Covenant University Journal of Politics & International Affairs, Special Issue on Leadership and Development, March, 2025
ISSN: p. 2354-3558 e. 2354-3493 DOI: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Open Access Journal Available Online

Integrating Climate Leadership and Adaptation Policies for Resilient Development in West Africa

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Abstract: The impact of climate change in West Africa presents a substantial obstacle, jeopardizing its socio-economic progress and intensifying existing conflict vulnerabilities. The manifestation of rising heat temperatures, unpredictable precipitation patterns, desertification, flood, and drought all impact agricultural activities and water availability. These effects weaken the ability to access and maintain an adequate food supply, increase the level of poverty, and put pressure on economic development. Existing adaptation plan/policies in West Africa reveal that, in Nigeria, policies such as the National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action on Climate Change in Nigeria (NASPA-CCN) have been formulated, yet its impact is constrained by little funding and bureaucratic inertia. Chad and Niger, grappling with severe droughts and flooding adopted the Chad the Chad National Adaptation Plan Advancement Project, and National Policy on Climate Change respectively. However, these policies face significant challenges due to internal or regional conflicts and socio-political instability. Cameroon's adaptation policy, including the National Development Strategy (SDN30) is undermined by limited stakeholder engagement and resource allocation. Existing literature emphasized two key issues. First, there is an urgency for robust climate leadership and effective adaptation policies to foster resilient development in the region. Second, 'climate leadership' should involve proactive governance, innovative policy frameworks, and regional cooperation to mitigate and adapt to climate impacts. The research utilizes secondary sources to explore how climate leadership and effective adaptation strategies are crucial for sustainable progress in West Africa. Findings reveal that while these countries have established various climate adaptation frameworks, their implementation and efficacy are hindered by weak leadership and governance, limited financial resources, and insufficient political will. The paper recommends that climate leaders must prioritize climate concerns within their comprehensive development plan.

Keywords: Climate Adaptation, Climate Change, Climate Leadership, Leadership, West Africa

Introduction

Aside the ongoing conflicts and

instability in different regions and continents of the world, climate change is considered a significant 'universal global problem' for all countries of the world. It is on this premise that Carter et al (2021) and Abbass et al (2022) aver that climate change is widely acknowledged as a crucial global concern due to its transboundary effects, which have far-reaching consequences on economies, biodiversity, and societies across the globe. Evidently, the Global food security, the availability of water, and public health are under risk due to increasing temperatures, shifts in rainfall patterns, and increase in severe weather events.

Africa which includes the West African Sub-region, contributes between 3.9% to 4% carbon dioxide which is a very small fraction of the global total emission (Aljazeera, 2023; Statista, 2024. In West Africa alone, data from Climate Watch indicates that Niger released 46.04 C_{O2} in 2021, accounting for 0.78% of world emissions. Her neighbour, Chad, released a total of 114 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide. This accounts for 0.24% of the total world emissions. According to ClimateWatch (2021), Cameroon contributed 0.27% of the total world emissions, equivalent to 128.4 million of C_{O2}. Nigeria which is the highest in the region released 369.38 C_{O2}, accounting for 0.78% of the global emissions. Evidently, the states mentioned have minimal emissions, mostly because they have limited industrialisation in comparison to industrialised areas such as Europe, Asia, and Middle East.

Although the West African sub-region's contribution to global warming is minimal, it is already facing a phenomenon known as "dangerous humid heat" according to the World Weather Attribution (WWA, 2024. For instance, in February of this year, the area experienced an intense heatwave with temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius reaching up to 50 degrees Celsius. This prompted both the Nigeria Meteorological Agency (NiMet) (Etuk, 2024) and its Ghanaian counterpart (GMet) to issue warnings in their respective states. The World Weather Attribution (2024) research also determined that climate change significantly increased the likelihood of the scorching heat by a factor of 10 and raised the temperature by 4 degrees Celsius.

