The Role of the State and Transnational Corporations in Achieving Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines the close co-operation between African rentier states and the capitalist states of the global North in destroying the environment for resource exploitation in the global South, especially, in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). It is interesting to note that the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) regimes ended and were born simultaneously in December 2015. Similar to the MDGs regime, MDG 7 (the environment) was treated casually in the context of Africa. There is the likelihood that similar fate awaits SDG 15 (Life-on-Land) in Africa. With the help of its Transnational Corporations (TNCs) and the cooperation of resource-rich rentier states in Africa, states of the global North exploit natural resources in Africa. Worrisomely, organisations like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme are both indifferent to these issues. As a result, the entire SDGs regime, like its predecessor, is being implemented in a

Janus-faced manner. The global South, particularly Africa, has been treated with indifference while the states of the global North have worked diligently together to accomplish a significant number of SDGs goals in the global North. Therefore, in order to achieve the SDGs, resource exploitation and profit calculations—rather than the people and their environment in Africa—are prioritised. The paper used secondary sources of information. It adopted the World-System Theory as its theoretical framework. It found that SDGS15 remains utopian in sub-Saharan Africa insofar as the unbridled desire for natural and forest resources by states of the global North and their allies, as exploited by African rentier states and TNCs, is not curbed. The paper concludes that for states in SSA to meet the targets of SDG I5, the excessive use of forests and other natural resources as demonstrated by states of the global North must be curbed.

Keywords: SDGs, Rentier State Theory, Environment, Global North and South, TNCs

Introduction

Africa, in particular, sub-Saharan Africa has always been considered a natural resource enclave by the states of the global North without recourse to the state of the environment. Consequently, profit has often been considered far above the environment. Thus, the quality of the environment is inconsequential. Invariably, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) means practically nothing in the light of the environmental blindness and callousness displayed by states of the global North and their Transnational Corporations (TNCs). Is there any difference in the way the global North views Africa as a resource enclave today? In particular, how have the global North and their transnational corporations affected the environment?

The SDGs are inextricably linked; focusing development efforts on a select few while neglecting the others is a charade for reasons that cannot be explained. However, throughout the entire SDGs regime, the environment is especially important. Poverty, famine, climate change, and other issues are triggered by the disregard for the environment, which has a negative impact on all of the other SDGs combined; which is also responsible for instigating the numerous, potentially fatal attempts by Africans who wish to migrate to North America and Europe.

However, not all those who benefit from the environment treat it in the same way. As representatives of states of the Northern Hemisphere, Transnational Corporations (TNCs) have been accused of being environmentally blind (Thomas, 1992). Additionally, aborigines from various regions, including the Aceh in Indonesia, the Uwa in Columbia, the

Ogoni and Ijaws in Nigeria, and others, have repeatedly resisted TNCs for their environmental blindness (Peluso, 1992; Gedicks, 1993, 2001; see Appendix A). Consider this, the loss of forests is a major contributor to hunger and a cause of famine. Access to land for crop cultivation is being denied. Simply put, poverty is closely linked to climate change and the conflicts that accompany it. Similar to the MDGs regime, the expected failure to meet the SDGs 15 (Life-on-Land) targets is explained by the environmental blindness committed by TNCs operating in the global South; working with rentier African states.

It is particularly worrisome in Nigeria as a rentier state. The country has demonstrated a blindness to the environment in various dimensions. Amongst other environmental implications, the water and agricultural sectors stand conspicuous. The waterways of a region are essential to the survival of all living things, including non-human and human species, as well as their habitats and means of subsistence (Kumar, 2002; Reddy et al, 2012). Waterbodies are not only vital economic ecosystems or transportation routes for local and indigenous communities; they are also living and spiritual systems with which they have a long-standing relationship (HOMEF, 2024). In addition to harming a region or the aquatic life of a people, polluting or unconventional oil exploration activities in the waters would also have an adverse effect on semi-terrestrial and terrestrial habitats, as well as the socioeconomic, environmental, and spiritual well-being of the populace (Ado et al, 2015). In other words, when pollution and other abnormal activities establish themselves in the waters, many, if not all, species of terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna, as well as the entirety of a people's way of life—their culture—come under threat. Because waterways and waterbodies are interconnected and valuable to the local and national economies, as well as to agriculture, industry, business, and energy, the effects are felt throughout the affected areas (HOMEF, 2024).

