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ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL DISPLACEMENTS OF PERSONS IN AFRICA BY OPERATIONALIZING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND AFRICAN AGENDA 2063

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ABSTRACT

Internal displacement due to environmental disasters has become a major humanitarian challenge in Africa, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the elderly. Despite efforts like the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and adherence to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the continent continues to face rising environmental challenges, raising questions about whether these displacements result from a failure to heed environmental warnings and whether development should be approached from a home-grown perspective. African Agenda 2063 and the SDGs now include forced displacement as key targets and indicators, emphasizing a comprehensive approach that extends beyond humanitarian aid to focus on development. This paper explores whether an intentional Afrocentric development plan, alongside the operationalization of the SDGs and Agenda 2063, can effectively mitigate environmentally induced internal displacement in Africa.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, internal displacements and the protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have become worrisome, for which attention and sustainable solutions are required. In recent years, internal displacement has emerged as a major concern globally, and particularly in Africa. Large-scale displacements within national boundaries resulting mainly from environmental or natural disasters have left vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and the elderly, most affected. Notwithstanding the cause of the displacement, the experience always leaves negative socioeconomic impressions on the people globally. These IDPs are displaced within state boundaries and are indeed the responsibility of their home countries, but often do not get the protection they deserve from their governments for several reasons. They are left in hazardous conditions for many years without adequate protection.

Displacements from environmental situations are one of the most devastating consequences of climate change. Vulnerable people living in some of the most fragile countries are often disproportionately affected.[1] The impacts of climate change are numerous and often trigger displacements and worsen living conditions, or hinder returns for those already displaced. Unfortunately, environmental sustainability practices such as maintenance of drainage, sustainable agricultural practices and re-afforestation appear to have been neglected for too long in Africa.[2] This has increased environmental problems such as soil erosion, floods and desertification, which have triggered numerous environmental displacements, creating a lot of vulnerabilities for the African people.

Achieving sustainable development goals requires considerable attention to the protection of various categories of persons within the national normative framework. Fundamental to this process is the need to ensure that law and policy responses are developed, which also take into consideration the fact that 'no one will be left behind in furtherance of developing lasting sustainable goals.[3] The SDGs[4] were borne out of the collective realization that, for meaningful development to take place globally, there was the need for a paradigm shift to foster stronger international environmental governance and ensure a balanced integration of the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.[5] These three areas of sustainable development are crucial,

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[1] UN Report on Climate change <https://www.unhcr.org/climate-change-and-disasters.html> accessed on 17 January 2025.

[2] Akinolu Omisore, 'Attaining Sustainable Development Goals in sub-Saharan Africa; The Need to Address Environment Challenges', (2018) 25 Environmental Development Journal: 138–145.

[3] Romola Adeola, *National Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa; Beyond the Rhetoric*, (Adeola (ed) 1st ed. 2021. Springer, London 2020).

[4] The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the post-Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and are the global developmental agenda adopted by governments at eh UN General Assembly in September 2015.

[5] Akinolu Omisore, 'Attaining Sustainable Development Goals in sub-Saharan Africa; The Need to Address Environment Challenges', (2018) 25 Environmental Development Journal 138 – 145.

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interlinked, and mandatory for SDGs to be achieved, and to understand that they need to balance out each other and that none is more important than the other. Sub-Saharan Africa, in this regard, needs special attention as one of the least developed and most vulnerable areas, needing attention and relevant support in environmental protection, as this area is in crucial need for sustainable development to be achieved.

Before the end of the MDGs in 2015, the least progress made in Africa was in the areas of poverty, hunger reduction, and environmental sustainability. As a fact, the environment has a direct impact on poverty alleviation and hunger reduction.[6] Whilst progress in both can also be detrimental to the promotion of environmental values if sustainable agricultural practices and land management are not taken into consideration, the concept of sustainable development becomes crucial to balance them out. It is logical that to address environmental displacements, there is a need to address climate change issues and the impacts, which is the specific goal of SDG (Goal 13). This goal is also directly mentioned in targets under Goals 2 and 11 and is connected with most of the other SDGs.

Nevertheless, it may seem that the development of Africa depends on the institutionalization of an active state.[7] The components of an active state in a development scheme are dependent on the state's ability to chart ways for all-around sustainability, meaning full functionality. Africa is faced with daunting developmental challenges skewed by problems associated with poverty, unsustainable population growth, state fragility, governance, and political instability, among others.[8] In the past, development initiatives such as the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), launched by the leaders of the African Union (AU) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) championed by world leaders did not translate into development for Africa.[9] The failure of NEPAD and MDGs to engender development resulted in the Agenda 2063 initiative and the SDGs. While Agenda 2063 is an initiative packaged to guide Africa to the development destination that the African people want, the SDGs are goals initiated by world leaders to ensure sustainable development globally.

There is a need, therefore, to commit to a home-grown development agenda that will take into consideration the specificities of the African challenges, especially in environmental development. It would involve the articulation of development initiatives through consultative and participatory approaches involving African leaders. The drive for "African solutions" as embedded in Agenda 2063 is to de-emphasize the continuous reliance on external entities to deal with continental challenges. It will also refocus attention on Africa's capability to initiate solutions to its problems

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[6]   Agenda 2030 stresses that "the interlinkages and integrated nature of the SDGs are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the Agenda is realized" see Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, Preamble, A UN Document.

[7]   Agaptus Nwozor, Onjefu Okidu, and Solomon Adedire, 'Agenda 2063 and the Feasibility of Sustainable Development in Africa: Any Silver Bullet?' (2021) 52 (7) Journal of Business Studies 688.

[8]   Ibid

[9]   Ibid

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without depending on other external powers. In this regard, operationalizing home-grown SDGs and Agenda 2063 development plans will undoubtedly yield the desired result because the approach will be Afrocentric. In dealing with environmental development, its interdependence and interrelatedness with poverty and hunger, making human settlements safe and environmentally friendly will be addressed, simultaneously, thereby mitigating environmental displacements in Africa.

The purpose of this study is to determine the possibility of addressing internal displacements resulting from environmental issues through the home-grown perspectives, which have been identified in the SDGs and the Agenda 2063 development plans which if implemented properly will address issues of environmental disaster, displacements and hunger and poverty which are the immediate consequences of such disaster.

This paper is divided into seven parts. Following this introduction is the methodology and review of relevant literature referenced in this study. The Third part examines the overview of the impact of environmental displacements of persons in Africa. The fourth part explains the relationship between the goals of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. The fifth part discusses the possibility of mitigating environmental displacements of Persons by operationalizing the home-grown Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. The sixth part discusses the challenges and prospects of implementation, and then the paper recommends and concludes.

