

**THE POLITICS OF GLOBAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES**

**By**

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Ekong Daniel  
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## **PREFACE**

Environmental issues such as global warming and climate change are at the epicenter of debate among scholars, environmentalists, world leaders, concerned individuals, governmental and non-governmental organizations on how to balance relations between humans and the various natural systems on which they depend, in such a way that all the components are accorded proper degrees of sustainability.

This Book of Readings by like-minded academics and experts in the field lend credence to this on-going debate especially on the need to protect and conserve our environment by engaging in environmentally friendly activities or packaging. The idea behind this masterpiece is not only to provide adequate and proper information on the burning issues but also to build and encourage dialogue and strengthen synergies among the diverse stakeholders in the preservation of our environment.

The editors are glad to be able to bring together the views and perspectives contained in each of the chapters. It is our utmost belief that the contributions in this Book of Readings which is eclectic in nature will provide students of various disciplines, researchers, environmentalists, governments, non-governmental organizations and the reading public with the insights that would be useful for understanding the issues, politics, nature, dimensions and dynamics of environmentalism.

***Enefiok Ibok***  
***Ekong Daniel***  
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We wish to state here that the views contained in this book are exclusively those of the authors.

***Enefiok Ibok***  
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## FOREWORD

I came across the manuscripts of ‘The Politics of Global Environmental Policies’ towards the end of 2018. That was shortly after Mr. Donald Trump, had unilaterally withdrawn the United State of America from the agreements by World Leaders on the deteriorating state of the World’s environment. That Trumplike action by the American President himself, and the widespread condemnation of the decision by the international community was my first real experience of the politics of Global Environmental Policies in action.

This book of readings on the Politics of Global Environmental Policies, authored by young academics in the Social and Management sciences at Akwa Ibom State University deals with an important aspect of the debate on the state of the deterioration of the world’s environment and steps being taken to normalize the situation. There are twelve chapters.

The first chapter “The Politics of Global Environmental Issues” starts off with the various environmental problems that give rise to environmental issues. Environment in this context refers to the tangible physical or in-organic environment land (lithosphere), water (hydrosphere) and air (atmosphere) and the organic environment (biosphere) which is made up of small parts of the three components of in-organic environment. It notes that concern about the state of the environment is not new, but dates back to pre-history; that in the past, the issues of concern were largely restricted to the adequacy of the earth’s resources to support the small but increasing human population. That today, however, the major issues relate to the state of the natural environment (abiotic and biotic), which is increasingly being suffocated by human activities, using highly sophisticated advanced technology of production and destruction of the land, air and sea.

The author classifies global environmental problems into two categories based on (1) the physical or spatial extent of occurrence of the problem (damage) and (2) social perception of the problem as global or not, by individuals, the media, in public debates or in scientific research. More importantly he sub-divided the category (1) problems into two sub-groups namely (a) systematic global environmental problems and (b) cumulative global environmental problems.



A systematic global environmental problem such as the release of ozone- depleting substances in a particular place brings about an effect or damage to the whole global system; but such damage can be controlled or repaired not necessarily at the point or country where the problem or damage started, but at any point (place) in the global system. The cumulative sub-group problems are those that occur simultaneously in various parts of the world but are not linked to a global system as in the case of bio-diversity damage.

Currently, governance appears to be the central theme of global environmental politics. This point is clearly demonstrated in the dislocations and embarrassments caused by the unilateral withdrawal of the United States government of President Donald Trump from International Agreements on Global Environmental Issues, including climate change. The stand of developing countries on key proposals by developed countries to reduce the damage that humans have inflicted on the physical environment is presented under the brief discussion of the North/South Divide in Global Environmental Politics.

There are two chapters on the distribution (location) of the physical components of the earth, land, air and sea – the distribution of these elements and their structural composition. It is their functioning that produces the disasters that environmentalists seek to prevent. It is also these components that contain the resources that humans exploit for a living and in the process do great damage to the environment. That is one aspect of the geographic factor. The other is the two-way human environmental relations which relate to the ways humans impact on the environment and the ways the environment impacts on humans. There is no smoke without fire, so goes the saying. It is these aspects of our environment that constitute the fires that produce the environmental disaster smoke.

