

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES (A CASE STUDY IF NIGERIA BETWEEN 20219-2023)**

BY

**CHIAMAKA SAMUEL OGOH
GOU/U22/IRE/603**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
GODFREY OKOYE UNIVERSITY**

JULY, 2026

TITLE PAGE

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES (A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA BETWEEN 2019-2023)**

BY

**CHIAMAKA SAMUEL OGOH
GOU/U22/IRE/603**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL
SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, GODFREY OKOYE
UNIVERSITY, ENUGU**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc.) DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: DR. N. C. MBAEZE

JULY, 2026.

DECLARATION

I Chiamaka Samuel Ogoh hereby declare that this research project titled: “Climate Change and International Politics of Developing Countries (A case study of Nigeria between 2019-2023)” was written and presented by me in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu state, and has not been presented anywhere else for the purpose of acquiring any degree in International Relations carried out under the supervision of DR.N.C Mbaeze

.....

CHIAMAKA SAMUEL OGOH
(STUDENT)

.....

DATE

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that this research project entitled “Climate change and international politics of developing countries (A case study of Nigeria between 2019-2023)” submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in International Relations has been examined and approved by the Department of International Relations, Godfrey Okoye University.

.....
DR. N.C MBAEZE
(PROJECT SUPERVISOR)

.....
DATE

.....
PROF. SAMUEL UGWUOZOR
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

.....
DATE

.....
PROF. JOHN ODO
DEAN, FMSS

.....
DATE

.....
EXTERNAL EXAMINER

.....
DATE

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for His grace and mercies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study would not have been achieved without the assistance of numerous committed individuals that are worth mentioning. My deepest gratitude goes to God for his guidance, provision and grace throughout the duration of this program.

Gratitude goes to my wonderful and easy-going supervisor, Mr. N.C Mbaeze whose invaluable guidance, patience, constructive criticism, and encouragement greatly contributed to the success of this research work. Your academic support and commitment towards this project are deeply appreciated.

To all my lecturers in the department who really played quintessential role in my life in the past four years, may God continually bless you all. Prof. Samuel Ugwuozor (my wonderful Head of Department), your paternal guidance and support are inspiring. The likes of Rev. Sr. Dr. Lucy Umeh, Dr. Kingsley Ezechi, Dr. N.C Mbaeze, Dr. Mrs. Ifedi, Mr. Okonkwo W.O. I will always remember. My appreciation also goes to the Dean of Management and Social Science, Prof. John Odo and to my Lecturers, Dr. Kingsley Ezechi, Dr. N.C Mbaeze, Mr. Anthony Onyishi, Dr. (Mrs.) Fransisca Ifedi, Rev. Fr. Dr. Ikenna Ogbuka, Prof. Ochioha, Mr. Okonkwo W.O, Mr. Ajibo C.C, the Secretary of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Mrs Chioma has also contributed immensely to my educational advancement.

Special thanks goes to my Godsent parents,, Mr Francis Chukwu Ogoh and Mrs Isoekeni Nkechinyere Chukwu Francis, who in their endless love have supported me throughout this academic journey ,everyday I'm inspired by the both of you ,thank you for the love you've showed me, your sacrifices and belief in me have been my greatest motivation .

Special thanks to my friends Nkiru, Hilary, Chinenye , Angel, Chidinma, Mama my Coursemates, and those who have in one way or the other contributed greatly in this journey . Thank you for your unwavering support and may God bless you all immensely.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page	i
Declaration page	ii
Approval page	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of contents	vi
List of Tables	ix
Abstract	x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	4
1.3 Research Questions	6
1.4 Objectives of the Study	6
1.5 Significance of the Study	7
1.6 Scope of the Study	8
1.7 Limitations of the Study	8
1.8 Operational Definitions of Terms	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 Conceptual Review	12
2.1.1 Climate Change	13
2.1.2 Foreign Policy	15
2.1.3 Climate Security	17
2.1.4 Forced Displacement	19

2.1.5 Climate Diplomacy	21
2.2 Thematic Review	24
2.3 Theoretical Review	37
2.3.1 Liberal Institutionalism	38
2.3.2 Constructivism	38
2.3.3 Realism	39
2.3.4 Political Ecology and Vulnerability Theory	39
2.3.5 Dependency Theory	40
2.4 Empirical Review	40
2.5 Summary of Literature and Gap	44
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	46
3.1 Theoretical Framework	46
3.2 Hypotheses	48
3.3 Research Design	49
3.4 Methods of Data Collection	49
3.5 Methods of Data Analysis	50
3.6 Logical Data Framework	52
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND	
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	54
4.1 Introduction	54
4.2 Climate Change and the Foreign Policy Priorities of Nigeria (2019 to 2023)	54
4.3 Climate-Induced Displacement and Nigeria's Regional Governance Participation (2019 to 2023)	62
4.4 Nigeria's Diplomatic Strategy Within the Unequal Global Climate Governance System (2019 to 2023)	72

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	79
5.1 Summary of Findings	79
5.2 Conclusion	80
5.3 Recommendations	81
REFERENCES	83

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Documentary Corpus of Nigeria's Climate Policy Submissions and Diplomatic Engagements (2019 to 2023)	55
Table 2: Thematic Coding Matrix: Frequency of Climate Themes Across Nigeria's Official UNFCCC Documents (2019 to 2023)	58
Table 3: Nigeria Internal Displacement Figures, Climate Drivers and Governance Responses (2019 to 2023)	63
Table 4: Nigeria's Participation Record in Regional and International Governance Mechanisms Related to Climate-Induced Displacement (2019 to 2023)	65
Table 5: Rival Hypothesis Matrix:	71
Table 6: Climate Finance Gap:	73

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Historical Timeline: Key Climate Events and Nigeria's Diplomatic Responses (2019–2023)	57
Figure 2: Segmented Time-Series: Nigeria's NDC Conditional and Unconditional Targets vs. Estimated GHG Reduction Progress (% below BAU, 2019–2023)	60
Figure 3: Grouped Bar Chart:	67
Figure 4: Process Tracing Flowchart:	68
Figure 5: Climate Finance Gap:	74
Figure 6: Policy Evaluation Dashboard:	75

ABSTRACT

Climate change has become one of the most important challenges shaping the international politics of developing countries. This study examined climate change and the international politics of developing countries using Nigeria as a case study from 2019 to 2023. In specific terms, the study reviewed how climate change influenced the international political engagements of Nigeria, studied the impact of climate-induced displacement on the participation of Nigeria in regional and international climate governance, as well as evaluated the response of Nigeria to inequalities within the global climate governance system. The study used an ex post facto and documentary research design using existing data drawn from the Nationally Determined Contribution of Nigeria (2021), the Climate Change Act (2021), official statements at COP26 as well as COP27, alongside reports from the IDMC, IOM, UNHCR together with ECOWAS Commission. Qualitative content analysis was used, while the study was based on Liberal Institutionalism Theory, supported by Dependency Theory and Constructivism. Liberal Institutionalism explains the reliance of Nigeria, Dependency Theory explains structural inequalities in global climate governance, and Constructivism explains the influence of international norms on the climate diplomacy of Nigeria. The findings showed that climate change in a significant way influenced the international political engagements of Nigeria through the implementation of the 2021 Nationally Determined Contribution, the Climate Change Act, and continued advocacy for climate finance as well as the Loss and Damage mechanism at COP26 alongside COP27. The study found in addition that climate-induced displacement strengthened the participation of Nigeria in regional and multilateral climate negotiations. It stated that the climate diplomacy of Nigeria was shaped by institutional cooperation, structural inequalities, and international norms. The study advised that Nigeria should improve its climate diplomacy, establish a national climate negotiation structure, and increase advocacy for equitable climate finance as well as effective global climate governance.

Keywords: Climate change, international politics, Nigeria, Liberal Institutionalism, Dependency Theory, Constructivism, climate diplomacy, ECOWAS, UNFCCC, Loss and Damage.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Climate change has become one of the most important global challenges of the twenty-first century, shaping not just the environment but also the political, economic, and diplomatic relations among states. For developing countries, the impacts of climate change extend beyond ecological degradation to threaten national stability, economic development, and international engagement. Okon et al. (2021) state that Nigeria faces many climate-related weak points linked to poverty, rapid population growth, and governance challenges. These conditions make climate change a main factor influencing livelihoods, social stability, and state ability. Because of this, understanding how Nigeria navigated the international politics of climate change between 2019 and 2023 is essential for examining the adaptation strategies of the country as well as diplomatic responses to emerging global environmental challenges.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2023) defines climate change as long-term changes in temperature and weather patterns in large part resulting from human activities, in particular greenhouse gas emissions. In International Relations, climate change is viewed not just as an environmental issue but also as a political issue that influences power relations, resource sharing, security, and international cooperation. Sending et al. (2020) argue that climate politics can be studied through dimensions such as power distribution, foreign policy behaviour, institutional cooperation, security concerns, and norm-based influence. Developing countries face a unique challenge because they contribute in relative terms little to global emissions while experiencing some of the most serious consequences of climate change (Closset et al., 2018). This imbalance in a significant way shapes the participation of countries such as Nigeria in global climate governance.

The international structure for climate governance is in large part based on the Paris Agreement, which came into force in 2016 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The shared view requires states to submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) outlining their commitments toward climate mitigation and adaptation. Even though the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities recognises past inequalities in global emissions, developing countries often face difficulties meeting reporting and implementation requirements due to limited institutional as well as financial ability. Obah-Akpowoghaha et al. (2022) state that African states often seek collective bargaining through the African Union to call for climate finance, technology transfer, and greater support from developed countries. Because of this, climate diplomacy for developing countries involves keeping balance between developmental needs with international environmental obligations.

Nigeria holds an important position in Africa as the most populous country of the continent, one of its largest economies, and a leading member of ECOWAS. Because of this, its climate policies have effects beyond its national borders. In its Initial Adaptation Communication to the UNFCCC, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2021a) accepted serious climate threats shaping agriculture, water resources, public health, and coastal infrastructure. The North-East region is a special area of vulnerability, where climate-related pressures such as desertification and water scarcity have increased resource competition as well as contributed to lack of security. Wakdok and Bleischwitz (2021) describe climate change in the Lake Chad Basin as a risk multiplier that makes existing conflicts, displacement, as well as humanitarian crises worse. Even though the National Climate Change Policy of Nigeria aims to address these challenges, important gaps remain between international commitments and domestic implementation.

A major clear consequence of climate change in Nigeria is population displacement. Reports from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2019) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2019) show that flooding, desertification, as well as resource scarcity have contributed to wide-scale internal alongside cross-border migration within the Lake Chad Basin region. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2023) further reported continued displacement across affected communities during the study period. These developments have important foreign policy effects because they require regional cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and effective migration management among neighbouring states.

Nigeria has participated with consistency in international climate negotiations and has shown commitment to the aims of the Paris Agreement. But scholars such as Amobi and Onyishi (2015) argue that climate governance in Nigeria is limited by weak institutional working together, not enough ability for implementation, as well as the influence of the petroleum sector. In a similar way, Butu et al. (2022) note that limited funding, poor policy working together, and competing economic priorities continue to weaken climate adaptation efforts. These challenges have created a gap between the international climate commitments of Nigeria policy outcomes, raising questions about the effectiveness of its climate diplomacy.

In addition, the international climate governance system contains structural inequalities that often disadvantage developing countries. Silander (2021) argues that global climate structures with frequency assume governance capacities and financial resources that many African states lack. In a similar way, the ECOWAS Commission (2019) identified implementation gaps and inconsistent climate reporting across West Africa. These challenges are made worse by past patterns of economic dependence that limit the bargaining power of developing countries within international climate negotiations. Because of this, the climate

diplomacy of Nigeria must be understood within the wider context of global inequalities and ability limits.

Even with the growing literature on climate change and environmental governance in Nigeria, existing studies have in large part studied climate vulnerability, displacement, as well as policy responses as separate issues. Limited attention has been given to the relationship between climate change and the interests of the foreign policy of Nigeria behaviour during the period 2019–2023. This period is in particular important because it witnessed the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the revised NDC commitments of Nigeria, increasing global climate diplomacy, and main domestic political developments. The absence of an integrated analysis connecting climate vulnerability, displacement, and international political engagement creates an important research gap. For this reason, this study examines climate change and the international politics of developing countries, with particular reference to Nigeria between 2019 as well as 2023, in order to provide a full understanding of how climate-related challenges influence the country's foreign policy alongside international relations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Climate change has become a main challenge for Nigeria, with important effects for environmental long-term stability, human security, economic development, and international relations. Across 2019 and 2023 the country experienced increasing climate-related challenges such as flooding, desertification, resource scarcity, as well as population displacement. Reports by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2024) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2023) show that climate-related disasters contributed to the displacement of large numbers of people, in particular in vulnerable regions such as the North-East as well as the Lake Chad Basin. These developments have created additional pressures on governance, security, and regional cooperation, making climate change not just an environmental issue but also a foreign policy concern.

To address these challenges Nigeria participated with active involvement in international climate governance through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement, and regional climate initiatives within ECOWAS as well as the African Union. The country in addition revised its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and used climate-related policies designed to strengthen adaptation as well as mitigation efforts. But several studies have shown that implementation has been limited by not enough funding, weak institutional working together, policy inconsistency, and dependence on fossil fuel revenues (Amobi & Onyishi, 2015; Butu et al., 2022; Okoh et al., 2017). Because of this, a gap continues to exist between the international climate commitments of Nigeria domestic policy outcomes.

Even though existing literature has contributed in a significant way to the understanding of climate change in Nigeria, important gaps remain. First, studies such as Wakdok and Bleischwitz (2021), Kamta et al. (2020), as well as Rigaud et al. (2021) focus in the main on climate vulnerability, resource conflicts, migration, alongside displacement without with enough depth examining how these climate challenges influence the interests of the foreign policy of Nigeria priorities together with diplomatic engagements. Second, studies by Amobi and Onyishi (2015), Butu et al. (2022), as well as Okoh et al. (2017) concentrate in large part on climate governance, policy implementation, alongside adaptation challenges, but pay limited attention to the international political dimensions of climate change. Third, research by Obah-Akpowoghaha et al. (2022) and ECOWAS Commission (2019) examines African as well as regional climate diplomacy in general terms, but does not provide a clear assessment of how Nigeria has responded to the structural inequalities built into the global climate governance system as a developing country.

In addition most existing studies have studied climate vulnerability, displacement, governance, and diplomacy as separate issues. There is limited scholarly work that integrates

these variables to explain how climate change has shaped the international political behaviour of Nigeria in global climate governance between 2019 and 2023. This lack of an integrated analysis forms an important gap in the literature. For this reason, this study aims to examine climate change and the international politics of developing countries, with particular reference to Nigeria between 2019 as well as 2023, in order to provide a full understanding of how climate-related challenges have influenced the diplomatic engagements of Nigeria, response to climate-induced displacement, alongside position within the global climate governance system.

1.3 Research Questions

- i. How has climate change influenced Nigeria's participation in international climate governance between 2019 and 2023?
- ii. What role has Nigeria played in regional and global climate diplomacy as a developing country between 2019 and 2023?
- iii. How has Nigeria navigated the structural inequalities of the global climate governance system between 2019 and 2023?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- i. Examine how climate change has influenced Nigeria's participation in international climate governance between 2019 and 2023.
- ii. Assess Nigeria's role in regional and global climate diplomacy as a developing country between 2019 and 2023.
- iii. Analyse how Nigeria navigated the structural inequalities of the global climate governance system between 2019 and 2023.

1.5 Significance of the study

The findings of this study will be of benefit to several groups of stakeholders across both theory-based and practice-based areas. First, the academic community will benefit from

this study through its contribution to the existing body of knowledge on climate change alongside foreign policy, International Relations in the context of developing countries. This is because the study fills a clear gap in the literature by providing an integrated analysis that connects climate stress, and displacement, diplomatic behaviour within a specific national as well as time frame, so enriching theory-based debates around climate security alongside constructivism, the political ecology of vulnerability. The study offers scholars a case study that can be applied in a comparative way to other African or developing-country contexts, which advances the method choices of documentary research in International Relations. Beyond academia, Nigerian government agencies such as the Federal Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Climate Change, will benefit from the policy effects of the study because these identify specific failures in the movement of international climate commitments into domestic as well as diplomatic action. The Nigerian diplomatic corps, and ECOWAS-level climate negotiators, will in addition find value in the assessment of the place of Nigeria within the global climate governance system because the findings can support more coherent climate negotiation positions that are grounded in strategy. International organisations and development partners. These include UNHCR alongside IOM, UNDP, bilateral donors engaged in the climate adaptation programming of Nigeria, will benefit from the based on evidence analysis of the displacement-climate-foreign policy connection, which can improve the targeting as well as effectiveness of humanitarian alongside adaptation actions.

