

NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS (NLC)

CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

2015

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Dr. Peter Ozo-Eson
General Secretary

ACRONYMS

1. CBDR Common But Differentiated Responsibilities
2. GHG Green House Gas
3. ITUC International Trade Union Congress
4. LASCO Labour-Civil Society Organisation
5. LAWAN Labour Writers Association of Nigeria
6. M&E Monitoring and Evaluation
7. NASS National Assembly
8. NGO Non-Government Organisation
9. NNPC Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
10. NLAC National Labour Advisory Commission
11. NLC Nigeria Labour Congress
12. NUJ Nigeria Union of Journalists
13. REDD Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
14. SCF Standard Cubic Feet
15. UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
16. WB World Bank

ABOUT THE NLC

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) is an umbrella organisation with 43 trade unions in Nigeria and a membership strength of about 7million. The fundamental aims and objectives of Congress are to protect, defend and promote the rights, well-being and the interests of all workers, pensioners and the trade unions; to promote and defend a Nigerian nation that would be just, democratic, transparent and prosperous and to advance the cause of the working class generally.

In the last decade, the NLC has been evolving through a policy of a 'New Beginning', which is enshrined in a vision that captures the imperative of rebuilding the movement towards a direction that makes it more relevant to its members and to the broad society at large. This vision identifies the importance of empowerment and social redemption. It is also about enhancing inter-movement linkages that can help the movement project power in the labour market. In particular, it aims at firming up the capacity of each union and segment through solidarity actions involving the resources, experience and general organisational acumen of the entire movement.

This new vision has been demonstrated in the NLC's struggle against neo-liberal economic policies such as casualisation of labour, deregulation and trade liberalization. Congress' progressive intervention in governance issues and concerns of the society as a whole are part of this process as seen within the context of a struggle to invest in the democratic dispensation with dividends.

To give this process a credible and sustainable organisational platform, Congress has also facilitated the creation of a pro-democracy coalition of civil society organisations.

As part of boosting union's capacity and extending union's engagement within the broad context of development, the Congress finds it exigent and imperative to engage the current reality of climate change noting that failure to take appropriate action at the appropriate time could have dire consequences for the overall trade union essence and credibility.

PREFACE

The challenge of climate change, as widely seen in the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather conditions in many parts of the world, including Nigeria, has naturally come into the full purview of Congress, because it affects the workplace.

Findings of the recent social survey, as part of Congress response to this complex and sad development, brought home the character and magnitude of the danger that lies ahead, were Congress to ignore the need to brace itself.

Sadly, Congress appreciates that many Nigerian workers do not sufficiently grasp the complex processes of the manifestation of climate crisis, nor are they able to relate its effects to the workplace.

This policy document thus, represents the institutional response of Congress; setting out the scope, content and the thrust of the work it plans to undertake to address the emerging menace.

As is clearly stated, Congress sees itself as a prime partner in the broader sectoral, national, regional and global programme to protect and maintain our natural environmental assets, even as the country aspires and plans to step up its economic production, to help realize the Vision 20: 2020 dream.

Our specific understanding of the necessity to intervene is essentially derived from the social reality that both our natural environment and the Nigerian worker are intricately key to the delicate responsibility of ensuring the right resource mix, in pursuit of modern economic production, within the parameters of current globalization.

In this wise, therefore, our practical policy response, as hereby captured, will be scientifically determined, in terms of taking active, and sustained interest in exploring the benefits and prospects of new, clean and carbon-free technologies, that will, in the longer term, protect public health and save jobs.

Accordingly, Congress will work with interested parties to promote such alternative technologies, especially as they relate to public transportation, energy production, agriculture, mining, etc. It is the hope of Congress that this document will clearly signal the preparedness of Labour to lead in the fight against climate change crisis.

This policy document cannot be said to represent a conclusive work on climate change, given the complex and dynamic nature of climate change and the apparent capacity, knowledge and skill deficit of trade unions, and the working people. Coupled with this, is the immediate challenge of cognition and capacity for achieving the combined ideal of environmental protection and sustainable development.

However, this modest effort will serve as a guide to action and be reviewed periodically by the relevant organs of Congress in appreciation of the dynamic nature of climate change, contemporary knowledge and best practices as well as unfolding events in the country and globally.

Ayuba Wabba, *mni*
President, NLC

1.00 BACKGROUND

Globally, humanity is experiencing multiple crises in terms of the skewed structure of the international economy and the current forms and patterns of production in developed and developing countries. The ever increasing demand and consumption of global resources, as it currently stands has fundamentally become unsustainable. This emerging global scenario has, therefore, created massive and growing social and environmental stresses and pressures, posing epochal threats to the entire planetary ecological system and, ultimately human survival.

