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‘Work it and take care of it’ (Genesis 2:15): Investigating contemporary ecocide in Nigeria and the need for a legal policy

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Abstract: This paper explores the imperative for a legal policy addressing the ecological crisis in Nigeria, drawing insights from the biblical perspective of Genesis 2:15. This study adopted the narrative method with data gotten from literature and analysed using content analysis. Scholarly publications on ecological crises abound; however, this study goes a step further by providing responses from a legal and theological lens. Findings show that in Nigeria, large-scale deforestation, often driven by logging, agricultural expansion, and urbanisation, has contributed to the loss of critical ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and biodiversity. Rapid industrialisation and urbanisation in Nigeria have resulted in air pollution, primarily in major cities. The study advocates for the development and implementation of laws that address destruction of the environment, emphasising the interconnectedness of legal, ethical, and biblical principles in fostering sustainable environmental policies for Nigeria.

Keywords: ecological crisis; legal policy; ecocide; Nigeria; Genesis 2:15; environment; climate change

1. Introduction

The concept of ecocide was initially introduced in the 1970s amidst the Vietnam War by biology professor Arthur W. Galston. At that time, Galston protested the United States military’s use of the herbicide and defoliant chemical Agent Orange to eliminate foliage cover and crops of enemy troops. Practices that inflict ecocide are hence often responsible for the destruction of ecological and social life-systems that face adversities due to deteriorating ecological conditions [1]. Since its inception, numerous civil society organizations and legal experts have advocated for the criminalization of ecocide within the realm of international law [2]. In a proposal presented to the UN Law Commission aimed at amending the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) by incorporating ‘ecocide’ as a fifth crime against peace, the late Polly Higgins defined ecocide as the extensive damage to, destruction of, or loss of ecosystem(s) of a given territory, whether by human agency or by other causes, to such an extent that peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants of that territory has been or will be severely diminished’.

The term ecocide is sometimes used in the context of environmental law and international discussions about the protection of the environment. Ecocide is the extensive damage to, destruction of, or loss of ecosystem(s) of a given territory, to such an extent that peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants of that territory has been or will be severely diminished [3]. Ecocide is the unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts [4]. There have

been discussions about whether ecocide should be recognized as an international crime, similar to genocide or crimes against humanity, with the idea that individuals or entities responsible for severe environmental destruction could be held accountable on a global scale. Corporate responsibility for environmental damage and illegal natural resource exploitation is also endemic not only in the peacetime context but also in internal and international armed conflicts in resource-rich countries, which have led to major human rights violations around the world [5]. This is so because the phenomenon of ecocide leads to extensive damage to, destruction of, or loss of ecosystems of a particular territory, whether by human agency or other causes, to such an extent that peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants of that territory has been or will be severely diminished. The concept of ecocide is often associated with severe environmental harm, including large-scale pollution, deforestation, and other actions that significantly impact ecosystems and biodiversity.

Nigeria, like many other countries, faces environmental challenges that could be characterized as ecocide in certain contexts. Some of the key environmental issues in Nigeria include oil pollution, deforestation, and air pollution; waste management; erosion; and desertification, among others. According to Ordinioha and Brisibe [6], each year, an estimated 240,000 barrels of crude oil are discharged into the Niger Delta, primarily attributed to unidentified reasons (31.85%), actions by third parties (20.74%), and mechanical breakdowns (17.04%). These spills result in the pollution of surface water, groundwater, air, and crops with hydrocarbons. Ordinioha & Brisibe [7] further explain that this contamination includes recognized carcinogens like polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon and benzo(a)pyrene, naturally occurring radioactive materials, and trace metals that subsequently accumulate in certain food crops. The Niger Delta region, rich in oil resources, has experienced extensive environmental damage due to oil spills. These spills have led to the pollution of waterways, the destruction of farmlands, and adverse effects on biodiversity. The epicentre of this has been Ogoniland, with 261 communities spread over nearly 1000 km² (385 m²) [8].

Large-scale deforestation, often driven by logging, agricultural expansion, and urbanization, has contributed to the loss of critical ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and biodiversity. Rapid industrialization and urbanization in Nigeria have resulted in air pollution, primarily in major cities. Thus, urbanization could reduce hardship and human suffering; on the other hand, it could also increase poverty and squalor [9]. Environmental pressures such as elevated carbon dioxide emissions, inefficient water use, contamination of drinking water, deforestation, and climatic disasters are contributing to a decline in the overall quality of life [10]. Emissions from vehicles, industries, and waste burning contribute to poor air quality, impacting both the environment and public health.