1.6 Scope of the Study

limits for this study are set by its aims, which focus in a clear way on the relationship between climate change and the foreign policy behaviour of Nigeria within the context of

international politics of developing countries. The temporary scope is limited to the period 2019 to 2023. This point is a frame chosen because it covers the post-Paris Agreement adaptation planning cycle of Nigeria, its revised NDC document alongside the COP26, and COP27 processes, as well as a clear increase of climate-related displacement alongside policy challenges within the country. In geographic terms, the study centres on Nigeria with particular analytical attention to the North-east region, where climate-induced displacement intersects in the most acute way with security instability and the Lake Chad Basin crisis. While in addition attending to the wider engagement of Nigeria with ECOWAS alongside the African Union, the UNFCCC as arenas of climate diplomacy. The ideological scope is oriented toward a critical political economy view that questions the structural inequalities of the global climate governance system and their consequences for developing-country agencies. In method-based terms, the study adopts a qualitative documentary, ex post facto research design. This point relies on existing data drawn from policy documents alongside UNFCCC submissions, institutional reports, peer-reviewed literature because this choice suits the analysis of events that have already taken place and that are recorded in checkable written sources.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Several limits were met during the course of this study. First, time limits created a problem due to the broad nature of the study, which required the review of wide literature on climate change, international politics, climate governance, and developing countries. This challenge was addressed through effective time management, the adoption of a structured research schedule, and the prioritization of sources that were by direct means important to the aims of the study.

Second, the study faced limits linked to the lack of certain primary data, in particular private diplomatic communications, unpublished government records, and clear climate expenditure reports. To address this challenge, the researcher relied on trusted secondary

sources, including official government publications, UNFCCC reports, policy documents, ECOWAS reports, and peer-reviewed academic literature.

Third, financial limits limited access to some subscription-based databases and restricted the possibility of conducting wide field investigations. This challenge was reduced through the use of open-access academic repositories, institutional library resources, and public reports from international organizations.

At the end, limited access to some important materials was addressed through systematic electronic searches and careful selection of trusted as well as checkable sources. Even with these limits, the measures used by the researcher ensured the dependability, soundness, and general quality of the study findings.

1.8 operational definitions of Terms

Climate change means important and long-term changes in the climatic conditions of the Earth resulting from both natural processes as well as human activities, in particular the emission of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, alongside nitrous oxide. These changes appear through rising global temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, desertification, flooding, droughts, as well as sea-level rise. In the context of this study, climate change refers to the environmental changes experienced in Nigeria between 2019 and 2023 as well as their influence on the engagement of the country in international climate governance alongside diplomacy. It covers both slow-onset events such as desertification and rapid-onset disasters such as flooding, which have affected livelihoods, economic development, as well as national stability.

International Politics

International politics means the relations, relationships, negotiations, and power relations among states, international organizations, as well as other actors within the global system. It involves cooperation and competition among nations in the search of their interests as well as

aims on issues of global concern. In this study, international politics refers in specific terms to the political processes, negotiations, and diplomatic engagements surrounding climate change at the global level as well as the participation of Nigeria in these processes between 2019 alongside 2023. It includes the involvement of Nigeria climate negotiations, multilateral environmental agreements, and global efforts designed to address climate-related challenges.

Developing Countries

Developing countries are nations marked by in relative terms low levels of industrialization, technological advancement, income generation, and human development when compared to developed countries. These countries often face important developmental challenges such as poverty, not enough infrastructure, limited financial resources, and weak institutional ability. In the context of climate change, developing countries are in general more vulnerable to climate impacts despite contributing less to global greenhouse gas emissions. For the aim of this study, developing countries refer to nations such as Nigeria that face climate-related weak points. While at the same time working to achieve economic growth and sustainable development within a global system marked by unequal access to resources as well as decision making power.

Climate Governance

Climate governance means the set of policies, institutions, legal structures, agreements, and decision processes created at national, regional, as well as international levels to address climate change. It covers efforts designed to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, promoting adaptation to climate impacts, bringing in climate finance, and ensuring sustainable development. Climate governance involves the participation of governments, international organizations, civil society groups, and private sector actors. In this study, climate governance means the structures and mechanisms through which Nigeria engages with global climate

institutions such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as well as implements climate-related commitments between 2019 alongside 2023.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

The conceptual review serves as the foundation for understanding the main ideas and concepts upon which this study is built. It provides a clear explanation of the key concepts important to the relationship between climate change and the international politics of

developing countries. Over the years, climate change has moved beyond an environmental concern to become an important issue in international political discourse, influencing diplomatic relations, global governance structures, economic development strategies, and international cooperation among states. Because of this, the issue has attracted increasing attention from governments, international organizations, and policy makers seeking sustainable solutions to its harmful effects.

For developing countries such as Nigeria, climate change brings unique challenges due to their vulnerability to environmental degradation, limited financial and technological resources, as well as dependence on climate-sensitive sectors of the economy. These challenges have made greater participation necessary in international climate negotiations and global governance mechanisms designed to address climate-related issues. Because of this, understanding the concepts that shape climate politics and governance is essential for analysing the engagement of Nigeria's global climate governance system between 2019 as well as 2023.

This section reviews the core concepts supporting the study, such as climate change, international politics, climate security, climate governance, and climate diplomacy. The examination of these concepts provides a structure for understanding how Nigeria, as a developing country, navigated the opportunities and limits of international climate politics during the period under review.

2.1.1 Climate Change

Climate change means long-term changes in global and regional temperature patterns as well as rainfall patterns that result mainly from human-caused greenhouse gas emissions. This definition is set out by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and used through the later Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Assessment Reports (IPCC, 2023). At the level of physical science, the concept is not disputed in any serious way among climate scientists. The evidence base for human-caused warming built up over several

decades shows that global average temperatures have risen at a rate without precedent in the recorded geological record, with the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report confirming that human influence has warmed the climate at a rate not seen in at least two thousand years. The physical effects include rising sea levels, changes in precipitation patterns, more intense extreme weather events, glacier retreat and the gradual loss of biodiversity across ecosystem types.

In International Relations scholarship climate change must be read as a political issue rather than a scientific one. Sending et al. (2020) argue that its study requires engagement with power imbalances alongside foreign policy responses, institutional cooperation, security dynamics and norm-based diffusion at the same time. This political reading of climate change moves the concept from the area of environmental science into the area of international politics. This is because the sharing of duty for past emissions, the distribution of vulnerability to current impacts and the design of governance responses are all in a deep way disputed political questions that reflect unequal power relations. The political character of climate change is most clear in the concept of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities, which the UNFCCC introduced to recognise that industrialised countries bear greater past duty for atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations while all states share a duty to take action.

Closset et al. (2018) show that developing countries carry the highest physical vulnerability to climate change despite contributing the least to past emissions, which establishes the structural unfairness that frames the international climate engagement of Nigeria. This emissions-vulnerability contradiction is the central moral and political argument that developing countries bring to international climate negotiations. The argument holds that those who have benefited least from the industrial processes that produced climate change now face the greatest costs, which generates a moral demand for repayment through climate finance, technology transfer and greater adaptation support. Scholars in the tradition of political ecology, which includes Taylor (2015) and Mikulewicz (2018), extend this argument by

showing that vulnerability to climate change is itself produced by social as well as economic structures that have long concentrated poverty alongside exclusion in certain communities together with regions.

In the Nigerian context, Okon et al. (2021) show that the country faces many-sector climate risks across agriculture, water, coastal infrastructure and public health. Wakdok and Bleischwitz (2021) show that climate change works as a risk multiplier in the Lake Chad Basin by intensifying resource competition, movement of pastoral groups as well as displacement. The difference between slow-onset processes such as desertification and rapid-onset events such as flooding is more than a description because it shapes in a direct way how foreign policy responses are designed alongside the need for quick action with. At this point they are communicated at international forums. Slow-onset processes tend to be undercounted in crisis-driven governance structures while rapid-onset events attract quick humanitarian response but miss the build-up of vulnerability that makes communities so exposed in the first place. For this study, climate change is given an operational meaning as the recorded change of the climatic conditions of Nigeria between 2019 and 2023, which takes in both slow-onset as well as rapid-onset processes insofar as they produce consequences for displacement, resource competition alongside diplomatic engagement.

A further part of the concept that this study brings into account is the difference between mitigation and adaptation as the two main policy responses to climate change. Mitigation means efforts to reduce or prevent greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit the degree of future warming. Adaptation means efforts to adjust systems and communities so that they can cope with the climate impacts that are already under way or locked into the future path of the Earth system. For developing countries such as Nigeria, the difference has strong political importance because the international climate finance system has in past practice sent the greater share of resources toward mitigation, even though the most urgent need of vulnerable

developing countries is adaptation support. The NDC submissions of Nigeria reflect this tension by including both mitigation commitments conditional on international support and adaptation priorities that depend on climate finance flows that have not been provided at the needed level. This structural imbalance in the global response to climate change is part of the political landscape within which the foreign policy of Nigeria takes shape.

2.1.2 international politics

International politics means the relations, relationships, negotiations, and power relations among states as well as other actors within the international system. In traditional terms, international politics focused on issues such as security, war, diplomacy, and economic cooperation. But current international politics has grown to include global challenges such as climate change, environmental long-term stability, migration, public health, and human security. Because of this, climate change has become an important issue in international political discourse due to its cross-border nature and its effects for economic development, national security, as well as global stability.

The increasing severity of climate-related challenges has transformed climate change into a main agenda within international politics. States now engage in diplomatic negotiations, international agreements, and multilateral cooperation to address the causes as well as consequences of climate change. This has led to the development of international structures such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement, which serve as platforms for cooperation as well as negotiation among countries. In these structures states seek to promote their national interests while contributing to shared efforts designed to mitigate climate change and adapting to its impacts.

In the context of developing countries, international politics plays a crucial role in determining access to climate finance, technological assistance, capacity building, and

participation in global climate decision processes. Even with contributing in relative terms little to global greenhouse gas emissions, many developing countries bear an unequal share of climate-related weak points. Because of this, these countries often call for climate justice, equity, and the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities in international climate negotiations. Such advocacy reflects broader political debates concerning duty, resource sharing, and power relations within the international climate governance system.

In the case of Nigeria, international politics has been important in shaping its climate-related engagements and policy responses. Across 2019 and 2023 Nigeria participated with active involvement in global climate negotiations as well as multilateral forums designed to address climate change. Through its involvement in the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement, the Conference of Parties (COP) meetings, and various regional initiatives, Nigeria sought to promote its national interests while supporting the collective concerns of developing countries. These engagements were sent towards securing climate finance, promoting sustainable development, strengthening adaptation measures, and advocating for fair treatment within the global climate governance system.

For this reason, international politics provides an important structure for understanding how climate change influences relations among states and how developing countries such as Nigeria navigate opportunities as well as challenges within the global climate governance system. It highlights the connection between power, cooperation, and national interests in addressing one of the most urgent global challenges of the twenty-first century.

2.1.3 Climate Security

Climate security is a concept that grew at the meeting point of environmental studies and security studies as evidence increased that climate change drives conflict, displacement as well as state weakness. The origins of the concept can be linked to the work of Myers (1989), who introduced the idea of environmental refugees and argued that environmental degradation

posed a threat to national as well as international security. This in a way framing placed climate change within the language of security in a way that opened up new institutional attention and political need for quick action but also introduced analytical risks that subsequent scholars have worked to address. The security framing of climate change raises it on political agendas and generates resources as well as institutional attention, yet it can in addition militarise responses in ways that harm the most vulnerable populations.

Baysal and Karakas (2017) map three main structures within climate security scholarship. The first is the national security view, which treats climate change as a threat to state sovereignty and territorial protection. This structure dominated in a clear way policy discussions in the United States and the United Kingdom as well as shaped the inclusion of climate change on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council. The second is the human security view, which places individual and community vulnerability at the centre rather than state survival. This structure draws on the basic UNDP Human Development Report of 1994, which defined security in terms of freedom from fear and freedom from want rather than the protection of state borders. The third is the security framing view, which follows the work of Buzan et al. (1998) and looks at how political actors construct climate change as a threat of a life-or-death kind through speech acts as well as institutional practices. Each structure is present in the Nigerian context and must be separated with care to avoid merging dynamics that are distinct in an analytical sense.

The national security framing is of special relevance for Nigeria because Wakdok and Bleischwitz (2021) show that Lake Chad shrinkage has increased resource competition alongside expanding the working space of Boko Haram, which connects climate variables to traditional security concerns in a direct way. The argument that climate change contributed to the conditions in. This point Boko Haram grew is supported by evidence that the gradual loss of the lake reduced livelihoods for fishing and farming communities to such a degree that other

forms of income as well as belonging became more attractive to young men in the region. Idean Salehyan (2008) offers an opposing argument by warning against too simple cause links that reduce complex political violence to environmental stress alone, noting that strong governance and economic development can break the link between resource scarcity as well as conflict even in strongly stressed environments. This debate is of direct analytical importance for this study because the diplomatic claims of Nigeria about climate security must navigate between the need to state genuine climate-security linkages and the risk of oversimplifying causes in ways that weaken scientific trust.

The human security part is of equal importance. UNHCR (2022) shows how climate change intensifies displacement and protection weaknesses without producing a distinct legal category of climate refugees under current international law. Ari and Gokpinar (2020) add a warning that placing climate migration within a security frame can strengthen border controls as well as reduce pressure on states with emissions to provide climate finance. This point would harm the interests of Nigeria as both a displacement-producing state and a displacement-host state in the Lake Chad Basin region. The tension between the national security and human security framings of climate change is not just a scholarly debate but a policy choice that shapes in a direct way the diplomatic strategy of developing countries in international forums. For this study, climate security is given an operational meaning as the set of threats to human life, livelihoods and state stability produced by climate change in Nigeria between 2019 as well as 2023.

A further part of climate security that is important to Nigeria is the concept of climate-conflict interaction, which means the way in which climate pressures interact with existing political, economic and social tensions to produce or increase violent conflict. Schleussner et al. (2016) provide quantitative evidence that climate-related natural disasters increase the risk of armed conflict in ethnic-divided societies, which is of direct relevance to the multi-ethnic

and governance-stressed context of northern Nigeria. The farmer-herder conflicts that have increased in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria during the study period show this interaction. This is because they are caused by a combination of land scarcity produced in part by climatic changes, past patterns of ethnic and religious division as well as the weakness of state institutions in managing resource disputes. The security dimensions of climate change For this reason create a governance challenge that goes beyond the ability of any single ministry or agency and requires cross-sectoral working together of the kind that the current system of the Nigerian state struggles to produce.

2.1.4 Climate Governance

.Climate governance means the system of institutions, policies, rules, agreements, and decision processes created at the national, regional, as well as international levels to address the causes alongside consequences of climate change. It covers the mechanisms through which governments, international organizations, civil society groups, and other interested groups coordinate actions designed to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing climate adaptation, promoting sustainable development, as well as strengthening resilience to climate-related challenges. As climate change has become a global concern that transcends national limits, climate governance has become a needed structure for supporting collective action among states.

The concept of climate governance gained prominence with the recognition that climate change cannot be addressed with effect by individual countries acting in isolation. Because of this, international institutions and agreements have been created to promote cooperation as well as coordinate global responses to climate challenges. Key examples include the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement. These structures provide rules for emissions reduction, adaptation strategies,

climate finance, technology transfer, and capacity building initiatives designed to support countries in their climate action efforts.

Climate governance is in particular important for developing countries because it shapes access to financial resources, technology, and institutional support necessary for addressing climate weak points. Many developing countries contribute in relative terms little to global greenhouse gas emissions but are in an unequal way affected by climate-related impacts such as flooding, drought, desertification, food lack of security, and displacement. Because of this, climate governance structures emphasize principles such as equity, climate justice, and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities, which recognise the differing capacities as well as past contributions of states to climate change.

In the context of international politics climate governance serves as a platform through which states negotiate responsibilities, seek national interests, and influence global climate policies. The governance process often reflects existing power relations within the international system, where developed countries possess greater financial and technological abilities, while developing countries call for increased support as well as fair representation in climate decision making. These dynamics make climate governance not just an environmental issue but also a political and developmental concern.