And there are sufficient indicators that even the aggressive global economic players, can no longer deny the evolving realities of climate change consequences; and most important, the attendant threats to the workplace.

Africa is one of the most vulnerable continents to climate change. This situation is further worsened by its poor state of economic development and low adaptive capacity. But across Africa itself, the landscape is changing; the snowy caps of our famous mountains are melting and the shorelines of lakes such as Chad, Tanganyika and Victoria are receding. These and many other changes have led to unreliable farming seasons and low water supplies – a serious problem for a continent almost entirely dependent on rain for its agriculture.

Despite the fact that in the context of man-made activities that have led to climate change that Africa is least liable, there are widespread fears that Africa will bear the worst burden of it. And most experts agree that Africa is the most vulnerable continent and the least able to adapt to the effects of climate change.

Emissions from energy supply and use (excluding transport emissions) account for over 50% of Nigeria's total greenhouse gas emissions, while the public transportation sector of the Nigerian economy accounts for 7% of emissions.

Indeed, Nigeria's biggest contribution to global warming comes from

the flaring of associated gas in the oil fields of the Niger Delta. These flares of death have gone on for about six decades now. Complaints have trailed this unacceptable wasteful and toxic act right from the early days of oil extraction here. The biggest culprits in this exercise are the oil companies in Nigeria.

The implications of climate change on workers though real, the depth of the consequences would tend to differ for different sectors of production and location. But in specific sense, it affects productivity, livelihoods and income. Labour, therefore, has a significant role to play in addressing climate change, both in terms of protecting workers and ensuring a "just transition" towards a 'green economy.'

From the foregoing, it becomes clearer that climate change is a developmental issue with political, social and economic implications. We therefore, need to interrogate the process of transition to a low carbon economy; the change from unsustainable production and consumption patterns to government investment and job creation. This will require significant government investment in renewable energy, efficient transport system, and a creative adaptation to urban development, among others.

It has become more imperative that the political processes through which policies and programmes emerge necessarily mainstream climate change

Furthermore, reducing emissions in key polluting industries, encouraging more energy efficiency, skills development and re-training workers are critical. From a social perspective, climate is an issue for the poor and the working class because it is the poor that will be most vulnerable to the impact of climate change. While the trade unions need to support the principle of common but differentiated responsibility as an appropriate international response to climate change, it is necessary that we act to hasten the transformation of production, ownership and control patterns in the economy, in the interest of the working class and the poor.

Thus, trade unions and workers need to understand the causes of these disruptions, in order to ensure strategic participation in critical discussions and to be able to propose measures that would strengthen the fight against climate change. This would be possible by multiplying the positive changes.

The current scenario can only worsen, especially as the developed economies push their policies of marketization of social provisioning. In context, therefore, Nigeria's rapid economic growth aspiration means that such would largely focus on current environmentally costly manufacturing practices, tourism, transportation, energy production and agriculture, all bearing directly on the country's fragile eco-political environment.

It becomes acutely important that not only should Labour redefine its central role in the struggle to protect the integrity of the environment, but equally must design strategies to build social buffers and broad negotiation skills that will ensure that workers are not adversely affected in measures aimed at containing current climate change crisis.

2.00 Key Policy Direction

Demands of Labour from international and national governments

This policy is designed as a tool to aid Labour to engage in multilevel actions, from the work floor to the international level, to ensure adequate responses to the climate crisis. Keeping in mind that workers are also citizens, the policy seeks to protect not just workers but all vulnerable peoples, including mechanisms to ensure gender equity and the protection of livelihoods. To facilitate the needed actions in this regard, Congress shall create structures that would work consistently on climate change issues, monitor climate actions by stakeholders and contribute to such actions in a way consistent with the ideals of Congress and the essential need to protect the best interest of workers and the general citizenry.

International Response Strategy

Although industrialised nations recognise that climate change must be addressed, they are seeking ways of doing this in a way that helps them avoid bearing much of the costs. This approach seeks to negate the fact of historical responsibility of the industrialised nations for contributing the bulk of the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere that cause climate change.

Until recently the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, (UNFCCC), was anchored strongly on the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities, (CBDR). This is gradually being degraded to a regime of “nationally determined contributions.” This, in concrete terms, means that vulnerable poor countries have to largely fund their climate mitigation efforts, while the industrialised nations maintain economic and geopolitical dominance.