2. METHODOLOGY

The information for this study is derived from doctrinal research methodology. The justification for the choice of doctrinal research methodology is based on the fact doctrinal research methodology is desk research that involves a systematic analysis of how the SDGs, the African Agenda 2063 and African Indigenous Knowledge Systems can engender legal reforms that will mainstream Afrocentric development plans, alongside the operationalization of the SDGs and Agenda 2063, to effectively mitigate environmentally induced internal displacement in Africa. Therefore, doctrinal research methodology is the appropriate research methodology to use in this research work. Information and literature used in this research were sourced from the review of secondary sources, which include relevant literature from respected scholars in the form of textbooks, articles from journals, reputable newspapers, and online sources. The research materials were sourced from law libraries of institutions of higher learning such as the University of Jos Law Library, The Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Law Library, Nasarawa State University Law Library, e-libraries such as LexisNexis and Hein online and others

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3. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

This section will discuss the relevant literature referenced in this work. Suzi Mohammed Rashad[10] discussed the effects of climate change in the African continent. In her view, the continent has suffered the repercussions of environmental and climate deterioration, most notably "environmental displacement" or what is called "climate refugees." The findings of her research demonstrate that although the phenomenon of "climate refugee" has become noticeable in the African continent, and despite concrete efforts by Africa, the lack of international recognition of the term "climate refugee" as well as the lack of environmental justice in distributing the burdens of global warming, remains an obstacle for the African continent for solving this problem. Therefore, international synergy is required to find common solutions. The significance of this study lies in highlighting the insufficiency of African efforts to reduce the phenomenon of environmental refugees, and the lack of international efforts to establish a legal framework for this problem. While her research is relevant to this study however there has been a lot of improvement after the publication of her article in 2020, for instance on lack of legal framework, Nigeria and Kenya[11] enacted the Climate Change Act in 2021 and 2023 respectively and some African countries such as Ghana is also working on enacting one. This illustrates the ongoing efforts of African countries to tackle climate change and its negative impacts, including displacement.

Anthony Ikhide Osawe and Ojeifo O. Magnus[12] examined the community involvement in environmental governance in Nigeria. The main objectives were to identify prevailing environmental problems in Nigeria and examine the community's participation in their management. To achieve this, a process approach was followed in which secondary data, sourced from textbooks, articles in journals and the internet were utilized. The study revealed that communities in Africa had little or no role to play in the governance of their environment. The study showed that the government alone played this role, which has been seen to be ineffective considering the extent of air pollution, oil spillage and deforestation in the urban and rural environments on the continent. Based on this, the study therefore recommended, among other things, that, participatory approach to environmental governance, including the government, the private sector, multinationals and the community, was required to effectively harness the environment. The study also recommends that policies should be strengthened, while environmental education should be a basic requirement for communities. The study aligns with this research and concludes that environmental education is needed to address the negative effects of climate

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10   Suzi Mohammed Rashad, 'African Climate Refugees: Environmental Injustice and Recognition' (2020) 10 (3) Open Journal of Political Science, <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojps.2020.103033>.
11   Kenya Climate Change Act 2023 <http://kenyalaw.org> accessed 2 April 2025.
12   Anthony Ikhide Osawe and Ojeifo Magnu, 'Environmental Governance in Nigeria: The Community Perspective' (2016) 6 (2) Public Policy and Administration Research 2225-0972.

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change, which is considered the major contributor to environmental displacement. Where this is not done, the number of environmental refugees may double shortly.

Ashok Das Gupta[13] states that people with Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) have the capabilities to provide several Public Services that are parallel to the Modern systems and are equally important. An indigenous community may be marginalized due to in-migrations or be out-migrated. It may be immigrated or emigrated. In both cases, IKS could be altered due to changes in modes of production. He also noted that in certain traditional communities in India, ancient trade routes have been lost, leaving people to only imagine their native statehood. Tribal communities like Mech (Bodo), Rabha, Garo, and Koch have been mostly incorporated into the wider social category of the agrarian Rajbanshi caste. Varendri caste group there speaks of their Aryan origin but on to Kashmir-Tibet ways. Nepali-speaking Hill Nepalese of Nepal are immigrants but recruited into the Indian Army. They also construct the labour class in Tea estates along with Adivasi people of Dravidian-Proto Australoid origin from Central India. A new form of IKS has grown up locally that contains identity movement, human shield in this border territory and multiculturalism. For that, the British rule in India got the credit. Mutual understanding between IKS and Modernity can fulfil the goal. We cannot consider IKS as being a part confined to the mode of production, but the structure and the super-structure (or cognition) that speaks openly in favour of culture to multiculturalism. This is not different from what is happening in Africa, hence the need to document the African Indigenous Knowledge system, which is being eroded due to migration. Considering that climate-induced migration is negatively impacting on African indigenous knowledge system, which could have been used to mitigate or adapt to climate change effects. The study aligns with the recommendations of the research, but emphasises the need to adopt the Afrocentric method in documenting the IKS.

Agaptus Nwozor, Onjefu Okidu, and Solomon Adedire[14] stated that several continental and global development initiatives have been developed to trigger development in Africa, the latest being Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The research relied on relevant materials to examine the challenges of sustainable development, especially within the context of the serious structural adjustment challenges in Africa. Against the backdrop of the continent's earlier dismal experiences with development initiatives, the article assesses the promises of both Agenda 2063 and the SDGs to motorize sustainable development in the continent. The article contends that the feasibility of sustainable development in Africa is contingent upon the institutionalization of the active state. The imperative of the active state in development architecture is

13 Ashok Das Gupta, 'Impact of migration on Indigenous Knowledge System' (2024) <https://nomadit.co.uk> accessed 15 December 2024.

14 Agaptus Nwozor, Onjefu Okidu, Solomon Adedire, 'Agenda 2063 and the Feasibility of Sustainable Development in Africa: Any Silver Bullet?' (2021) 52 (7) Journal of Business Studies 691.

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because of its indispensability in charting critical pathways for all-around sustainability. The study aligns with the findings and recommendations of this research on the fact that the feasibility of sustainable development in Africa is contingent on the institutionalization of an active State for all round development in Africa as the continent has inflicted a lot of barriers that makes it difficult for states in continent to trade or even move around the continent with ease. This has increased migration to other continents, especially by environmental refugees who find it difficult to remain within the continent due to travel and visa barriers. These barriers need to be eliminated for us to have the Africa we want.