A comprehensive account of the ongoing concern about the state of the world environment starting with the Human Environment at Stockholm, Sweden is presented in the chapter on the History of Global Environmental Meetings. The series of subsequent meetings and conferences led to the agreements signed by Heads of Government to

ensure that the decisions to contain the damaging effects of the ozone layer level were carried out by the countries concerned.

Actors in and “Actors on Global Environmental Politics” constitute the core contribution to this treatise on Global Environmental Politics. The state, a political association that has authority over a country or territory is or should be the main actor in environmental politics. In practice, there are also many other non-state actors in some countries. These other actors include local and inter-national Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOS), civil society groups, private businesses, including transnational corporations like the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations and United Nations Agencies such as the World Bank and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) etc.

Non-state Actors have over the years become the major source of funds and personnel for the increasing number of conferences and meetings to discuss global environmental issues and to find solutions to global environmental problems. In respect of state participation, it has become increasingly clear that governance is what is most important in contemporary politics of global environmental policies. Governance is what has brought about the unilateral abrogation in 2018 of treaties signed by world leaders to protect the earth’s environment by the President of the United States of America, Mr. Donald Trump.

Global environmental issues and problems (disasters) have become so widespread, more regular and more damaging to humans and the environment during the past four decades, that a new field of study - global environmentalism has emerged. Global environmentalism is defined as the study of the concern about the state of the global environment and the actions to help solve environmental problems. Global environmentalism is at the root of Green Party Politics of the developed countries of the world. The principles, norms, rules and the decision-making procedures that Actors have to apply in dealing with a given environmental problem or issue is referred to as environmental regime.

Regimes that deal with endangered species, hazardous waste, protection of the ozone layer and climate change have admirable goals, but are

difficult to enforce. These are issues that are best handled at the international level. The problem with international environmental regimes is that they lack the ability and authority to implement their own legal standards. Why? Politics! When formally organized, an international regime can transform into an intergovernmental organization. They are, however not actors or non-governmental organization (NGO'S).

The overriding purpose of environmental policies and programmes is to ensure the sustainability of the Earth's environment that is in addition to repairing the damage caused by natural disaster and rehabilitating the victims of these disasters. Chapter nine presents a situation global report on the issues and challenges of sustainable development. It draws attention to the lack of implementation of the recommendation from the numerous global environmental meetings by many governments. The unilateral withdrawal in 2018 of the American President, Mr. Donald Trump from the Paris Agreement (December, 2015) of the world climatic commission is a case in point.

Chapter 10 presents the special case of oil multinational companies that have caused massive destruction of the physical environment and disruption of social and family life of local populations, and this, in spite of existing international human rights. The chapter zeros in on the special case of the Niger Delta, where the inhabitants of the region that produces the crude oil and gas that fuel the Nigerian economy, live in absolute poverty in a most polluted and ravaged wetlands without potable water, electricity and basic health facilities.

The chapter on climate change – a most topical environmental issue, considers climate change to be a militating factor against sustainable development in Africa. Climate change is not new in Africa. The Sahara was once a sea bed and later had extensive forests and fauna, the remains of which formed the crude oil and natural gas in Libya etc. The difference between past climate change in Africa and the current ongoing climate change is the presence today of the human population which is growing rapidly and on the move. The drying up of lake chad and severe droughts in the West African Sahel have already disrupted social life and the native economy of these regions. There is a strong

case for more people oriented politics, for more positive action to protect the environment of the regions of Africa by national governments and international agencies such as the World Climatic Commission, Forest Commission and relevant United Nations Agencies.

The study ends with an interesting, but unusual presentation on Environmental Accounting Information System, unusual in the sense that most papers on environmental studies do not consider the cost implications of the recommendations made. The editors have done a good job in putting together these papers for use by students in the related disciplines in the Faculty of Social and Management Sciences and Law.