Unusual activities and various types and levels of pollution plague Nigerian waters in general and the Niger Delta in particular. In Nigeria, water bodies are becoming more and more polluted by the extractive, palm oil, soft drink and brewery, soap and detergent, textile, and tannery industries. The petroleum industry, mining, industrial and household effluents, farmland or agricultural runoff (fertilizers, pesticides), gas flaring, industrial emissions, garbage burning, logging, and the transportation of timber on water are the main causes of pollution in Nigeria's coastal waters (Ado et al, 2015).

It is concerning that pollution in Nigeria moves from east to west and vice versa. It spreads from neighbourhoods to cities

and back again; it settles in aquatic and marine environments and descends far below the surface of the ocean. It trickles down into groundwater, sipping into the soil, food chain and finding its way into homes and stomachs of people and animals, and roots of plants. Crude oil spills are one of the polluting activities that have wreaked the most havoc on the environment in Nigeria's Niger Delta (Mishra & Kumar, 2015).

Given the significant harm and long-term consequences associated with these incidents, crude oil spills into the waters of Nigeria's Niger Delta represent one of the biggest threats to the region's aquatic and marine environment as well as the entire land and population. There is currently skeletal assessment of the effects of oil spills on the economy, environment, and health of Nigeria overall and the Niger Delta in particular. The country and its coastal communities suffer significant economic and cultural losses as a result of these ongoing oil spills in the region's waters. They affect human and marine animal food chains, harm marine vegetation by sinking to the seafloor, contaminate harbor infrastructure like fishing ports, and harm environmentally sensitive nearshore resources like mangroves and estuaries. Even worse, it becomes challenging to recover oil spills, particularly from the sea surface. This is a result of the weather and sea surface's unpredictable nature.

Oil spills into waterbodies spread and cause so much damage for a number of reasons. Processes that affect oil after it spills into the waters are among the causes. Weathering is the collective term for these processes, which include emulsification, oxidation, evaporation, dispersion, sedimentation, biodegradation, and dissolution. Oil spills on waterbodies are among the most degrading polluting activities because of a number of factors, including advection, tidal current, waves, longshore currents, and the spreading process of the distributed oil. For instance, water current can regulate the flow of spilled oil carried along in a water column that extends from the ocean surface to the seafloor due to advection, which is the natural movement of a mass of fluid.

Oil theft, the destruction of ships and vessels carrying stolen crude oil by Nigerian military and other security personnel, the exploitation of industrial fishing trawlers, and the artisanal refining of crude oil and the destruction of illegal refineries are additional troubling activities on the Niger Delta's waters. Other problems include the militarization and appropriation of the waters, the presence of pirates on the seas, and the extensive use of agrochemicals that rainwater washes into the waterbodies. Nigeria's coastal waters are now threatened by the nipa palm invasion

and aquatic weeds, especially Eichhornia crassipes, commonly referred to as water hyacinth. According to reports, the nipa palm was brought into Nigerian waters as a way to reduce pollution, but it is currently having a detrimental effect on both the local economy and the waters. Though the oil industry's operations continuously pollute the waters and make criminal activity on the waters worse, the plants still infiltrate the Niger Delta's waters. While many oil exploration and exploitation activities have received extensive media coverage and investigation, the effects they are having on terrestrial life—and consequently on communities, individuals, and activities that heavily rely on the environment—have not received nearly as much attention.

This paper interrogates the attainment of SDGs 15 in Africa, especially rentier states, in the light of the heinous oil-induced spoliation of the environment. In continuing, the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 undertakes conceptual review of related literature and theoretical framework of the paper. Section 3 interrogates the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 15 (Life-on-Land) in the global South. Conclusion and recommendations are made in Section 4.