The study relies on the above materials and others cited in the footnotes for the arguments canvassed in this research. The gaps identified in the materials cited were filled. The study has contributed to the development of African legal jurisprudence.

4. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL DISPLACEMENTS OF PERSONS IN AFRICA

Environmental Displacement of persons in Africa is a worrying phenomenon. Many people have been forced to leave their homes due to environmental changes that threaten their lives and livelihood.[15] To date, millions of people have been displaced due to problems associated with environmental destruction and climate change. This results in an increase in migration to other countries within Africa or other continents, resulting in negative impacts such as security challenges, terrorism, and pressure on both economic resources and the environment of the countries or continents. The UN Secretary-General, António Gutiérrez, and the head of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi,[16] noted this phenomenon at the opening of the Global Refugee Forum 2019 in Geneva, when discussing how climate change is creating environmental refugees[17] in Africa.

Climate change-related disasters such as floods, erosion, and storms are the major drivers of environmental displacement and the bane of achieving sustainable development in Africa.[18] Though climate change is a global phenomenon, its negative effects are advancing at an alarming rate. Natural events and human activities are believed to be contributing to an increase in average global temperatures and resulting in displacements resulting from such disasters like floods and widespread wildfires, for

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[15] Suzi Mohammed Rashad, 'African Climate Refugees: Environmental Injustice and Recognition' (2020) 10 (3) Open Journal of Political Science, <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojps.2020.103033>.

[16] Ibid.

[17] According to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, environmental refugees is a person displaced owing to environmental causes, notably land loss and degradation, and natural disaster; see UNESCWA, Environmental refugee <https://archive.unescwa.org> accessed 2 April 2025.

[18] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 'What is Internal Displacement' <http://www.internal-displacement.org/internal-displacement/what-is-internal-displacement> accessed 18 January 2025; Uche Isiugo-Abanihe, Migration in Nigeria a Country profile <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mp_nigeria.pdf> accessed 18 November 2024.

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instance. In 2024, more than 414,000 people were displaced in Borno State of
Nigeria,[19] and the 2019 cyclone Idai in Mozambique displaced hundreds of
thousands in Mozambique, Malawi and Madagascar.[20] However, the fifth
assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
in 2014 attributed the major causes of climate change to human activities via
anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions from population growth and
increased industrial activities.[21] While the sixth assessment report of
Working Group II of IPCC released in February 2022 states that Climate and
weather extreme conditions are increasingly driving displacement in all
regions, with an increase in Flood and drought-related acute food insecurity
and malnutrition in Africa.[22] This may be the reason for the increased
migration of Africans to other continents.[23] Further, the Internal
Displacement Monitoring Centre's (IDMC) 2024 Africa report revealed that
climate-related disasters, particularly those associated with hydro-
meteorological hazards such as floods, storms, and drought, also triggered
35 million internally displaced people (IDPs), nearly half of the global total.[24]
32.5 million of these IDPs were displaced by conflict and violence, which has
increased migration within and outside the African continent.[25]

The impact of environmental displacement cannot be ignored as they
range from security-related challenges, economic challenges, food insecurity,
water scarcity, demographic pressure, exacerbated public health challenges,
competition for scarce resources, poverty, housing challenges,

[19] Reliefweb, Nigeria: Floods – Maiduguri (MMC) and Jere Floods Flash Update 2 (15
September 2024) https://reliefweb.int accessed 2 April 2025.

[20] IOM, 'UN Migration, Mozambique — Cyclone IDAI - Snapshot Report (Eight months after Idai)
November 2019' (2019) <https://dtm.iom.int> accessed 2 April 2025.

[21] Summary for Policymakers Figure (SPM 1.2) states as follows: 'Anthropogenic greenhouse gas
emissions have increased since the pre-industrial era, driven largely by economic and population
growth, and are now higher than ever. This has led to atmospheric concentrations of carbon
dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide that are unprecedented in at least the last 800,000 years. Their
effects, together with those of other anthropogenic drivers, have been detected throughout the
climate system and are extremely likely to have been the dominant cause of the observed warming
since the mid-20th century" See IPCC, Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report Summary for
Policy makers, <http://ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf>
accessed 3 November 2024.

[22] Hans-Otto Pörtner and others, 'Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability'
(2022) <https://www.ipcc.ch> accessed 12 September 2024.

[23] Vivian Falae, 'Flood in Nigeria: Why did the latest disaster happen?'
<https://www.naija.ng/1114394-flood-nigeria-latest-disaster-happen.html#1114394> accessed 26
December 2024; Hembadoon Orsar, 'Benue Flood, 110,000 persons and 24 communities affected'
Leadership (Makurdi, 31 August 2018) <http://leadership.ng/2017/08/31/benue-flood110000-
persons-24-community-affected/> accessed 26 December 2024; Richard Davis, 'Nigeria-Thousands
Displaced by Flood in Kogi' <http://floodlist.com/africa/nigeria-floods-kogi-september-2017>
accessed 26 December 2024; Richard Davis, Nigeria-Deadly Flood hits Niger-State
<http://floodlist.com/africa/nigeria-deadly-floods-hit-niger-state> accessed 26 December 2024.

[24] IDMC, 'Internal Displacement in Africa' <https://www.internal-displacement.org> accessed 2
April 2025

[25] Sorcha O'Callaghan and Chloe Sydney, 'African Report on Internal Displacement 2017'
<http://www.internal-displacement.org/library/publications/2017/africa-report-2017> accessed 2
March 2024; see also Esther Yu His Lee, Climate change forced Over 1 Million Africans from
their homes in 2015 <https://thinkprogress.org/africa-climate-internally-displaced-people-
318d3eb8a27b/> accessed 3 March 2024.

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environmental induced conflicts and all forms of violence, boarder political destabilization and in some cases death of refugees. The resultant effect of these displacements is the increase in migration of Africans within and across the global environment.

