ENVIRONMENTALISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: BEYOND POLITICAL STATEMENT

Zekeri MOMOH

Abstract: *Since the emergence of the concept of sustainable development in the 1980s the concept of sustainable development is conceived as a political success than an environmental one. It is because achieving sustainable development goals goes beyond making blanket statements with little or no action by states. However, data for this study were collected from secondary sources such as textbooks, journals and internet sources while content analysis was employed in analysing the data collected. This study argues that sustainable development is a concept used by policy makers to express their political success than an environmental one, drawing evidence from their commitment to global environmental policies and programmes. In conclusion, this study recommends among others things that state actors back their political statements with environmental actions.*
Keywords: *Development, Environment, State, Politics, Environmentalism, Policies*

INTRODUCTION

Environmental pollution has existed since the dawn of time. Today, mankind faces massive problems of unparalleled scale and danger: halting global climate change, maintaining biodiversity, providing safe drinking water, and recovering forest, fisheries, and other overexploited natural resources. The global environmental trends are not the result of a single factor. Rather, multiple factors interact with one another to generate the dreaded risks that jeopardise the survival of the world's living systems, on which human existence is dependent (Kegley et al 2011).

However, one analysis has been highly popular among environmentalists and ecologists who scientifically examine the causes of planetary quandaries and problems is environmental degradation, in part, as a result of the individual pursuit of private wealth. At least, such is the agreement of among many environmentalists who are concerned about the world's ecology's prognosis. Nonetheless, the advocacy of

environmentalism may be traced back to the nineteenth-century ecological or green movement in response to the industrial revolution. Environmentalism as an ideology has manifested in various forms over the years, such as "Shallow" ecologists, also known as "Light Greens," think that common awareness and individual desire will push mankind to embrace environmentally friendly laws and programmes, as well as lifestyles, in order to maintain the entire ecosystem. While "deep" ecologists, often known as "dark Green" campaigners, fight for reorganising political priorities and the capacity to prioritise environmental problems over individual needs in order to protect the ecosystem and human life (Heywood 2007:65).

The environment is one of the key features of a state and a driver of a nation's foreign policy, and a government would go to any extent to safeguard its territory from any dangers. Because of the crucial role it plays in the lives of living things, the environment serves as the foundation for human survival. One resource that is available everywhere is the environment. As a result, a danger to the environment is typically treated seriously, because actions in one geographical region can directly or indirectly influence the total ecosystem. Cooperation might thus be both personal and collective in character. Man is typically seen to be tied to his or her environment, and as such, he or she has the obligation to care for it, as it will in turn care for them.

The post-World War II period, particularly the 1950s and 1960s, set the pace for modern development as underdeveloped countries confronted independence and the necessity to imitate Western cultures' route to growth, while less emphasis was placed on environmental regulations. This is because policymakers in most Western cultures would rather forgo short-term progress for nebulous long-term environmental stability goals at the time. The developing countries' focus was on improving their inhabitants' living conditions through development. It is worth noting that prior to the 1960s, there was little or no worldwide community effort to promote global action aimed at saving the environment.

However, an English Political Economist William Foster Lloyd popularized the notion of "tragedy of the commons" in 1833, which is commonly used to describe the human source of the world's mounting environmental difficulties today. The 1960s saw an early effort and then a more extensive and robust awareness of the interconnections between human life and nature, which was extensively discussed in Rachel Carson's book Silent Spring in 1962, which recognised the dangers of pesticides accruing and drifting in environmental systems (Carson, 1962). Besides,

Garrett Hardin later published his paper named "The Commons" in the Journal Science in 1968. According to Hardin, human action is motivated by a desire for personal benefit.

Furthermore, the 1970s were an era when the state was more involved in environmental concerns than individual remarks on environmental issues, as policymakers were previously exploring the linkages between environment, development, resources, and human population. For example, representatives from 114 nations gathered in Stockholm in 1972 for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE). In addition, the 1970s saw the beginning of a heated debate about the relationship between the environment and development. The 1980s were also a watershed moment in worldwide attempts by world leaders to promote a sustainable environment, with the notion of "sustainable development" emerging (Momoh, 2022).

Since the year 2000, the international community has been increasingly concerned about attaining long-term economic development. As a result, a variety of analytical frameworks have been developed to help in the promotion of long-term growth and development, as contained in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (SDGs). Furthermore, governments have used a number of approaches to solve environmental challenges. Against this backdrop, the belief that if people safeguard the environment from various types of pollution, the world will experience less development, and if human society pollutes the environment, the world would experience more development, implies that the environment will be negatively affected. The discussion about whether mankind has lost sight of its relationship with the environment in recent years is still ongoing.