Conceptual Review

This section examines the role of North-South Relations in the context of sustainable development, in accordance with Wallerstein's World-System Theory, rather than examining sustainable development as a phenomenon overflowing with emerging works:

North-South Divide: A Conceptual Clarification

This section examines the role of North-South Relations in the context of sustainable development, in accordance with Wallerstein's World-System Theory, rather than examining sustainable development as a phenomenon overflowing with emerging works. Scholarly attention has been paid to the topic of North-South relations. The 1966 book, "Hemispheres North South: Economic Disparity among Nations" by Horowitz immediately springs to mind in this situation. The fundamental message of his work is that something needs to be done to bridge the gap between the industrialised and affluent North and the less developed South.

The appropriateness of the North-South divide was one of the vocabulary issues Eckl and Weber (2007, p. 4) addressed rather than the many other issues surrounding the North-South debate, such as poverty, environmental

degradation, debt, etc. (Therien, 1999). According to their theory, the North-South problem involves the nation-state as a level of analysis, the general issue of economic inequality, and two geographical regions (the northern and southern hemispheres). Therefore, among the drawbacks they discussed were the reference to geography, the simple economic reductionism, and its state-centredness. The term "North-South divide" has become a reality in and of itself, and it tends to oversimplify problems. In other words, it is regarded as objectively given by both practitioners and analysts. First, a more detailed division along the lines of developed, developing, or industrialised and non-industrialised countries is revealed by an analysis of the usage of the term, which cannot be obtained by merely analysing the phrase "North-South divide."

This relationship is evident in both academic literature and popular discourse, where the "industrialised North" is frequently seen as a model that the "South" attempts to emulate, with industrialisation acting as the yardstick. This not only severely restricts the range of comparison terms to a single category (development), but it also represents this category as binary variables of industrialised/non-industrialised or developed/non-developed. Second, the idea of the "North-South divide" assigns social roles and guidelines for behaviour in global society. The third is that the concept of the "North-South divide" is very state-centric.

Using industrialisation as a yardstick to compare the North and South is a significant mistake that Eckl and Weber (2007) pointed out above. The practice of linking industrialisation and development is contested by Arrighi (1990, p. 12), who contends that "it is necessary to abandon the postulate that industrialisation is the equivalent of development".

It is worthwhile to attempt a one-sentence definition of North-South relations, despite the apparent lack of one. North-South relations is a term that aptly characterises the pattern of interactions and perceived or actual differences between nations of Northern and Southern hemispheres. In most cases, this description of political or economic differences is called the North-South divide (Quilligan, 2002).

It might also be interpreted as a socio-economic and political split between the poorer developing nations, or the "South," and the wealthy developed nations, collectively referred to as the "North." The divide is not entirely defined by geography, though the majority of the countries that make up the "North" are actually found in the Northern hemisphere (with the notable exceptions of Australia and New Zealand) (Calvocoressi, 2001). All G8 members and four of the five permanent members of the Unit-

ed Nations Security Council reside in the global North. With a large portion of the Second World (the former Eastern bloc), the 'North' primarily consists of the West and the First World. Although the phrase "North-South divide" is still widely used, the terms "North" and "South" are already a little out of date. Regardless of their geographic locations, countries that achieve economic development may become part of the "North," while those that do not meet the criteria for "developed" status are effectively considered to be part of the "South."

Historically, the division of nations into East and West during the Cold War marked the beginning of the concept of classifying nations according to their economic and developmental status (Rourke & Boyer, 2002). The United States and its allies represented the more developed West, while the Soviet Union and China represented the developing East. The division of the First World (the West) and the Second World (the East) emerged from this paradigm of development, with the global South consisting of even less developed nations (Danziger, 2001). A new and more straightforward classification was required as some Second World nations joined the First World and others joined the global South (Third World). According to Reuveny (2007), the Third World became the South and the First World the "North".

Determining the divide in geographic factors (i.e., latitudes) or GDP per capita income is not always simple. This is due to how easily nations could migrate to the North or the South once they reached a certain level of development (Chomsky, 1992). For instance, many of the nations that made up the Soviet bloc, also known as the Second World, were reclassified as developing after it collapsed, though they were geographically located in the north. Geographically southern countries that were once thought of as developing, like Turkey or the East Asian Tigers, have joined the modern First World at the same time, although their classification on maps depicting the North-South divide is ambiguous. Similarly, though they belong to the developed world, developed nations' dependencies are also categorized as Southern (Therein, 1999). The Brandt Line, also known as the "Brandt Report," encircles the world at a latitude of 30° N, passing between North and Central America, north of Africa and India, but lowering towards the south to include Australia and New Zealand above the line. It is a visual representation of the North-South divide between their economies.