Congress sees as major policy planks the need for a just transition to renewable energy as well as demands for loss and damage, and enhancing job creation without jeopardizing job security.

For the international community, Congress will press for;

- Undiluted obligations of industrialised nations to support efforts of the developing countries, including matters of mitigation and finance;
- Reinforcing of core convention principles such as the CBDR;
- Nations to accept binding commitments to achieve their emission reductions at source;
- Provision for expert review and compliance procedures such as was included in the Kyoto Protocol;
- Rejection of all forms of market mechanisms such as carbon trading and including the commodification of nature;
- Rejection of false solutions to climate change, including those promoted through Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, (REDD), geo-engineering, synthetic biology and genetically modified trees and crops;
- Rejection of every argument and attempt to place the burden for adaptation, finance and technology and capacity building, on poor countries.

National Response Strategy

At the national level, Congress will push for a periodic review of the National Policy on Climate Change, engage in broad-based and popular consultations in the process to ensure that it is inclusive and takes cognizance of gender equity and the peculiar needs of Nigerian workers and the poor.

Climate change is already contributing seriously to environmental change in Nigeria. Lake Chad, for example, has shrunk from a size of about 22,000 square kilometres in the early 1960s, to a size that is less than 2000 square kilometres. Although poor management of the hydrology of the area is implicated in the shrinkage, climate change contributions cannot be denied. The shrinkage highlights the high risk of water stress for Nigeria in the coming decades, especially when combined with sea level rise at the coastal region and the attendant degrading of fresh water systems.

The shrinkage of Lake Chad has already led to the displacement of millions of citizens who depended on the ecosystems for their livelihoods through fishing, pastoralism and farming. That this may have contributed to the incidence migration and the rise of violent conflicts in the region cannot be ignored. Congress demands that the Nigerian government intensifies efforts with other countries in the Lake Chad Basin Commission to work towards reviving the lake.

Desertification is a big threat in Nigeria and it affects 11 frontline states in Northern Nigeria. The phenomenon which is impacted by climatic changes, threatens communities, farming and pastoral activities and requires urgent and concerted responses by the State.

The 853-kilometre Nigerian coastline hosts key Nigerian cities, including Lagos, Warri, Port Harcourt and Calabar. For instance, the continental shelf is 35 kilometre-wide at Lagos; 64 kilometres around Forcados, and reaches a maximum value of 75 kilometres, offshore Calabar. The coastline is also dotted with industrial installations such as offshore platforms of the petroleum industry, as well as the nation's seaports. This environment is now experiencing grave impacts from climatic changes as well as the effects of human activities, like sand mining, dredging and deforestation.

Due to the combined factors of sea level rise and land subsidence, exacerbated by oil extraction activities, the Niger Delta coastline is especially impactedⁱ. Over the entire coastline, the average rate of coastal erosion is 1.7m annuallyⁱⁱ. Due to the low lying nature of much of Southern Nigeria, it has been estimated that if a relative sea level rise of 1 metre occurs here, up to several kilometres into the hinterland will be submerged (Ogba, C.Okoko and Utang B. Pius. 2010). This would translate to serious displacement of human populations, loss of jobs and livelihoods with heavy impacts on fisheries, food production and other economic activities.

The Nigerian economy depends disproportionately on the petroleum

sector with about 70 -80 % of government revenue coming from the sector in 2011. (www.resourcegovernance.org). Lax enforcement of regulations and laws has led to continued illegal burning or flaring of gas associated with crude oil extraction in the oil fields of Nigeria. Estimates of amount of associated gas flared in this manner are unreliable but they do pump tonnes of harmful greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, methane, sulphur and nitrous oxides, particulate matter and carcinogenic substances into the atmosphere.

The oxides of sulphur and nitrogen combine with atmospheric moisture to send down acid rain, corroding roofs, harming food production and impacting the health of workers and local populations. In a definitive 2004 report by the World Bank, the economic wastage was put at between \$500 million and \$2.5billion, annually(WB report 2004 report on Niger Delta).

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, (NNPC), has laboured to show that gas flaring has reduced due to gas-to-power utilisation of the product, but its report for August 2014 indicated that Nigeria lost about \$170.166 million, or approximately N27.227 billion, to gas flaring in that month, when oil and gas companies flared 39.07 billion Standard Cubic Feet (SCF) of gas (Eboh Michael, 2014).