However, countries have a variety of obstacles, including attempting to conceptualise sustainable development, operationalizing the notion, and establishing indicators that may be used to monitor it. Today, the notion of sustainable development is one of the most popular in environmental literature, albeit its application is debatable among scholars and researchers. Overall, despite state actors implementing many international treaties aimed at protecting and maintaining the environment, state enforcement of these accords has been challenging (Momoh, 2021). Against this backdrop, this study contends that accomplishing environmental protection and sustainable development requires more than policymakers making political pronouncements, because policymakers regard modern environmental challenges as a political success rather than an environmental one.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There is a rising theoretical postulation in the literature on environmentalism and sustainable development. This theoretical viewpoint may be divided into two schools of thought: anthropocentric (also known as thinking green) and ecocentric (is often refer to as green thought, which are often radical in their approach to environmental issues). Again, the Realists' approach to environmental studies is centred on topics such as "water wars." Neo-Marxists (structuralists) investigate the intimate connection between poverty, inequality, and environmental deterioration. Liberal pluralists frequently disagree about the complexities of environmental regimes and the role of nonprofit organisations in supporting sustainable environmental development.

However, throughout the literature, the many theoretical perspectives examined above have been applied to the study of the environment. This study is situated within the Green Thought (ecologism). Green Thought is a fundamental challenge to the 'issue' or 'problem-solving' approach to environmental issues. From this vantage point, the modern state system, the key structures of the global economy, and even global organisations are viewed as contributing to the problem. Furthermore, contemporary science and technology, which is heavily used in 'problem-solving' approaches to the environment, can be considered as a cause as well as a solution to global environmental deterioration (Steans et al 2010).

The underlying optimism of certain 'problem-solving' techniques is rejected by 'Green Thought,' and the case is made that the interaction between humans and the environment explains much of the present environmental catastrophe. Furthermore, if we are to have a stable future, we must reorganize key aspects of that relationship. Such a perspective is based on the idea that the globe is made up of interconnected ecosystems. Humans are also involved in symbiotic relationships. As a result, distinguishing between humans and other living organisms is impossible. In light of this, this study employs the Green thought theoretical framework because Green Thought is a comprehensive worldview that emphasises the deep relationship between human life and the global ecology. We explain how Green Thought advocates a fundamental change in modern thinking from an emphasis on the "international sphere" to a conceptualization of the "global." (Steans et al 2010).

On the whole, Green Thought calls for significant reforms in sociopolitical organisation and respect for nonhuman species. Green Thought entails: a refusal of anthropocentric interpretations; the belief that

human influences in the natural world is currently threatening the survival of both humankind and other species; an increased emphasis on the importance of foundational changes in social, economic, and technological structures, as well as ideological/value systems; a demarcation between vital and non-vital needs; a repudiation of development strategies that prioritise economic growth over living standards; and a disapproval of development initiatives that prioritise growth in the economy over quality.

Conceptual Issues: Environment, Environmentalism and Sustainable development

According to the Webster's New English Dictionary, the environment is the sum of all external conditions and factors impacting an organism's existence and growth. Thus, environmentalism refers to the inclination to emphasise the relevance of the physical, biological, psychological, or cultural environment in determining the structure and behaviour of animals, including humans (Wallis 1967: 561). This understanding has enabled man to engage with the environment.

The notion that man impacts the environment is widely recognised; nevertheless, the concept that man pollutes the environment and so produces an issue or series of problems is a novel perspective or insight. Greenhouse gases, acid rain, health issues, population expansion, famine, natural catastrophes, and other environmental concerns have no regard for national borders. This has highlighted the importance of international collaboration among governments within and beyond continents to solve challenges such as environmental concerns.

From Hippocrates, Thucydides, and Plato in ancient times through Bodin, Montesquieu, Buckle, and Ellsworth Huntington in modern times, social theorists have debated the inextricable interdependence between biological beings and the physical environment in which they thrive. All living things exist in a specific environment; while the latter conditions the former in many essential ways, the former may also impact the latter in other ways. As a result, the two are interdependent and intricately linked (Johari, 2012:503).

On the other hand, "Sustainable development" "as a concept can be traced back to the World Commission on Environment and Development, also known as the "Brundtland Commission" report with the theme: "Our Common Future" in 1987, in which the commission stated that the world could perhaps sustain the growth desired to meet the needs and expectations of the growing global population unless proactive measures are taken that differ from the existing approaches to issues of economic growth,

environmental protection, emission reduction, and so on. The report of the "Brundtland Commission" also criticizes the "economic realities" posited by the neo-Malthusian school of thought, instead emphasising "the growth of limitations." According to the Brundtland Commission's findings, a "Sustainable development" is one that "meets the requirements of the present without jeopardising the capabilities of future generations." (United Nations General Assembly, 1987:43; Momoh, 2021:420).

From the above, three areas of concern have emerged as critical to the notion of sustainable development in recent years. Taylor (2016) identified three significant problems with sustainable development. They include economic advancement, environmental conservation, and social equality. Similarly, Mensah et al. (2019) established three pillars upon which sustainable development is founded. They are "economic sustainability," "social sustainability," and "environmental sustainability." Each of these concerns are crucial to understanding sustainable development. We will frame our knowledge of sustainable development in the perspective of a strategy that recognises the synergy of economic growth and environmental protection (Cohn, 2000:386).