In the case of Nigeria climate governance has played an important role in shaping climate-related policies and international engagements. Across 2019 and 2023 Nigeria participated with active involvement in global climate governance processes through its involvement in the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement, as well as the annual Conference of Parties (COP) meetings. During this period, the country pursued climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, revised its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), as well as sought international support for climate-resilient development. The engagement of Nigeria with global climate governance structures was caused by the need to address domestic environmental

challenges while promoting at the same time its interests within the broader international climate regime.

For this reason, climate governance provides an important conceptual structure for understanding how states as a group respond to climate change and how developing countries such as Nigeria navigate the opportunities as well as limits of the global climate governance system. It highlights the role of international cooperation, institutional arrangements, and political negotiations in shaping climate action as well as development results.

2.1.5 Climate Diplomacy

Climate diplomacy means the use of diplomatic tools alongside multilateral negotiations to promote state interests within the global climate governance arena. It combines the state-centred logic of traditional diplomacy with the norm-based logic of multilateral governance, which makes it a mixed practice that operates across the boundary between domestic politics and international duty. Traditional diplomacy as defined in the basic work of Bull (1977) means the management of relations between states and other political communities by peaceful methods through the use of official officials who negotiate on behalf of their governments. Climate diplomacy takes on this state-centred character yet goes further. This is because climate change is a global collective action problem that cannot be solved by any single state and for this reason requires continued multilateral negotiation within institutional structures that set rules as well as create accountability tools for all parties.

Lisinge-Fotabong et al. (2017) define climate diplomacy in the African context as the point of contact between national interest and international cooperation, arguing that effective climate diplomacy requires developing countries to state vulnerability while showing governance credibility at the same time. This dual requirement creates a tension that shapes the diplomatic practice of Nigeria in a direct way. On one hand, Nigeria must present the scale and need for quick action of its climate vulnerability in order to build the moral as well as political

case for greater climate finance alongside adaptation support. On the other hand, it must demonstrate the governance ability to absorb and use that finance in an effective way in order to maintain credibility with donor governments as well as international institutions. States that present themselves as to a high degree vulnerable but unable to manage resources with effect risk being passed over in climate finance sharing decisions in favour of countries that can demonstrate stronger institutional ability.

Sending et al. (2020) place climate diplomacy within a broader argument about how climate change has reshaped the foreign policy agenda by producing new links between issues between environmental obligations, energy security, development finance and geopolitical position. These linkages mean that climate diplomacy is not a separate area but connects in a direct way to the full set of interests that a state pursues in international relations. In the case of Nigeria the linkage between climate diplomacy and energy security is of particular significance because the country faces the possibility of reduced international demand for its oil exports as main economies seek carbon reduction. This point creates a material incentive to engage climate negotiations in a strategic way that protects its development options while meeting the norm-based expectations of the international community. The ECOWAS Commission (2019) regional assessment confirms that the challenges of Nigeria are systemic rather than unusual and that the climate diplomacy of the country must be understood within the wider context of West African developing-country place in the international climate regime.

The climate diplomacy of Nigeria faces difficulty from a structural tension between its Paris Agreement carbon reduction commitments and its dependence on oil revenues, which creates a tension that shapes its international place in a direct way. Salih (2025) applies dependency theory to this dynamic by arguing that developing countries enter climate negotiations from positions of structural subordinate position shaped by past economic dependence so that their diplomatic space is limited by ability deficits alongside the system of

the international system. This structural constraint means that the climate diplomacy of Nigeria is not a free choice among a range of positions but is shaped in an important way by the economic and institutional conditions within which the country operates. The concept of structural influence in international negotiations, developed by Strange (1988), means the ability of powerful states to shape the rules and structures within. This point all actors operate, which is important here because the design of the UNFCCC transparency framework, the structure of the climate finance system as well as the speed of negotiations on loss alongside damage all reflect the preferences of the most powerful states.

A constructivist view on climate diplomacy adds a part that realist and structuralist accounts miss by drawing attention to the role of norms, ideas as well as identity in shaping diplomatic behaviour. Stevenson (2011) shows through constructivist analysis of the climate engagement of India that developing countries are active agents in debate over norms rather than passive receivers of norm-based demands. This is because they build a fit between norms between domestic positions and international expectations through continued diplomatic engagement. This framing of agency applies to Nigeria. This is because the continued engagement of the country with UNFCCC processes over two decades has produced a degree of learning within institutions and norm-based acceptance that shapes the climate identity of the Nigerian state in ways that go beyond instrumental calculation. For this study, climate diplomacy is given an operational meaning as the formal contacts of Nigeria with UNFCCC processes, ECOWAS climate structures and bilateral development partners on climate-related matters between 2019 as well as 2023.

2.2 Thematic Review

This section discusses existing literature in a thematic way across three main themes drawn from the research questions of the study. Each theme is organised around two sub-themes, with each sub-theme covered in five paragraphs that draw in a clear way on the findings

and observations of prior studies. The aim is to map the scholarly area and identify areas of shared view, difference as well as to set up the analytical foundation for the empirical analysis of the study.

Major Theme 1: Climate Change and Internal Displacement in Nigeria

Sub-theme 1.1: Climate Stressors and Displacement Drivers in Northern Nigeria

Wakdok and Bleischwitz (2021) show that the Lake Chad Basin experiences climate-induced land degradation, water scarcity, agricultural disruption as well as increased resource competition at the same time, with these pressures working as threat multipliers that increase existing weak points. Their analysis reveals that Lake Chad shrinkage, which is caused by reduced rainfall, alongside increased water extraction, has in a gradual way reduced the resource in a supply way available to pastoralist and farming communities, which generates migration flows that overload receiving communities. This finding carries weight. This is because it insists that climate change is not a background condition in the displacement crisis of Nigeria but an active cause factor that produces in a structural way the conditions for mass population movement both on its own and in interaction with conflict dynamics.

Kamta et al. (2020) provide clear evidence from North-east Nigeria showing that while Boko Haram lack of security is the cause of displacement that sits closest to the event, environmental pressures. These include water scarcity, alongside land degradation, have weakened community resilience so that recovery, alongside return, become more difficult even when security improves. Their local-level survey and interview data show that the climate-conflict-displacement connection in North-east Nigeria can be traced in an empirical way, which challenges readings that reduce displacement to conflict alone in a too simple manner. This combined vulnerability structure is an important contribution to the method because it shows that larger-level attribution debates should not hide the real contribution of climate stress to displacement vulnerability at the family and community level.

Okpara et al. (2017) create and use a climate-water conflict vulnerability index to Lake Chad Basin communities by mapping the differences in exposure across pastoralist, fishing as well as farming livelihoods. Their findings show that vulnerability is shaped by livelihood type, asset resources and access to governance institutions, with fishing communities facing the highest exposure, alongside the most limited adaptation choices. This different vulnerability mapping is critical because it shows that climate displacement in the region follows distinct livelihood-based patterns that generic conflict-displacement structures fail to capture in a systematic way. This point carries important consequences for the design of governance responses that must be matched to specific community conditions rather than applied in a same way.

Okpara et al. (2016) look at livelihood dynamics and community responses to lake drying by finding that Lake Chad communities hold important local adaptation knowledge yet that the shrinkage of the lake in the current period has gone beyond the speed, alongside scale that past adaptive strategies can manage. The study describes climate-induced displacement in the region as gradual and step-wise rather than sudden, which puts pressure on the main emergency-response framing of displacement in policy discourse. This finding is of direct relevance to the foreign policy context of Nigeria. This is because it points to the view that the diplomatic need for quick action required to bring in international climate support is not captured in an adequate way by crisis-driven displacement statistics that undercount the slower-moving yet damaging in an equal way as structural displacement produced by the accumulation of environmental degradation.

Rigaud et al. (2021a) model internal climate migration in Nigeria across three emissions, alongside development scenarios. The study finds that even under projections that are positive, important internal climate migration is unavoidable, with the greatest displacement pressures concentrated in the drying North, alongside the flooding coastal South.

Ekoh et al. (2023) extend this analysis to Lagos by showing that flooding is an important predictor of migration intention in the coastal megacity of Nigeria, with the most vulnerable households facing the greatest exposure, alongside the least financial ability for mobility as adaptation. Together, these studies show that the climate-displacement challenge of Nigeria is wide across places as it spans the North, South, the rural and urban contexts as well as calls for an integrated national governance alongside diplomatic response rather than region-specific emergency control.

Sub-theme 1.2: Governance Responses to Climate-Induced Displacement

Amobi and Onyishi (2015) argue that the climate governance of Nigeria is weakened in a fundamental way by institutional division, overlapping duties as well as the absence of continued political commitment. This produces a governance system that shows climate ambition at the international level while delivering limited action at the domestic level. Their analysis shows that formal institutions, which include the Department of Climate Change, alongside the NDC process, lack the financial resources, technical ability and political authority to carry out their mandates in an effective way. This gap between institutional existence and institutional effectiveness is a structural feature of the climate governance of Nigeria that shapes in a direct way the credibility of its international climate diplomacy because a state that cannot demonstrate domestic implementation provides a weak base from. This point demands international finance as well as support.

Butu et al. (2022) find that the adaptation strategies of Nigeria are under-funded in a structural way and without adequate working together across government levels, with an important financing gap between adaptation needs, available domestic as well as international resources. Okoh et al. (2017) identify three structural barriers to NDC implementation, which are policy inconsistency across administrations, weak monitoring, data systems and the fundamental tension between NDC commitments as well as oil-revenue dependence. These

governance failures are not at the edge of the analysis but at its centre. This is because they represent the domestic foundation of the international climate of Nigeria and the main reason why the formal commitments of the country go beyond its delivery performance in a consistent way.

The Adaptation Communication and National Climate Change Policy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2021a, 2021b) presents the vulnerability profile of Nigeria, alongside its adaptation priorities to the international community, while acknowledging institutional ability limits, alongside limited domestic financing. The strategy of these documents is itself of analytical significance because they balance with care the advocacy of vulnerability. This point requires presenting Nigeria as a climate-stressed state in need of support, against the signalling of governance credibility, which requires showing institutional ability to absorb climate finance in an effective way. This dual communicative strategy reveals how domestic governance limits are reframed as arguments for international support rather than accepted as evidence of policy failure.

Onuoha et al. (2023) show that security forces across ECOWAS and ECCAS are required in a growing way to manage conflicts with climate dimensions, which include farmer-herder clashes, water disputes yet without the training or institutional mandate to address their structural causes. The ECOWAS Commission (2019) regional assessment confirms that the implementation challenges of Nigeria are shared in a broad way across West Africa, with all 17 countries surveyed facing limited domestic climate finance, weak monitoring systems and not enough vertical policy integration. This regional comparability is important for calibrating the assessment of the study because it places the governance shortcomings of Nigeria within a shared developing-country predicament rather than attributing them in a clear way to national political failures.

Kamta and Scheffran (2022) look at the relations between IDP communities as well as host communities in North-east Nigeria through social network analysis alongside find that. While IDP networks support eventual return, they in addition reproduce ethnic, alongside communal tensions that make governance more difficult in mixed communities. Silander (2021) adds a norm-based part by arguing that the SDGs and the Agenda 2030 structure assume institutional capacities that many African states do not yet hold, which creates a structural mismatch between international norm-based ambitions as well as operational reality. For this study, these findings together show that effective governance of climate-induced displacement in Nigeria requires responses that work across many scales, alongside sectors to address social, relational and institutional dimensions at the same time rather than alone the material as well as administrative dimensions that current structures place at the centre.

Major Theme 2: Nigeria's Foreign Policy Response to Climate Change

Sub-theme 2.1: Nigeria's International Climate Commitments and Their Implementation

Okoh et al. (2017) carry out a systematic evaluation of the NDC implementation of Nigeria and find a consistent pattern in. This means that formal ambition goes beyond operational capacity, with conditional targets that depend on international climate finance proving to be of particular difficulty given the failure of Nigeria to bring in resources at the required scale. Their study identifies this conditionality gap as a defining feature of the climate diplomacy of developing countries, in which the credibility of international commitments is in part contingent on the delivery of support that has not come through. This dynamic is of direct relevance to the diplomatic position of Nigeria because commitments that cannot be financed from domestic sources and have not received external support remain in a performative state rather than an operative one. This point weakens the authority of the country in climate negotiations.

The transparency framework of the Conference of the Parties (2019) under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement creates accountability tools that constrain the diplomatic space available to developing countries by requiring checkable evidence of climate action rather than political self-presentation. In the case of Nigeria this structure works as a double-edged instrument because it creates pressure to improve domestic monitoring, alongside reporting systems, while in addition providing a venue of legitimacy for communicating the gap between climate needs and international support received. Butu et al. (2022) note that the adaptation efforts of Nigeria at the sub-national level may go beyond what official transparency reports capture. This point points to the view that the diplomatic presentation of the country of its climate action understates genuine effort at the same time as it still falls short of the scale the challenge demands.

Amobi and Onyishi (2015) argue that the implementation gap of Nigeria is not in the main technical or financial but rooted in the political economy of the Nigerian state, where climate commitments compete with more quick political, economic priorities as well as where institutional culture has not yet taken on board climate action as a core state function. This political economy analysis carries direct foreign policy consequences because a state that places climate action below fiscal necessity in a structural way provides a weak diplomatic platform for claiming moral authority in international climate negotiations. Obah-Akpowoghaha et al. (2022) strengthen this assessment by noting that industrialised countries use the governance weaknesses of developing countries to deflect demands for greater climate finance, which creates a perverse incentive structure that penalises states for the same structural conditions that produce their vulnerability.

The ECOWAS Commission (2019) regional assessment places the implementation performance of Nigeria within a pattern shared across 17 West African states by identifying common barriers, which include limited domestic climate finance, weak monitoring systems

and not enough horizontal policy integration. This regional framing is of analytical importance because it shows that the implementation challenges of Nigeria reflect the structural conditions of developing-country climate governance rather than unusual national failures. This point strengthens the case for collective regional responses and coordinated advocacy for systemic reform of the climate finance system. Sending et al. (2020) add a constructivist part by pointing to the view that the engagement of Nigeria with UNFCCC norms is not in a clear way instrumental but reflects the gradual acceptance of climate obligations through social learning.

Silander (2021) argues that the ambitious norm-based demands of the Agenda 2030 structure assume governance capacities that many African states are still developing. This point creates a norm-based-operational gap that should be understood as a structural mismatch rather than a straightforward failure of political commitment. This view provides a critical corrective to analyses that focus in a clear way on the domestic governance failures of Nigeria without acknowledging the unrealistic expectations built into the international norm-based structure. For this study, the appropriate benchmark for judging the implementation of the climate commitments of Nigeria is not the standard set by industrialised-country governance models but the realistic standard possible within the actual governance context of Nigeria. This point is a difference that reshapes in an important way how the climate foreign policy performance of the country should be evaluated.

Sub-theme 2.2: Nigeria's Regional Climate Diplomacy and ECOWAS Engagement

Obah-Akpowoghaha et al. (2022) argue that collective African climate diplomacy. While growing in sophistication, it remains limited by the diversity of climate interests among African states and the limited institutional resources of the African Union, regional bodies as well as dependence on external technical support for negotiating ability. In ECOWAS these limits shape the climate diplomacy of Nigeria in a direct way because the limited financing and enforcement ability of the regional body means that the climate leadership of Nigeria is

exercised through political influence rather than institutional authority. The study shows how the African Group of Negotiators has achieved tangible results, which include the formal recognition of loss, damage, yet notes that the gap between pledged, delivered climate finance remains large and is entrenched in a structural way.

The ECOWAS Commission (2019) assessment reveals that the engagement of Nigeria with regional climate mechanisms is inconsistent, with the country sometimes taking the lead on climate governance initiatives and at other times falling behind smaller member states in implementation quality. This inconsistency reflects the broader ambivalence in the approach of Nigeria to regional multilateralism, where the size of the country creates leadership potential that domestic governance limits prevent it from realising in a frequent way. Onuoha et al. (2023) show that climate-security challenges in the ECOWAS region create new institutional demands that existing structures were not built to address. This point positions the regional security leadership role of Nigeria as a vehicle with potential for developing new many-sector climate-security governance.

Sending et al. (2020) note that climate change creates opportunities for developing countries to use shared vulnerability as leverage in international forums. This point is of special relevance to ECOWAS, where the shared climate challenges of West African states provide a base for coordinated advocacy on finance, adaptation and technology transfer. The size and diplomatic weight of Nigeria give it a distinctive ability to lead such shared efforts, while the literature points to the view that this leadership, when it is exercised, is valued by smaller ECOWAS members. Yet domestic climate governance failures create reputational risks that weaken the authority of Nigeria as a regional climate advocate from time to time, which reveals the direct relationship between the quality of domestic governance and the effectiveness of regional diplomacy.

