environmental laws.

Another significant challenge is political interference and corruption. Regulatory agencies may face pressure from powerful economic actors, particularly multinational corporations, to overlook breaches or delay enforcement actions^[66]. Political patronage can also compromise decision-making, prioritising short-term economic gains over long-term environmental sustainability.

Furthermore, public awareness and participation in environmental governance remain limited. Citizens often lack information about their rights, environmental standards, or reporting mechanisms, which weakens grassroots enforcement and reduces pressure on authorities to act against violators^[67]. Additionally, the judicial system faces challenges in adjudicating environmental disputes. Litigation is costly and protracted, and judges may lack the technical expertise required to assess complex environmental claims^[68].

Finally, inadequate data collection and research infrastructure hinder evidence-based policymaking. Limited environmental data affects the ability of agencies to identify high-risk areas, design effective interventions, and evaluate policy outcomes^[69]. Addressing these challenges requires reforms that strengthen institutional capacity, enhance coordination, reduce political interference, improve public engagement, and build data-driven policymaking frameworks. Without such measures, even the most comprehensive legal framework will struggle to achieve meaningful environmental protection in Nigeria.

Strengthening Legal and Institutional Responses to Environmental Degradation in Nigeria

To address environmental degradation effectively, Nigeria must focus on legal reform and institutional strengthening. Statutes should be harmonised to remove overlaps and ambiguities, clarify agency responsibilities, and introduce stricter compliance mechanisms, clearer penalties, and provisions for public interest litigation to enhance enforcement^[70].

Environmental agencies also require increased technical capacity, funding, and autonomy to enforce regulations without political interference^[71]. Strengthening coordination through formal collaboration frameworks can reduce duplication and improve regulatory consistency^[72]. Robust data collection and monitoring systems are crucial for evidence-based policymaking and targeted interventions^[73].

Public engagement is vital, with environmental education and community participation enhancing compliance and accountability^[74]. International cooperation, including implementing multilateral environmental agreements, complements domestic efforts by providing technical guidance, standards, and funding support^[75].

By integrating legal reform, institutional capacity-building, and participatory governance, Nigeria can strengthen its environmental protection framework, translating laws and policies into practical measures that mitigate environmental

degradation and support sustainable development for current and future generations.

Conclusion

Environmental degradation in Nigeria continues to pose serious threats to public health, economic development, and ecological sustainability. Although, the country has an extensive legal and institutional framework, its effectiveness is undermined by weak enforcement, overlapping mandates, limited capacity, and political interference. These challenges highlight a persistent gap between regulatory provisions and practical outcomes. Addressing this requires greater coherence in legal instruments, strengthened institutional capacity, and enhanced regulatory independence. Also important is the need for increased public participation and alignment with international environmental standards. Only through effective implementation and coordinated governance can Nigeria translate its environmental laws into meaningful action and achieve sustainable environmental protection. I wish it a success.

References

1. Gbonnah MC, LLB (Hons), BL, LL.M, PhD, Notary Public, Lecturer in the Department of Private and Property Law, Faculty of Law, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria; Email: ogbonnamc1@yahoo.com.
2. Agbede JO. Environmental Management in Nigeria (Spectrum Books), 2010, 22.
3. Akinbile AA. Impacts of Environmental Degradation on Rural Livelihoods in Nigeria. *J Environ Law*,2016;4(1):45.
4. Adewale. Sustainable Development and Environmental Law in Nigeria (Lagos University Press), 2014, 18.
5. Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) s 20.
6. Amokaye G. Environmental Pollution and Challenges of Environmental Governance in Nigeria. *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*,2012;10(1):26-41.
7. Ijaiya PO. Challenges of Environmental Governance in Nigeria. *African J Public Administration*,2018;12(2):77.
8. Rio Declaration on Environment and Development 1992, UN Doc A/CONF.151/26 (Vol I).
9. Oladipo SO. Law and Environmental Compliance in Nigeria (University Press), 2015, 64.
10. Ojo EO. Institutional Weaknesses and Environmental Law Enforcement in Nigeria. *Nigerian J Environ Law*,2020;5(1):33.
11. Sands P, Peel J. Principles of International Environmental Law (4th edn CUP), 2018, 3.
12. Jodha NS. Environmental Degradation and Rural Livelihoods. *Ecological Economics*,1998;26(3):321.
13. Bell S, McGillivray D, Pedersen O. Environmental Law (9th edn OUP), 2017, 12.
14. Nwafor LA. Environmental Problems in Nigeria: A Review. *J Human Ecology*,2006;4(1):1.
15. Boyle AE, Redgwell C. Birnie, Boyle and Redgwell's International Law and the Environment (4th edn OUP), 2021, 21.
16. United Nations Environment Programme. Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland (UNEP), 2011, 9.
17. Viñuales JE. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. *Oxford Handbook of International Environmental Law*,2015;7(1):121.