Due to recent heavy rain, Save the Children (2024) reports that torrential rains and floods in West Africa have resulted in the displacement of around 950,000 people, including a significant number of children, in Nigeria, Chad, and Niger. Despite being the traditional rainy season, this year's rainfall has been unusually intense, resulting in extensive flooding in Lagos, Niamey, Abuja, and other areas. As a result of climate change, flood effects have intensified recently, leading to significant repercussions in humanitarian and development efforts. The occurrence of extended periods of little to no rainfall and the severity of drought have already exacerbated in some regions of West Africa, leading to a significant reduction of 40 to 60 % of water volume in the Lake Chad Basins area. (Issaharou-Matchi et al, 2021). These environmental pressures exacerbate conflicts, particularly in rural regions where farmers and herders contend for depleting land and water resources. Nevertheless, the persistent lack of security in areas like as Lake Chad leads to the displacement of populations, exacerbating the destabilisation of their

means of living. According to Cabot and Cabot (2017), climate change exacerbates poverty by rendering agricultural and natural resource-dependent livelihoods unviable, leading to increased migration to urban areas.

Meanwhile, the West African nations of Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad have substantial obstacles in adopting efficient climate adaptation plans. The research conducted by Sorgho et al (2020) confirmed the fact that there are one or two Climate Change policies in each nation within the West African sub-region. Furthermore, Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad have existing adaptation policy document that prioritise certain industries/sectors. For instance, Nigeria has two climate change policy documents, namely the National Policy on Climate Change (2021-2030) and the National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action on Climate Change (NASPA-CCN). Cameroon has updated its Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP), which expired in 2019, with a new plan called the National Development Strategy (NDS30) for the period of 2020-2030. Chad also have the Chad National Adaptation Plan Advancement Project. Niger has implemented the National Policy on Climate Change. Although these measures exist, the crucial question is: how effective are they in reducing climate-related disaster in West Africa?

West African nations have substantial obstacles when it comes to establishing efficient climate adaption plans. These nations sometimes lack the essential infrastructure and technical proficiency to formulate and implement policies that effectively tackle the threats presented by climate change (Leal Filho et al, 2018). Furthermore, there is also a lack of alignment between climate adaptation policies and the practical financial circumstances on the ground. These discrepancies arises from the fact that many of these adaptation policies are formulated without taking into account the socio-economic and cultural contexts of local communities. Additionally, these countries lack sufficient financial resources to effectively implement these policies, resulting in futile or unsustainable approaches. The lack of robust climate governance at both the national and regional levels has resulted in fragmented and reactive approaches to climate-related emergencies. Climate change policies are often compartmentalised within individual sectors, such as agriculture or water management, instead than being included into more comprehensive development plans. The absence of cooperation across sectors and nations undermines the region's overall capacity to withstand the effects of climate change.

When Climate Change was seen as a complex and challenging issue, the focus of most efforts was on addressing the problem by using scientific methods, particularly via the advancement of biofuels. Leadership according to Ferraro et al (2015) is essential in tackling complex and challenging issues such as climate change, since leaders are in a prime position to make decisions and execute strategies. Although initial efforts mostly concentrated on scientific remedies, it is the leadership that determines the order of importance, communication, and implementation of these strategies within society. Although, the cooperative, legislative, and regulatory framework in securing and protecting the future world of net-zero is characterised by great ambition, the current issue lies in the

successful implementation and execution of the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in each state. This paper adopt the 4 A's of climate leadership as explained by the We Mean Business Coalition (2024). Ideally, an effective leader is who is ambitious to protect the present and the future of his state will respond to climate crisis with *Ambition*, such leader will deliver that ambition with strategic or developmental *Action*. He will speak up to secure more adaptation policies with *Advocacy* and lastly, such leader will drive state development by demonstrating *Accountability* We Mean Business Coalition (2024). While climate leadership is a top-bottom approach to policy formulation and development, it requires a genuine 'political will' to implement these adaptation policies.