To mitigate the impacts of environmental displacements and the attendant consequences of forced migration in Africa, appropriate environmental displacement management models can be adopted in Africa. These models encompass efforts to mitigate environmental displacements in Africa. For example, this can be achieved through operationalizing the Sustainable Development Goals and African Agenda 2063, promoting responses in joint humanitarian and development initiatives that promote human development and reduce impacts of environmental displacement on human populations; preparing for potential displacements and relocations through appropriate preparedness and response measures; effectively managing displacements (particularly mass displacements) when they occur; mitigating the impacts on the environment and most importantly, addressing the root causes of environmental displacements through durable solutions and identifying effective climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies in Africa.[26]

The IPCC sixth Assessment report and the IDMC African 2024 report[27] on the vulnerability of African Countries, underline the purpose of this research, which includes the need to address the impact of environmental displacement in Africa by operationalizing the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Agenda 2063 using sustainable development plans. This is achievable through mainstreaming the SDGs and Agenda 2063 goals and aspirations into the domestic Laws and Policies of most African Countries to help combat climate change and also close the gaps in the protection of the environmentally displaced persons in Africa. Understanding the perspective of this research will no doubt assist the heads of government of African countries and Stakeholders to prepare and avert the challenges that come with climate change, such as environmental displacement. Though much has been written on mechanisms to check environmental displacements and other causes of displacement, such as conflict-related displacement, however, there is a need for practical solutions. To achieve the thesis of this research, there is an urgent need to close both the existing legislative and institutional gaps by operationalizing the SDGs and the goals of the African Agenda 2063. The African Agenda 2063 is the African Union's strategic framework for transforming the continent into a global powerhouse by 2063. The agenda emphasizes the need to address Africa's high reliance on climate-sensitive agriculture, rapid population

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[26] Mohamed Atani, 'UN Environment Program, Displacement and Environment in Africa: What is the Relationship?' <https://www.unep.org/> accessed 8 September 2024.

[27] IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, 'Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability' <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/> accessed 15 September 2024; Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, 2019 Africa Report on Internal Displacement <https://www.internal-displacement.org> accessed 15 September 2024.

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growth in vulnerable areas, which increases the risk of displacements, and limited infrastructure and disaster response capacity. Recognizing that climate change poses a significant threat to the environment, food security, livelihoods, and economic stability, Agenda 2063 advocates for climate resilience, sustainable land management, and enhanced agricultural productivity to mitigate the impacts of climate change, including displacements.[28]

5. ANALYZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND THE AFRICA AGENDA 2063 AS A LASTING SOLUTION

The relationship between the SDGs and the Africa Agenda 2063 ultimately lies in their shared commitment to sustain development and make the world, including Africa, a safer place. Though distinct in their features and content, both concepts are interconnected in their goals, targets, and aspirations as they promote global and regional development.

The SDGs, being a successor of the MDGs, not only cover a broader range of issues but also serve as reference goals for the period 2015 to 2030. All 17 goals and targets are interconnected, meaning success in one affects success for others. Dealing with the threat of climate change impacts on the environment, natural resources, achieving gender equality or better health, fostering peace and inclusive societies to reduce inequalities and helping economies prosper. For instance, about 60 targets have direct links to at least another goal, excluding the one to which they belong, thereby creating indirect or third-party links among goals.[29] Nevertheless, they differ from the MDGs in the areas of conception, target, purpose, and political processes.[30]

Similarly, at the continental level, the African Union formulated Agenda 2063 as a home-grown vision borne out of the maxim "African solutions to African problems" From the various points, African countries gained independence; their major concern was development, to which they made various strategic efforts. However, the major ones are NEPAD, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and African Agenda 2063 (The Agenda). In other words, the Agenda builds upon past and present continental initiatives such as the Monrovia Declaration, the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty, and NEPAD, and Africa's recent positive performance in the economic, social, and political fields to put the continent on a positive path of growth, peace, and prosperity.[31] The Agenda, therefore, leverages on the continent's rich history, natural resources, people, culture, its institutions and capitalizes on the opportunities of changing Africa.

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[28] African Union, African Agenda 2063 <https://au.int/en> accessed 2 April 2025.
[29] Agaptus Nwozor, Onjefu Okidu, Solomon Adedire, 'Agenda 2063 and the Feasibility of Sustainable Development in Africa: Any Silver Bullet?' (2021) 52 (7) Journal of Business Studies 691.
[30] Ibid
[31] Ibid

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Unlike the SDGs, which are universal goals, the Agenda was adopted in 2013 and is connected to the African continent.[32] The African Agenda 2063 highlights people-centered development. It places the African people at the center of all continental efforts to ensure their participation in the transformation of the continent and to build caring and inclusive societies. In the pursuit of realizing its full potential, the Agenda has seven aspirations:

1) a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;

2) an integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa's renaissance;

3) an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;

4) a peaceful and secure Africa;

5) an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values, and ethics;

6) an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children; and

7) Africa as a strong, united, resilient, and influential global player and partner.

All these aspirations reflect the continent's desire for shared prosperity and well-being, unity, and a prosperous Africa based on all-inclusive growth and sustainable development.[33]

The international community and the African region have been concerned with economic growth and the well-being of both the planet and its inhabitants, and this is reflected in the SDGs and Africa we want (Agenda 2063). These socioeconomic initiatives have aimed to ensure the reduction of inequality while promoting sustainable development. Both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 and the African Union 2063 agendas, like most global initiatives in the past, aimed at tackling environmental sustainability and inequality, hence the Leaving no one behind and Africa we want mantra of the SDGs and Agenda 2063.[34] 'Leave no one behind means that development should occur within a minimum set of social and environmental inclusion boundaries. Inclusion is concerned with bringing vulnerable and marginalized groups, especially the environmentally displaced, into the mainstream via economic and environmental protection. While the 'Africa we want" mantra refers to Africa's new path for attaining inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development, which also translates to where no one is left behind.

Both the SDG 2030 and the African Union (AU) 2063 include environmental inclusion and sustainability, it is cognizant that adverse

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[32]   Agenda 2063, 'The Africa We Want'<https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview> accessed 16 September 2024.

[33]   Ibid

[34]   The Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa, 'Africa 2030: SDGs within Social Boundaries Leave no one behind' Outlook, 2.

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climate conditions can exacerbate exclusion; poor climate conditions intensify environmental displacements, poverty, hunger, and vulnerability of African Countries to climate change. Both frameworks also seek to uplift vulnerable populations (such as environmentally displaced persons). The 'leave no one behind' and 'The Africa we want' conceptualization of SDGs and African Agenda 2063 has not been translated into practice in Africa, especially with the increase in migration of Africans resulting from environmental displacement. Out of the seven aspirations of the African Agenda 2063, 5 have a component of social inclusion. Also, further analysis of the goals revealed that 15 of the 20 goals have inclusiveness dimensions.[35] Out of the 17 SDG goals, 13 include social inclusion components.[36] Thus, achieving 'the leave no one behind' and 'The Africa we want' mantra of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 is practicable.