The North-South divide has one thing in common: development, which is frequently confused with industrialisation. As opposed to belonging to the "South", which suggests a lack of development, being classified as part of the "North"

implies development. While the south stands for the formerly colonised nations that require assistance in the form of international aid agendas, the north comes to be associated with economic growth and industrialisation (Preece, 2009).

More recently, the North-South divide has been referred to as the "development continuum gap". Closing the obvious divide between wealthy (more economically developed) and impoverished (less economically developed) nations is given more importance as a result. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a useful indicator of the position of a nation on the gap (Rourke, 2004). The closer this is to 1.0, the more developed the nation is and the farther along it is on its development path; that is, the closer it is to becoming well developed.

The North continues to benefit at the expense of the South due to the growing divide between the two regions. It is believed that a number of recognised theories, such as capitalism, globalisation, immigration, and even the environment, which is briefly covered below, are to blame for this unequal relationship between the North and South (Kacowicz, 2007).

World System Theory (WST)

The World-Systems Theory (WST), popularised by Immanuel Wallerstein, serves as the theoretical foundation for the analysis in this paper. The main argument of WST is that the place of a nation in the global division of labour is crucial to comprehending its social and political development, which creates core and peripheral regions. Core regions take advantage of peripheral regions through a variety of unequal exchange mechanisms made possible or enabled by Transnational Corporations (TNCs), which are the main economic agents of peripheral exploitation (Onimode, 1978; Mabogunje, 1980; Gilpin, 1987; Jeyifo, 2009).

The recasting of the unit of analysis from the nation-state, which is the implicit unit of analysis in the majority of other discussions of incorporation, to the world-system is one of the major contributions of World-System Theory (Hall, 1986; Doorenspleet, 2001). A macro-sociological viewpoint known as the "World-System Theory" aims to describe the workings of the "capitalist world economy" as a "total social system".1 According Wallerstein (1974, p. 437):

> A world-system is a social system, one that has boundaries, structures, member groups, rules of legitimation, and coherence. Its life is made up of the conflicting forces which hold it together by tension and tear it apart as each group seeks eternally to remold it to its advantage. It has the

> characteristics of an organism, in that it has a lifespan over which its characteristics change in some respects and remain stable in others…Life within it is largely self-contained, and the dynamics of its development are largely internal.

A power hierarchy between the core and periphery, where the wealthy and powerful "core" societies rule over and take advantage of the weak and impoverished peripheral societies, is one of the most significant features of the modern world system. Technology plays a major role in determining whether a region is located in the centre or on the outskirts. Less developed nations are found on the periphery, while advanced or developed nations make up the core. According to Chase-Dune and Grimes (1995), peripheral nations are compelled by structural constraints to undergo a type of development that perpetuates their inferior status.

The Environment and the North-South Relations

The World Commission on Environment and Development's 1987 publication of "Our Common Future," also known as the Brundtland Report, was regarded as the precursor to a global awakening to the enormous importance of the environment to humanity. Regretfully, the general state of the environment can still be evaluated in essentially the same way after three decades (thirty-seven years) of its publication. The ecosystem of the Earth is still unstable due to global processes of natural resource overuse, degradation, and climate change. Only the international state society as a whole can meet the challenge of fending off these threats.

However, the world is still split between underdeveloped and marginalised societies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and prosperous societies in the Western Hemisphere. Thus, the so-called North-South divide still has a significant negative impact on our world. Modern international environmental agreements are said to have started with the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, which signaled a change in state interests from transboundary environmental issues to global environmental concerns. As a result, states became more conscious of how closely development and the environment are related. The idea of "sustainable development," which reflects this interdependency, was introduced at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and became the guiding principle of all ensuing international environmental initiatives.