If that is taken as a monthly average for the year, the economic loss still tops \$2billion. For that year, the NNPC records that of an annual gas production of about 2,000 billion SCF, about 40% was flared, constituting a drop from a previously high rate of 70% proportion routinely flared a few years earlier(www.nnpcgroup.com). The quantity/ volume of gas flared in the Niger Delta is said to be enough to meet half of the energy needs of all of Sub- Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa (Wachter Sarah J. 2007).

The elements in the flares constitute health hazards to oil sector workers, the communities and the environment. NLC notes that the gas flares in the Niger Delta constitute one of the highest sources of GHGs in

Africa. Accordingly, Congress demands that the government stops the obnoxious act of gas flaring as a significant contribution to greenhouse reduction, protection of workers' health and stemming of needless economic wastage.

Congress is equally aware that the bulk of our industries depend on diesel-powered generators for their electricity supplies. This is detrimental to the climate as well as the health of workers and other citizens. The situation gets worse in instances where factories are located in residential areas or vice versa.

Congress, therefore, demands an urgent transition away from fossil dependent power generation. To note also is the fact that sources of air pollution include transportation, particulates from cement plants/factories and multiple pollutants from petroleum refineries and chemical fertilizer production.

Efforts to resolve the energy poverty issues in Nigeria must be anchored on renewable energy paths, and the country should not venture into nuclear power development, essentially because of the high costs, problems of nuclear waste handling and disposal as well as the overall risks in an environment with less than optimum maintenance culture.

Transport is one area that needs serious overhaul in Nigeria. Mass transit systems, such as rail and water modes, need to be developed to reduce the amount of GHGs pumped from the exhaust pipes of millions of cars and trucks on our roads.

Manufacture and production of durable goods, wastes segregation and recycling must be given elevated environmental considerations as a way of combating climate change. Dumping of electronic waste in Nigeria, for example, must be halted.

Deforestation is a major ecosystem problem in Nigeria, and it results from forest conversion to monoculture plantations, fuel wood collections, large-scale farming and clearing, for industrial purposes and rapid urbanisation.

In addition to rain forest and grassland degradation, Congress believes that mangrove destruction through oil spills and fires, as well as petroleum exploratory and exploitation activities that do not comply with international best practices, contribute to the overall climate change challenges. Deforestation must, therefore, be tackled through various ways, including community forest management, agroforestry and forest regeneration, without recourse to speculating on trees as mere carbon stocks.

Congress also believes in the need for a transition to green jobs and inclusion of climate change considerations in all collective bargaining processes.

Trade Unions Response Strategy

The NLC and its affiliates shall prepare detailed plans and implement same in sectors, including;

1. Extractives
 - a. Mining – With the dwindling fortunes of the oil and gas sector in terms of price collapse, the solid minerals sector has suddenly become attractive. Occupational health issues in the sector cut across concerns for organised as well as informal sector workers. These must be carefully addressed.
 - b. Oil and gas – Besides the GHGs that this sector generates or promotes, there are several environmental and health issues that workers face. The pollutions from this sector negatively impact local livelihoods and places workers in the bad light, as the official faces of the corporations. These all require to be effectively addressed.
2. Energy – Promote renewable energy and transit from dirty energy forms. The recent research shows that in Lagos, Kano and Kaduna, of the factories visited, 65% of them were not connected to the grid, and they were all 100% on generator, using fossil fuel because of operational disruptions that would result from epileptic power supply. Emphasis should be on the provision of affordable and fuel efficient stoves and other alternatives.
3. Agriculture – Promote agro-ecological food production and shift

away agricultural production that is dependent on toxic chemical inputs as well as the use of chemical fertilisers that are known to be harmful to the climate.

4. Industry/manufacturing and service must be climate-friendly.
5. Health – Ensure provision of adequate protective gears for workers, especially in situations of high industrial risks.
6. Transportation – Promote mass transit systems and regular vehicular emissions monitoring.

Congress will also produce a training manual on climate change, setting out what should be done by employers and workers. This manual will be used in continuous education of workers and employers and help build and entrench a climate change-sensitive workplace ethic.

Congress will generally ensure that climate change considerations are mainstreamed into workplace practices and that actions taken are on the basis of due consultation and informed consent of workers at all levels. In particular;

- In the workplace, Congress will work to ensure that workers are duly compensated when climate change demands lead to significant cost savings.
- Changes in machinery, processes, materials and skills should not lead to job losses, but require new capacity enhancement schemes.
- Prioritise workers' education through the creation of a Climate Change Committee that would work across sectors and affiliate groups.
- Such educational spaces should also be utilised to build international solidarity and for Campaigns, including advocacy and movement-building.
- Congress will work to ensure that adequate adaptation plans are in place across the economic sectors.
- Research must be carried out as needed.
- Workers should have information about where their pension funds are utilised or invested.