Environmentalism, Economic growth and Low Carbon monoxide (CO2) Emission

Policymakers around the world are confronted with two interrelated challenges: how to achieve structural change in order to promote higher productivity that is socially inclusive and will link their economic development strategies with the environment. Thus, identifying the need to incorporate both national objectives and make environmentally friendly industrial policy is considered for engagement. This effort by states set the tone for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Altenburg et al 2017:8).

However, the activities of Multinational Corporations have resulted in increased levels of environmental pollution globally, with a global assessment report revealing that nearly 60% of the world's ecosystem services have been degraded or used in an unsustainable manner (Bapna et al 2011). Furthermore, global statistics show that global material extraction has more than doubled in the last 30 years, rising from around 36 billion tonnes in 1980 to nearly 85 billion tonnes in 2013, representing a 132% increase (Momoh 2022). As a result, environmental degradation has accelerated. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report 2014, global annual CO2 emissions must be reduced by 42 to 57 percent by 2050 compared to 2010, and by 73 to 107 percent by 2100. (IPCC 2014).

Furthermore, ecologists have argued that over the years, trading activities, particularly by MNCs in developing countries, have exacerbated the continent's environmental degradation. Furthermore, it can be stated that MNCs' continued unregulated and blatant disregard for environmental standards and regulations in many developing countries such as Nigeria, Algeria, Gabon, Libya, Algeria, and Egypt, to name a few, is having a negative impact on the ecosystem. Besides, home countries of MNCs whose resource bases have depleted or have passed strict environmental laws to protect their environment will have to relocate to places in developing countries for their production process, shifting the balance of power.

The implication is that when these MNCs violate environmental rules and regulations, the developing countries natural environment will deplete to the point where it will cause various health hazards, as well as land, water, and air pollution. As things stand today, MNCs' activities in the chemical industry in developing countries are having a negative impact on the environment, whereas the natural environment of these MNCs' home countries will be preserved while developing countries environment will suffer from environmental degradation.

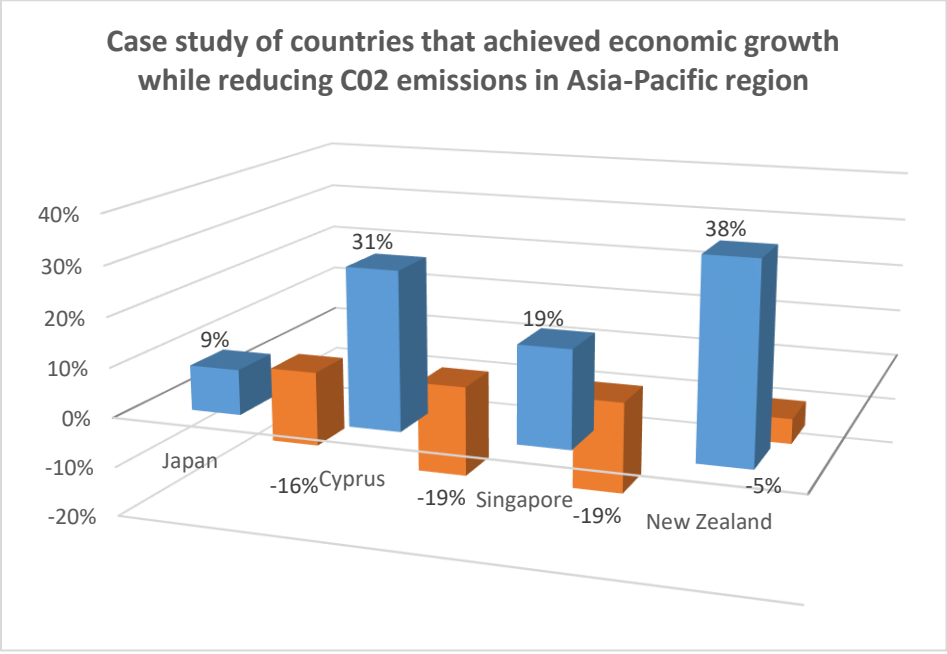


Figure 1 shows that Japan achieved 9% economic growth with -16% reduction in Co2 emission. Cyprus achieved 31% economic growth with -19% reduction in Co2 emission. Singapore achieved 19% economic growth with -19% reduction in Co2 emission and New Zealand achieved 38% economic growth with -3% reduction in Co2 emission.

Over the years, it can be said that the international community has made some level of progress in reducing the level of carbon monoxide emission particularly between 2005 and 2019 as well as achieving some level of economic growth in the Asian-Pacific region. Below statistics from various continents have shown the commitment of some countries in achieving economic growth with reduction in carbon monoxide emission.

Too many political statements but less environmental Actions

During the first half of the twentieth century, fundamental international treaties aimed at the conservation of wildlife and wilderness, such as the Pacific Fur Treaty (1911) and the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (1946), were signed. To regulate maritime pollution, countries signed the International Convention for the Prevention of Oil Pollution in the Sea (1954) and the Convention on the High Seas (1958). The Antarctic Treaty (1959), the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, Outer Space, and Under Water (1963), and the Kyoto Protocols of 1997 and 2005 (O' Brien et al 2007). The Kyoto Protocol, with the theme "The Framework Convention on Climate Change," was a historic international treaty that pushed industrialised countries to limit carbon dioxide emissions (Goldstein et al 2008).