SDG Goal 13 on climate action recognizes the impact of climate change on environmental displacements. It therefore encourages measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Though it is difficult to directly attribute human displacement to climate change, the relationship between climate change and increased environmental displacement in recent times is recognized.[37] The assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identified some scenarios for climate displacement, such as loss of housing (due to flooding or mudslides in mountains), loss of living resources (e.g. water, energy, and food supply) and others.[38] Climate-related displacement scenarios, such as weather-induced displacement resulting from hurricanes and flooding, increased disaster threats in high-risk zones, gradual environmental deterioration, slow onset disasters and the submersion of low-lying island states, are instances that directly capture the SDG-13.1 goals of strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacities for bracing against disasters.[39] Though SDG 13 does not does not directly link to environmental displacement, nevertheless, it is acknowledged under SDG 13 as a climate change impact in general terms and does not address specific

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[35] African Union, 'Goals and Priority Areas of Agenda 2063' <https://au.int/agenda2063/goals> accessed 5 September 2024.

[36] African Union, 'Linking Agenda 2063 and the SDGs' <https://au.int/agenda2063/sdgs> accessed 6 September 2022; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development, 'Make the SDGs a Reality' <https://sdgs.un.org/#goal_section> accessed 6 September 2024.

[37] Sarah Opitz Stapleton and Others, 'Climate Change, Migration and Displacement: The Need for A Risk-informed and Coherent Approach, Overseas Development Institute and United Nations Development Programme,' (2017) 12 <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11874.pdf> accessed 12 December 2024.

[38] The fifth assessment report of IPCC stated in Stellina Jolly and Abhishek Trivedi, 'Implementing the SDG-13 through the Adoption of Hybrid Law: Addressing Climate-Induced Displacement,' (2020) Brill Open Law, <https://brill.com/view/journals/bol/2/1/article-p69_69.xml> accessed on 15 December 2024.

[39] The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) perspective as captured in The fifth assessment report of IPCC stated in Stellina Jolly and Abhishek Trivedi, 'Implementing the SDG-13 through the Adoption of Hybrid Law: Addressing Climate-Induced Displacement' (2020) Brill Open Law, <https://brill.com/view/journals/bol/2/1/article-p69_69.xml> accessed on 15 December 2024.

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climate change impacts such as food security and access to water.[40] Other SDG goals such as SDGs 8, 10 and 17 more explicitly regulate the need for migration policies.

African Agenda 2063 pertinently aligns with the SDG goals, thereby emphasizing the need for collaboration between the African countries and the international communities to achieve the common goals, which relate to lasting development, environmental sustainability, poverty eradication, and putting an end to displacement-induced migration. The Agenda's first aspiration is for a "prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development" and places a high priority on environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation and mitigation while advancing Africa's common agenda.[41]

Africa recognizes that it is warming earlier than any other continent, with global projections of a rise of 3 - 4°C this century.[42] The negative consequences of this situation range from water scarcity, reduced crop and livestock productivity, rising sea levels, and more frequent extreme climate events, which lead to human displacements. African governments have acknowledged the urgent need to address these threats, as evidenced in national, sub-regional, and continental commitments to the global "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" and African Agenda 2063, the "Africa We Want."[43] In this regard, African leaders have specifically committed to Goal 13 of Agenda 2030 and Goal 7 of the first ten-year implementation plan of the African Agenda 2063, which aims to "take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact" with associated targets to integrate climate change measures into national policies, improve education, awareness-raising, and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warnings.[44]

Ultimately, achieving the African Agenda 2063 and the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will depend on how the impact on climate variability is managed. Therefore, the relationship between the two concepts lies in the effort to achieve an environmentally safe Africa and, by extension, a globally safe environment.

6. MITIGATING ENVIRONMENTAL DISPLACEMENTS OF PERSONS BY OPERATIONALIZING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND AFRICAN AGENDA 2063

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40   The fifth assessment report of IPCC stated in Stellina Jolly and Abhishek Trivedi, 'Implementing the SDG-13 through the Adoption of Hybrid Law: Addressing Climate-Induced Displacement,' (2020), Brill Open Law, <https://brill.com/view/journals/bol/2/1/article-p69_69.xml> accessed on 15 December, 2024

41   Aspiration 1, 'African Agenda 2063. The Africa We Want,' Framework document, <https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33126-doc-framework_document_book.pdf> accessed on 18 December 2024.

42   Steiner, A., 'Climate Change, Environment, and Sustainable Development in Africa. *African Economic Development* (Steinered: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2019) 93–110, <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78743-783-820192006> accessed 18 December 2024.

43   Ibid

44   Ibid (n.39)

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Operationalizing the SDGs and African Agenda 2063 using home-grown solutions is considered an effective tool towards mitigating environmental displacement of persons in Africa. SDG 2030 and AU Agenda 2063 are a culmination of efforts by the international community and the African region to address global economic growth.[45] Statistics have shown that climate-related disasters accounted for the displacement of 35 million persons in Africa in 2024.[46] Research has shown that while Africa contributes little to global greenhouse gas emissions, African countries are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as environmental displacements.[47]

Environmental displacement refers to the forced displacement of people from their homes, communities, and villages due to natural disasters or what may be referred to as an 'Act of God'.[48] The growing intensity of meteorological disasters due to climate change, coupled with the effects of environmental degradation, is likely to continue to be a factor behind human displacement. The International Organization of Migration (IOM) predicts there will be 230 million displaced people by the year 2050, with major effects on countries of origin, transit countries, as well as receiving countries.[49] Environmentally displaced persons (EDPs) are often neglected in national policies and development planning, resulting in the insufficient allocation of resources for their protection, hence the call for home-grown solutions to address EDPs. Consequently, EDPs in many instances lack necessities like shelter, food, and access to health care. Considering that a lot of climate change impacts are responsible for these displacements, there is a need to mitigate climate change in Africa. It should be noted that mitigating climate change will help mitigate environmental displacements in Africa. Though Africans seem to have shown a preference for migration over mitigation of environmental displacements due to several socio-economic factors. Climate change and environmental degradation, such as desertification in the Sahel, rising sea levels in coastal regions, and extreme weather events, have made some areas increasingly uninhabitable. However, rather than investing in long-term adaptation measures, many individuals, communities, private sector opt for migration as a survival strategy.

Mitigating the environmental displacement of Persons in Africa requires concerted efforts to be made by African countries. Operationalizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and African Agenda 2063 using

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[45] The Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa, 'Africa 2030: SDGs within Social Boundaries Leave no one behind' Outlook, p.2 <https://sdgcafrica.org/wp-content> accessed 12 September 2024.

