



PANEL PAPER ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND MDG

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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*eko akete international summit vi, on efficient management of
cities, municipalities in a mega region: towards creating a live-able
and manageable lagos metropolis by 2015*

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INTRODUCTION AND PREAMBLE

For the first time in history more than half the world's populations are living in towns and cities. This milestone was passed in 2008 and by 2040 it is predicted that two people out of every three, are expected to live in urban environments.

Although urbanization presents us with a wealth of new opportunities and huge challenges as well as potentials to improve economic development and innovation, it threatens key global problems such as resource depletion, climate change, and inequality. This is why Megacities like Lagos, must be on the move to set out solutions of how billions of city-dwellers can access what they need without putting intolerable strains on the environment. In such a situation, development strategies must focus on how to achieve sustainable urban mobility, looking at all the ways in which people will access goods, services and information and make contact with each other. It goes beyond transport to consider information communication technology solutions, innovative urban design and much more importantly, environmental management and sustainable development.

In view of the above, the Lagos State Government has taken several steps in bracing up for the mega city challenges ahead of 2015 by giving priority to infrastructural development and environmental

sustainability. The proposed Eko Atlantic City is one of such strategic development projects. It is expected to have residential structures, first class hotels, restaurants and architectural edifices that can serve as competitive tourist destinations anywhere in the world, thus making the City the centre of tourism, property and investment market in Nigeria.

It therefore goes without saying that this annual ***“Eko Akete International Summit VI, on Efficient Management of Cities, Municipalities in a Mega Region: Towards Creating a Live-able and Manageable Lagos Metropolis by 2015”*** is a round peg in a round hole. This year’s Summit Theme is *“Strategic Planning and Development: Local leaders preparing for the future of our cities in meeting the United Nations, Millennium Development Goals for sustainable megacity development”* and as an environmentalist, I am to speak on the topic CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FOR MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

OUR CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES

Climate Change is a measurable increase in the average temperature of the earth’s atmosphere, oceans and landmasses. This temperature difference over the years has now become rapid due to industrialization and man’s activities which more often than none are not environment friendly. Such activities result in the release of various gases or emissions (Green House Gases) which contribute significantly to global warming. Examples of these include Carbon Dioxide, Methane; Nitrous Oxide; Ozone; Synthetic Chemicals; aerosols etc. It has been scientifically concluded that global average

surface temperature has increased over the 20th century by about 0.6°C. Such increase can adversely affect weather patterns, ice sheets and glaciers, sea levels, agriculture, plants and animals as well as human health. Climate Change is gradually approaching catastrophic dimensions as seen from the various recent socio-economic disasters which include but not limited to food crisis, water scarcity, flooding, loss of biodiversity, spread of diseases etc. Observed Climate variability and changes in Nigeria as reported by the Nigerian Meteorological Agency include some of the following:

- Warmer hot season throughout Nigeria. March – May has had hot episodes of heat waves as temperature increases of about an average of 0.4-1.5°C with extreme ranges of 2.0 – 3.3°C are being observed across the country. The result is warmer and more frequent hot days and nights over most places.
- Higher rates of evaporation and evapo-transpiration and increase in frequency, duration and intensity of dry spell.
- Late onset of rain and early cessation of rain with wider spread since 1911, leading to shortened length of the rainy season.
- Shift in the occurrence of the little dry season (August break) from August to a long time well before August, that is, mostly in mid July and also shift in the harmattan haze season.
- Pronounced reduction in annual rain by about 15-20% in some places (drought); while a few others maintained high values within the shortened season resulting in floods in such places.

- Drought and desertification literally blowing away the north and the desert now covers over 35% of the nation's landmass
- Floods, storm surges and gully erosions (washing away the coastal zone) e.g the Lagos Bar Beach

I have provided the information above to clear the mind of doubting Thomases and establish that Climate Change is not a farce but a reality.

The effect of Climate Change in Lagos has been intense and mitigation efforts towards confronting Climate Change effects in Lagos State have equally been intense. A disclosure from a UN-Habitat sponsored study which spanned five years of data collection (2005 to 2010), said flooding was among the major environmental problems which had persisted in Lagos in spite of government's efforts. Lagos land is flood prone and surrounded by coastal regions. Some part of the Victoria Island area is under threat of being submerged by the Atlantic Ocean. Many lagosians will not quickly forget the July 10 flood tragedy that engulfed the State.

