



## 6<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Environmental Toxicology and Health Safety

### Environmental Behavior in Nigeria

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Good day Ladies and gentlemen, I am Izuchukwu Temilade Nwagbara, a Nigerian legal practitioner and an environmental law enthusiast. Environmental toxicology is relevant to Nigeria as Nigeria is a resource-rich country. As such, in the process of exploiting the resources, there is the risk of environmental impact; an impact which, over the decades, has not been adequately addressed. Extreme environmental degradation pervades areas and regions where mineral resources are deposited. Stakeholders deflect responsibility for this environmental degradation whilst the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), the national agency responsible for enforcing all environmental laws and regulations, stands akimbo. On the other hand, the Nigerian Government has bought into the climate change narrative, passing a Climate Change Act in 2021 with an overarching objective to achieve net zero emissions between 2050 and 2070. This is akin to a homeless man in California dreaming of building a mansion within 5 years when he should at least prioritise getting a room apartment. In essence, it signifies leaving substance to pursue shadows.

Nigeria has a myriad of environmental laws catering to basic as well as specialised environmental issues. This is not a gathering of legal scholars, so I do not intend to bore you with legal jargons and polemic. However, I find it quite hypocritical and self-defeating that the Nigerian government, as well as African governments, would make bold commitments towards Climate change goals and objectives when basic environmental protection is a farce. The theme of this 6th World Congress on Environmental Toxicology and Health Safety is 'An Emerging model in biomedical and environmental toxicology'. I am intrigued by the theme and I wished my country had done extensive foundational work in its environmental space that would qualify it to participate in such advanced discussions. Nonetheless, all hope is not lost; a deliberate and dedicated enforcement of the existing environmental laws and policies as well as a readjustment of the policies to suit modern research would go a long way to position Nigeria as a big player in the environmental sphere, albeit it must learn not to leave substance and pursue shadows. It is nice to aspire to build a mansion but whilst being homeless (I mean, Ben Carson admonishes us all to think big), however, the priority should be getting reasonable shelter. Please do not get me wrong, I do not consider climate change goals to be some sort of luxury though people disagree on what the goals should actually be. My point is that for countries like Nigeria with extreme environmental degradation, basic environmental protection is the priority and climate change goals remain lofty aspirations.

#### Biography

He has done his B.A. in Environmental Engineering Catholic University of Brasilia, Brazil in 2006 and his M.Sc. in Environmental Planning and Management from Catholic University of Brasilia, Brazil in 2011. He pursued his Phd in Geoscience from Geoscience Institute, University of Brasilia, Brazil; and School of Public Health, Harvard University, United States (as doctoral exchange program). in 2015. Currently he is working as Researcher (Postdoctoral Fellow) in School of Geography and Earth Sciences McMaster University, Canada Involved in the following projects: 1) Socio-environmental costs and benefits of electric mobility in Canada; 2) Metropolitan traffic congestion in Canada; 3) Children's exposure to criteria air pollution due to drop-off programs at school.