All nation-states now have a fundamental concern for attempts at a consensus-based approach to international

environmental protection (Biermann, 2001, 2011; Charnovitz, 2002; Harada, 2003). All efforts to establish a strong environmental and developmental partnership between hemispheres North and South have been severely impeded by a number of disparities, including global environmental threats, disagreements in approaches to development and the environment, the high level of indebtedness of the South to the North, the overbearing dominance of the North in environmental treaty negotiations, etc. As a result, inter-state environmental cooperation at the global level was significantly increased and expanded, but with little success. Therefore, it would be impossible to achieve environmental cooperation by bridging the North-South divide.

Additionally, the unsustainable consumption patterns of the industrialised North and their TNCs' demonstrate a semblance of concern for the environment (Mies, 1993; Hornborg, 1998; Jorgenson, 2003). In support of regulating an avid consumption pattern in the North, Thomas (1992, p. 294) proposed that:

> The environment is in crisis. The atmosphere, oceans and land are all beset by problems resulting from human activities, the ultimate effects of which remain uncertain. The challenge for international relations and diplomacy is to take us back from the brink of disaster by promoting the principle global sustainability over parochial state interest. In essence, the international political and economic systems need to change, for they are a major part of the environmental problem. The situation calls for unprecedented levels of cooperation not only between countries but also between industry, local communities, scientist and non-governmental organisations. At the national level, rich and poor countries alike must face up to their respective responsibilities and adapt local behaviour. Unless consumption is curbed in the developed countries and population controlled in the developing, efforts towards sustainability will be rendered impotent.

In contrast to Principle II of the Stockholm Declaration (UN Conference on the Human Environment, 1972) which stated inter-alia that the:

> Environmental policies of all states should enhance and not adversely affect the present or future development po-

> tential of developing countries, nor should they hamper the attainment of better living conditions for all and appropriate steps should be taken by states and international organizations with a view to reaching agreement on meeting the possible national and international economic consequences resulting from the application of environmental measures.

The consumption pattern of the rich North is so much of a discomfort to the poor South. The attitude of the North toward the environment of the South is growing rather than decreasing. In 1991, the former World Bank Chief Economist Lawrence H. Summers made the following secret memo argument:

> dirty Industries, just between you and me, shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging more migration of the dirty industries to the less developed countries? If so, why not?" 1 can think of three reasons: the measurements of the costs of health impairing pollution depend on the foregone earnings from increased morbidity and mortality. From this point of view a given amount of health impairing pollution should be done in the country with the lowest cost, which will be the country with the lowest wages. I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that; the costs of pollution are likely to be non-linear as the initial increments of pollution probably have very low cost. I have always thought that underpopulated countries in Africa are vastly under-polluted; their air quality is probably vastly inefficiently low compared to Los Angeles or Mexico City. Only the lamentable facts that so much pollution is generated by non-tradable industries (transport, electrical generation) and that the unit transport costs of solid waste are so high prevent world welfare enhancing trade in air pollution and waste; (Pellow, 2007, p. 9)

He continued:

> the demand for a clean environment for aesthetic and health rea-

> sons is likely to have very high-income elasticity. The concern over an agent that causes a one in a million change in the odds of prostate cancer is obviously going to be much higher in a country where people survive to get prostate cancer than in a country where under 5 mortality is 200 per thousand. Also, much of the concern over industrial atmosphere discharge is about visibility impairing particulates. These discharges may have very little direct health impact. Clearly trade in goods that embody aesthetic pollution concerns could be welfare enhancing. While production is mobile the consumption of pretty air is a non-tradable. (Pellow, 2007, p. 9)

Given the foregoing, it would not be incorrect to suggest that there is a grand scheme, an unholy alliance between oil transnational corporations, the Bretton Woods institutions, and a few Northern nations, to sustain environmental deterioration in the global South. The state of affairs in the global South is rather hopeless and pitiful. It appears that the global North is determined to maintain the status quo. Hence, the key question is what kind of power the global South can gain to convince the industrialised world that, as the original polluters, they must pay if the global South is to cooperate in effective environmental control.