The Acting Director-General of the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) Ibadan, Prof. Femi Olokesusi, while presenting a paper entitled, 'Lagos: The Challenges and Opportunities of an emerging African mega city.' noted that Lagos has some environmental challenges to overcome if it was to attain its Mega City Status, however its environmental disaster can be averted if proper environmental checks were carried out. *(The various environmental checks and statutory technical reports in abating environmental nuisance are domiciled with the Lagos State Ministry of Environment*

and its Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA). On the challenges of environmental degradation and Climate Change, he said there was rapid land conversion in the State from the prehistoric ecology of the City to a human dominated urban region.

In combating Climate Change effects at the national level, the recent launching of the Nigeria Sat – X satellite this year (August) has the ability to aid Nigeria in effective monitoring of key environmental issues such as flooding, gaseous emissions, agriculture, forestry and environmental mapping while it also provides satellite imagery for humanitarian use in the event of major international disasters such as the tsunamis, hurricanes, fires and flooding. The Director-General of the Nigerian Space Agency (NASRDA), Dr. S.O. Mohammed, when referring to the importance of the satellite to the environment, had said, “The Disaster Monitoring Constellation (DMC) has proved to be both a successful and sustainable way to supply data about the earth for planning and managing resources effectively.

At the State level, the government of Lagos State has contributed in no small way to ensuring that on every front of the battle the menace of Climate Change and threats to Lagos’ emergence as a successful Mega City are strategically addressed. From the challenge of collapsed building to admirable infrastructural change, corporate signage and advertising outputs, effective waste management options, efficient water supply system, road constructions and urban development, the State has continued to go by leaps and bounds.

The **Lagos State Government** in partnership with the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) **AFRICA** hosted a

Mayoral Climate Change Congress in Lagos on the 20th – 22nd September, 2011. The Congress, which had as its theme, ***Building Climate Change Resilient African Cities: Climate Proofing Africa on the Road to COP 17***, was a forum where Mayors and Local Council Chairmen across Sub-Saharan Africa came to share experience and best practices in responding to the challenge of climate change. This is with a view to defining an agenda for negotiations at the up-coming COP-17 Conference in Durban, South Africa.

The Congress had in attendance about 600 participants comprising Mayors from West African countries, members of the Diplomatic Corps, traditional rulers, senior civil servants from federal, state, and local governments, political office holders, members of the academia, people from the private sector, national and international experts in climate change, NGOs, environmentalists etc

The conference received several goodwill messages in which the Lagos State Government was commended for demonstrating leadership in organizing it as well as similar conferences in the last few years.

Some of the remarkable strides of the Lagos State Government in creating a viable environment include, but not limited to the following:

- The launching of School Advocacy Programme on Climate Change
- Annual Tree Planting Campaign Exercise
- Climate Change Summit
- Landscaping and beautification projects
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Scheme

- Construction of walkways and bicycle paths
- Efficient Waste Management System
- The use of Pollution Abatement Technology in industries
- Regulation and management of E-Waste in the State
- Vehicular Emission monitoring and regulation
- Waste to Wealth and Waste to Energy projects in order to reduce release of Carbon Dioxide into the atmosphere

CLIMATE CHANGE AND MDGs

The Millennium Development Goals towards 2015 are quantified targets set by the United Nations towards improving the standard of living among all peoples and these include:

- Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger
- Achievement of Universal Primary Education
- Promoting of gender equality and empowerment of women
- Reduction of child mortality rates
- Improvement of maternal health
- Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensuring environmental sustainability
- Developing a global partnership for development

Although there are several challenges concerning attainment of the goals, it is worthwhile to pursue them and continually seek for best ways to accomplish them. The urgent involvement of the Local Governments and Mayors towards the last lap of the 2015 target is based on the realization that this is the nearest government to the people and if the masses must be reached then this campaign must get to the grassroots.

SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Nigeria conducted its Local Government elections in 2011 for another leadership of governance and in Lagos State the inauguration of the elected chairmen of the Lagos State Local Governments and Local Council Development Areas took place on Saturday, 29th October, 2011. During the inauguration of the newly elected Chairmen into the Twenty (20) Local Governments and Thirty Seven (37) Local Council Development Areas, the Governor of Lagos State, His Excellency Babatunde Raji Fashola opined that the consistency of tenure and timing of elections will have a long term impact on policy planning and implementation which will ultimately manifest in improved service delivery. He therefore implored the newly elected officers to play out their roles in the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals with emphasis on the thrust given to them under the 4th Schedule of the 1999 Constitution which requires that Local Governments give priority administration to primary health, sanitation and primary education. In his words he said *"to this end as your primary assignment, we will expect you to focus on the primary healthcare system, primary education, sanitation and empowerment of women. These would form the basis of the policy thrust of our Local Government administration."* The Governor admitted that the State Government cannot go all alone in attaining the MDGs but a partnership is critical with the Local Governments. It is also important to note that the Local Governments themselves cannot go it all alone but in turn must seek partnership with the State Government and Environmental Agencies, NGOs, Research Institutes and necessary private organizations that will provide support for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. I shall now provide a few initiatives

which the Local Governments can build upon in attaining this objective:

The following are a few initiatives for sustainable development in the Local Governments for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals:

1. AGGRESSIVE PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT CAMPAIGN

There is need to step up a consistent and aggressive public enlightenment campaign at the Local Government Levels on the Millennium Development Goals. The campaign can come in form of jingles, sponsorship of radio programs, advertisement and a host of other ways in which the people can be sensitized.

2. DUPLICATING STATE PROGRAM INITIATIVES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Earlier on some of the laudable State Programme initiatives on sustainable development and Climate Change have been enumerated to include Annual Tree Planting Exercise, Climate Change Summits/Education, School Advocacy on Climate Change, Good Waste Management practices, Transportation, et cetera. Any of these can be duplicated at the Local Governments and Local Council Development Areas as a starting point for attaining the MDGs.

3. ESTABLISHING ENVIRONMENTAL STATIONS

The Local Governments and its Council Development Areas can partner with the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA) or its Ministry of Environment in establishing Environmental

Stations within their areas. In these stations, environmental data will be collected in relation to daily temperature, wind speed, relative humidity, water portability in the area and rainfall activities amongst others. These data will go a long way in providing useful information in measuring the success of the development goals.

4. EFFICIENT ENERGY USE

The Local Government and its Council Development Areas can embark on policies that will ensure that the entire local region uses energy efficient light bulbs in their homes. This will help save some money for the homes instead of paying huge bills or wasting energy that could have been used for other purposes. It will also help in publicity of the MDGs amongst others.

5. PROMOTING RESEARCH INITIATIVES

There can be a forum to sponsor research initiatives from Schools or research agencies. This will be supported by the State Government if the financing of such projects is huge. As long as research initiatives are environment friendly, they can be given adequate publicity and encouraged. In a way it can also serve as avenue for job creation.

6. IMPROVEMENT ON AESTHETIC ENVIRONMENT

Improvement on the aesthetic environment of the Local Governments will improve the tourism projects of the State. This will inspire sanitation exercises and drive for a clean and safe environment. It will also help stir the local people in greening their houses and parks, gardens and beautification schemes will be well developed.

7. TAX REDUCTION FOR ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY OUTFITS

Private organizations that are environment friendly can be given incentives on tax reduction because they have supported greening or provided necessary tools or facilities/equipments, recreation centers, etc that are meant for the general development of the area. The tax reduction incentive will generate a greater response from other private organizations that deem it necessary to do more.

8. LOCAL INITIATIVES FOR BIODIVERSITY

The Local Areas can provide different initiatives for biodiversity by documenting all species of living organisms in their regions. If there is sponsorship from private or public organizations, the data generated on the biodiversity of the region/area will be further used to strengthen the tourist potential of the area and provide necessary information for the academia. This can also assist in preventing species' extinction and promote conservation and ecology within the region for the benefit of the State and nation as a whole.

CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude with some salient recommendations made during the Lagos Declaration on Climate Change by West African Mayors and Local Government Chairmen at a Congress on building Climate Change Resilient African Cities: Climate Proofing Africa on the Road to COP 17 in Lagos, Nigeria on September 21-22, 2011 as follows:

- All African Cities and Local Governments must continue to seek for new and additional knowledge, including the Best Available

Technology (BAT)/scientific, economic, and technical information on Climate Change and its impacts.

- Civil societies, women, youths and children at the Local Government level, as advocates of the people, should be carried along and effectively utilized in awareness creation, public education and community mobilization.
- There is need for attitude change and leaders to have political will and formulate as well as implement policies around sustainable development in all facets of human endeavors thus providing the key in the development of the nation.

Thank you for your rapt attention.