This article is divided into six sections. The second section examines the conceptual understanding of the concept of climate leadership and its scope. The third section reviews the existing adaptation policies, their effectiveness and Gaps in implementation. The third section examines critically the problems of climate leadership in contemporary West Africa. The fourth section discusses integrating climate leadership into development goals while the fifth section towards adaptation politics for resilient development in Africa.

Climate Leadership

There seems to be a dearth of literature that comprehensively explores the concept of climate leadership. Although there are a limited number of pieces of literature on the subject, none of them have addressed the definition and extent of the concept. In this contemporary era, the importance of leaders has become more vital in a world facing the challenges and consequences of ecological degradation and climate change. Leaders provide guidance and motivation, propose, and implement measures on issues affecting society (Mayfield et al, 2015; Bolden et al, 2023). The correlation between leadership and ambition, as well as its impact on societal progress, may be ascribed to different researchers, contingent upon the particular circumstances. Maxwell (2005) provides a notable definition of leadership as the manifestation of "influence", including nothing more and nothing less. According to him, leadership is using one's desire and influence to direct others towards growth, advancement, and constructive development.

Climate leadership encompasses the proactive measures and initiatives undertaken by people, organisations, or governments to tackle and alleviate the consequences of climate change. Moreover, it entails the capacity to bring about fundamental and comprehensive transformation by incorporating sustainable methods, advocating for justice in addressing climate issues, and guaranteeing the ability to withstand and recover from frequent and repetitive ecological challenges. Korejan and Shahbazi (2016), in their explanation of transformational leadership, also associates climate leadership with both ambition and growth. They characterise leadership as a process in which leaders and followers elevate one other to enhanced levels of motivation and ethical standards. This approach posits that leaders motivate their followers to attain higher achievements by linking their aspirations with a broader purpose that

promotes growth.

Climate leadership can also be explained from two critical angles (see fig 1). The first is the *top-bottom approach* which is mostly determined by the system of government in practice. In a democratic setting, the "elected leader" who acts as the representative of the masses will have the absolute ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve net-zero emissions.

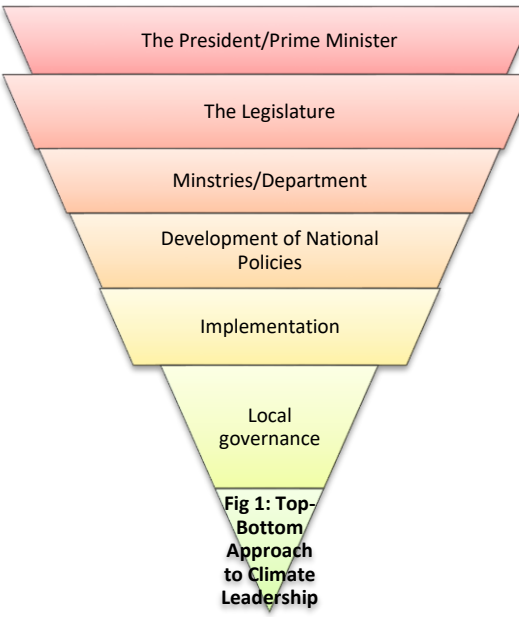

Figure 1: Top-Bottom Approach to Climate Leadership

Leaders in this area advocate for climate change and adaptation strategies, as well as innovation and cooperation, in order minimise carbon footprints and encourage the use of renewable energy sources. Climate leadership in West Africa sub-region therefore entails managing the socio-political dynamics of uneven global commitments to climate change while advocating for fairness in climate remedies (Turaga, 2017; Igue, 2018). In this context, leadership necessitates working together with international and regional institutions, formulating flexible approaches for local populations, and advocating for climate-resilient practices for societal development.

Bottom-up climate leadership may be seen as a multifaceted strategy necessitating not just governmental intervention but also local, community-driven efforts (See fig 2).