Wakdok and Bleischwitz (2021) argue that the resource connection in the Lake Chad Basin calls for regional solutions that go beyond any single national state, with the Lake Chad Basin Commission providing one institutional vehicle that remains under-developed relative to the governance challenges it faces. The engagement of Nigeria with the Commission, alongside its support for the Great Green Wall initiative, represents a part of its regional climate diplomacy that analyses focused in a clear way on the UNFCCC process miss. Below (2017) provides theory-based grounding for this by showing that the ECOWAS engagement of Nigeria reflects both realist dynamics driving regional influence, constructivist dynamics driving norm-based engagement and that both logics must be reviewed to understand the full character of the regional climate foreign policy of Nigeria.

Salih (2025) argues that the dependency relationships between African states and international financial institutions constrain in a fundamental way the range of climate positions that can be put forward with credibility in international forums, with climate finance conditionality shaping the content of regional governance in ways that reflect donor priorities rather than recipient needs. Mikulewicz (2018) extends this critique by showing that the way vulnerability is defined and communicated in international negotiations often serves institutional interests rather than the most affected communities. This point risks disconnecting the diplomatic vulnerability narrative of Nigeria from the actual conditions of its most climate-exposed populations. Together, these structural critiques show that effective regional climate diplomacy for Nigeria requires not just institutional engagement but active contestation of the governance structures within which that engagement takes place.

Major Theme 3: International Politics and Developing Countries in the Climate Regime

Sub-theme 3.1: Structural Inequities in the Global Climate Governance System

Salih (2025) applies dependency and world-system theory to the climate regime by arguing that the global climate governance system reflects the hierarchical organisation of the

international economic order, with industrialised countries holding agenda-setting power. While developing countries are positioned as supplicants for climate finance rather than equal architects of governance. This structural influence imbalance constrains the climate foreign policy of Nigeria in a direct way by conditioning the range of positions the country can put forward with credibility, and the leverage it can exercise over finance, adaptation support as well as the loss alongside damage structure. The analysis of Salih provides the essential structural context for reading the behaviour of developing-country actors in the climate regime by grounding apparent diplomatic inconsistencies in systemic limits rather than individual failure.

Closset et al. (2018) measure the emissions-vulnerability gap in an empirical way by showing through their physical vulnerability index that the states with highest physical exposure to climate hazards are in the main low-income developing countries. While those with highest past emissions are in the main high-income industrialised states. This evidence is the foundation of the developing-country argument for different responsibilities and greater international support. The position of Nigeria is distinctive because it is at the same time an important oil producer. This point places it as a contributor to the fossil fuel economy driving climate change, and a developing state with high vulnerability, which creates an inherent tension in its climate diplomacy that no single theory-based structure resolves in full.

Vogler (2010) writing from a liberal institutionalist view argues that the UNFCCC process has built trust and cooperation that provides a forward-looking foundation for expanding climate ambition. This point points to the view that continued developing-country participation can in a gradual way enhance diplomatic influence even within a system that is unequal in a structural way. Sending et al. (2020) complement this with a constructivist argument that the norm-based demands produced by climate governance reshape in a gradual way the identities and interests of states. This point creates opportunities for developing

countries to promote their agenda through norm entrepreneurship, alongside structural advocacy. Together, these theory-based perspectives point to the view that structural limits are real, not deterministic and developing-country agency operates within as well as reshapes in part the structural conditions it encounters.

Sosa-Nunez and Atkins (2016) argue that the response of the international system to environmental challenges is shaped by the same distributional conflicts, alongside power imbalances that mark international politics at large. This point means that structural inequalities in the climate regime are not accidental features that technical reform can correct but expressions of deeper political dynamics that require structural change. Obah-Akpowoghaha et al. (2022) show how collective African climate diplomacy has moved forward the interests of developing countries in an incremental way. These include the formal recognition of loss, damage, note that the gap between pledged alongside delivered climate finance remains a fundamental unresolved structural problem. These findings show that systemic reform rather than adjustment at the margins of institutions is required to achieve equitable climate governance.

Brinn (2022) offers a critique of the green liberal approach to climate governance by arguing that market-based mechanisms tend to produce outcomes that favour actors with economic power, and place costs that are disproportionate on less powerful states as well as communities. This critique is of direct relevance to the experience of Nigeria because the market-based instruments that dominate the current system, which include carbon trading, alongside conditional climate finance, tend to reproduce rather than challenge the structural inequalities that produce the vulnerability of developing countries. The advocacy of Nigeria for adaptation support that is unconditional, transparent climate finance delivery, a strong Loss and Damage mechanism can be understood as a response to the distributional failures of green

liberal governance that Brinn (2022) identifies. This point places the diplomatic demands of Nigeria as justified in a structural way rather than alone self-interested.

Sub-theme 3.2: Developing Countries' Agency and Climate Finance in International Negotiations

Stevenson (2011) shows through constructivist analysis of the climate engagement of India that developing countries are active agents in debate over norms rather than passive receivers of norm-based demands. This is because they build a fit between norms between domestic positions and international expectations through continued diplomatic engagement. This framing of agency is of direct relevance to Nigeria by pointing to the view that the engagement of the country with the Paris Agreement process reflects not just compliance calculation but the place of strategic identity within a governance system that rewards climate ambition with international legitimacy, alongside development finance. The constructivist view is For this reason essential for capturing the norm-based dimensions of the climate diplomacy of Nigeria that analyses based in a pure way on structure or interest miss.

Obah-Akpowoghaha et al. (2022) show specific instances of African diplomatic agency in the climate regime by demonstrating that collective advocacy through the African Group of Negotiators has in a gradual way strengthened developing-country positions on adaptation finance, Loss and Damage even within a system that is unequal in a structural way. The participation of Nigeria in these collective diplomacy efforts is described as variable, which reflects the domestic governance limits and competing political priorities that shape its engagement. Butu et al. (2022) note that the actual adaptation efforts of Nigeria at sub-national levels may go beyond official reporting. This point points to the view that the diplomatic presentation of the country of its climate action understates genuine effort at the same time as it still falls short of the scale the challenge demands.

Climate finance is central to the agency of developing countries because the scale, structure and conditionality of international financial support determines in a direct way the feasibility of implementing ambitious NDC commitments. The promise of USD 100 billion per year in climate finance from industrialised to developing countries has not been delivered in a consistent way and available finance has been weighted toward mitigation over adaptation, alongside loans over grants. This point is a structure that does not meet the priority needs of the most vulnerable states. The transparency mechanisms of the Conference of the Parties (2019) create both accountability obligations, alongside advocacy opportunities for developing countries by providing venues of legitimacy for communicating the gap between stated needs and actual support received.

Wakdok and Bleischwitz (2021) argue that the position of Nigeria as a Lake Chad Basin state creates specific diplomatic leverage. This is because the humanitarian, alongside security consequences of lake shrinkage produce international political pressure that engages security, development as well as humanitarian communities beyond the UNFCCC process alone. This framing of vulnerability across many issues has the potential to increase the access of Nigeria to finance and support from a broader range of international actors. This point shows that effective developing-country climate agency involves connecting climate vulnerability in a strategic way to many international governance structures at the same time rather than limiting advocacy to the UNFCCC channel alone.

Silander (2021) argues that the SDGs provide developing countries with norm-based leverage to measure and critique in a public way the adequacy of international support by setting the climate finance performance of industrialised countries against at the international level endorsed standards. Taylor (2015), alongside Mikulewicz (2018), adds a critical corrective by arguing that climate diplomacy that is disconnected from the voices of the most affected communities is both less valid in a democratic sense and less effective in practice than

advocacy grounded in community-level climate knowledge. In the case of Nigeria this points to the view that strengthening the connection between community climate experience and national diplomatic advocacy could enhance the moral authority, alongside the strategic effectiveness of the international climate place of the country at the same time.

2.3 Theoretical Review

This section discusses five theory-based structures of direct relevance to this study. Each theory is covered in terms of its basic tenets, assumptions and limits as well as its specific analytical relevance to the relationship between climate change, foreign policy alongside the position of Nigeria in the international climate governance system.

2.3.1 Liberal Institutionalism

Liberal institutionalism developed by Keohane and Nye argues that international institutions overcome collective action problems by reducing transaction costs, providing information as well as creating commitments that can be enforced. This enables states to cooperate for mutual gain even within an international system that is anarchic. Vogler (2010) applies this structure to the climate regime by arguing that the UNFCCC process has built trust that provides a forward-looking foundation for expanding climate ambition. Yet the theory has been criticised for not giving enough weight to power imbalances because Salih (2025) argues that institutions reflect the interests of their most powerful architects rather than providing fair structures for cooperation. For this study, liberal institutionalism analyses how the Paris Agreement transparency framework, alongside ECOWAS climate mechanisms, shape the diplomatic behaviour of Nigeria and constrain or enable its advocacy for greater developing-country support within the climate governance system.

2.3.2 Constructivism

Constructivism advanced by Wendt, Ruggie and Finnemore, challenges the assumption of fixed interests determined by material factors by arguing that interests as well as identities are constructed through society via norm diffusion, interaction alongside communicative processes. Stevenson (2011) shows that developing countries engage in the building of fit between norms by shaping in an active way the meaning of international climate obligations rather than alone accepting or rejecting them. Critics, which include Below (2017), argue that constructivism does not give enough weight to material limits, in particular fiscal pressures, alongside resource dependencies, that make climate ambition in a cost way for developing states in a real sense. For this study, constructivism explains the norm-based dimensions of the climate diplomacy of Nigeria. These include its NDC framing, climate justice advocacy and how continued engagement with the UNFCCC process is reshaping in a gradual way the climate governance identity of Nigeria even while structural limits limit implementation.

2.3.3 Realism

Realism grounded in the work of Morgenthau and Waltz argues that states are driven in the main by the search of power as well as national interest within an international system that is anarchic and predicts that climate cooperation will be limited by free-rider dynamics, alongside relative gains calculations. Below (2017) applies this structure to climate foreign policy by showing that climate change enters state calculations through its consequences for energy security, resource competition and geopolitical position rather than norm-based duty. Realism is criticised for predicting less cooperation than takes place in practice, though the continued gap between climate commitments and climate action supports many of its central predictions. For this study, realism explains the continuing oil-revenue dependence of Nigeria, its resistance to rapid carbon reduction and the structural incentives that produce the gap between its international climate ambitions as well as its domestic climate governance performance.

2.3.4 Political Ecology and Vulnerability Theory

Political ecology developed by Blaikie, Brookfield and Taylor, argues that vulnerability to environmental change is not a natural condition determined by geography but a condition produced by society as well as shaped by political economic structures, power relations alongside past patterns of unequal development. Taylor (2015) applies this structure to climate adaptation by showing that the conditions of vulnerability that expose certain communities to climate impacts are produced by the same agricultural, economic and institutional processes that have in the past benefited powerful actors. Mikulewicz (2018) extends the critique to vulnerability discourse in international negotiations by arguing that the way vulnerability is defined and communicated often serves institutional interests rather than the most affected communities. For this study, political ecology explains why climate impacts in Nigeria are most serious in communities that are already at the margins and why governance responses that do not address structural inequality remain without effect in a systemic way.

2.3.5 Dependency Theory

Dependency theory originating with Prebisch and developed by Frank, alongside Wallerstein, into world-system analysis argues that the underdevelopment of side countries is produced as well as maintained in a structural way by their incorporation into the global capitalist economy in terms of systematic disadvantage. Salih (2025) extends this structure to climate politics by arguing that developing countries enter climate negotiations from positions of structural subordinate position shaped by past economic dependence so that their diplomatic ability is limited by the system of the international system itself. Critics note that the theory over-determines structural limits and does not explain variation among developing countries in an adequate way. For this study, dependency theory provides the essential structural context for reading the limits of the climate foreign policy of Nigeria by grounding them in the international political economy rather than attributing them alone to domestic governance

failures. While the multi-theory-based approach of the study ensures that structural determinism is avoided.

2.4 Empirical Review

This section discusses ten empirical studies of direct relevance to the research questions of the study, with each reviewed in one paragraph that captures the author, aims, methodology, findings alongside conclusion.

Study 1: Kamta et al. (2020) investigated the drivers of migration from conflict-affected rural areas of North-east Nigeria to Maiduguri, alongside IDP camps, with the objective of determining the relative contributions of lack of security, resource scarcity and environmental stress to displacement decisions. A mixed-methods design combining structured family surveys with qualitative interviews was used. The finding of the study is that Boko Haram lack of security was the primary displacement cause yet that water scarcity, land degradation and agricultural failure were important structural contributors that increased vulnerability as well as limited recovery options. The study stated that displacement in North-east Nigeria cannot be understood as driven alone by conflict and must be reviewed through a combined vulnerability structure that recognises the role of climate stress in producing mass population movement.

Study 2: Kamta and Scheffran (2022) studied the social network structures of IDP communities in North-east Nigeria, alongside their relationships with host communities in the Lake Chad region, with the objective of assessing the potential for conflict between displaced as well as host populations. Social network analysis, alongside qualitative data collection, was used. The finding of the study is that IDPs maintain important ties to communities of origin that support eventual return yet that network densities and ethnic intersections create tension risks in mixed IDP-host settings. The study stated that effective IDP governance must attend to the social, relational dimensions of displacement, material and administrative concerns.

Study 3: Ekoh et al. (2023) carried out an empirical case study of climate mobility in Lagos by examining how flooding and coastal erosion shape migration intentions among urban residents of the coastal megacity of Nigeria. Structured survey data from flood-prone households was used. The finding of the study is that flooding is an important predictor of migration intention after controlling for socio-economic factors and that the most vulnerable households face the greatest exposure, alongside the least financial ability for mobility as adaptation. The study stated that climate mobility in Nigeria is not limited to northern regions and requires integration into national adaptation planning as an urban governance challenge of important scale.

Study 4: Okpara et al. (2017) built and applied a climate-water conflict vulnerability index to Lake Chad Basin communities with the objective of mapping the differences in vulnerability to compound climate, resource competition risks across pastoralist, fishing as well as farming livelihoods. A multi-criteria index combining biophysical, alongside socio-economic data was used. The finding of the study is that vulnerability is shaped by livelihood type, asset resources and governance access, with fishing communities most exposed, alongside least adaptive. The study stated that effective climate governance in the Lake Chad Basin requires responses that are different and matched to specific livelihood vulnerability profiles rather than generic conflict-displacement actions.

Study 5: Okpara et al. (2016) studied livelihood dynamics and community responses to lake drying in the Lake Chad Basin by combining long-term ecological data with qualitative fieldwork to understand how environmental change translates into livelihood stress, alongside displacement. The finding of the study is that indigenous adaptive strategies have been overwhelmed by the speed and scale of the shrinkage of the lake in the current period, which produces displacement that is gradual, alongside step-wise rather than sudden. The study stated that slow-onset climate displacement in the Lake Chad region is counted in a systematic way

below its true level in policy structures built around emergency response models. This point carries important consequences for the adequacy of both domestic governance and international diplomatic advocacy.

Study 6: Rigaud et al. (2021a) modelled internal climate migration in Nigeria across three emissions and development scenarios using the Groundswell methodology, which combines climate projections with spatial modelling of mobility flows. The finding of the study is that even under scenarios that are positive, Nigeria faces important internal climate migration, with greatest pressures in the drying North, the flooding coastal South and that delayed action increases the scale of future displacement in a substantial way. The study stated that Nigeria requires urgent integration of climate migration into national development, adaptation planning and that the diplomatic engagement of the country must reflect the long-term structural character of its climate mobility challenge rather than treating it as an emergency that can be recovered from.

Study 7: Rigaud et al. (2021b) extended the Groundswell methodology to fifteen ECOWAS member states by comparing internal climate migration dynamics to place Nigeria within a regional structure. The finding of the study is that governance quality, alongside development diversification, mediates climate migration outcomes, with better-governed states projecting lower displacement even under conditions of similar physical exposure. The study stated that regional working together on climate governance, development investment is essential at the West African scale. The size, regional position of Nigeria create both a duty and an opportunity to drive collective improvements in West African climate governance that individual national responses cannot achieve on their own.