[46] Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, 2024 Africa Report on Internal Displacement' <https://www.internal-displacement.org> accessed 2 April 2025.

[47] African Development Bank, 'Climate Change in Africa' <https://www.afdb.org/en/cop25/climate-change-africa> accessed 12 September 2024.

[48] Environmental Law Institute, "Environmental Displacement, and Migration' <https://www.eli.org/migration/environmental-displacejent-and-migration> accessed 12 September 2024.

[49] IOM UN Migration, 'World Migration Report 2020,' p.2 <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf> accessed 10 September 2024.

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the home-grown approach is key to mitigating environmental displacements of persons in Africa. Home-grown approach refers to the use of African indigenous knowledge systems to address climate change effects, which result in environmental displacement. Africa is also a continent rich in Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK) that has a long history of informing responses to climatic variability and change. African Indigenous knowledge systems have become central to sustainable development.[50] This is because of the way in which the indigenous knowledge system allowed people to live in harmony with nature and has become a way of life. African Indigenous knowledge systems, such as growing drought-resistant crops, the use of animal dung as manure, the siting of the new moon before planting, rain-making rituals, and the planting of trees to serve as shade, have helped to conserve the wetlands and the forests are effective in promoting environmental sustainability. Further, cultural taboos are not new to many traditional societies in Africa, as they are used to put restrictions on the excessive use of some plants, killing of some animals or carrying out development in erosion-prone areas, which they refer to as 'African shrines/religious worship centers' and 'evil forest', preventing overfishing from some waters by tagging the waters "*Owumiri or 'Mami Water'* dedicated rivers or sea.[51] This home mechanism helped to curb the depletion of natural resources, desertification, erosion, and climate change effects, such as global warming, that we experience today.[52] The mechanism also helped to promote environmental sustainability, which is one of the critical goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2022) and one of the 7 aspirations of the African Agenda 2063. Integrating these home-grown mechanisms into policies and environmental protection laws is important and an effective way to operationalize the SDGs and African Agenda 2063 to mitigate environmental displacements.

It is expected that the domestic/ national laws will engender responses in joint humanitarian and development initiatives that promote human development and reduce other impacts of environmental displacement on human populations at the national level in Africa,[53] preparing for potential displacements and relocations through appropriate preparedness and response measures at the national level; effectively managing displacements (particularly mass displacements) when they occur; mitigating the impacts of displacements on the environment and at the domestic level and most

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[50] Anthony Ikhide Osawe and Ojeifo O. Magnu, 'Environmental Governance in Nigeria: The Community Perspective' (2016) 6 (2) Public Policy and Administration Research 2225-0972; Ashok Das Gupta, 'Impact of migration on Indigenous Knowledge System' <https://nomadit.co.uk> accessed 15 December 2024.

[51] Izuoma Egeruoh-Adindu, 'Leveraging Indigenous Knowledge for Effective Environmental Governance in West Africa', (2022) 13 Beijing Law Review 931-947.

[52] Jiri, Mafongoya Mubaya, & Mafongoya, 'Seasonal Climate Prediction and Adaptation Using Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Agriculture Systems in Southern Africa: A Review' (2016) 8 (5) The Journal of Agricultural Science 156–172.

[53] Food insecurity, poverty, hunger, environmental-induced conflicts, insecurity

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importantly, addressing the root causes of environmental displacements through durable solutions and identifying effective climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies across the countries in Africa.

Further, operationalizing the Kampala convention by ensuring ratification and domestication of the convention across all African countries is another strategy that will help in mitigating the environmental displacements of persons in Africa. In response to the challenge of preventing and addressing internal displacement on the continent, African States joined forces through the African Union (AU) to create the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention, or the Convention) in 2009.[54] This innovative treaty is the world's first-ever legally binding instrument on Internally Displaced Persons, which includes Environmentally Displaced Persons in Africa, entered into force in 2012 after 15 African States ratified it. Today, 33 African Union members have ratified the convention.[55]

The Convention aims to prevent internal displacement and to protect the rights and well-being of people forced to flee their homes by conflict, violence, natural disasters, and development projects.[56] It provides durable solutions to internal displacements in the African region by providing an excellent opportunity for the Member States to put in place a national framework for the prevention of displacement and a comprehensive framework when it happens. To achieve these aims, it sets out the rights of IDPs/EDPs and lays obligations on states, armed groups, non-state actors, and other relevant actors. The rights of IDPs/EDPs enshrined in the Convention include the right not to be displaced, the right to non-discrimination, the right to seek safety, the right to education, the right to food, and the right to shelter. The obligations of states include, but are not limited to, the obligation not to arbitrarily displace individuals and groups, and to prohibit and prevent the same; the obligation to respect and guarantee the human rights of IDPs/EDPs; the obligation to provide or facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance to IDPs/EDPs; and the obligation to put in place legal, policy and institutional frameworks for the protection of IDPs/EDPs, and to allocate resources for these purposes.[57]

Despite the robust provisions of this convention, the momentum the Kampala Convention enjoyed between its adoption in 2009 and its entry into force in 2012 has stalled in recent years. Few States have ratified or acceded to the Convention in the period from 2014 to the present. There are African Union (AU) Member States that have signed up to the Kampala Convention but have not taken the required action to ratify or accede to it, even after

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[54] African Union, 'African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention)' <https://au.int/en/treaties> accessed 15 September 2024.

[55] International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 'Translating the Kampala Convention into practice: A stocktaking exercise of International Review of the Red Cross', (2017) 99 (1) Journal of Migration and Displacement 365–420. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1816383117000601>.

[56] Ibid

[57] Ibid.