Besides, during the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, developing nations promised to industrialize in cleaner methods, while developed countries agreed to provide the required road through development aid and technology. Aside from Agenda 21, which established a strategy framework for preventing environmental deterioration, policy monitoring and implementation procedures, and Sustainable Development (United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1992).

The 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference, often known as the Copenhagen Summit, was held in Copenhagen, Denmark. Similarly, in 2002, Johannesburg, South Africa hosted the World Summit on Sustainable Development (also known as Rio 10) to examine progress achieved ten years after the Rio summit. Later, in 2012, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and in 2015, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development was held with the subject Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Momoh, 2022).

The major challenge confronting environmentalists today is a lack of collaboration among individuals, organizations, and even states, particularly in the area of reconciling environmental degradation and sustainable development, which is most prominent in many countries around the world

and has resulted in a decline in environmental conservation initiatives. Globally, optimum citizens interest on information as it relates to new on climate change have not exceeded 53 per cent. For instance, the level of citizens' interest in climate change news in many countries around the world are below fifty percent (50%) should be a source of concern for policy makers (Reuters Institute and University of Oxford, 2022).

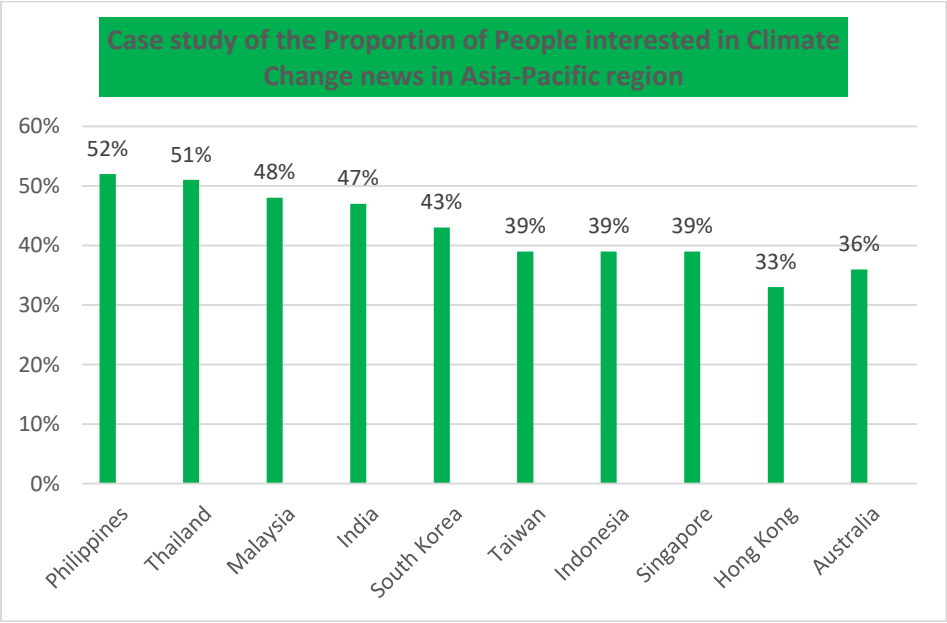


Figure 2 below shows the proportion of people interested in climate change news in Asia-Pacific region as at 2022 June.
Source: The data in the figure were collected by the Author from Reuters Institute and University of Oxford (2022)

Figure 2 above shows that the proportion of people interested in climate change news in selected countries in Asia shows that the Philippines has 52% of the proportion of its citizens that are interested in climate change news which is above 50% and remained the highest among the sampled countries from Asia-pacific and Australia. Thailand has 51% of its citizens that are interested in climate change news, which is above 50%. Other countries from the region, had the following percentage of their citizens who are interested in climate change news like Malaysia 48%, India 47%, South Korea 43%, Taiwan 39%, Indonesia 39%, Singapore 39%, Hong Kong 33% and Australia 36%. It is important to note that Hong Kong has the least percentage of 33% of its citizens that are interested in climate change news. On a general note, significant numbers of countries sampled

from the Asia-Pacific and Australia have less than 50% of their citizens interested in climate change news.

From the above analysis, despite the adoption and ratification of several international environmental treaties by a significant number of Asian-Pacific countries, only the Philippines and Thailand had more than 50% of their citizens interested in climate change news in 2022. The implications are that governments in many Asian-Pacific countries must encourage their citizens to be more interested in climate change news in order to be informed about the changes occurring in the environment.