18. Sands P, Peel J. (n 10) 67.
19. Lemos S, Agrawal A. Environmental Governance. Annual Review of Environment and Resources, 2006, 31, 297.
20. Jordan A. Environmental Policy in the European Union (3rd edn Routledge), 2012, 14.
21. Gupta J, van der Grijp N. Mainstreaming Climate Change in Development Cooperation (CUP), 2010, 42.
22. Bodansky D, *et al.* The Oxford Handbook of International Environmental Law (OUP), 2007, 508.
23. Chaytor BA, Gray KR. International Environmental Law and Policy in Africa (Springer), 2003, 103.
24. National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (Establishment) Act 2007.
25. Adekola F, Mitchell O. The Niger Delta Wetlands: Threats to Ecosystem Services and Environmental Governance. Environment, Development and Sustainability, 2011;21(5):703.
26. CFRN 1999, s 20.
27. Ibid, s 6(6)(c).
28. Nwabueze BO. Constitutional Democracy in Africa (Spectrum Books), 2003, 412.
29. Olowu AA. Environmental Rights and the Nigerian Constitution. Nigerian Journal of Public Law, 2009;3(1):89.
30. Ajomo MA, Adewale O. Environmental Law and Sustainable Development in Nigeria (NIALS Press), 1994, 67.
31. Boyle A. Human Rights and the Environment: Where Next?. European Journal of International Law, 2012;23(3):613.
32. Gbemre v Shell Petroleum Development Company Nigeria Ltd. AHRLR, 2005, 151 (NgHC).
33. African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights 1981, art 24.
34. African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act Cap A9 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004.
35. Social and Economic Rights Action Centre (SERAC) v Nigeria. AHRLR, 2001, 60 (ACHPR).
36. Ajomo MA, Adewale O. Environmental Law and Sustainable Development in Nigeria (NIALS Press), 1994, 103.
37. National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (Establishment) Act 2007.
38. Adekola F, Mitchell GA. The Niger Delta Wetlands: Environmental Governance and Regulatory Challenges. Environment, Development and Sustainability, 2011;21(5):703.
39. Environmental Impact Assessment Act Cap E12 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004.
40. Fagbemi SO. The Legal Framework for Environmental Impact Assessment in Nigeria. Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy, 2010;4(2):45.
41. Harmful Waste (Special Criminal Provisions, etc.) Act Cap H1 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004.
42. Petroleum Industry Act 2021.
43. Oil in Navigable Waters Act Cap O6 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004.
44. Adebayo AA. Environmental Governance and Sustainable Development in Nigeria. Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa, 2017;9(1):113.
45. Jegede. Institutional Framework for Environmental Protection in Nigeria: An Appraisal. African Journal of Environmental Science and Technology, 2016;7(2):92.
46. Uchegbu CN, Ite EO. Environmental Regulation and Compliance in Nigeria. International Journal of Environmental Policy and Law, 2015;10(3):145.
47. Omotola IA. Environmental Governance and Oil Resource Management in Nigeria's Niger Delta. Journal of African Development Studies, 2014;6(1):61.
48. Adejumo TO. State Environmental Protection Agencies and Environmental Governance in Nigeria. Environmental Policy and Law Review, 2018;5(2):74.