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several years of entering into force. More worrisome is that many African States are experiencing delays in the process of enacting the necessary legislation to give domestic effect to the Convention as a means of operationalizing the Convention. Some of the identified reasons for not operationalizing the convention may include lack of awareness by some authorities on the issue of displacements, their obligations, and/or on the importance of the Kampala Convention; lack of capacity; lack of budget allocations; and internal/environmental displacements not being seen as a priority issue by the authorities.[58]

Acknowledging the urgent need to address the impact of internal displacement/Environmental displacement on the continent and the Convention's potential to this effect, the African Union Commission (AUC) launched a strategy, in cooperation with its partners and United Nations agencies. This strategy aims at achieving continent-wide ratification and full implementation of the Convention. It focuses on four key elements: (1) capacity-building for Member State institutions dealing with the issue of internal displacement; (2) promoting ratification and domestication of the Kampala Convention; (3) strengthening and monitoring reporting mechanisms; and (4) awareness of, advocacy for and promotion of the Convention. However, just like operationalizing the SDGs and Agenda 2063 requires an inclusion process, the domestic implementation of the Kampala Convention also requires an inclusive process. This means engaging all key domestic actors across African countries in consultations, information sharing, and decision-making. These include ministries and governmental agencies concerned, at central and field levels, municipal authorities and civil society organizations, as well as IDPs/ EDPs. Without an inclusive process, operationalizing the convention at the domestic level may suffer setbacks. Public education and raising awareness of the Kampala Convention and the plight of IDPs/EDPs are important factors in translating political commitments into concrete measures. These activities can be usefully carried out with the public authorities and civil society, as well as survivors of IDPs/EDPs. They can serve to encourage the public's interest and engagement, and their dialogue with public authorities, on the issue of environmental displacement. This, in turn, can help ensure that addressing environmental displacement remains a priority that enjoys sustained political will.

Special attention should be given to ensuring that laws and policies are created on domesticated conventions, and made available in all official and local languages of the most affected stakeholders. Laws and policies that will address issues of environmental displacement must contain provisions for adequate means for their implementation and operationalization, such as institutional/mandate, human resources, and budget.[59] This is because implementation processes may be stalled because of a lack of adequate

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[58] ICRC, 'The Kampala Convention: Key Recommendations Ten Years on' <https://www.icrc.org> accessed 9 September 2024.

[59] Ibid

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resources to sustain the work. Concerted efforts and practical measures are urgently required to operationalize the SDGS and African Agenda 2063 using the Kampala Convention to address the impact of environmental displacement in Africa.

7. CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

This section will examine the challenges in implementing the SDGs, Agenda 2063, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) to address environmental displacement as well as the potential opportunities for success. Africa is battling with challenges such as poverty, lack of awareness, food insecurity, water scarcity, environmentally induced conflicts, political instability, infrastructural development and undocumented African indigenous knowledge systems. It is notable to briefly examine some of the identified challenges intensified by the negative impacts of environmental displacement in Africa.

7.1 Poverty

Statistics have shown that 460 million Africans are projected to remain poor in 2030, and this is exacerbated by climate change effects such as climate-induced displacements and the COVID-19 pandemic.[60] This translates into 8 in 10 of the world's poor will be living on the African continent. Of those, nearly two-thirds are in rural areas, and the most affected are women, children, and the youth. Climate change effects made many African households susceptible to displacement, hence the increased rate of migration in search of a home and sources of livelihood. Climate change adaptation and mitigation measures are rarely explored because of poverty and lack of awareness. Women continue to face unique adversities which leave them more vulnerable and poorer. Currently, 7 of the 10 most unequal economies are in Africa, with the top 10% accounting for more than 50% of the national pre-tax income while the bottom 50% account for less than 10%.[61] It is notable that 33 of the 36 countries in the low human development category are in Africa.[62] Labour market exclusion is on the increase across African countries. Further, social protection coverage remains unavailable as Africa becomes the world's poverty capital. The situation is not poised to change unless active, structural changes are implemented. Poor implementation of policies that adequately address the welfare of environmental refugees is a challenge. This means displaced people or those at risk of displacement may not receive the support they need despite the high-level frameworks in place.

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[60] Abdulkareem Mojeed, 'Climate Change: Why over 40 Million Africans May Experience Extreme Poverty by 2030-Report' (2022) Premium Times, 25 May 2022.
<https://www.premiumtimesng.com> accessed 10 September 2024.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Lily Welborn, 'Climate Change and Poverty in Africa' <https://reliefweb.int/> accessed 12 September 2024.

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7.2 Lack of Awareness

Africa has the highest rates of education exclusion.[63] Pre-COVID-19 trend analyses show that children, adolescents, and youth in Africa are more than five times as likely to be out of school and also aware of events happening around them when compared to children, adolescents, and youth in Asia and Europe by 2030.[64] For example, in Africa, over 5.3 million learners are at risk of not going back to school due to the pandemic as well as poverty.[65] The average internet penetration rate remains lower for Africa (26%) compared to the world's average (57%). The cost of internet-enabled devices has not significantly fallen in Africa. Only 10 out of 45 countries in Africa (22%) have affordable internet, which still falls short of the target of monthly income per capita of 1 GB by 2.3%.[66] Issues of affordability and the ability to use the devices optimally exclude many users, and displaced persons are inclusive. This is a call to awareness on how to mitigate climate change and environmental displacements in Africa.

7.3 The Desire to Migrate and Brain Drain in Africa

Environmental displacement and lack of response to the plight of environmentally displaced persons by most governments increased the desire to migrate to other continents. The reason for migration, which often results in brain drain in the African continent, is the search for shelter and means of livelihood. Considering the brain drain and increase in migration, mitigating environmental displacement in Africa faces a lot of challenges, as environmentally displaced persons give preference to migration over addressing the root causes of environmental displacement in Africa. The constant neglect of how to address or mitigate climate-related disasters makes the continent more vulnerable to climate-induced displacements.[67]

7.4 Environmental Displacement and Increased Scarcity of Food and Water in Africa

Africa has the highest prevalence of food insecurity and water scarcity. Environmental displacement has resulted in environmental-induced conflicts that exacerbated food insecurity, for example, the farmer's-herders' conflicts, which are fueled by climate-related disasters and environmental displacements, forcing herders to migrate in search of pastures for their animals. Also, food insecurity and water scarcity were exacerbated by the

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[63] Isaac Kaledzi, 'Why the Right to Education remains a Challenge in Africa' <https://www.dw.com/en/africa-right-to-education-remains-a-challenge> accessed 7 September 2024.

[64] UNICEF, 'COVID-19 A Catastrophe for Children in Sub-Saharan Africa' <https://www.unicef.org/> accessed 6 September 2024.

[65] UNESCO, 'UN Secretary-General warns of education catastrophe, pointing to UNESCO estimate of 24 million learners at risk of dropping out' < https://www.unesco.org/> accessed 2 April 2025.

[66] Paula Gilbert, 'The State of Mobile broadband affordability in Africa' <https://www.connectingafrica.com> accessed 12 September 2024.

[67] Amal El Ouassif, 'Policy Center for the New South, 'The Challenge of Youth Bulge in Africa and Middle East, Migration and Brain Drain' <https://www.policycenter.ma> accessed 13 September 2024.