Study 8: Okoh et al. (2017) evaluated the NDC implementation of Nigeria and its transition toward a low-carbon economy through document analysis, alongside stakeholder review of policy documents, alongside sectoral implementation records. The study identified

three structural barriers, which are policy inconsistency across administrations, weak monitoring, data systems and the fundamental tension between NDC commitments as well as oil-revenue dependence. The study stated that effective NDC implementation requires institutional reforms that improve vertical policy coherence, continued executive-level political commitment and international technical as well as financial support for monitoring systems, without. At this point the international climate commitments of Nigeria will go beyond its operational delivery ability in a consistent way.

Study 9: Onuoha et al. (2023) studied the consequences of climate-related natural resource conflicts in ECOWAS, ECCAS and regional governance mechanisms through qualitative documentary, alongside interview-based methodology. The finding of the study is that security forces are engaged in a growing way in managing climate-security challenges yet without the training, mandate and institutional structures to address their structural causes. The study stated that effective governance of the climate-security connection requires new many-sector regional governance structures that bring together environmental, humanitarian, security concerns and the regional security leadership of Nigeria creates both duty as well as opportunity to drive the development of such structures within ECOWAS.

Study 10: ECOWAS Commission (2019) carried out a regional assessment of Paris Agreement implementation across seventeen West African countries through multi-country review drawing on national implementation reports, alongside stakeholder consultations. The study identified systematic implementation gaps across the region, which include limited domestic climate finance, weak monitoring systems and not enough policy integration. The study stated that regional ECOWAS working together can address systemic barriers in a more effective way than individual national responses and that the regional position of Nigeria places it at the centre of the collective response required. This point makes the quality of its ECOWAS

climate engagement a critical factor in regional climate governance outcomes across West Africa.

2.5 Summary of Literature and Gap

The conceptual, thematic, and theory-based as well as empirical reviews in this chapter reveal a growing body of scholarship that shows in a consistent way that climate change in Nigeria works as a compound risk multiplier producing displacement, resource competition alongside governance challenges. While formal international climate commitments are undermined in a systematic way by implementation failures rooted in institutional division, oil-revenue dependence together with structural inequalities in the global climate governance system (Butu et al., 2022; Salih, 2025; Wakdok & Bleischwitz, 2021). Three important research gaps remain. First, no study has brought together climate-induced displacement, governance failures and foreign policy behaviour within a single analytical structure applied in a clear way to Nigeria between 2019 as well as 2023. This point leaves the mechanisms through which climate stress translates into diplomatic posture without adequate theory-based grounding. Second, the strategic dimensions of the vulnerability advocacy of Nigeria in international forums, which include how vulnerability narratives are constructed, deployed and whether they represent the distribution of climate impacts in an accurate way, remain without adequate examination. Third, the regional climate diplomacy of Nigeria, which takes in ECOWAS, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the African Group of Negotiators, has not been studied as a coherent strategic whole, which leaves the relationship between the regional, alongside global climate diplomacy of Nigeria without adequate theory-based grounding. This study addresses all three gaps in a direct way.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Liberal Institutionalism as its primary theory-based structure. Liberal Institutionalism provides the most productive analytical lens for examining how Nigeria, as a developing state, engages with the international climate governance system because it explains state behaviour in multilateral settings through the logic of institutional participation, rule compliance and cooperative norm-building. The focus of the theory on how institutions reduce transaction costs, enable collective action addresses in a direct way the central concern of the study. This explains why the engagement of Nigeria with the UNFCCC, and the Paris Agreement, as well as ECOWAS climate mechanisms takes the form it does alongside whether these institutional structures are adequate vehicles for advancing developing-country interests in climate politics.

3.1.1 Liberal Institutionalism as Theoretical Framework

Liberal Institutionalism became a distinct theory-based tradition in International Relations through the basic works of Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in their 1977 treatise *Power, Interdependence and through the 1984 elaboration of Keohane in After Hegemony*. The theory was put forward as a direct response to the pessimistic account of international cooperation in classical realism by arguing that, in a world of complex interdependence, states have strong incentives to create and sustain international institutions that support cooperation even in the absence of a hegemonic enforcer. Liberal Institutionalism holds that institutions reduce uncertainty and lower transaction costs, provide information that enables believable commitment as well as create repeated relations in which reputation pressures give incentives for compliance. Its core assumptions are that states are reasonable self-interested actors, that absolute gains from cooperation matter more than relative gains in most issue areas and that

international institutions shape state behaviour in a genuine way by altering the incentive structures within. At this point foreign policy decisions are made.

Liberal Institutionalism has faced important criticisms that require acknowledgement. Realists argue that the theory does not give enough weight to distributional conflicts and the role of relative power in shaping institutional design by noting that institutions often reflect the preferences of their most powerful founders rather than providing fair cooperative structures. Salih (2025) extends this structural critique to the climate regime in a clear way by arguing that the UNFCCC system advantages industrialised states in a systematic way and constrains the agency of developing countries. Constructivists challenge the rationalist assumptions of the theory by arguing that institutional effects work through norm-based socialisation rather than calculations of cost and benefit in an instrumental way alone. Vogler (2010) acknowledges that the gradual ambition of the climate regime has gone beyond its delivery ability in a consistent way, in particular on climate finance, which reveals the limits of institutionalist optimism when structural influence imbalances persist. These criticisms are built into the multi-theory-based awareness of this study, which ensures that the analytical contributions of Liberal Institutionalism are used without reproducing its weak points.

This study adopts Liberal Institutionalism because it provides the most direct analytical value on the three research questions, each of which concerns how Nigeria engages with and is shaped by multilateral institutional structures. Vogler (2010) shows that institutional participation in the climate regime produces a forward-moving logic of expanding cooperation through repeated engagement, believable commitment and reputational incentives. This logic has direct relevance to analysing whether the continued UNFCCC engagement of Nigeria has produced measurable changes in its foreign policy priorities as well as diplomatic behaviour between 2019 alongside 2023. The transparency framework of the Conference of the Parties (2019), which this study examines as a mechanism shaping the climate diplomacy of Nigeria,

is the kind of institutional accountability system that Liberal Institutionalism is built to analyse. In addition, the policy effects of the theory. This means that better-designed institutions with stronger financing mechanisms and more equitable governance can enhance developing-country compliance, effectiveness, provide norm-based benchmarks against which the adequacy of the current climate governance system can be evaluated as well as seen as weak, which supports the advocacy of the study for structural reform.

3.1.2 Application of the Theory

Liberal Institutionalism applies to this study by explaining the engagement of Nigeria with the Paris Agreement, UNFCCC COP processes, ECOWAS climate mechanisms as reasonable institutional participation caused by the logic of cooperative benefit, reputational investment and norm compliance. The theory explains why Nigeria submits NDCs and takes part in transparency reporting, engaging ECOWAS climate governance even where domestic ability for implementation is limited by framing these behaviours as forms of investment in institutional credibility as well as access to climate finance. It in addition provides the analytical tools to evaluate whether the institutional system of the climate regime supports developing-country participation in an adequate way, which allows the study to assess both the behaviour of Nigeria and the systemic conditions shaping it.

3.2 Hypotheses

- 1: There is a significant relationship between climate change and Nigeria's participation in international climate governance between 2019 and 2023.
- 2: Nigeria has significantly navigated the structural inequalities of the global climate governance system between 2019 and 2023.
- 3: Nigeria adopted different methods and international discussions to handle the unfair treatment and challenges it faced in the global system as a developing country between 2019 and 2023 .

3.3 Research Design

This study adopts an ex post facto research design. Research design means the strategic structure that structures the collection, analysis, interpretation of data to address the research questions of a study and ensures method-based coherence between the aims of the study as well as its evidence-based base (Weber, 2017). An ex post facto design is appropriate because the events under examination are the foreign policy behaviour of Nigeria, its climate governance responses and its diplomatic engagements between 2019 and 2023. These events have already taken place and cannot be subjected to experimental manipulation because the researcher analyses pre-existing conditions, outcomes rather than introducing treatments or controlling variables (Salkind, 2010). A documentary research design complements this by treating official policy texts and institutional reports, UNFCCC submissions, regional governance records as primary sources of evidence. This is consistent with the argument of Mogalakwe (2006) that documentary methods are suited in a particular way to social research examining institutional behaviour as well as policy development alongside inter-state relations. The strength of the design rests in its access to trusted, checkable sources, while its limitation is that it cannot capture informal diplomatic exchanges or the lived experience of affected communities, which is a constraint addressed by triangulating across many document types.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

This study uses documentary analysis as its alone method of data collection by drawing in a clear way on secondary sources. The types of documents reviewed include official government publications, such as the NDC submissions of Nigeria, and its National Climate Change Policy, as well as UNFCCC institutional documents. These include COP decisions, transparency framework rules, international organisation reports from UNHCR alongside IDMC, IOM, the World Bank, regional governance documents from ECOWAS together with the African Union, peer-reviewed journal articles as well as books published between 2015

alongside 2025. Documents were selected on the criteria of official authority, and direct theme relevance to the research questions of the study, verifiability through institutional repositories, peer-reviewed publication as well as currency within the study period. Documents were accessed through the UNFCCC official website and UNHCR, IDMC online repositories, ECOWAS Commission publications as well as open-access academic databases. Content is reviewed in a thematic way with documents interrogated for evidence important to each research question (Tight, 2019). This approach ensures the evidence-based base of the study is transparent, reproducible and matched to the institutional character of the phenomena under examination.

3.5 Methods of Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study follows the qualitative content analysis procedure created by Schreier (2012) and Mayring (2014), which involves the coding of documentary sources in a systematic way according to thematic categories derived from the research questions as well as theory-based structure of the study. Data preparation involves organising documents by type of source and theme relevance followed by close reading as well as initial coding of passages pertaining to the climate foreign policy behaviour of Nigeria, its displacement governance alongside engagement with the international climate regime. The analytical technique involves identifying patterns and contradictions, convergences across coded parts, applying the Liberal Institutional structure to read findings as well as place them within the academic debates mapped in the literature review. The interpretation plan relates findings in a direct way to each research question by presenting evidence in a thematic rather than source-by-source way to maintain analytical coherence. Missing, incomplete data. These include gaps in the official transparency reporting of Nigeria to the UNFCCC, are addressed by triangulating across many independent sources by drawing on ECOWAS regional assessments, international organisation

evaluations to supplement official Nigerian government documentation where it is absent or without sufficient detail (Heaton, 2008).

3.6 Logical Data Framework

Research Objective	Research Question	Hypothesis (H1 Form)	Data Source	Method of Analysis
To analyse how climate change has influenced the foreign policy priorities of Nigeria and its diplomatic engagements between 2019 and 2023.	How has climate change influenced the foreign policy priorities of Nigeria and its diplomatic engagements between 2019 and 2023?	Climate change has influenced the foreign policy priorities of Nigeria and its diplomatic engagements between 2019 and 2023 in a significant way.	Nigeria NDC (2021); Federal Republic of Nigeria Adaptation Communication (2021a); UNFCCC COP decisions; Sending et al. (2020); Below (2017).	Qualitative content analysis; thematic coding of policy documents and diplomatic communications against Liberal Institutional framework.
To examine how the response of Nigeria to climate-induced displacement shaped its participation in regional and international governance	How has the response of Nigeria to climate-induced displacement shaped its participation in regional and international governance	The response of Nigeria to climate-induced displacement has shaped its participation in regional and international governance mechanisms	UNHCR (2023); IDMC (2024); IOM (2019); Kamta et al. (2020); ECOWAS Commission (2019); Obah-Akpowoghaha et al. (2022).	Documentary analysis of displacement data and governance records; thematic synthesis of regional diplomatic

Research Objective	Research Question	Hypothesis (H1 Form)	Data Source	Method of Analysis
mechanisms between 2019 and 2023.	mechanisms between 2019 and 2023?	between 2019 and 2023 in a significant way.		engagement evidence.
To assess how Nigeria copes with the global climate system as a developing country between 2019-2023.	How has Nigeria was affected by inequalities in the global climate governance system between 2019-2023	Nigeria has adopted a distinct diplomatic strategy to respond to the unequal conditions of the global climate governance system as a developing country between 2019 and 2023.	Salih (2025); Closset et al. (2018); Conference of the Parties (2019); Butu et al. (2022); Okoh et al. (2017); Vogler (2010).	Content analysis of UNFCCC submissions and COP outcomes; dependency theory and Liberal Institutional coding to assess structural positioning and agency.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter brings, analyses and discusses the findings of this study on climate change as well as international politics of developing countries with a case study of Nigeria between 2019 alongside 2023. The chapter is structured around the three research questions that guide this study. Section 4.2 addresses the first research question on the influence of climate change on the foreign policy priorities of Nigeria and its diplomatic engagements. Section 4.3 addresses the second research question on how the response of Nigeria to climate-induced displacement shaped its participation in regional and international governance mechanisms. Section 4.4 addresses the third research question on how Nigeria responded to the unequal conditions of the global climate governance system as a developing country. Each section brings data through tables and figures, provides analytical discussion as well as concludes with a formal test of the matching hypothesis.

4.2 Climate Change and the Foreign Policy Priorities of Nigeria (2019 to 2023)

4.2.1 Climate Events and Nigeria's Diplomatic Responses (2019 to 2023)

Across 2019 and 2023 Nigeria produced a concentrated set of formal climate policy documents as well as diplomatic engagements that together constitute its climate foreign policy record for the study period. These documents range from the landmark updated Nationally Determined Contribution submitted on 27 May 2021 to national statements delivered at COP26 in Glasgow and COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh. The table below lists these core submissions and their institutional recipients as a documentary corpus that forms the evidence-based backbone of this section. Each document carries distinct commitments, advocacy positions and institutional obligations that this section questions in analytical terms.

Table 4.1: *Documentary Corpus of Nigeria's Climate Policy Submissions and Diplomatic Engagements (2019 to 2023)*

Document	Date	Type	Recipient	Key Commitment
Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)	27 May 2021	NDC submission	UNFCCC Secretariat	20% unconditional GHG cut, 47% conditional cut below BAU by 2030
Initial Adaptation Communication	2021	Adaptation report	UNFCCC Secretariat	Documents vulnerability across agriculture, water, coastal infrastructure and public health
National Climate Change Policy (2021 to 2030)	2021	National policy	Federal Ministry of Environment	Domestic governance framework for NDC implementation and climate action
Climate Change Act	November 2021	Legislation	National Assembly of Nigeria	Establishes National Council on Climate Change and mandates carbon budget planning
Biennial Transparency Report (interim)	2022	Transparency report	UNFCCC Secretariat	Reports GHG inventory progress and climate action under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement
COP26 National Statement	November 2021	Diplomatic statement	UNFCCC COP26, Glasgow	Called for enhanced adaptation finance, landscape restoration and net-zero pathway clarity
COP27 National Statement	November 2022	Diplomatic statement	UNFCCC COP27, Sharm El-Sheikh	Advocated for Loss and Damage Fund and pressed for delivery of the USD 100 billion climate finance pledge

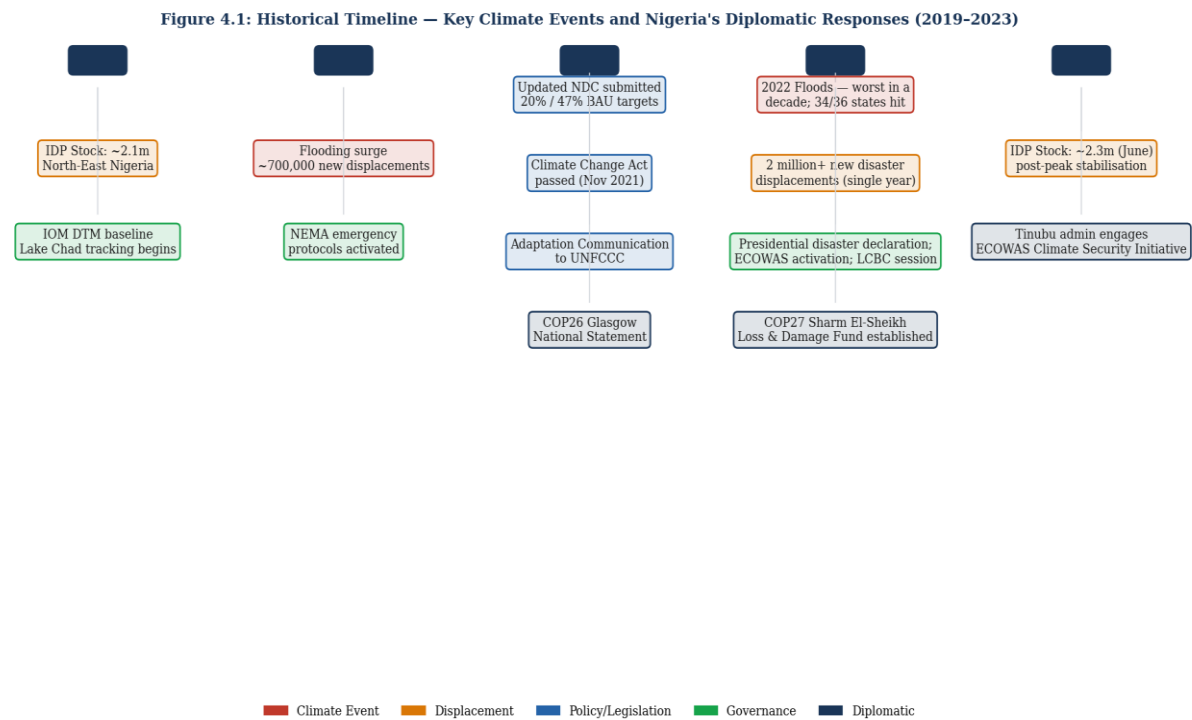
Note. Compiled from Federal Republic of Nigeria (2021a, 2021b), UNFCCC NDC Registry (2021), Conference of the Parties (2019), SAIIA (2022).