Environmentalism and Sustainable Development: Beyond Political Statement

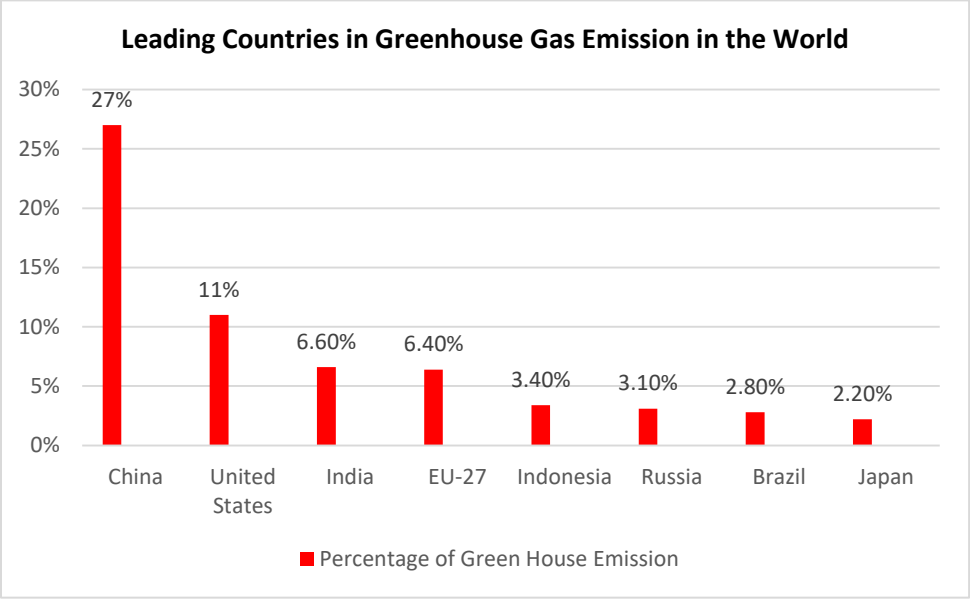
The future of human survival in the face of the world's current environmental challenges will rely heavily on human activities in the environment. This is because the environment, which includes land, water, and air, among other things, will help to ensure humanity's continued existence. For example, the environment provides us with land for agricultural purposes, water for human consumption and irrigation, habitat for aquatic animals, and air, which is necessary for survival and is freely available to all living creatures. The environment also contains mineral deposits such as gold, iron ore, crude oil, and so on, which are part of the resources that are refined for other purposes that improve man's life or sold to generate foreign exchange for other resources that are not available to human society. Hence, there is a need to protect the environment because the life of living beings is dependent on it.

The fundamental cause of global climate change is carbon dioxide emissions. It is commonly acknowledged that, in order to avert the worst effects of climate change, the world must cut emissions as soon as possible. However, how this duty is distributed across regions, governments, and people has long been a source of disagreement in international debates. This disagreement stems from the numerous ways emissions are compared, including yearly emissions by nation, emissions per person, historical contributions, and whether they account for traded products and services (https://ourworldindata.org/co2-emissions).

It is critical to emphasise that every human being has contributed to global CO2 emissions in some form. The extent to which people, groups, organisations, and governments contribute varies by location and period. However, both developing and developed nations are advocating for worldwide initiatives to reduce CO2 emissions. However, the contributions of each nation to the goal of lowering global CO2 emissions have been

contested, with developing countries charging industrialised countries of being the primary contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and so obligated to make the largest contribution. The developed countries are requesting collective assistance.

We acknowledge that certain some countries in the Asian-Pacific are making political success in maintaining environmental safety while also attaining economic growth. It is vital to note that certain governments are also in the business of making the environment dangerous. This statement has been supported by statistics. The question remains that, while some nations are making deliberate efforts to ensure the safety of the human environment by regulating CO2 emissions in the Asian-Pacific region, some countries are expanding their emissions to the atmosphere without regard for the repercussions.



Source: Rhodium Group, (2022)

Figure 3 depicts the world's top countries, which have contributed significantly to global greenhouse gas emissions. China is responsible for 27% of total world greenhouse gas emissions. China will have surpassed this amount to 29% by 2021. The United States comes in second with an 11% contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions. India comes in second with a 6.6% contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions. CO2 emissions in the United States are predicted to rise by more than 200 Mt CO2 in 2021 to 4.46 Gt CO2, but remain 5.6% lower than in 2019 and 21% lower than in 2005. CO2 emissions from coal are predicted to be about 12%

lower in 2020, as coal use for power generation is only expected to recoup 40% of the ground lost to renewables and natural gas. Oil consumption, the largest contributor to CO2 emissions in the United States, is expected to be about 6% lower in 2021 than in 2019 (https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-2021/co2-emissions).

The European Union's 27 member states produced 6.4% of total greenhouse gas emissions to the global total. Indonesia contributes 3.4% of total greenhouse gas emissions to the global total. Russia contributes 3.1% of world greenhouse gas emissions, whereas Brazil contributes 2.8% of global greenhouse gas emissions and Japan contributes 2.8% (https://www.iea.org/news/global-co2-emissions-rebounded-to-their-highest-level-in-history-in-2021). In 2021, record high natural gas prices will increase the usage of coal for energy generation. For the bulk of 2021, the costs of operating existing coal power plants in the United States and many European power grids were much cheaper than those of gas power plants. Switching from gas to coal increased worldwide CO2 emissions from electricity generation by more than 100 million tonnes, particularly in the United States and Europe, where rivalry between gas and coal power plants is fierce (https://www.iea.org/news/global-co2-emissions-rebounded-to-their-highest-level-in-history-in-2021).