However, how much money could support a global South that does not care about toxic waste, tropical deforestation, ozone depletion, or global warming? The issues facing the global South are much more personal: whether they can obtain enough food to sustain themselves, whether they have access to clean water, and whether they can offer their communities basic healthcare and education. Therefore, the global South should not be forced to shoulder the financial burden of environmental protection; instead, their priorities should be for basic development.

In order to achieve a truce, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is being called to be upgraded to a World Environment Organisation (WEO), similar to the World Health Organisation, International Labour Organisation, etc., (Esty & Ivanova, 2001; Biermann, 2002). However, as Johan Galtung (in Rothstein, 1984, p. 5) once warned "if change is wanted, very little can be obtained through negotiations with the holders of power...by using the existing system or, rather, by relying on them, the results are already given". This is why the global South has such doubts about

the likely effectiveness of the World Environment Organisation (von Moltke, 2001).

The Sustainable Development Goals and the Global South

Rourke and Boyer (2002, p. 385) pose a thought-provoking question regarding sustainable development in the global South thus: "if the minority of the world's population who live in EDCs use most of the resources and create most of the pollution, how can the South develop economically without accelerating the ecological deterioration that already exists?" The salience in the aforementioned puzzle does, in fact, lie at the core of the insincerities and half-truths that surround the various ways that the global North and global South interact. Through the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) operations, the global North negotiates and continues to engage the global South in an unprotected trade regime as part of globalization (Jawara & Kwa, 2003; Scholte, 2005); trade restriction regimes were previously the means by which the global North achieved its status as developed nations (Albert, 2006).

The salience in the above puzzle indeed lies at the heart of the half-truths and insincerities that surround the diverse forms of interactions between the global North and global South. In globalisation, the global North through the workings of the World Trade Organisations (WTO) negotiates and continue in that trend to engage the global South to operate an unprotected trade regime (Jawara & Kwa, 2003; Scholte, 2005); hitherto trade restriction regimes remained the avenues relied upon to move the global North to its status as developed nations (Albert, 2006). Similar to globalisation, the global North is still in charge of the sustainable development goals, which, taken as a whole, undermine or pretend to be unaware of the environmental blindness of the global North (Thomas, 1992). This still remains a major factor in the global South's deception of SDG15 (Life on Land). In this case, the ruse in SDG 15 is that the structure of the current or existing global governance is paradoxical. It is that the states that are causing the crisis are the global North, which controls how the current system functions (e.g., the SDGs) as a remedy for the common disasters that humanity faces, such as ecological destruction, climate change, etc. (Henfrey & Kenrick, 2015).

The global South and African scholars are concerned with this realisation of how the global governance structure operates. In fact, the performance of Africa under the current SDGs regime would be comparable to the expired MDGs regime. Numerous failure-precipitating scenarios have been identified by scholars as having the potential to prevent the global South and in particular Afri-

ca from performing admirably under the SDGs regime. SDG 15 is not feasible in the majority of the global South due to the extractive nature of most African economies, which depend on non-renewable resources like oil, gas, and mining that are known to be environmentally harmful. The likelihood of establishing an environmentally friendly mining, oil, and gas exploitation regime in the global South is further hampered by the rentier nature of the majority of these economies. Additionally, rent-dependent economies, like Nigeria, do link state security to oil security, royalties, and rents. Bassey (2015, p. 3) thus states that "the colour of oil turns red where fossil-fuels extraction is deeply linked to militarisation and repression". Such situations arise because community demonstrations for better environmental agreements are viewed as a threat to the flow of royalties and rents and are met with violent resistance.

The immense power of TNCs and boldness in conducting business around the world are evidence of the backing of their home governments; which is inextricably linked to their insatiable consumption patterns and suffocating effects on the global South (Korten, 2001; Hengeveld, 2012). No wonder the South Commission (1993, p. 279) stated that "The North is responsible for the bulk of the damage to the environment because of its wasteful life-style". Additionally, Leech (2006, p. 1) notes that "the United States consumes 25 percent of global energy production with only 4 percent of the world's population." Over 16 million barrels of oil were consumed daily in the United States in 2004, with imports making up over 10 million barrels per day, or 65 percent of total consumption. It may be recalled that the desire or will to maintain such an opulent lifestyle forces the United States, Britain, France, and other countries to pursue foreign policies intended to guarantee unrestricted access to the oil reserves of the Middle East, with the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) serving as a backup supply (Duffield, 2008; Hengeveild, 2012; Price-Smith, 2015). Both the first and second U.S.-led Gulf crises in the Middle East are said to have been driven more by oil interests than by the much-lauded counterterrorism justifications (Sachs & Santarius, 2005).