Table 4.1 reveals a pattern of continued formal engagement by Nigeria with the UNFCCC system throughout the study period. The submission of the updated NDC in May 2021 represents the most important policy document of the period because it sets out unconditional and conditional GHG reduction targets that define the outer limit of the climate

ambition of Nigeria. The approval of the Climate Change Act in November 2021 signals an institutional effort to give domestic legal strength to these international commitments. The COP statements of 2021 and 2022 show a consistent advocacy emphasis on adaptation finance, Loss and Damage mechanisms alongside the delivery of the USD 100 billion climate finance pledge, which reflects a diplomatic direction that gives priority to financial equity over mitigation ambition. This documentary evidence demonstrates that climate change entered the formal foreign policy agenda of Nigeria in a continued and structured way across the study period.

The updated NDC of Nigeria commits to reducing GHG emissions by 20 percent below business-as-usual by 2030 without any international support and by 47 percent below business-as-usual by 2030 subject to the receipt of international climate finance, technology transfer as well as capacity building (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021b). The African Development Bank Group estimates that the GHG emissions profile of Nigeria stands at 347 million metric tonnes of CO₂ equivalent under the 2021 NDC starting level, with the risk of rising to 452.7 million metric tonnes by 2030 if no action is taken (African Development Bank, 2025). The climate finance need of Nigeria was placed at about USD 142 billion over the period to 2030, translating to about USD 10 billion per year (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2017). This scale of financing needed against a documented receipt of about USD 2.5 billion in tracked climate finance in 2021 to 2022 (Climate Policy Initiative, 2025) reveals the size of the implementation gap that defines the climate foreign policy position of Nigeria.

Figure 4.1: Historical Timeline: Key Climate Events and Nigeria's Diplomatic Responses (2019–2023)



Note. Based on the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2021a, 2021b), IOM (2019), IDMC (2023), UNICEF (2022), SAIIA (2022).

Figure 4.1 reveals a pattern in which domestic climate shocks preceded with consistency or coincided with the most assertive diplomatic moments of Nigeria. The 2021 legislative and policy group followed at once after the continued displacement pressures of 2019 as well as 2020. The 2022 disastrous floods, which displaced over 2 million persons and affected 34 of 36 states (UNICEF, 2022), provided the material urgency behind the strong push of Nigeria for the Loss and Damage Fund at COP27 in the same year. This temporal match between internal climate events and diplomatic rise is consistent with the Liberal Institutionalist argument that states increase institutional engagement when the costs of inaction become clear in a domestic way (Vogler, 2010).

4.2.2 Nigeria's NDC Commitments and the Implementation Gap

The second sub-section examines the gap between the formal climate commitments that Nigeria stated in its NDC and Adaptation Communication as well as the documented record of implementation. This gap is the central contradiction of the climate foreign policy of Nigeria because it at the same time projects diplomatic credibility and reveals domestic governance limits. The thematic coding matrix below traces how key climate themes appear with consistency across the core diplomatic and policy documents of Nigeria during the study period.

Table 4.2: *Thematic Coding Matrix: Frequency of Climate Themes Across Nigeria's Official UNFCCC Documents (2019 to 2023)*

Theme	NDC 2021	Adaptation Comm. 2021	COP26 Statement	COP27 Statement	Frequency
GHG Emission Reduction	High	Low	Medium	Medium	3/4
Climate Adaptation Finance	High	High	High	High	4/4
Displacement and Migration	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	4/4
Energy Security and Fossil Fuels	High	Low	Medium	Low	3/4
Loss and Damage	Low	Medium	Medium	High	4/4
Common but Differentiated Responsibilities	High	High	High	High	4/4

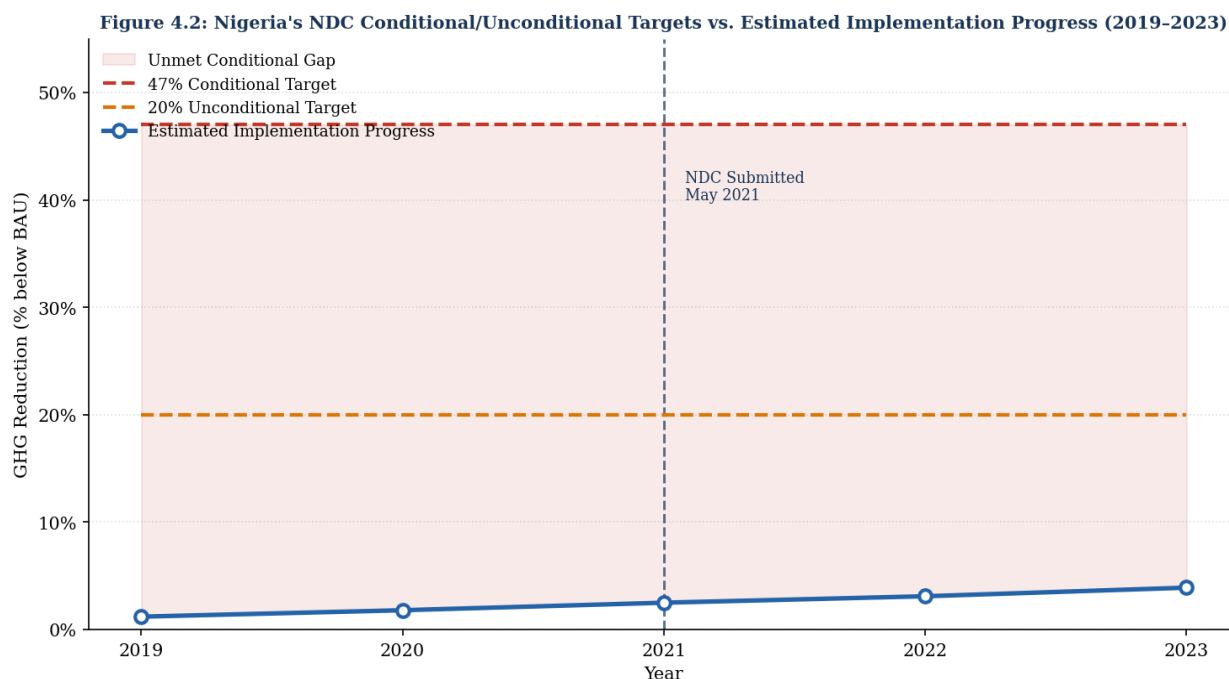
Note. Compiled through qualitative content analysis of Federal Republic of Nigeria (2021a, 2021b), COP26 National Statement (2021), COP27 National Statement (2022). High = theme prominently developed; Medium = theme addressed but not central; Low = theme mentioned in passing.

Table 4.2 shows that the theme of adaptation finance appears at high frequency across all four documents of the study period, which identifies it as the most consistent diplomatic

priority of Nigeria throughout 2019 to 2023. The principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities in a similar way appears at high frequency in all four documents, confirming that the equity framing of climate obligations is basic to the diplomatic identity of Nigeria. The theme of Loss and Damage escalates from low in the 2021 NDC to high in the 2022 COP27 statement, which reflects the direct influence of the disastrous 2022 floods on the negotiating posture of Nigeria. GHG emission reduction appears at high frequency in the NDC itself alone and at medium frequency in COP statements, revealing a planned diplomatic choice to emphasise receiving support over demonstrating mitigation performance.

The conditional structure of the NDC commitments of Nigeria is itself a form of diplomatic strategy rather than a technical mistake. By setting the 47 percent conditional target, Nigeria creates a formal legal claim on international climate finance while at the same time protecting domestic policy space if that finance does not arrive. Butu et al. (2022) show that adaptation efforts at the sub-national level in Nigeria go beyond what official reporting captures, which means the implementation picture is more complex than the gap alone suggests. The Climate Policy Initiative (2025) confirms that the USD 2.5 billion in tracked climate finance received by Nigeria in 2021 to 2022 represents less than one percent of national GDP and was dwarfed by the USD 9.3 billion spent on fossil fuel subsidies in 2022 alone. This structural tension between the diplomatic climate ambition of Nigeria and its domestic resource sharing is the defining tension of its foreign policy on climate change.

Figure 4.2: Segmented Time-Series: Nigeria's NDC Conditional and Unconditional Targets vs. Estimated GHG Reduction Progress (% below BAU, 2019–2023)



Note. NDC targets from the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2021b). Implementation progress estimated from Climate Policy Initiative (2025), Butu et al. (2022), Okoh et al. (2017).

Figure 4.2 makes clear a pattern that Table 4.2 documents in text form. The distance between the 47 percent conditional target and the estimated implementation path widens across the study period rather than narrowing. Okoh et al. (2017) identify three structural barriers that account for this: policy inconsistency across administrations, weak monitoring and data systems as well as the fundamental tension between NDC commitments alongside oil-revenue dependence. These are systemic features of the governance system of Nigeria resolved by diplomatic commitment alone. Silander (2021) argues that the norm-based expectations built into structures like the Paris Agreement assume governance capacities that many African states are still building, which means the implementation gap should be understood as a structural mismatch rather than alone a political failure. The flat path of the implementation progress line across all five years of the study period is the clearest visual evidence of this structural explanation.

4.2.3 Test of Hypothesis One

Research Question One: How has climate change influenced the foreign policy priorities of Nigeria and its diplomatic engagements between 2019 and 2023?

To answer this question, the following hypothesis is tested:

H1: Climate change has influenced the foreign policy priorities of Nigeria and its diplomatic engagements between 2019 and 2023 in a significant way.

Based on the thematic analysis of the documentary corpus presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 as well as the timeline evidence in Figure 4.1, there is strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis alongside support H1 that climate change has influenced the foreign policy priorities of Nigeria together with its diplomatic engagements between 2019 as well as 2023 in an important way.

The documentary record confirms that Nigeria submitted its updated NDC in May 2021, passed the Climate Change Act in November 2021, submitted an Initial Adaptation Communication in the same year and issued national statements at both COP26 as well as COP27 that with consistency prioritised climate finance equity, adaptation support alongside loss together with damage mechanisms. The thematic coding matrix in Table 4.2 confirms that the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and the theme of adaptation finance appeared at high frequency across all four core documents of the study period. This point establishes climate change as a structuring priority of the diplomatic agenda of Nigeria's side concern.

The temporal evidence in Figure 4.1 further demonstrates that the most assertive diplomatic actions of Nigeria coincided with its most serious domestic climate events. The 2022 disastrous floods, which displaced over 2 million persons, were followed at once by the strongest advocacy of Nigeria at COP27 for the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund, which was achieved at Sharm El-Sheikh in November 2022 (SAHIA, 2022). Sending et al. (2020) show that climate change enters foreign policy through many routes at the same time,

including energy security, humanitarian duty and norm-based compliance. The documentary evidence confirms that all three of these routes were active in the climate foreign policy of Nigeria throughout 2019 to 2023. The implementation gap documented in Figure 4.2 does not contradict this finding but confirms instead that climate change has influenced what Nigeria says at the international level more than it has transformed what Nigeria does in a domestic way. This point is itself an important foreign policy finding. On the basis of the full body of evidence presented in this section, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be stated that climate change has influenced the foreign policy priorities of Nigeria and its diplomatic engagements between 2019 as well as 2023 in an important way.

4.3 Climate-Induced Displacement and Nigeria's Regional Governance Participation (2019 to 2023)

4.3.1 Displacement Data and Nigeria's Institutional Responses

Across 2019 and 2023 Nigeria experienced continued as well as in some years record levels of internal displacement caused by the compound interaction of conflict, flooding, desertification alongside resource competition. The data presented in Table 4.3 draws on IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix reports, IDMC global reports and UNICEF emergency assessments to set up the scale, structure as well as governance responses to displacement across the study period. This evidence base allows a systematic examination of whether and how displacement patterns shaped the participation of Nigeria in regional as well as international governance mechanisms.

Table 4.3: *Nigeria Internal Displacement Figures, Climate Drivers and Governance Responses (2019 to 2023)*

Year	IDP Stock (North-East)	New Disaster Displacements	Climate Driver	Governance Response	Source
2019	~2.1 million	~630,000	Lake Chad shrinkage, desertification, flooding	IOM DTM tracking activated in Lake Chad Basin	IOM (2019)
2020	~2.4 million	~700,000	Flooding in North-East and North-West	NEMA emergency protocols; ECOWAS informal coordination	IDMC (2021)
2021	~2.5 million	~650,000	Conflict-climate compound in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa	Nigeria submits Adaptation Communication to UNFCCC; Climate Change Act passed	IDMC (2022)
2022	~3.3 million (peak)	~2.0 million	Worst flooding in a decade, 34 of 36 states affected; climate attribution confirmed 80x likelihood increase	Presidential disaster declaration; ECOWAS emergency mechanism; LCBC emergency session	UNICEF (2022); IDMC (2023)
2023	~2.3 million (June)	~500,000	Desertification, Adamawa floods, Middle Belt resource competition	Tinubu administration engages ECOWAS Climate Security Initiative; UNHCR mandate expansion	IOM DTM (2023); UNHCR (2023)

Note. Compiled from IOM DTM (2019), IDMC (2021, 2022, 2023), UNICEF (2022), UNHCR (2023).

Table 4.3 reveals a displacement path that reached its peak in 2022 with about 3.3 million IDPs and over 2 million new disaster-induced displacements recorded in a single year. The 2022 floods affected 34 of 36 states and were later confirmed by scientific attribution to be 80 times more likely to occur because of climate change (IOM Environmental Migration Portal, 2024). The governance responses in the final column of Table 4.3 show a clear rise from routine DTM tracking in 2019 to emergency presidential declarations, ECOWAS activation

and Lake Chad Basin Commission sessions in 2022. This point confirms that displacement by direct means triggered more intensive institutional participation at both the national as well as regional level. The 2023 figure of 2.3 million IDPs represents incomplete return movement rather than sustainable resolution of the underlying climate and conflict drivers.

Table 4.4: *Nigeria's Participation Record in Regional and International Governance Mechanisms Related to Climate-Induced Displacement (2019 to 2023)*

Year	Regional Mechanism	Nigeria's Participation	Outcome
2019	ECOWAS Paris Agreement Diagnostic Review	Contributed implementation data to regional assessment	ECOWAS Commission (2019) confirmed Nigeria among states with largest implementation gaps and highest displacement exposure
2019 to 2020	Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) Emergency Session	Participated as lead riparian state	Commission called for enhanced international humanitarian support for Lake Chad Basin crisis
2021	ECOWAS Regional Climate Policy Summit	Presented updated NDC and Climate Change Act to regional partners	Nigeria recognised as first major West African economy to legislate climate action at national level
2022	ECOWAS Emergency Response Mechanism	Requested and received regional humanitarian coordination support	Regional solidarity declaration issued; ECOWAS pledged technical support for IDP camp management
2022 to 2023	African Group of Negotiators (AGN) COP27 preparatory meetings	Active participation in AGN working groups on loss and damage and adaptation finance	AGN secured formal establishment of Loss and Damage Fund at COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh
2023	ECOWAS Climate Security Initiative	Tinubu administration engaged the initiative as part of the regional climate-security agenda	Framework for cross-border farmer-herder conflict resolution linked to climate drivers adopted

Note. Compiled from ECOWAS Commission (2019), IOM DTM (2019), SAIIA (2022), UNHCR (2023), Obah-Akpowoghaha et al. (2022).