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COVID-19 pandemic, as it is projected that 38-80 million people in African countries are experiencing food insecurity post-COVID-19.[68] Displaced persons are at risk of being malnourished if food insecurity and water scarcity are not addressed, as food and water are essential for human survival.

7.5 Absence of Sustainable Development in Africa

Africa lags behind the rest of the world in all dimensions of inclusive infrastructure – quantity, quality, cost, and access. Also, the government hardly provides even basic shelter to alleviate the suffering of environmentally Displaced persons. In some cases, the EDPs are kept in makeshift shelters, public schools, and most inhumane conditions, with little or no food, leaving them at the mercy of charity. Where they are kept in IDP camps, the camps lack basic amenities and good health care facilities. This leaves them vulnerable to crime and increases migration. Also, the absence of basic amenities and infrastructure has increased cases of migration to other continents. Thus, only 25 percent of Africa's Road networks are paved compared to the world's average of more than 50 percent. Out of the paved roads in Africa, only 49 percent are in good condition, and 85 percent of rural feeder roads remain in poor condition, depriving many people, especially the EDPs, access to basic services, especially healthcare facilities.[69] The fact that there are no plans to resettle them makes it more difficult and has led to the death of many displaced persons.

7.6 Political instability

Political instability and the non-sustainability of projects by various governments in Africa are also major challenges in mitigating environmental displacement in Africa. One major challenge faced in the African governance system is the continuity and sustainability of projects. Despite embracing democracy, most governments in Africa operate in autocracy. Upon being voted into power, a new government will commence new projects and abandon the ongoing projects of its predecessor. This has frustrated the enforcement of laws and implementation of various robust policies. Continuity in government is key to mitigating environmental displacements in Africa.[70]

Despite the challenges marshalled above, addressing the impacts of environmental displacements in Africa is not without prospects. Thus, where the welfare of EDPs is prioritized by the government and where they are empowered to embrace climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, migration and environmental displacement will be a forgotten matter. Also,

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[68] World Meteorological Organization, 'Climate Change triggers mounting Food Insecurity, Poverty and Displacements in Africa' <https://public.wmo.int/>accessed 13 September 2024.

[69] Belay Begashaw, 'African and the Sustainable Development Goals: A Long Way to go' <https://www.brookings.edu> accessed 11 September 2024.

[70] Mohamed Atani, 'UN Environment Program, Displacement and Environment in Africa: What is the Relationship?' (2016) <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/displacement-and-environment-africa-what-relationship> accessed 12 April 2025.

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operationalizing the SDGs, African Agenda 2063, and the Kampala convention through all-inclusive mechanisms for stakeholders across African countries will no doubt help address the impact of environmental displacements in Africa. This is because the SDGs and African Agenda 2063 contain goals and targets for sustainable development and environmental sustainability. Also, considering that the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 has expired and yet not much has been achieved in terms of implementation of the African Agenda 2063, there is a need for African countries to collaborate and also put in more efforts toward operationalizing Agenda 2063.

7.7. Undocumented African Indigenous Knowledge Systems

The African Indigenous knowledge system has been identified in this research as an effective homegrown approach to address negative climate change effects, such as climate-induced displacements. However, it is saddening that these knowledge systems are not documented and may be eroded in future if not addressed now. The need to preserve and revive the African Indigenous Knowledge Systems by empowering local communities in Africa and rediscovering the values of the indigenous people is essential to preserve these knowledge systems. Building and strengthening national institutions and cultures relating to indigenous knowledge is very important. Mainstreaming them into national development planning and sectoral development policies and programs, especially poverty reduction and environmental protection programs, promoting and enhancing IKS through the development of partnerships and stakeholder networks should be encouraged. Though passed from generation to generation, the need to document these knowledge systems or integrate them into education curricula in African countries cannot be overemphasized, as this will help preserve these knowledge systems, which promote nature-based solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change effects. Application of this knowledge will no doubt address climate-related disasters, which are the root cause of environmental displacement. This will reduce the number of environmental displaced persons in Africa.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The feasibility of achieving sustainable development in Africa, to a great extent, depends on the transformation of its states into active states. Most African countries are structurally weak to spearhead national development. Africa suffers weak capacity to implement development-based policies and laws. This is as a result of bad governance, lack of political will and lack of continuity in governance. Before major environmental development milestones can be hit, there must be a major overhaul in African orientation, especially in addressing hunger, poverty, migration, environmental sustainability and other incidental areas.

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The crux of operationalizing SDGs through Africa Agenda 2063 is twofold - recognizing that the goals of the SDGs are all interdependent, interrelated, and indivisible, just like human rights principles. This principle also resonates with that of the Africa Agenda 2063. The second point is in the SDG 2030 principle of inclusion. The 'Leave no one behind' policy also resonates with 'The African We Want' mantra of Africa Agenda 2063.

It is pertinent that getting these two principles right must translate to the re-orientation of the people. Awareness must be created to educate people on the need to embrace sustainable development. People must understand environmental matters, not just because of the displacement, but generally to avoid creating environmental problems that could complicate the status quo. A proper legal framework or reform of extant legal frameworks must be deployed to address the different areas of development and environmental sustainability. The proposed legal framework or reforms must integrate a home-grown approach using the African indigenous knowledge system, which promotes nature-based solutions and has proved to be effective in addressing environmental sustainability, climate change effects and environmental displacements.

This means that SDGs and African Agenda 2063 can best be operationalized through the Afrocentric way to address challenges that are peculiar to the region. Thus, domestic laws and policies should encourage all-around development, as a law is being made for the eradication of poverty, there is a law or policy in place encouraging environmental sustainability and agriculture, so that food production will be on the increase. As legislation is ongoing in agriculture, there must be policies in place to recognize African indigenous agricultural practices that are environmentally or climate-friendly. The cycle is endless until there is an active state. When these happen, the issue of environmental challenges that result in environmentally induced internal displacements will also have been adequately addressed, and no one will be left behind.

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African Union, 'Linking Agenda 2063 and the SDGs' <https://au.int/agenda2063/sdgs> accessed 6 September 2022

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AUTHORS' DECLARATION AND ESSENTIAL ETHICAL COMPLIANCES

Authors' Contributions (in accordance with ICMJE criteria for authorship)

Contribution	Author 1	Author 2	Author 3
Conceived and designed the research or analysis	Yes	Yes	No
Collected the data	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contributed to data analysis and interpretation	Yes	Yes	Yes
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