Waste generation is another consequence of the global North is increasing industrialisation. The global South is frequently the victim or a willing accomplice in the disposal of such wastes, which are typically dumped on any environment that state authorities approve of. Delbello (1991, p. 3) stated that:

> It is still legal under American law to dump waste products in any country whose government consents to accept them. Many developing countries accept waste exports for a

> per ton charge. It does not matter to them whether the waste is hazardous, toxic, nonhazardous, or nontoxic. Nor does it matter to them whether or not they have the technology for the safe disposal of wastes. In some nations there is little or no thought about the long-term consequences of unsafe disposal of hazardous wastes to their land, air, water, quality of life, crops, animals and children. Some of the main culprits in the U.S. have been surprising: the Pentagon, other federal agencies, state and local governments, the American business community in general, and, of course, various brokers and entrepreneurs have all been documented time and again, as exporters of hazardous waste to the Third World.

Particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, poverty in the global South continues to be a significant environmental deteriorator and a barrier to achieving SDG 15 (Life on Land). The poor view the environment as a source of income, but they continue to exploit its resources despite the fact that it is endangered, as long as it satisfies their basic survival needs (Nwagbara et al., 2012). This is the link between poverty and environmental degradation. For instance, illegal artisanal oil refineries and oil bunkering operations that negatively affect the environment are rampant in the Niger Delta, Nigeria (Ozogu et al, 2023). As a result, the environment is endangered but still exploited. This is, especially, true for the Niger Deltans, who believe that the state in Nigeria is stealing the oil in their area (Ndinwa & Akpafun, 2012). As a result, oil bunkering and crude refinement are seen as ways for them to engage in survival activities from which they are cut off. Sub-Saharan Africa is also experiencing extreme poverty-induced deforestation due to overexploitation, which has resulted in the majority of the global South being trapped in a poverty trap, where they are both victims and perpetrators of environmental hazards.

Conclusion

Since the environment is home to all living things, including humans, a disregard for it or a careless attitude toward it foretells danger for everyone (Carson, 2002). Sinha (2012, p. 330) cautions humanity that “only 2.5 percent of the waters on the surface of the Earh are freshwater, and the majority of freshwater on Earth is locked in icecaps, permafrost, and glaciers (1.74%) or deep in groundwater (0.76%). As a result, only 0.03% of the freshwater on Earth can be easily used by

humans".

The people of the exploited regions, as well as the environment and its constituents, are constantly in danger due to the desire of TNCs for profit and to satisfy the consumption and lifestyles of a portion of the world, despite these dire warnings. However, environmental disasters are not limited to particular parts of the world, particularly in terms of their timing and location. On the contrary, humanity as a whole is vulnerable. Regardless of global configurations into the Northern or Southern hemispheres, it is the social responsibility of all peoples to protect the environment for what it is: a source of life and sustenance (Goodin, 1985).

So far as to "protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss" remain the essential ingredients of SDG15 (Life on Land) and as a collective social responsibility to humanity, the following recommendations should be adhered to:

a. States in the global North should control their consumption and lifestyles and diversify their energy sources to be more environmentally friendly. Reversing the continuous, high use of non-renewable resources like gas and oil in favor of renewable ones like wind and water

b. States in the global South that rely too heavily on rents or royalties from non-renewable natural resources should diversify their economies and renter attitudes away from non-renewable resources like crude oil, which have a high potential for environmental destruction, and toward agro-based economies and renewable energy sources like wind and water.

c. TNCs and other large polluters that are unable to diversify away from energy resources known for being prone to environmental pollution should be subjected to high taxes (Roodman, 1999). The goal is to dissuade such TNCs from causing additional environmental harm.

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