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Title Page  
Copyright page  
Contributors  
Preface  
Acknowledgements  
Foreword  
Table of Contents

### **CHAPTER 1**

Politics of Global Environmental Issue  
Global Environmental Problems  
Global Environmental Politics  
North versus South Divide  
Environmental Policies  
Conclusion  
References

### **CHAPTER 2**

Geographical Perspective of the Physical Environment  
The Physical Structure of the Earth  
The Lithosphere  
The Distribution of Land on the Earth's Surface  
Earth Movement and Major Land Forms  
Rocks and Mineral Resources  
Mountains and Plateaux  
The Atmosphere  
Density of Gases in the Atmosphere  
Sub-Division of the Homosphere according to Layer of Temperature  
Change  
Stratosphere Change  
Mesosphere  
The Terrestrial Atmosphere and Space  
The Difference between Matter and Energy in the Atmosphere  
The Hydrosphere  
The Hydrological Cycle  
Ground Water

The Biosphere  
Summary and Conclusion  
References

### **CHAPTER 3**

Human Environment Interactions  
Environmental Determinism  
Environmental Possibilism  
Environmentalism  
Environmental Impact on Man  
Environmental Aspects and Impacts of Human Actions  
Importance of Impact study  
Assessing the Probability of Impacts  
Natural Disasters  
Hurricane  
Flooding  
Earthquake  
Drought  
Volcanic Eruption  
Tsunami  
Natural Disaster Management  
Disaster Prevention  
Disaster preparedness  
Disaster Relief  
Disaster Recovery  
The Concept of Sustainable Development  
Principles of Sustainable Development  
Global Responsibility  
Conclusion  
References

### **CHAPTER 4**

The History and Achievements of Global Environmental Meetings  
Some specific World Environment Conferences  
United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm 1972)  
The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED),  
Brundtland Commission.

Objectives of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED)  
Structure of the Brundtland Commission  
Report of the Brundtland Commission  
The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED): The Rio Earth Summit  
Objectives of the RIO Summit  
Powerful Message from the RIO Summit  
Decisions of the RIO Conference  
On the Issue of Finance  
On Climate Change  
On Biodiversity  
Agenda 21  
World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD); RIO+10;  
Johannesburg Summit 2002  
Background Information  
The Johannesburg Summit's Agenda  
Outcome of the RIO + 10 Summit  
Water and Sanitation  
Energy  
Global Warming  
Trade/Global Economic related issues  
Health  
Corporate Accountability  
The 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP 21 or CMP 11  
Background Information  
COP 21 or CMP 11  
Core Functions of World Conferences  
Conclusion  
References

## **CHAPTER 5**

Issues and Impacts of Meetings on World Environment  
The Stockholm Conference  
World Environmental Meetings  
Brundtland Commission  
RIO Earth Summit

Traditional Knowledge  
Public Display/Public Panel Review  
The Johannesburg Earth Summit of 2002 and Beyond  
The 2015 Paris conference  
References

## **CHAPTER 6**

Actors in Global Environmental Politics  
States as Actors in Global Environmental Politics  
Domestic Political Factors  
Cost and Benefits of Environment Regime  
International Political-Diplomatic Consideration  
Non-State Actors  
International Organizations  
Conclusion  
References

## **CHAPTER 7**

Stakeholders in Global Environmental Policies  
The Emergence of Global Environmental Politics  
State Actors in Global Environmental Politics  
Participation of Non-State Actors in Global Environmental Politics  
The Roles of Non-State Actors in Global Environmental Politics  
The Involvement of NGOS in Global Environmental Politics  
International Organizations Fighting Environment Degradation Earth  
System Governance Project (ESGP)  
Global Environment Facility (GEF)  
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)  
Major International Organizations Fighting Environmental Destruction  
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)  
World Nature Organization (WNO)  
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)  
References

## **CHAPTER 8**

Global Environmentalism and Environmental Regime  
Deep Green or Ecocentric Environmentalists  
Light Green or Technocentric Environmentalists



Environmental Regimes  
Routes or Approaches to Environmental Regimes  
Power-based Approach  
Interests-based Approach  
Knowledge based Approach  
Regime Formations  
The Ozon Model  
Conclusions  
References

## **CHAPTER 9**

Sustainable Development: Issues and Challenges  
Concept of Development  
Sustainable Development  
Indicators of Sustainable development  
Challenges of Sustainable Development  
Addressiing the Challenges of Sustainable Development  
Conclusion  
References