CO2 emissions are projected to recover less in the European Union, where the economic outlook is bleaker than in other areas of the world. The predicted increase of 80 Mt CO2 in 2021 will only reverse one-third of the decline seen in 2020. In 2021, the EU's emissions should be 2.4 Gt. The majority of the 90 Mt CO2 reduction in power sector emissions in 2020 will last into 2021, with a minor rise in coal and gas-fired capacity in 2021 reversing just 10% of the 2020 reduction. Coal's proportion in energy generation in the European Union fell by about three percentage points between 2019 and 2021, to less than 14% (https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-2021/co2-emissions).

Global economic production in industrialised economies restored to pre-pandemic levels in 2021, but CO2 emissions rebounded more slowly, indicating a more persistent structural drop. CO2 emissions in the United States were 4% lower in 2021 than in 2019. In the European Union, they were 2.4% lower. In Japan, emissions fell by 3.7% in 2020 and rose by less than 1% in 2021. CO2 emissions per capita in advanced economies have declined to 8.2 tonnes on average, falling below China's average of 8.4 tonnes, however large disparities exist across advanced nations (https://www.iea.org/news/global-co2-emissions-rebounded-to-their-highest-level-in-history-in-2021).

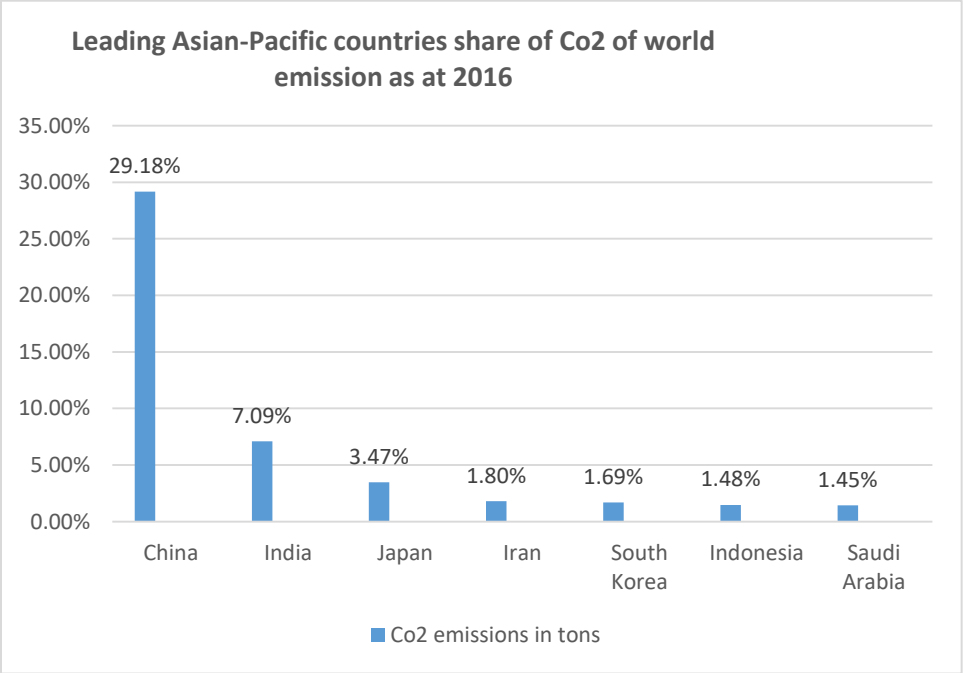


Figure 4 indicates that China had the biggest percentage of global CO2 emissions in 2016. However, the figure has not altered significantly in a good direction since then. The rise in global CO2 emissions above pre-pandemic levels has been mostly driven by China, where emissions surged by 750 million tonnes between 2019 and 2021. China was the only major economy to see economic growth in both 2020 and 2021. China's emissions rise in those two years more than offset the global drop during the same time period. China's CO2 emissions exceeded 11.9 billion tonnes in 2021, accounting for 33% of the world total. China's emissions growth was mostly caused by a surge in electricity demand, which relied heavily on coal power. With high GDP development and increased electrification of energy services, China's power consumption is expected to expand by 10% in 2021, outpacing economic growth of 8.4%. This demand growth of about 700 TWh was the greatest ever seen in China. With demand outstripping supply increases from low-emission sources, coal was utilised to fulfil more than half of the increase in energy demand. Despite this, the country's renewable energy generation increased at its fastest rate ever in 2021 (https://www.iea.org/news/global-co2-emissions-rebounded-to-their-highest-level-in-history-in-2021).

However, India occupied the second position with 7.09% of share of Co2 of world emission. In recent years, India Co2 share of global emission

has increased such that CO2 emissions in India rose substantially in 2021, exceeding 2019 levels, owing to increased coal consumption for electricity generation. In India, coal-fired power achieved an all-time high, rising 13% over the 2020 goal. This was due in part to the fact that renewables growth slowed to one-third of the five-year average (https://www.iea.org/news/global-co2-emissions-rebounded-to-their-highest-level-in-history-in-2021).