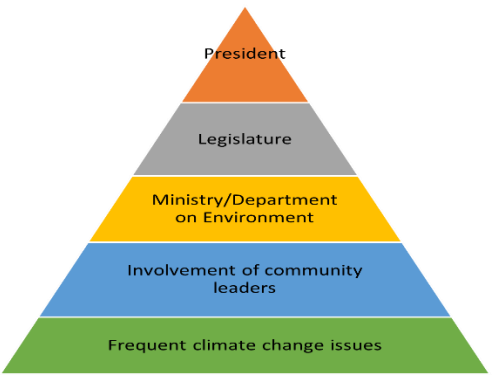

Figure 2: Bottom-Up Approach to Climate Leadership

This strategy begins with the prevalent climatic challenges impacting a community, followed by the engagement of community leaders who will then contact the regional ministry at the state level, before contacting the Ministry or Department of Environment at the federal level. This paradigm is especially pertinent in West Africa, where empowering local populations to embrace climate-resilient practices is a crucial aspect of leadership.

Existing Climate Adaptation Policies in West Africa

Following the ratification of the Paris Agreement on December 12, 2015, the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) emerged as a pivotal component of the Agreement, as delineated in Article 2, paragraph 2, which addresses the global objective of reducing climate change to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, with endeavours to constrain it to 1.5°C. Each country to the Paris Agreement, is accountable for developing its own Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) (Jernnäs, 2024), which serve as its national climate action strategies outlining methods for reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and aiding in global climate change mitigation.

Numerous reports, such as the World Bank Groundswell Report (2021) and the Africa Climate Mobility Report (2023) indicate that the West African Sub-region is significantly susceptible to climate change owing to its reliance on climate-sensitive industries such as agriculture, water resources, and forestry. A number of governments in the area have initiated environmental adaptation initiatives to tackle these environmental concerns. As revealed earlier, the four countries under consideration have a combination of four (4) adaptation policies. (See table 1 below).

Table 1: **Nigeria: National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action for Climate Change in Nigeria (NASPA-CCN)**

S/N	Countries	Adaptation Policies	Timeframe
1.	Nigeria	National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action for Climate Change (NASPA-CCN)	10 years
2.	Niger	National Policy on Climate Change	10 years
3.	Chad	Chad National Adaptation Plan Advancement Project	10years
4	Cameroon	National Development Strategy (NDS 30)	10years

Nigeria's National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action for Climate Change (NASPA-CCN), established in 2011, functions as an essential framework for tackling the country's climate change issues, especially in susceptible sectors including agriculture, water resources, health, and infrastructure. Onyeneke et al. (2020) advocate for a comprehensive policy that prioritises cross-sectoral collaboration to incorporate climate resilience into national development planning. This plan serves as an integral element of environmentally friendly development, aiming to mitigate climate change sensitivities and consequences; enhance adaptive capabilities; capitalise on new possibilities; and promote stakeholder engagement (Onyimadu and Uche, 2021). The Nigerian Federal Government is tasked with providing leadership and monitoring in the implementation of NASPA-CCN, ensuring the alignment of climate adaption initiatives across all sectors. This leadership guarantees the successful implementation of the policy and fosters cooperation across national, state, and local governments to enhance climate resilience.

Niger's National Policy on Climate Change (NNPCC)

Niger's National Policy on Climate Change (NNPCC) aims to strengthen the country's resilience to climate impacts

and reduce its vulnerability, particularly in agriculture and water resources, which are vital to its economy and food security. According to Ado et al (2019) the policy promotes integrating climate adaptation strategies into national and local development plans, ensuring that climate risks are systematically addressed. It emphasizes the adoption of sustainable practices in key sectors such as agriculture, water management, and energy, to mitigate adverse effects while fostering environmental sustainability. Additionally, the policy prioritizes enhancing the capacity of local communities to adapt to climate change, through education, resource management, and technology transfer. This approach aims to create a more climate-resilient society, equipped to face future environmental challenges.

Chad's National Adaptation Plan Advancement Project

The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Advancement Project in Chad seeks to enhance the nation's ability to adapt to climate change by refining its institutional structure and promoting the incorporation of climate adaptation into national planning processes. The initiative is integral to Chad's overarching strategy to synchronise its development objectives with climate resilience measures, emphasising sectors like agriculture, water, and disaster risk mitigation.

