



AN ARTICLE BY EGWU FRANCIS EBUBE ON NIGERIA'S ROAD MAP TO ENERGY TRANSITION, WRITTEN AT HIS UNDERGRADUATE LAW CAREER.

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THE CIRCLE OF NIGERIA'S ENERGY TRANSITION AND MECHANISM FOR ENHANCEMENT

ABSTRACT

With increasing concerns about the dangers of climate change, the whole world has become endangered. The need to solve this challenge is a top priority for many countries. In order to solve the challenge, most countries in the world are starting to shift their energy patterns from a non-renewable mix to one based on renewable energy sources. Nigeria has also pursued the ambition of combating the demon causes of climate change, which is an evil that has haunted the world for so long. Nigeria seeks to achieve a net-zero economy by transitioning to clean energy through laws, policies, and actions to protect the environment. Against the backdrop of challenges, this paper discusses how Nigeria is set to transition to clean energy. The second and final part of this paper discusses the legal frameworks that Nigeria has adopted to achieve its net-zero ambition.

Keywords: Climate Change, Renewable Energy, Energy Transition

1.0 INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest threats to the existence of man and the environment is none other than Climate Change. This Climate Change is driven by human activities through the heavy reliance on fossil fuels, which emit greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. These subsequent emissions largely contribute to global warming. The ways human beings can release these greenhouse gases include the burning of fossil fuels, cutting down trees, and farming livestock. The whole world is alarmed at the dangers of climate change, which include but are not limited to pollution, earthquakes, extreme weather, and drought.

A standard statistical report from the United Nations provides that non-renewable energy is the major cause of climate change, making up around 60 percent of the total greenhouse gas emissions.¹ This shows that climate change is primarily caused by our reliance on fossil fuels for various activities in our lives. For instance, the use of gasoline and gas for cooking and electricity.

To combat this threatening event, Nigeria has joined other global leaders in making efforts to achieve a net-zero economy. This was proven by the subsequent adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015 and the launching of Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan in 2022.

2.0 ENERGY TRANSITION IN NIGERIA

Due to the adverse effects of Climate Change and the need to eradicate energy poverty, the country is currently focused on shifting its energy mix from one based on fossil fuels to one based on

¹ Climate reports (2022) United Nations<<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/reports>>accessed 31st July 2023.

renewable energy. This is reaffirmed with the need for a net-zero emitting source and one that bridges the energy access gap.

Energy Transition simply means the transformation of the whole energy sector from fossil-based energy sources to clean energy sources through necessary means, including but not limited to laws, policy frameworks, and technology.

Due to Nigeria's Commitment to fighting climate change and providing clean and sustainable energy around the world, the country adopted the Paris Agreement in line with the Sustainable Development Goal. The main aim of this Paris Agreement was to reduce global warming to below 2°C and create a carbon-neutral environment by 2050.

The Nigerian Government went further to launch Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan in 2022 with the view to subsequently tackle the challenges of climate change events. This plan is also focused on solving the issue of energy poverty.

It is very important to state that for the energy transition to be successful, it must touch all sectors that are emitters or users of fossil fuel-based energy sources. This may be the transportation Sector, the Cooking sector, or any other industrial sector.

One may wonder what the implications of a fast-moving energy transition would be for a country like Nigeria that greatly depends on fossil fuels, which contribute to its major revenue. Knowing fully well that Crude Oil in Nigeria brings 90% of revenue from foreign exchange, the answer to these questions would be that Nigeria is not like any other country in the world. So the energy transition would be a gradual process for the country. This is because the Country heavily relies on fossil fuels (Oil and Gas). The Country must play a wise game to both meet the need for energy transition and also manage its local energy source to further develop the nation.

Nigeria is said to have a large gas reserve. The Federal Government stated this in a report from Punch Newspaper. The government restated that the value of Nigeria's proven gas reserves of about \$206.53 trillion is over \$803.4 trillion, adding that the country has the most extensive gas reserve in Africa.² With the recent adoption of natural gas as a transition fuel, many countries in the world are inclined to leverage this energy source, of which Nigeria is not excluded. This was demonstrated by the launch of the "Decade of Gas" initiative in 2021. This initiative was seen as a National Gas Expansion program to leverage natural gas as a clean and sustainable energy source. It sets energy sources like Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), and Liquefied Petroleum gas (LPG) as clean and efficient energy sources to be used for various activities like cooking and transportation.

Despite this, our country, Nigeria," is on its way to transitioning to clean energy. This was demonstrated by its commitment to the Paris Agreement and the reaffirmation of its efforts to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060 at the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26), Nigeria. Nigeria has made subsequent moves that show that it is committed to transitioning to clean, environmentally friendly energy. These include the enactment of the Climate Change Act 2021 and the launch of the Natural Gas Policy of 2017. These steps seek to transform the country into a clean energy-producing country.

² Nnodim, O. (2022) 'Nigeria's proven gas reserves worth over \$803.4TN-FG', Punch Newspapers<<https://punchng.com/nigerias-proven-gas-reserves-worth-over-803-4tn-fg/?amp>>accessed 31st July 2023.

3.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR ENERGY TRANSITION IN NIGERIA

In the bid to achieve an energy transition, Nigeria has made laws, regulations, and policies that foster the adoption of clean, sustainable, and environmentally friendly energy. These laws, policies, and regulations regulate renewable energy (clean energy) in Nigeria. These laws, policies, and regulations are discussed below:

3.1 Climate Change Act 2021

This law is, however, made to provide the country with a legal Framework to achieve its goal of eradicating climate change and maintaining economic sustainability. The Act establishes the National Council on Climate Change, which is responsible for formulating climate actions within the country.

3.2 Electricity Power Sector Reform (EPSRA) Act 2005

This Act is the major law that governs the power sector in Nigeria. It establishes the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission as a regulatory body in charge of licensing and regulations for the generation and distribution of electricity in the power sector. The powers of the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission to make regulations in exercising its functions were provided for in Section 96.

3.3 Environmental Impact Assessment Act 1992

This Act deals with matters in relation to the protection of the environment. It requires that an environmental impact assessment be conducted for plans or projects that may affect the environment. This project includes power projects, both public and private. It requires an environmental impact assessment on power generation operations that may affect the environment.

3.4 Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency Act, 2015

This Act is focused on providing a sustainable electric power supply and also protecting consumers of electric products. The Act establishes the National Electric Management Services Agency (NEMSA) as the agency in charge of making electric standards and regulations. The Act requires the enforcement of these standards even in electrical installation processes.

3.5 National Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Policy 2015

This policy is designed to address the challenges of accessing modern and clean energy resources. The policy aims to address energy poverty and increase energy access. This policy, approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC), is aimed at pursuing Nigeria's climate objective. The Policy also looks to remodel existing electricity generation activities.

3.6 Renewable Electricity Policy Guidelines 2006

This policy is aimed at bridging the gap in access to electricity. It requires the provision of an adequate and reliable power supply in Nigeria. The policy is issued by the Federal Ministry of Power.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The need to balance the energy transition and increase energy access has remained the key objective of Nigeria's foremost policy. Nigeria has gradually moved from fossil fuels to renewable energy to combat the dangers of climate change. This energy transition involves the reduction of greenhouse gases that escape into the atmosphere. In order to fasten the transition process, the country has made regulations, laws, and policies to enable the achievement of energy efficiency, provide energy supply, and combat climate change. These laws, regulations, and policies will be efficient in driving a greener economy and sustainable development in Nigeria.