Improper waste disposal and inadequate waste management infrastructure have led to pollution of water bodies and soil. Plastic pollution is a significant concern in many areas. Erosion and soil erosion, exacerbated by deforestation and improper land use practices, is a problem in various regions. Additionally, desertification, particularly in the northern parts of the country, poses threats to agricultural productivity and livelihoods. According to AbdelRahman [11], desertification poses a major threat to food security, livelihood sustainability, ecosystem services, and

biodiversity conservation. Nigeria is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events, rising temperatures, and changing precipitation patterns. These factors can contribute to ecological imbalance and affect agriculture, water resources, and biodiversity. Efforts are being made at various levels to address these environmental challenges. However, the scale and complexity of the issues require sustained commitment, collaboration, and the implementation of effective policies and regulations to mitigate further ecological damage. Advocacy for sustainable practices, conservation, and responsible resource management is crucial in addressing ecocide and promoting environmental sustainability in Nigeria.

There is no legal policy against ecocide in Nigeria. This legal policy encompasses the principles, guidelines, and objectives that form the foundation of laws and regulations within a jurisdiction. It represents the government's overarching approach to addressing social issues and achieving specific goals through legislative and regulatory measures. Legal policies guide the development, interpretation, and enforcement of laws, shaping the legal landscape in a particular jurisdiction. This seems not to exist in Nigeria, hence the indiscriminate environmental degradation going on in the different parts of Nigeria. Nigeria has environmental laws addressing pollution, wildlife protection, and conservation. However, effective enforcement remains a challenge. Numerous policies and programs have been instituted by the Nigerian government to address desertification. However, the issue persists and worsens due to the treatment of the problem as a sector-specific concern rather than adopting an integrated approach that would effectively connect policy formation with strategies for combating drought and desertification [12]. The specific legislation against ecocide could strengthen the legal framework, providing a targeted approach to address severe environmental harm and hold responsible parties accountable.

Although extremely important, few research groups have consistently gathered a great amount of evidence for ecocide in Nigeria. In addition, previous studies that assessed the effects of habitat loss were conducted on a biological scale [13] or investigated the economic lens [14] but ignored the theological lens and the need for legal policy. The aim of this article is to explore what legal framework should be adopted to curb ecocide in Nigeria. First, this article accesses ecocide in Nigeria. Second, it analyzes the impact of ecocide in Nigeria. Third, it examines ecocide in Genesis 2:15 ff. Thereafter, a legal framework was provided that could assist in ameliorating the challenge of ecocide in Nigeria.

2. Materials and method

This study utilised a qualitative design. Qualitative research is often exploratory, seeking to understand the “how” and “why” behind a phenomenon. It is used because the research question requires deep exploration rather than quantifiable measures. This qualitative research used the narrative method. Narrative research often emphasises the temporal order of events, exploring how past experiences shape present and future understanding [15]. The method pays close attention to the context in which stories are told, recognising that stories are influenced by cultural, social, and historical factors. Data was gotten from secondary sources such as

journals, textbooks, archives, and gazettes. Secondary sources focus on discussing or evaluating information that has already been collected or published by others. They provide context, summarise findings, and offer critiques or perspectives on the original data on contemporary ecocide in Nigeria using the text of Genesis 2:15. Also, data was gotten from personal observation. The data was analysed using content analysis. Content analysis can be applied to a wide range of materials, including written documents, social media posts, speeches, and advertisements, which were used in gathering data for this study [16]. Content analysis is valuable in historical research for examining how themes or issues have evolved over time. It allows researchers to trace the development of concepts, ideologies, or social norms across different periods.

3. Ecocide in Nigeria

The concept of ecocide underscores the need for responsible environmental stewardship and the protection of ecosystems to ensure the well-being of both the environment and its inhabitants. Ecocide refers to extensive damage, destruction, or loss of ecosystems to such an extent that it severely diminishes the peaceful enjoyment of inhabitants. Ecocide is the damage caused by individuals, cooperative organizations, and the state [17]. It may involve activities like pollution, deforestation, and other actions causing significant harm to the environment. While there is no specific international law defining ecocide, discussions are ongoing about its recognition as an international crime. Some argue that individuals or entities responsible for severe environmental destruction should be held legally accountable.