In 2021, India's economic recovery is expected to boost emissions over 200 Mt higher than in 2020, leaving emissions 1.4% (or 30 Mt) higher than in 2019. The increase in emissions in India was driven by a resurgence in coal demand above 2019 levels, with the predicted growth in coal-fired power generation in 2021 estimated to be three times bigger than the increase in renewable generation. CO2 emissions in India are now about on pace with those in the European Union, at 2.35 Gt, albeit they are still two-thirds lower per capita and 60% lower than the global average (https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-2021/co2-emissions).

Both China and India exceeded their 2019 emission peaks in 2021. Between 2019 and 2021, Chinese emissions increased by 5.5%, while Indian emissions increased by 4.4%. Chinese coal consumption was a significant contributor to the worldwide recovery in emissions, with the electricity and industrial sectors in China being the biggest drivers. Coal, oil, and gas emissions all decreased during the pandemic, but coal and gas emissions have already surpassed pre-pandemic levels, with a 2% increase in gas emissions and a 1% increase in coal emissions between 2019 and 2021. Oil emissions are still about 6% lower than in 2019, which is one of the key reasons 2021 emissions did not establish a new high (https://www.carbonbrief.org/global-co2-emissions-have-been-flat-for-a-decade-new-data-reveals/).

Other countries from the Asian Pacific region that have contributed to the global emission of Co2 include Japan with 3.47% of Co2 emission, Iran with 1.80% of Co2 emission, South Korea with 1.69% of Co2 emission, Indonesia with 1.48% of Co2 emission and Saudi Arabia with 1.45% of Co2 emission (https://www.iea.org/news/global-co2-emissions-rebounded-to-their-highest-level-in-history-in-2021).

Global energy-related CO2 emissions increased by 6% in 2021 to 36.3 billion tonnes, the highest level ever, as the global economy recovered quickly from the Covid-19 crisis and depended heavily on coal to fuel that recovery. According to the IEA, the increase in worldwide CO2 emissions of more over 2 billion tonnes was the greatest in history, more than compensating the previous year's pandemic-induced reduction. The

recovery of energy demand in 2021 was hampered by severe weather and energy market conditions, particularly price increases in natural gas, which resulted in more coal being burnt despite renewable energy output growing at its fastest rate ever.

In 2021, coal contributed for more than 40% of the entire increase in worldwide CO2 emissions, hitting an all-time high of 15.3 billion tonnes. Natural gas CO2 emissions increased significantly from 2019 levels to 7.5 billion tonnes. Because of the weak rebound in global transport activities in 2021, CO2 emissions from oil remained much lower than pre-pandemic levels at 10.7 billion tonnes.

Despite a recovery in coal use, renewable energy and nuclear power will account for a greater percentage of worldwide electricity generation than coal in 2021. Renewables-based generation surpassed 8 000 terawatt-hours (TWh) in 2021, a record 500 TWh more than in 2020. Wind and solar PV output climbed by 270 TWh and 170 TWh, respectively (https:// www.iea.org/news/global-co2-emissions-rebounded-to-their-highest-level-in-history-in-2021).

Global coal consumption is expected to return in 2021, resulting in a 640 Mt CO2 increase in global CO2 emissions. This would raise coal-related CO2 emissions to 14.8 Gt CO2, a 0.4% increase above 2019 levels and barely 350 Mt CO2 shy of the 2014 world peak. The power industry accounted for less than half of the reduction in coal-related emissions in 2020, but it accounts for 80% of the comeback, owing primarily to Asia's fast rising coal-fired output. Natural gas burning is anticipated to raise CO2 emissions by more than 215 Mt CO2 in 2021, reaching an all-time high of 7.35 Gt CO2, accounting for 22% of worldwide CO2 emissions (https:// www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-2021/co2-emissions).

Emerging markets and emerging countries currently account for more than two-thirds of global CO2 emissions, whereas advanced nations' emissions are declining structurally, despite a 4% comeback expected in 2021. China's CO2 emissions are expected to rise by 500 Mt. With energy consumption and emissions already rising in 2020, China's CO2 emissions in 2021 should be 6% higher, or over 600 Mt CO2, than in 2019. In 2021, all fossil fuels are predicted to contribute to increasing CO2 emissions in China, but coal is expected to dominate, accounting for 70% of the rise, owing mostly to increased coal usage in the power sector. Despite substantial development in renewable energy generation in China, output from coal-fired power plants climbed by 330 TWh, or roughly 7%, between 2000 and 2010 (https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-2021/ co2-emissions).