Cameroon's National Development Strategy (NDS 30)

Cameroon's National Development Strategy 2020-2030 (NDS 30) incorporates climate adaptation into the nation's long-term developmental objectives. It underscores the need for sustainable development and delineates strategies to bolster climate resilience via reforestation, enhanced water management, and catastrophe risk mitigation.

oun try	Adaptation Policy	Priority Sector	Effectiveness	Gap
igeria	National Adaptation Strategy and Plan for Climate Action in Nigeria (NASPA-CCN)	• Agriculture, • Forest, energy, • water, • transport, • industry, • health, • ICT, • Human settlement and • security	• It increased climate change awareness in some part of the country. • Some successes were recorded in climate-smart agriculture and water management. • Adaptation plans was integrated into national policies.	• Limited access funding for implementation • Insufficient institutional capability at lo levels • Inadequate inte agency cooperation • Insufficient comprehensive data for progre assessment
iger	National Policy on Climate Change (NPCC)	• Agriculture • Water resources • Built infrastructure • Fisheries • Human Settlement • Human health	• Developments in climate-resilient agriculture • Improved early warning signs • Global collaboration for climate financing	• Constrained technological a financial resources, particularly in rural regions. • Inadequate integration within local governing structures • Significant dependence on external financ resources
had	National Adaptation Plan Advancement Project	• Agriculture and livestock • Forestry and environment • Water and Sanitation • Education • Gender and social protection • Health and nutrition	• Enhance the resilience of pastoral, fisheries, and urban systems. • Advocate for climate change mitigation initiatives • Enhance the capabilities of stakeholders and organisations to address climate change • Enhance the mechanisms and capabilities to mobilise climate funding.	• Capacity gaps the local level • Limited awareness and resources for adaptation • Political instability • Strong dependence on international funding for lon term sustainability
ameroon	National Development Strategy (SDN 30)	• Agriculture • Forestry • Water resources	• Mainstreamed climate adaptation into national development	• Delayed implementation due to financial constraint

The Problem of Climate Leadership in Contemporary West Africa and the Nuances

West Africa faces significant environmental challenges due to climate change, and the need for effective climate leadership has become urgent. The region, known for its diverse ecosystems ranging from coastal areas to arid zones, is experiencing the adverse effects of rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and sea-level rise. These climatic changes are exacerbating existing socio-economic problems like food insecurity, poverty, and political instability. However, despite these pressing issues, climate leadership in among states like Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon in West Africa remains inadequate, characterized by a lack of political will, insufficient funding, and weak governance structures. The paper explores the problem of climate leadership in West Africa, its underlying nuances, and the factors impeding effective action.

Lack of Political Will and Commitment

Despite leadership awareness of the damaging effect of the consequences of climate change in their respective state and region, a major issue among these countries in the West African is the lack of sustained political commitment. In order to substantiate this assertion, Antwi-Agyei et al (2018) assert that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are well-aligned with the existing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in West Africa. However, there are still obstacles in the areas of institutional capability, cooperation, and distribution of resources for integrated adaptation planning. Political will in this context refers to the level of dedication shown by significant decision-makers to a specific policy proposal (Post et al, 2010). Although these nations are parties to international climate accords such as the Paris Agreement, the implementation of these pledges into national laws and actions has been erratic. Furthermore, climate change does not have a prominent position on the political agendas of these climate leaders who prioritise more pressing economic and social issues such as hunger and poverty, unemployment, and security. Consequently, climate change is often seen as a protracted issue, but economic development, political stability, and personal financial gain are viewed as pressing priorities. This myopic perspective hampers the formulation and execution of comprehensive, resilient climate strategies for the development of their individual states.