## **CHAPTER 10**

The Politics of Oil Resource Management and Environmental  
Degradation in the Niger Delta Region, Nigeria  
Conceptual issues  
Theoretical Perspective  
Historical Trajectory of Oil Exploration and Environmental  
Degradation....  
Pollution  
Oil Spillage  
Gas Flaring  
Mining Waste  
Land Degradation and Deforestation  
Oil Resource Management: Minority Questions and Agitations  
Government Responses to the Niger Delta Problem  
Concluding Remarks  
References

## **CHAPTER 11**

Climate Change and Sustainable Development in Africa

The Relationship between Climate Change and Sustainable Development

Impacts and Vulnerabilities of Climate Change in Africa

Climate Change: A Threat to Development Gains in Africa

Regional Impacts and Vulnerabilities to Climate in Africa

Nigeria, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Objectives

The Federal Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development

Managing the Climate Change Effects on Achieving Sustainable Development Objectives

Conclusion

Reference

## **CHAPTER 12**

Environmental Accounting Information System

Issues

Components of Environmental Accounting:

Environmental Management Accounting (EMA)

Environmental Cost Modeling and Resource Economics

Environmental Financial Accounting (EFA)

Environmental Reproting

Auditing for Environmental Aspect in the Financial Statement and

External Assurance of Sustainability Reports

Conclusion

References

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **THE POLITICS OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE**

**Enefiok E. Ibok**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The most important feature of environmental degradation is that it affects all mankind. Since the whole world is a stakeholder, it raises issues on who should do what to combat environmental degradation. The environment itself encompasses the whole of life on earth and the complex interrelationship that links the biotic and the abiotic world. In a general sense, it covers everything contained within the air, land and sea (Ahmad-Khan, 2013).

Since the advent of humankind, man has established an inalienable close tie with the environment. As early as 5,000 years ago, especially after the start of human civilization, the area coverage by human colonization has been continually widened with the increase of population and progress of production technology, followed with environmental problems. Therefore, it is pertinent to say that throughout the process of human development, the entire history is actually a process during which humankind kept fighting against and got adapted to the environment. For example, the Industrial Revolution of the United Kingdom which occurred in the middle of the eighteen century witnessed the emergence of an industrial society era. When industrialization was providing the benefits of industrialized civilization and economic growth for humans, a series of important environmental problems worsened in company with industrial globalization.

From the Industrial Revolution in the eighteen century to 1950, the developed countries accounted for 95% of CO<sub>2</sub> emission. Between 1950 – 2000, emission by developed countries went up to 77% of world total. Of concern is that after the 1940s when the imbalance between ecology and economy in fields like resources, energy and the environment became increasingly outstanding, the issue of environmental protection became one of the biggest concerns of the public. Certain organizations of developed countries even launched “strong initiatives” for global environmental protection. These include International Union for

Conservation of Nature (IUCN) founded in Switzerland in 1948, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) founded in 1961, Club of Rome founded in 1968, Greenpeace International (GI) established in 1971 in Canada, World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), established by the UN in 1983. Others are Friends of the Earth founded in 1983, Global Environmental Facility (GEF) launched in 1997 and International Environmental Protection Organization Association (IEPOA). All these organizations turned out to be influential advocates and implementers of environmental protection throughout the world and having made progress, contributed to the undertaking of global environmental protection. It is worth noting that the above mentioned organizations are mostly established by developed countries and the initial participants are also developed countries. It is only at a later stage that developing countries and underdeveloped countries were absorbed in, (Magdoff, 2011, Xu, 2007).

The concerns over the health of our global environment continued to rise in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This concern motivated experts who met in 1968 at the United Nations Biosphere Conference held in Sweden to discuss global environmental problems. The first Earth Day was held in the United States (US) in April, 1970, with twenty million people rallied. This was indeed one of the largest organized demonstrations in the history of the United States. The impact was that the same year, the United States government founded the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In the following year 1971, the Canadian Government created a Department of the Environment. The result of these growing societal and political concerns was the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, Sweden, in June 1972 (Dryzek, 1992).

### **GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS**

The growing population has been a great pressure for resource environment. Excessive growth of population in spite of ecological environment load-bearing limitation is another important cause of global environmental problems. Since the nineteenth century, and particularly after the twentieth century, the rapid growth of population has triggered a series of environmental problems, such as air pollution, security of resources, piles of household garbage etc (Jiangiang, et al, 2013).