CONCLUSION

From 1972 until 2022, the Stockholm conference has marked 50 years of the world's dedication to environmental conservation. The United Nations and policy makers worldwide have shown some commitment to environmental protection while attaining economic growth. However, this effort is insufficient in light of the present global difficulties confronting the planet. However, the amount of state collaboration in many circumstances has not been advantageous especially in the Asian-Pacific region because numerous governments have disregarded fundamental environmental protection standards. As a result, this study contends that achieving environmental protection and sustainable development in the Asian-Pacific region requires more than issuing political statements; rather, more environmental actions are required by the states in the Asian-Pacific region if the current trend of increasing greenhouse emissions is to be reduced to the bare minimum. Against this backdrop, this research presents recommendations for environmental activities that will aid in the achievement of environmental conservation and sustainable development in the Asian-Pacific region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

First, there is a need for improved political will, backed up by environmental efforts, to reduce global CO2 emissions. Leaders in the Asian-Pacific region must go beyond rhetoric by making broad declarations that give the impression that they are dedicated to environmental conservation while their actions at home show otherwise. As a result, policymakers must back up their words with actions, because the world is tired of too many conferences but little action, as we see today.

Second, policymakers in the Asian-Pacific region should step up efforts to educate their population about environmental protection policies. As current statistics reveal, individuals' interest in watching climate change-related news remains low. When a result, as individuals grow more interested in viewing news about the risks of environmental degradation, they will become more knowledgeable and will be able to lobby and demand that their particular government promote and adopt environmentally friendly policies and programmes.

Third, shifting to renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and other renewable energy sources such as hydrogen remains one of the alternatives to fossil fuel reliance. For example, the earth requires a solar

surface area of 23,398Twh. According to the World of Engineering study (2022), the following data reflect the amount of surface area required for solar by each region of the world: Asia 11, 614 Twh, North America 5,151 Twh, Europe 3,886 Twh, Central and South America 1,103 Twh, Middle East 1,237 Twh, Africa 722 Twh, and Euroasia 1,237 Twh.

Furthermore, the United Nations must adopt compliance procedures to help limit the excesses of nations who violate international environmental conventions. This will, among other things, impose limitations on nations in the Asian-Pacific region whose goods and services violate international norms and laws on the international market.

Finally, nations in the Asian-Pacific region that violate international environmental treaties have not received the necessary collective condemnation from states throughout the world. As a result, collective action by governments under the auspices of the United Nations is required to blacklist countries guilty of breaking environmental norms and regulations in order to serve as a deterrent to others.

References

Altenburg, T. & Rodrik, D. (2017). Green industrial policy: Accelerating structural change towards wealthy green economies in Altenburg, T., & Assmann, C. (Eds.). (2017). Green industrial policy. concept, policies, country experiences. Geneva, Bonn: UN Environment; German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungs Politik (DIE).

Bapna, M. & Talberth, J. (2011). What is a "green economy? Washington, D.C: World Resource Institute Available at https://www.wri.org/blog/2011/04/qa-what-green-economy.

Carson, R. (1962). Silent Spring, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Heywood, A. (2007). Politics Third edition New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

https://ourworldindata.org/co2-emissions

https://www.carbonbrief.org/global-co2-emissions-have-been-flat-for-a-decade-new-data-reveals

https://www.iea.org/news/global-co2-emissions-rebounded-to-their-highest-level-in-history-in-2021

https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-2021/co2-emissions

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). (2015). Climate change 2014: mitigation of climate change (Vol. 3). Cambridge University Press.

Johari J.C (2012) International Relations and Politics (Theoretical Perspectives in the Post-Cold War Era) Sterling Publishers PVT LTD New Delhi India.

Kegley, W.C. & Blanton, L.S. (2011). World politics: Trend and transformation 2010-2011 edition International edition Boston: Wadsworth.

Mansbach, W.R. & Rafferty, L.K. (2008). Introduction to global politics New York: Routledge.

Momoh, Z. (2021). Influence of Political Stability on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa (2010-2015) Quaestus Journal,

Dimitrie Cantemir of Christian University Bucharest Romania June Vol. 21 (1), 417-433.

Momoh, Z. (2022). Influence of globalisation and multinational corporation on green economy in Africa Quaestus Open Access Journal, Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University Bucharest Romania Vol. 22 (1),86-101.

O'Brien, R. and Williams M. (2007). Global political economy: Evolution and Dynamics Second edition New York: Palgrave Macmillan Pp: 357.

Reuters Institute and University of Oxford (2022) Online Publication Accessed via LinkedIn

Rhodium Group, (2022). Online Publication Accessed via LinkedIn

Spero, E.J. & Hart, A.J. (2007). The politics of international economic relations New York: Thomson Wardsworth.

Steans, J., Pettiford, L., Diez, T., & El-Anis, I. (2010). An Introduction to International Relations Theory *Third Pearson Education Limited:* England.

World of Engineering Study Report (2022), Online Publication Accessed via LinkedIn

Notes on the author

Zekeri MOMOH is a Lecturer at the Department of Political Science and Diplomacy, Faculty of Social Sciences, Veritas University, Abuja, Nigeria. He has over 150 publications both in local and international outlets. He is a Political Scientist with special interest in Political Economy. His research area span through Development Assistance, Democracy, Corruption, Environmental Issues, Migration and Development Studies. He is the founder of Global Network for Advancement of Integrity Transparency and Accountability (GNAITA) a Non-governmental organization based in Abuja, Nigeria. He can be reached via his email address: momohzekeri@gmail.com or Call/WhatsApp +2348031311717