

Committee: United Nations General Assembly

Delegation: Nigeria

Topic: Addressing Climate Change and Ensuring Protection for Persons Displaced Due to Adverse Effects of Climate Change

The federal republic of Nigeria approaches the topic of climate change and displacement with a great urgency and concern, and sees these themes not as a future threat, but as a reality that already shapes its present. As the most populous nation in Africa, located at the junction of the Sahel, the Gulf of Guinea and the Niger river basin, Nigeria has experienced the intensifying effects of global warming more rapidly than many other regions. Rising global temperatures -now reported as the highest in 175 years- with projections suggesting an 86% change of surpassing 1.5°C warming within the next five years¹, have placed unprecedented pressure on fragile ecosystems and human settlements worldwide. Particularly in Nigeria, the recurrent drought in the northern states, the sea-level rise and coastal erosion in the Niger delta, and the increasingly destructive floods across the country illustrate how environmental fragility shapes socio-economic stability. A case in point is the Lake Chad Basin, which has lost more than 90% of its water extent over the past sixty years, compromising the livelihoods of more than 30 million people and contributing to increased vulnerability, insecurity and forced displacement throughout the region². The Anthropocene has accelerated these pressures, transforming them into severe humanitarian and security risks. The estimates suggesting that over 216 million people could be displaced by 2050 due to climate impacts.³ Nigeria itself ranks among the states predicted to face extreme climate hazard by 2040, hosting large population already vulnerable to conflict, desertification, and land degradation.

Extreme weather events such as the 2022 floods have disrupted entire communities, forcing internal migration on a scale that requires an international response. In many areas, people do not face only a first displacement: the increasing unpredictability of climatic events makes secondary displacement phenomena increasingly frequent, in which families already relocated are forced to move again because the shelter areas themselves prove to be unsafe or no longer habitable. This makes it clear that the transformation taking place is not only environmental, but profoundly social and economic. Temperatures in many regions are rising faster than in other parts of the world, and considering that around 70% of Nigeria's workforce is employed in highly climate-sensitive sectors -such as agriculture, fisheries and forestry- competition for vital resources such as land, water, and food is becoming increasingly intense. Economic losses due to climate effects are estimated to be enormous: there are projections that link the impact of climate change to a significant decrease in GDP, if no strong action is taken⁴.

¹ World Meteorological Organization (2023). *Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update*. WMO-No. 1305.

² United Nations Environment Programme (2018). *Lake Chad: The Vanishing Lake*. UNEP Assessment Report.

³ World Bank, *Groundswell Report* (2021).

⁴ Nigeria estimates that without adaptation measures, climate change could cost between 2% and 11% of GDP by 2020, and between 6% and 30% by 2050, for a cost equivalent to 100-460 billion dollars. Source: Building Nigeria's

The Nigerian government has already put in place an advanced regulatory framework to address these challenges. With the Climate Change Act of 2021, a National Climate Council was established, and the National Adaptation Plan is geared towards protecting vulnerable communities, building early warning systems, and promoting resilient agriculture. Through the Great Green Wall initiative, we are working to turn land degradation into opportunities for regeneration, fighting desertification and stabilizing livelihoods in the most fragile areas. At the operational level, institutions such as the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) play a crucial role in coordinating evacuations, assisting displaced people and planning relocations.

On a humanitarian level, the phenomenon of climate-related displacement requires a careful and respectful response to fundamental rights. Nigeria believes that those who are forced to leave their homes due to climatic processes -whether sudden or slow- should enjoy protection. We do not propose the creation of a new 'legal category of climate refugee', but we do call for a strengthening of existing protection frameworks, such as the UN Guidelines, the Kampala Convention and other international initiatives, to ensure that dignity, safety and access to services are effectively guaranteed.

However, national policies are not sufficient on their own. Our country needs the international community to recognize how crucial climate justice is: many of the countries suffering the greatest impacts have contributed very little to global emissions. For this reason, in addition to the creation of a UN International Fund for the adaptation and protection of climate-displaced populations, it is essential to accelerate the operation of the Loss and Damage Fund and ensure fairer and more predictable access to the Green Climate Fund. These mechanisms must support resilient infrastructure, relocation plans, livelihoods and support for communities that will never be able to return to their original territories.

In parallel, an effort is needed to transfer technologies -including digital alert systems, smart climate agriculture and sustainable water management- and strengthen climate data and education in the most vulnerable communities, to build resilience "from below" before crisis explode.

Finally, Nigeria firmly believes that the response to climate change must be regional as much as global. Solutions must come through cooperation with ECOWAS, the Lake Chad Basin commission and other African partners, because there are no clear boundaries in climate phenomena. This is our vision: fair, solidarity-based and timely international action, which considers climate change not only as an ecological challenge, but as a crisis of human rights, security and dignity. Nigeria is ready to be a proactive partner in any effort to protect those forced to migrate due to the climate.