Furthermore, leadership transitions in West Africa are often tumultuous, characterised by recurrent governmental changes or political instability that undermine the continuity of climate policy and adaptation strategies. In nations with somewhat stable governments like Nigeria and Cameroon, the need to tackle climate change is eclipsed by critical governance challenges. Countries such as Nigeria, although demonstrating advancements in renewable energy and environmental regulations, continue to have difficulties in continuously prioritising climate initiatives owing to conflicting developmental issues (Omisore, 2018). The absence of a cohesive (Williams et al, 2020), long-term strategy from political leaders impedes the region's capacity to address climate change effectively.

Economic Constraints and Funding Challenges

The economic constraints of countries in West Africa exacerbate the region's difficulties in climate leadership. Numerous nations in the area have emerging economies, significantly dependent on agricultural, mining, and oil exports, sectors susceptible to the impacts of climate change. The economic vulnerability hinders these governments from investing in effective climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives, particularly while international climate finance remains inadequate (Hall, 2017). Notwithstanding worldwide commitment to assist poor nations in their climate adaptation initiatives, West Africa has insufficiently received financial resources to establish climate-resilient infrastructure or to invest in green technology. Onyimadu and Uche (2021) elucidated that Nigeria's financial allocation for climate change mostly focuses on mitigation rather than adaptation. Nigeria's adaptation efforts aimed at the industrial, trade and commerce, information technology, and transport sectors are the most overlooked among the key sectors identified in the NASPA-CCN strategy.

The substantial costs associated with converting to renewable energy, constructing climate-resilient farming practices, and protecting coastal communities from rising sea levels is a significant financial challenge (Bagheri et al, 2019). These nations are significantly indebted and mostly depend on foreign assistance, which constrains their ability to dedicate adequate resources for combating climate change. Although international organisations and donor agencies have launched several projects in the area, these initiatives tend to be ephemeral, project-specific, and disjointed, rather than comprehensive and sustainable.

Weak Governance and Institutional Capacity

A critical challenge hindering climate leadership in West Africa is inadequate governance and institutional capability. Numerous governments in the area lack the requisite skills, resources, and administrative structures to formulate and execute comprehensive climate policies. According to Horning and Horning (2018), environmental ministries are often underfunded and short of personnel possessing low influence in national policymaking. Consequently, climate initiatives often exhibit weak coordination, insufficient enforcement, and susceptibility to corruption. Moreover, there exists a pervasive deficiency of dependable climate data and research to guide and assess policymakers, so obstructing the formulation of evidence-based initiatives. Moreover, the decentralisation of authority in several West African nations hinders the execution of national climate policy at the local level. Local governments, tasked with significant environmental management, often lack the expertise and resources to execute climate measures. The disparity between national policy and local actions results in a deficiency in effective climate governance. In nations such as Nigeria, where decentralisation policies have empowered local governments, the insufficient local ability to tackle climate challenges has hindered the achievement of national climate objectives.

Socio-cultural Barriers

Climate leadership in West Africa encounters cultural and societal obstacles. Numerous communities in the area continue to depend on conventional farming methods that lack resilience to climate change. Transitioning traditional behaviours to more sustainable techniques requires both economic incentives and societal acceptability, which often develops at a slow pace (Sovacool and Griffiths, 2020). Moreover, public knowledge of climate change is notably deficient in several regions of these nations, especially in rural locales. The deficiency in understanding the causes and effects of climate change obstructs grassroots initiatives aimed at fostering community resilience and adapting to the evolving environment. Cultural views and conventional leadership structures may, in some instances, impede climate action. In particular locations, opposition to contemporary environmental management approaches arises from entrenched beliefs and habits that may contradict planned climate measures (Everard et al, 2016). This underscores the need for climate leadership that is both hierarchical and inclusive of local traditions and knowledge systems.