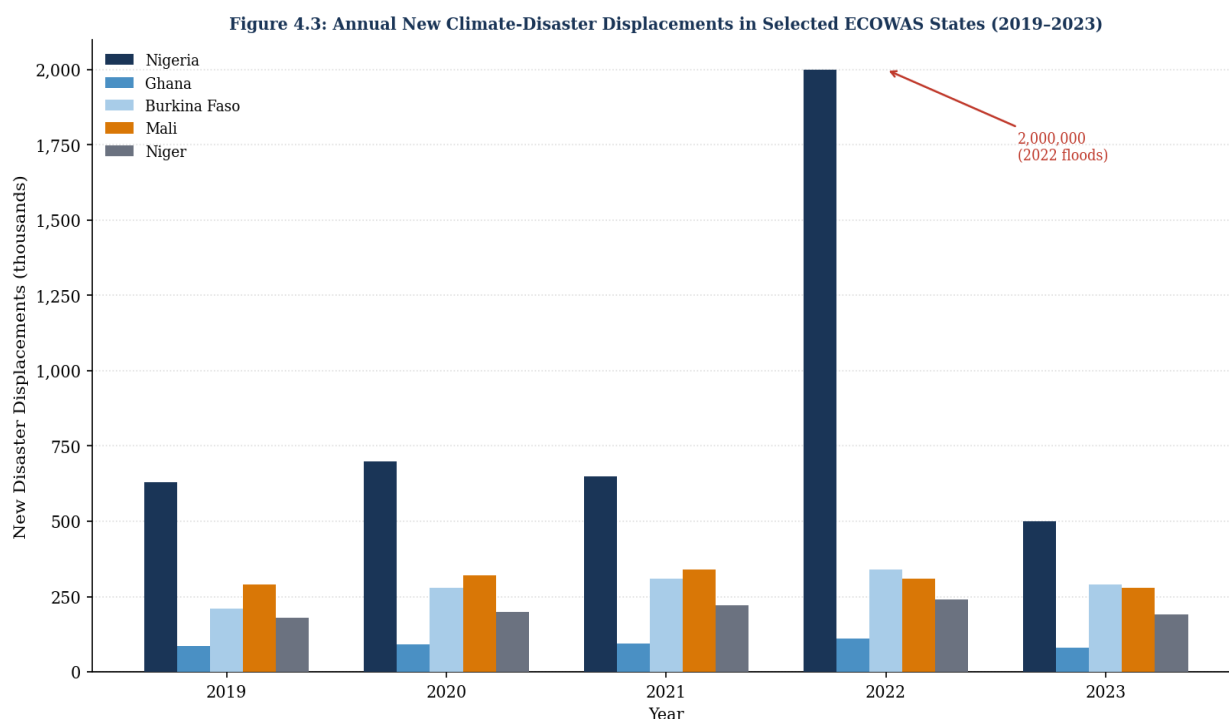
Table 4.4 confirms that the regional governance participation of Nigeria increased in direct connection with displacement rise across the study period. The most important regional

outcome of the period was the active participation of Nigeria in African Group of Negotiators working groups that led to the formal establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund at COP27 in November 2022 (SAIIA, 2022). The 2022 ECOWAS emergency response activation following the disastrous floods demonstrates that displacement produced real regional governance engagement rather than diplomatic statements alone. Kamta and Scheffran (2022) document that IDP communities maintained ties to communities of origin that supported eventual return, but that ethnic as well as communal tensions in mixed host-IDP settings created governance challenges that required regional working together beyond NEMAs ability.

4.3.2 ECOWAS Engagement and Regional Burden-Sharing

The regional part of the governance response of Nigeria to climate-induced displacement extends beyond emergency reactions to encompass continued engagement with ECOWAS climate structures, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the broader African Group of Negotiators. The figure below brings the comparative displacement burden across ECOWAS states, while the process tracing flowchart maps the cause order from climate stress through displacement to regional governance response.

Figure 4.3: Grouped Bar Chart: Annual New Climate-Disaster Displacements in Selected ECOWAS States (2019–2023, in thousands of persons)

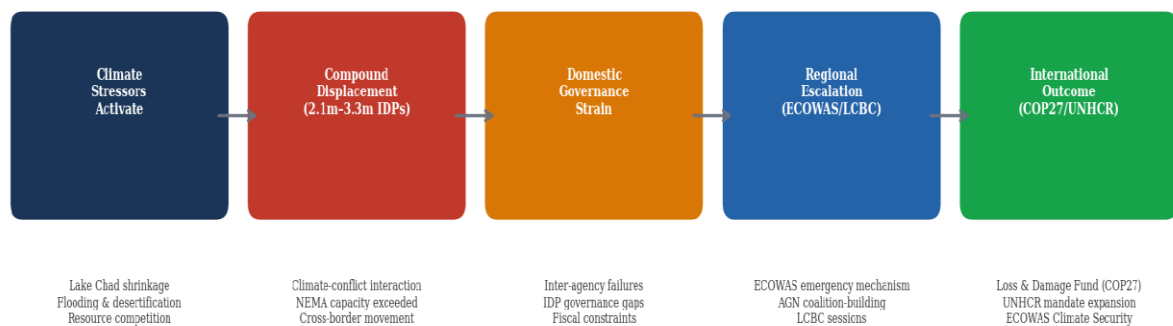


Note. Data from IDMC Global Reports on Internal Displacement (2020–2024). Figures represent new disaster-induced displacements per year.

Figure 4.3 makes clear a finding that text alone cannot convey with equal force. Nigeria is not in a simple way one of many ECOWAS states facing climate displacement. It is the main displacement state within the region, carrying a burden that is an order of size larger than any other West African nation in every year of the study period. The 2022 peak of about 2 million new disaster displacements stands in clear contrast to the next highest figure in the same year, which was Burkina Faso at about 340,000. This scale difference has direct effects for the regional governance argument. The ECOWAS Commission (2019) found that the challenges of Nigeria are shared across West Africa but the data in Figure 4.3 shows that the displacement burden of Nigeria category in scale from that of its ECOWAS neighbours. This means that regional burden-sharing mechanisms, even when activated, cannot replace domestic governance ability and international climate finance sent in specific terms at the situation of Nigeria.

Figure 4.4: Process Tracing Flowchart: Climate Stress to Regional Governance Response in Nigeria (2019–2023)

Figure 4.4: Process Tracing Flowchart – Climate Stress to Regional Governance Response in Nigeria (2019–2023)



Note. Causal sequence based on Kamta et al. (2020), ECOWAS Commission (2019), UNICEF (2022), SAIIA (2022), UNHCR (2023).

The process tracing logic in Figure 4.4 is essential for defending the causal claim built into H2. The participation of Nigeria in regional governance mechanisms cannot be explained as a routine institutional practice because the evidence in Tables 4.3 and 4.4 shows that the intensity as well as form of that participation varied in direct connection with displacement events. The causal chain moves from climate pressures through compound displacement to domestic governance strain, then to regional rise and at the end to international outcomes including the Loss and Damage Fund as well as the ECOWAS Climate Security Initiative. This five-point sequence is consistent with the Liberal Institutional argument that institutional participation is most intensive when the costs of non-participation are most clear (Vogler, 2010). Obah-Akpowoghaha et al. (2022) confirm that collective African climate diplomacy remains limited by the diversity of interests among African states and the limited enforcement

ability of regional bodies. This point means the regional outcomes shown in the final point of Figure 4.4 represent the maximum possible within existing institutional limits.

4.3.3 Test of Hypothesis Two

Research Question Two: How has the response of Nigeria to climate-induced displacement shaped its participation in regional and international governance mechanisms between 2019 and 2023?

To answer this question, the following hypothesis is tested:

H2: The response of Nigeria to climate-induced displacement has shaped its participation in regional and international governance mechanisms between 2019 and 2023 in a significant way.

Based on the displacement path in Table 4.3, the governance participation record in Table 4.4 and the cause order in Figure 4.4, there is strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis as well as support H2.

The evidence shows a consistent temporal relationship between displacement rise and governance increase throughout the study period. In 2019, Nigeria engaged in routine IOM DTM tracking and contributed data to the ECOWAS regional assessment. By 2022, the same country was activating ECOWAS emergency mechanisms, convening LCBC sessions, issuing presidential disaster declarations and mobilising AGN positions on Loss and Damage at COP27. This rise followed by direct means the displacement severity documented in Table 4.3, which peaked in 2022 with over 2 million new disaster displacements in a single year.

The most important regional governance outcome of the study period, the formal establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund at COP27, was itself a product of the continued advocacy of the African Group of Negotiators in which Nigeria participated with active involvement. UNHCR (2023) records that as of January 2023 Nigeria continued to host one of the largest IDP populations on the continent, which continued the diplomatic need for quick

action behind the regional of Nigeria into the final year of the study period. The quality and consistency of governance participation was not same throughout the study period: Table 4.4 shows more assertive participation during crisis years as well as less systematic engagement in non-crisis periods. This unevenness does not negate the fundamental finding but limits it: displacement shaped participation in intensity and form without guaranteeing the same policy quality across all years. On the basis of the full body of evidence presented in this section, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be stated that the response of Nigeria to climate-induced displacement has shaped its participation in regional and international governance mechanisms between 2019 as well as 2023 in an important way.

4.4 Nigeria's Diplomatic Strategy Within the Unequal Global Climate Governance System (2019 to 2023)

4.4.1 Nigeria's Positioning in the UNFCCC Architecture and the Finance Gap

The third research question concerns the strategy of the diplomatic response of Nigeria inequalities of the global climate governance system. This section examines the evidence through three analytical lenses: the rival hypothesis table that compares the explanation strength of competing theory-based structures, the climate finance gap data that measures the structural inequity Nigeria faces and the policy evaluation summary display that brings together the diplomatic path of Nigeria period.

Table 4.5: *Rival Hypothesis Matrix: Competing Theoretical Explanations for Nigeria's Diplomatic Strategy in the Global Climate Governance System*

Criterion	Liberal Institutionalism	Dependency Theory	Constructivism
Explanation of NDC participation	Nigeria participates to build institutional credibility and access climate finance	Participation is structurally compelled: non-participation risks diplomatic isolation and financial exclusion	Nigeria has internalised UNFCCC norms through decades of engagement and participates out of norm commitment
Explanation of implementation gap	Institutional design inadequate: finance mechanisms fail to deliver so commitments cannot be met	Gap reflects structural subordination: Nigerian economy is locked into fossil fuel dependence by historical integration	Gap is a social performance: Nigeria projects ambition outwardly while domestic capacity has not been fully reshaped by norms
Explanation of loss and damage advocacy	Nigeria uses institutional venues to advance interests through coalition-building within the African Group	Loss and damage advocacy is the only redistributive demand available to peripheral states in an unequal system	Advocacy reflects identity formation as climate-vulnerable state constructed through sustained COP engagement
Explanatory strength for this study	Strong for participation and advocacy behaviour within UNFCCC	Strong for implementation constraints and finance gap persistence	Strong for NDC framing, identity claims and normative positioning
Key limitation	Does not explain why institutional engagement has	Over-determines structural constraints; leaves little room for Nigerian agency	Understates material and structural constraints that

Criterion	Liberal Institutionalism	Dependency Theory	Constructivism
	not produced finance delivery		limit norm internalisation in practice

Note. Theoretical positions drawn from Vogler (2010), Salih (2025), Stevenson (2011), Sending et al. (2020).

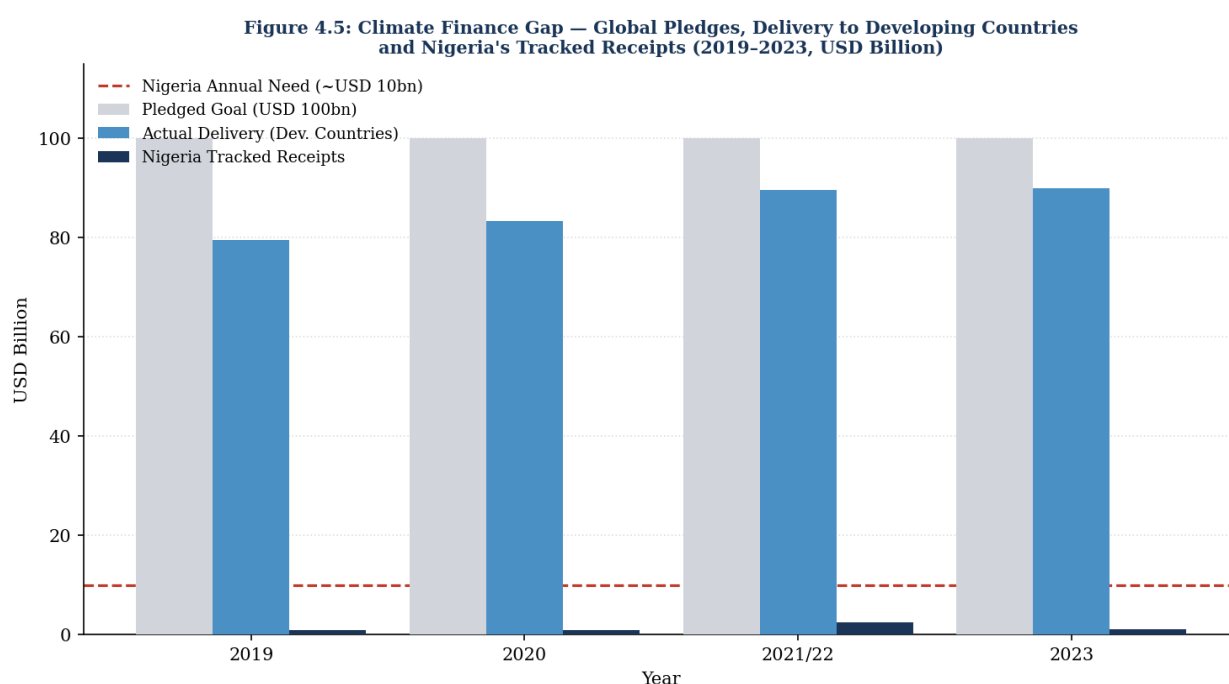
Table 4.5 reveals that no single theory-based structure provides a complete explanation for the diplomatic strategy of Nigeria in the global climate governance system. Liberal Institutionalism, the primary theory-based structure of this study, offers the strongest explanation for the participation of Nigeria behaviour and advocacy through institutional channels. It explains why Nigeria submits NDCs, engages transparency reporting and builds coalitions through the AGN even where domestic ability for implementation is limited. Dependency Theory adds what Liberal Institutionalism cannot explain alone: the continued finance gap and the structural constraint that locks the economy of Nigeria fossil fuel dependence. Salih (2025) demonstrates that developing countries enter climate negotiations from positions of structural subordinate position shaped by past economic dependence and this structural argument is by direct means confirmed by the finance data presented in Table 4.6 below. Constructivism adds a further part by explaining the norm-based framing of the advocacy of Nigeria : the repeated use of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities across all four documents coded in Table 4.2 reflects the acceptance of a norm rather than alone an instrumental claim. This is consistent with Stevenson's (2011) account of developing-country debate over norms.

Table 4.6: *Climate Finance Gap: Global Pledges, Delivery to Developing Countries and Nigeria's Tracked Receipts (2019 to 2023)*

Year	Pledged (USD 100bn Goal)	Actual Delivery to Developing Countries	Nigeria Tracked Receipts (USD bn)	Nigeria Finance Gap Note
2019	USD 100 billion	USD 79.6 billion (OECD reported)	~USD 0.8 billion	Nigeria requires est. USD 10bn per year; received less than 8% of annual need
2020	USD 100 billion	USD 83.3 billion (OECD reported)	~USD 0.9 billion	COVID-19 diverts multilateral finance; adaptation share of flows declines
2021 to 2022	USD 100 billion	USD 89.6 billion (OECD 2023 estimate)	~USD 2.5 billion (CPI tracked)	Multilateral DFI flows up 45% but 70% debt-based; adaptation share only 15% of total receipts
2023	USD 100 billion (goal extended to 2025)	Est. USD 90+ billion (preliminary)	~USD 1.1 billion (estimated)	Loss and Damage Fund established at COP27 but not yet capitalised for Nigeria within study period

Note. Global pledge figures from OECD (2023), UNFCCC (2022). Nigeria tracked receipts from Climate Policy Initiative (2025), REGlobal (2025). Nigeria annual need estimated from Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017).