49. Oyedepo SO. Energy and Environmental Challenges in Nigeria: Policy and Institutional Responses. Energy Policy, 2012;19(3):342.
50. Chukwuemeka BA, Aghara CO. Institutional Challenges in Environmental Governance in Nigeria. Journal of Environmental Management and Safety, 2019;8(1):55.
51. Fagbohun A. Environmental Law in Nigeria (Malthouse Press), 2010, 245.
52. Soneye AO. Litigation and the Enforcement of Environmental Rights in Nigeria. Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy, 2013;7(1):136.
53. Olowu AA. Locus Standi and Environmental Justice in Nigeria. Law, Environment and Development Journal, 2009;1(1):45.
54. Gbemre v Shell Petroleum Development Company Nigeria Ltd. AHRLR, 2005, 151 (NgHC).
55. Social and Economic Rights Action Centre (SERAC) and Another v Nigeria. AHRLR, 2001, 60 (ACHPR).
56. Okogbule NS. Access to Justice and Human Rights Protection in Nigeria. Human Rights Law Review, 2005;3(2):241.
57. Boyle AE. Human Rights and the Environment: A Reassessment. Fordham Environmental Law Review, 2007;18(3):471.
58. Bell S, McGillivray D. Environmental Law (8th edn OUP), 2013, 301.
59. Sands P, Peel J. Principles of International Environmental Law (4th edn CUP), 2018, 8.
60. Boyle AE, Redgwell C. Birnie, Boyle and Redgwell's International Law and the Environment (4th edn OUP), 2021, 122.
61. Rio Declaration on Environment and Development 1992, UN Doc A/CONF.151/26 (Vol I) Principle 4.
62. Convention on Biological Diversity 1992, 1760 UNTS 79; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 1992, 1771 UNTS 107.
63. CFRN 1999, s 12.
64. Jegede. Institutional Coordination and Environmental Governance in Nigeria. African Journal of Environmental Policy, 2017;12(2):88.
65. Adekunle AO. Capacity Challenges in Environmental Regulation in Nigeria. Journal of Environmental Management in Africa, 2016;8(1):43.
66. Ite EO. Oil Exploration and Environmental Compliance in the Niger Delta. Journal of Petroleum and Environmental Studies, 2015;9(3):67.
67. Olayinka TN. Corruption and Regulatory Weakness in Nigerian Environmental Governance. African Journal of Public Administration, 2018;5(2):105.
68. Olawale BA. Public Participation in Environmental Governance in Nigeria. Journal of Environmental Law and Policy, 2016;10(1):56.
69. Oyedepo SO. Challenges of Judicial Enforcement of Environmental Laws in Nigeria. Nigerian Law Review, 2014;6(2):112.

70. Omotola IA. Data and Evidence-Based Environmental Policy in Nigeria. *Environmental Policy and Law Journal*,2019:7(1):33.
71. Adekunle AO. Reforming Environmental Law in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects. *Journal of Environmental Policy and Law*,2017:9(2):58.
72. Uchegbu CN. Institutional Strengthening for Effective Environmental Regulation in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Environmental Management*,2019:6(2):77.
73. Adekola F, Mitchell GA. Inter-Agency Coordination in Environmental Governance in Nigeria. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*,2015:21(3):689.
74. Omotola IA. Data-Driven Environmental Policy in Nigeria. *Environmental Policy Review*,2020:8(1):23.
75. Olawale BA. Public Participation in Environmental Governance in Nigeria. *Journal of Environmental Law and Policy*,2016:10(1):56.
76. Bodansky D, *et al.* *The Oxford Handbook of International Environmental Law* (OUP), 2007, 512.