- Congress will work to close the knowledge gap with regard to occupational health issues.
- Work to promote the consciousness of workers, including informal workers, as citizens. This will ensure that policy coverage goes beyond the factory floor.

3.00 Implementation Strategy

It is apparent that climate change has become a trade union issue that urgently requires the imperative attention of the labour movement. While the response and role of the trade unions can be best appreciated within the framework of collective policy efforts directed at environment versus sustainable resource use and creating jobs, its broader context should be that of protecting the environment and ensuring sustainable development.

This understanding demands that the just transition to a carbon-free economy through renewal energy options must be people-oriented and worker-driven. What this means is that our energy policy focus should not be based on external development models, known more for fantastic economic growth rates forecasts and job promises, rather than actually sustainably creating such jobs. In sustainable industrial transformation through renewal energy, creation of jobs must be real and decent as well as impact measurably on the living conditions of the poor and other vulnerable groups.

Thus, there will be need for a radical paradigm shift from the prevailing development pathways, based on the perception of nature as a private asset for maximisation of profit, to one based on collectivisation for the public good, where decision making will derive from meaningful consultation involving civil society and communities. To achieve these within the framework of the key policy direction, trade unions, in addition to existing strategies, would need to employ its traditional forms of struggle as a social movement.

International Level

At the international level;

- Congress will cooperate and work with relevant regional and global organisations to enrich its research, education and training potentials by being part of broader research efforts, workshops and seminars for contemporary knowledge generation and application, and the sharing of information on best practices.

- Congress will participate actively in rallies and other campaign struggles at the global level for governments to be accountable, thus giving trade unions a voice and a fighting chance to be part of global efforts to limit temperature rises such as the ongoing ITUC campaign – Unions 4Climate Action, among others.

National Level

- Congress will critically analyse and review the National Policy on Climate Change and mobilise to ensure serious commitment, accountability and compliance from government in measurable terms through insisting on being part of the stakeholder fora on climate change, meetings and regular consultations.
- Congress will not only insist on the inclusion of climate change issues in the existing social dialogue machinery of the National Labour Advisory Council, NLAC, but strengthen it to include social dialogue at the sectoral level.
- Congress will build alliances and platforms nationally and at the state levels to collaborate and partner with civil society organisations and community-based groups, working on environmental issues as well as other mass organisations through the Labour-Civil Society Organisation LASCO in research, workshops and seminars, advocacy and mobilisation rallies to ensure government takes climate change issues seriously and is held accountable to the just transition to renewal energy.
- These coalitions of labour and other NGOs will also carry out solidarity engagements and social actions in support of communities affected by climate change and mobilise for political commitments.
- Congress will establish institutional linkages with the National Assembly, NASS, and the Federal Ministry of the Environment as well as other relevant federal and state government agencies for exchange of information, advocacy, lobbying for inputs into legislative frameworks on climate change, etc.
- Congress will identify and enlist campaign champions from the sport world, the *Nollywood*, faith-based organisations, renowned community leaders, and activists, to popularise and create awareness on environmental protection and sustainable development issues.

Labour

- Congress will embark on intensive and consistent educational and training programmes to build capacity in the knowledge and skill base of workers and trade union leaders through its regular Rain, Harmattan, and State-level schools as well as public lectures through workshops and seminars. A training manual on climate change issues will be developed in this regard.
- Congress will develop communication and media platforms that will be internal and external, to create sufficient awareness through its regular newsletter, periodicals and journals, including posters, bulletins, etc. Efforts in this regard will also involve members of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ, especially the Labour Writers Association of Nigeria, LAWAN, in all its educational and training activities for better appreciation of climate change issues and information dissemination to workers and the public.
- Congress will set up climate change desks at its headquarters and encourage affiliate unions to do same. At the workplace, joint climate change committees of employers and workers will be set up, or expand existing Occupational Health and Safety Committees to include climate change issues for purposes of interactive meetings and consultations on industrial transformation to achieve just transition measures.
- Congress will strengthen its Organising Committee and request affiliates to do same, and mainstream collective bargaining to include climate change issues as this will be pivotal to negotiate the just transition to a carbon free economy.

While the scope of the strategy has been conveniently categorised as global, national and labour, emphasis should be on sectoral levels with the active participation of climate change-sensitive unions to drive the process that will determine the scale of demonstrable milestones through monitoring and evaluation with measurable industry based transformation indicators.