Figure 4.5: Climate Finance Gap: Global Pledges, Delivery to Developing Countries and Nigeria's Tracked Receipts (2019–2023, USD billion)



Note. Pledge data from OECD (2023). Nigeria receipts from Climate Policy Initiative (2025). Annual need line from Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017).

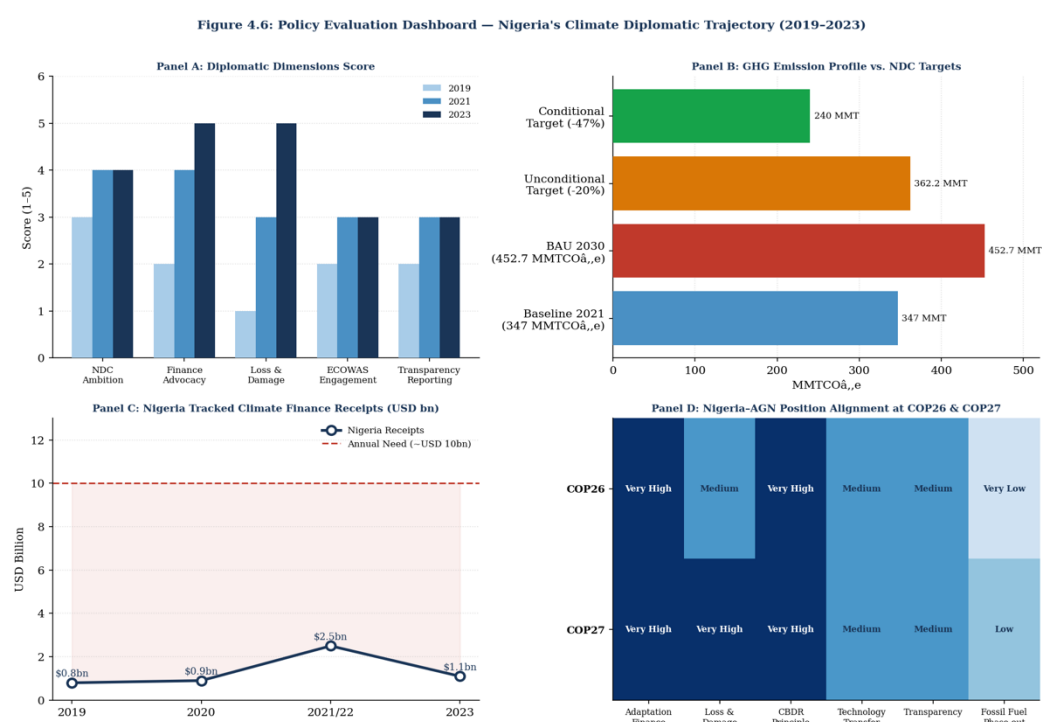
Table 4.6 and Figure 4.5 together quantify the structural inequity that frames the climate diplomacy of Nigeria in clear money terms. The global commitment of USD 100 billion per year from industrialised to developing countries was not delivered in any year of the study period. Even the OECD-reported figure of about USD 89.6 billion for 2021 to 2022 represents a shortfall from the stated goal and hides the fact that the majority of flows were delivered as debt rather than grants. In the case of Nigeria in specific terms the gap between the stated annual need of about USD 10 billion and the tracked receipts of USD 2.5 billion for 2021 to 2022 represents a structural shortfall of about USD 7.5 billion per year. The Climate Policy Initiative (2025) confirms that this tracked finance represented less than one percent of national GDP and was equivalent to the total foreign debt servicing of the country in the same period.

4.4.2 Structural Inequities and Nigeria's Advocacy Strategy

The evidence in Table 4.6 and Figure 4.5 establishes the structural context within which the advocacy strategy operates in Nigeria. The question this section addresses is whether

Nigeria developed a distinct and coherent diplomatic strategy to navigate this structural context or whether its positions represented reactive as well as case-by-case responses to quick circumstances. The policy evaluation summary displayed below brings together the four key dimensions of the diplomatic path of Nigeria period.

Figure 4.6: Policy Evaluation Dashboard: Nigeria's Climate Diplomatic Trajectory (2019–2023) — Panel A: Diplomatic Dimensions Score; Panel B: GHG Profile vs. NDC Targets; Panel C: Climate Finance Receipts; Panel D: AGN Position Alignment Heatmap



Note. Compiled from Federal Republic of Nigeria (2021a, 2021b), Climate Policy Initiative (2025), SAIIA (2022), African Development Bank (2025), OECD (2023).

Figure 4.6 reveals a strategic pattern that is consistent with the theory-based argument of this study. Panel A shows that the scores of Nigeria on finance advocacy and Loss and Damage positioning showed the strongest improvement between 2019 as well as 2023, rising from 2 alongside 1 in the stated order to 5 in both dimensions by 2023. NDC ambition and transparency reporting stayed stable but did not improve, which is consistent with the implementation gap documented in Figure 4.2. Panel D confirms the key strategic feature of

the diplomatic position of Nigeria : very high match with the AGN on adaptation finance, Loss and Damage as well as the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities, but low match on fossil fuel phase-out. This planned difference on fossil fuels is not a mistake but a core feature of the strategy of Nigeria that protects its oil-revenue-dependent economy while maintaining UNFCCC membership and developing-country advocacy credentials.

Sending et al. (2020) argue that climate change has reshaped the foreign policy agenda by producing new links between issues between environmental obligations, energy security, development finance and geopolitical position. The diplomatic strategy of Nigeria across the study period exploits these linkages in a systematic way. By placing at the centre its advocacy on adaptation finance and Loss and Damage rather than on mitigation ambition, Nigeria aligns its diplomatic capital with the areas where the moral argument for international support is strongest alongside where domestic implementation limits are least in a way to weaken credibility. Stevenson (2011) calls this approach debate over norms: developing countries with active involvement shape the meaning of international obligations rather than alone accepting or rejecting them. The gradual rise of the loss of Nigeria from low frequency in the 2021 NDC to high frequency in the 2022 COP27 statement, confirmed in Table 4.2, is consistent with this analytical account of strategic diplomatic position.

The structural constraint argument of Salih (2025) establishes the upper limit within which this strategy operates. The rules of the UNFCCC transparency framework, the structure of the climate finance system and the speed of Loss and Damage negotiations all reflect the preferences of industrialised states. The finance gap documented in Table 4.6 confirms that the institutional system has not yet been reformed in ways that would make the conditional NDC targets of Nigeria achievable. The distinct diplomatic strategy of Nigeria, while coherent and clear across the study period, operates within a structural constraint that no diplomatic approach alone can overcome. The finding that this strategy produced the Loss and Damage Fund at

COP27 while leaving the underlying finance gap in basic terms unresolved is the clearest evidence of both its achievements and its limits.

4.4.3 Test of Hypothesis Three

Research Question Three: How has Nigeria responded to the unequal conditions of the global climate governance system as a developing country between 2019 and 2023?

To answer this question, the following hypothesis is tested:

H3: Nigeria has adopted different methods and international discussions to handle the unfair treatment and challenges it faced in the global climate system as a developing country between 2019 and 2023.

Based on the rival hypothesis table in Table 4.5, the finance gap data in Tables 4.6 and Figure 4.5 as well as the policy evaluation summary display in Figure 4.6, there is strong evidence to support H3.

The evidence across this section confirms that the diplomatic strategy of Nigeria combines three distinct elements that together constitute a clear and connected approach. The first element is continued institutional participation: Nigeria engaged with consistency with UNFCCC processes, submitted NDCs, passed domestic climate legislation and participated in the African Group of Negotiators throughout the study period. This participation produced real outcomes, with the clearest example being the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund at COP27 following continued AGN advocacy in which Nigeria was an active participant.

The second element is equity framing: Nigeria centered its diplomatic positions with consistency on the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities, the adaptation finance gap and the Loss and Damage mechanism. Panel D of Figure 4.6 confirms a very high match between the positions of Nigeria and those of the broader AGN on these three themes at both COP26 as well as COP27. This framing transforms structural disadvantage into a moral

demand for international support and positions Nigeria as a valid advocate for the interests of the developing world.

The third element is strategic uncertainty on fossil fuels: Nigeria maintained its oil-revenue-dependent economic model throughout the study period while presenting itself at the same time as a climate-committed developing-country actor. Panel D of Figure 4.6 confirms low match between the positions of Nigeria and AGN calls for fossil fuel phase-out. This is a planned diplomatic choice rather than an accidental omission. Taken together, these three elements constitute a distinct diplomatic strategy that is clear across the full documentary record of the study period. On the basis of the full body of evidence presented in this section, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be stated that Nigeria has used a distinct diplomatic strategy to respond to the unequal conditions of the global climate governance system as a developing country between 2019 and 2023.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The following findings are drawn in a clear way from the documentary evidence presented in Chapter Four in direct answer to the three research questions of the study:

1. Climate change has influenced the foreign policy priorities of Nigeria and its diplomatic engagements between 2019 and 2023 in a significant way. Nigeria produced a cluster of major climate policy instruments in 2021, including the updated NDC committing to a 20 percent unconditional and 47 percent conditional GHG reduction below business-as-usual by 2030, the Climate Change Act and the Initial Adaptation Communication to the UNFCCC. At COP26 in 2021 and COP27 in 2022, Nigeria consistently prioritised adaptation finance, the delivery of the USD 100 billion climate finance pledge and the loss and damage mechanism as the core diplomatic demands of its UNFCCC engagement. The thematic coding matrix confirmed that climate adaptation finance and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities appeared at high frequency across all four core documents of the study period. The implementation gap between the 47 percent conditional NDC target and estimated domestic progress remained wide, with Nigeria receiving approximately USD 2.5 billion in tracked climate finance in 2021 to 2022 against an estimated annual need of USD 10 billion.
2. The response of Nigeria to climate-induced displacement has shaped its participation in regional and international governance mechanisms between 2019 and 2023 in a significant way. Nigeria's IDP stock in the North-East remained persistently above 2 million throughout the study period, driven by the compound interaction of conflict and climate stressors including Lake Chad shrinkage and flooding. The catastrophic 2022 floods, which affected 34 of 36 states and displaced over 2 million persons in a single

year, directly triggered the activation of ECOWAS emergency mechanisms, LCBC sessions, a presidential disaster declaration and Nigeria's most forceful advocacy at COP27 for the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund. The Loss and Damage Fund was formally established at COP27 in November 2022 following sustained collective advocacy by the African Group of Negotiators in which Nigeria participated actively. The governance response to displacement was more intensive during crisis years and less systematic in non-crisis periods.

3. Nigeria has adopted a distinct diplomatic strategy to respond to the unequal conditions of the global climate governance system as a developing country between 2019 and 2023. This strategy is composed of three identifiable elements: sustained institutional participation through NDC submissions, COP engagements and AGN coalition-building; consistent equity framing through the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and demands for adaptation finance and loss and damage support; and strategic ambiguity on fossil fuel phase-out to protect oil-revenue interests whilst maintaining UNFCCC membership and developing-country advocacy credentials. The finance gap data confirms that Nigeria received less than eight percent of its estimated annual climate finance need in 2019, a structural inequity that persisted across the study period and provided the material basis for Nigeria's advocacy positions at successive COPs.

5.2 Conclusion

This study examined climate change and international politics of developing countries with a case study of Nigeria from 2019 to 2023. It found that climate change shaped the foreign policy agenda of Nigeria, its regional governance participation, international governance participation, and its diplomatic strategy in ways that are important as well as clear across the documentary record of the period. The Liberal Institutionalist structure used in this study

provides the most productive lens for reading these findings. This is because it explains why Nigeria sustains institutional engagement even where implementation falls short of stated commitments, with reputational investment and access to climate finance providing the structural incentives. Dependency Theory and Constructivism enrich the analysis by accounting for the structural limits that restrict the diplomatic space of Nigeria and the norm-based processes through which its climate identity has been constructed through continued UNFCCC participation.

5.3 Recommendations

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria should establish a dedicated Climate Foreign Policy Coordination Unit within the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a specific mandate to align domestic NDC implementation reporting with international diplomatic advocacy. This unit should produce annual public reports measuring progress against the 20 percent unconditional and 47 percent conditional GHG reduction targets using the monitoring protocols established under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, so that Nigeria's diplomatic claims of climate commitment are supported by verifiable domestic evidence rather than formal submissions alone.
2. The Federal Government of Nigeria should negotiate with the ECOWAS Commission and the Lake Chad Basin Commission a binding regional climate displacement protocol that defines specific burden-sharing obligations, resource allocation mechanisms and early warning standards to be activated automatically when annual climate-disaster displacement exceeds 500,000 persons in any member state. This protocol should be integrated into the existing ECOWAS Emergency Response Mechanism and funded through a dedicated West African Climate Resilience Fund with contributions from member states and international climate finance partners.

3. The Federal Government of Nigeria should formalise its loss and damage advocacy strategy into a standing negotiating position that is adopted before each COP session through a formal Cabinet decision endorsed by the National Council on Climate Change established under the 2021 Climate Change Act. This formalised position should include a quantified annual loss and damage estimate for Nigeria based on the Climate Policy Initiative methodology, a specific financial ask calibrated to that estimate and a coalition-building mandate directing Nigerian negotiators to coordinate with the African Group of Negotiators and the Climate Vulnerable Forum before each round of UNFCCC negotiations.

REFERENCES

- Butu, H. M., Okeke, C. U., and Okereke, C. (2022). Climate change adaptation in Nigeria: Strategies, initiatives, and practices (Working Paper No. 3)
- Closset, M., Feindouno, S., Guillaumont, P., and Simonet, C. (2018). A physical vulnerability to climate change index: *Which are the most vulnerable developing countries?* (FERDI Working Paper No. P213). FERDI.
- Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement. (2019). Modalities, procedures and guidelines for the transparency framework for action and support referred to in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement (Decision 18/CMA.1). UNFCCC.
- ECOWAS Commission. (2019). *Diagnostic on the implementation of the Climate Paris Agreement in West Africa*. ECOWAS Commission.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2021a). *Initial adaptation communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*. Federal Ministry of Environment, Department of Climate Change.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2021b). *National climate change policy for Nigeria (2021–2030)*. Federal Ministry of Environment.
- Heaton, J. (2008). Secondary analysis of qualitative data: *An overview*. *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, 33(3), 33–45.
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2024). *Global report on internal displacement 2024*. IDMC.
- International Organization for Migration. (2019). Tracking displacement in the Lake Chad Basin crisis. IOM DTM.
- Kamta, F. N., Schilling, J., & Scheffran, J. (2020). Insecurity, resource scarcity, and migration to camps of internally displaced persons in Northeast Nigeria. *Sustainability*, 12(17), 6830. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12176830>
- Mayring, P. (2014). Qualitative content analysis: Theoretical foundation, basic procedures and software solution. *Social Science Open Access Repository*.
- Mogalakwe, M. (2006). The use of documentary research methods in social research. *African Sociological Review*, 10(1), 221–230.
- Obah-Akpowoghaha, N. G., Tarro, M. L., and Bah, M. (2022). Climate change and the African Union's role in the international system: *A brief situational analysis*. *Journal of African Union Studies*, 11(1), 31–48.

- Okoh, A. I. S., Mulumo, D., and Orokpo, O. F. E. (2017). Assessment of the implementation of Nigeria's nationally determined contribution (NDC) in transition to a low carbon economy. *Nigerian Journal of Management Sciences*, 6(1), 372–383.
- Salih, M. A. M. (2025). A lease of life: Dependency, the world-system and the critique of climate change. In *Development theory and climate change*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Salkind, N. J. (Ed.). (2010). Ex post facto study. In *Encyclopedia of research design* (Vol. 1, pp. 496–499). SAGE Publications.
- Schreier, M. (2012). Qualitative content analysis in practice. *SAGE Publications*.
- Sending, O. J., Øverland, I., & Hornburg, T. B. (2020). Climate change and international relations: A five-pronged research agenda. *Journal of International Affairs*, 73(1), 183–193.
- Tight, M. (2019). Documentary research in the social sciences. *SAGE Publications*.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023). UNHCR Nigeria: All population snapshot – January 2023. UNHCR.
- Vogler, J. (2010). The institutionalisation of trust in the international climate regime. *Energy Policy*, 38(6), 2681–2687. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2009.05.072>
- Wakdok, S. S., & Bleischwitz, R. (2021). *Climate change, security, and the resource nexus: Case study of Northern Nigeria and Lake Chad*. *Sustainability*, 13(19), 10734. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su131910734>
- Weber, M. (2017). Methodology of social sciences. *Routledge*.