Integrating Climate Leadership with Development Goals

Climate leadership is crucial in determining the future of our world, with its fundamental principles—*Ambition, Advocacy, Action, and Accountability*—steering the shift towards sustainable development (See fig 3). The combined efforts of climate leadership with developmental objectives according to Chan et al (2021) guarantees that initiatives to address climate change concurrently promote economic advancement, poverty alleviation, and enhanced living conditions. This integration is essential for linking environmental sustainability with UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Figure 3: The 4 A's of Climate Leadership

Ambition

According to Ghosh (2019), ambition is the cornerstone of climate leadership, embodying a daring vision for a 'net-zero' planet. It entails a long-term commitment to a sustainable future that mitigates the negative impacts of climate change while aligning with the overarching objectives of economic and social growth for each state. When effectively communicated by leaders, ambition offers a constructive trajectory for individuals, enterprises, and economies, guaranteeing that climate plans aid in realising development objectives (Northrop et al, 2016). A climate leadership ambition grounded in development objectives must seek to revolutionise sectors, stimulate innovation, and improve inclusion, while advancing environmental sustainability. By establishing audacious, science-driven objectives, firms and governments may influence sectors to emulate their actions. This strategy empowers people, educates stakeholders, and generates momentum for a future in which climate resilience and economic development coexist together. Investing in renewable

energy solutions reduces carbon emissions and fosters job creation in green businesses, so advancing SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Furthermore, ambition guarantees that climate efforts emphasise fairness and access, in accordance with SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality), by ensuring that marginalised populations are not neglected.

Action

Ambition alone is insufficient; it is through action that climate leadership really manifests. Climate action embodies the creativity and change necessary to attain a net-zero planet. Leaders must actualise their ambitious goals via tangible actions, including the shift to renewable energy, the adoption of circular economy models, and the investment in green infrastructure (Hassan et al, 2024). Climate initiatives that coincide with development objectives provide chances for commercial prosperity, alongside enhancements in living conditions and ecological well-being. These measures also safeguard against hazards, such as resource depletion and climate-related calamities, that might jeopardise advancements in development goals. By doing so, climate leaders may tackle many Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure). The Nigerian government's Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) effort represents a significant advancement in climate mitigation and economic development.

Advocacy

Advocacy is essential for ensuring that climate leadership transcends particular organisations and fosters social and policy-level change. Climate leaders according to Evans et al (2015) significantly influence the advocacy for science-based climate policies that correspond with development objectives. Utilising their influential voices, actions, and affiliations, they may advocate for progressive initiatives that foster sustainable development worldwide. Advocacy for climate action aims to stimulate investment and promote the wider use of sustainable practices. Climate leaders may influence policies that facilitate the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

Accountability

Accountability is the ultimate pillar of climate leadership, crucial for fostering confidence among stakeholders and guaranteeing the achievement of climate objectives. In this framework, accountability guarantees that leaders fulfil their commitments and maintain openness in their efforts. Transparent outcomes and uniform reporting of advancements, dangers, and opportunities are essential for showcasing resilience and preparedness for a net-zero future (Gupta and van Asselt, 2019). By means of accountability, enterprises and governments may assess their influence on climate change and developmental goals, therefore aligning their initiatives with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Regular reporting on emissions reductions, energy consumption, and

social impacts aids stakeholders in comprehending the contribution of climate initiatives to development objectives, including SDG 13 and SDG 7. Furthermore, by revealing the dangers and possibilities linked to climate change, organisations may draw investment and channel resources into sustainable projects that promote long-term growth.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The West African area, with its comparatively low carbon footprint, is suffering serious consequences as a result of the evident environmental and socio-economic effects of climate change. Climate leadership in the area is impeded by several hurdles, including political instability, inadequate resources, ineffective governance, and socio-cultural obstacles. Despite significant advancements in policy formation and international collaboration, the efficacy of these initiatives is constrained by insufficient political will and the absence of coherent, long-term strategy. To enable West Africa to surmount these obstacles and establish itself as a leader in climate adaptation and mitigation, there must be enhanced alignment between national and local policies, increased financial investment in sustainable technologies, and a unified effort to elevate public awareness and societal involvement in climate action. Regional leaders must prioritise climate concerns within a comprehensive development plan, ensuring the area mitigates climate change impacts and enhances resilience against future environmental difficulties.

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