The Niger Delta, a major oil-producing region, has faced severe environmental consequences due to oil spills, gas flaring, and other petroleum-related activities. Large-scale deforestation threatens Nigeria's diverse ecosystems and wildlife. Preservation efforts are crucial to combating biodiversity loss. Urbanization and industrial activities contribute to air and water pollution, impacting ecosystems and public health. Deteriorating air and water quality, inadequate water supply, challenges in waste disposal, and elevated energy consumption are heightened by the growing population density and urban demands. Effective urban planning will play a crucial role in addressing these and other challenges as global urban areas continue to expand [18]. Nigeria is vulnerable to climate change impacts, including extreme weather events, rising temperatures, and changing precipitation patterns, which can exacerbate environmental challenges. These spills have had devastating effects on waterways, farmlands, and biodiversity. Large-scale deforestation, often driven by logging, agriculture, and urbanization, has led to the loss of critical ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and biodiversity. Besides being hotter, patches embedded within deforested landscapes present reduced quality, evidenced by low fruit production and quality [19]. This presents an additional cancer risk that may manifest in a higher incidence of specific cancers many years following the oil spill. The extensive radiation pollution resulting from crude oil spills in the Niger Delta region is often widespread, leading to contamination beyond acceptable limits in both surface water and crops cultivated in the affected areas.

Desertification in northern regions poses threats to agriculture and livelihoods.

Desertification in northern Nigeria refers to the process of land degradation and the expansion of arid conditions in the northern regions of the country. This phenomenon is characterized by the gradual transformation of once fertile and productive land into desert-like landscapes, often caused by factors such as prolonged drought, deforestation, unsustainable agricultural practices, and climate change. Desertification stands as a critical challenge in northern Nigeria, impacting approximately 580,841 km² out of the total land area of 927,892 km² in the country. Around 62 million Nigerians are directly or indirectly affected by the consequences of desertification in this region [20]. Desertification poses significant challenges to the environment, agriculture, and livelihoods of communities in the affected areas, leading to soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, and increased vulnerability to extreme weather events.

There is also an increasing level of bush burning in Benue State. Benue State is located in the middle belt of Nigeria and is known as the agricultural capital in Nigeria. Bush burning in Benue State refers to the practice of intentionally setting fire to vegetation and grasslands in open areas. This activity is commonly known as a form of land management, often used to clear land for agriculture, grazing, or other purposes. However, uncontrolled or indiscriminate bush burning can have adverse effects on the environment, including soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, and air pollution. Aluko et al. [21] in their study found out that the level of livelihood security was low, with more than half (53.8%) feeling the negative effects of bush burning ranging from destruction of wildlife, pollution of the environment, destruction of soil texture, respiratory infection, and lastly, destruction of agricultural products. The practice of bush burning in Benue State, as in many other regions, is influenced by various factors such as agricultural practices, traditional land management, and local customs. While controlled burning can be a tool for certain land management objectives, it is crucial to balance these practices with environmental conservation efforts and sustainable land use practices. The detrimental effects of bush burning should not be underestimated, as it poses threats not only to human health but also to the overall environment by emitting various toxins. Apart from causing soil destruction and facilitating the encroachment of deserts, bush burning has substantially contributed to global warming. This is due to the release of harmful gases that adversely affect the ozone layer and result in acid rain. The acid rain, in turn, harms plant life, negatively affects soils rich in calcium, and increases the acidity of adjacent lakes [22]. Efforts to address bush burning in Benue State may involve public awareness campaigns, community education on alternative land management practices, and the enforcement of regulations to prevent uncontrolled or harmful burning. Sustainable agricultural practices, agroforestry, and community involvement in land conservation can contribute to minimizing the negative impacts associated with bush burning.

4. Impacts of ecocide Nigeria

The impacts of ecocide in Nigeria are multifaceted, affecting the environment, communities, and overall sustainability. While ecocide may not be officially recognized as a crime under international law, severe environmental degradation in

Nigeria has led to significant consequences. The Niger Delta is known for oil pollution, and the activities of oil exploration companies have caused oil spills, gas flaring, and other petroleum-related activities in the Niger Delta that have led to extensive pollution of water bodies, farmlands, and mangrove forests. According to data from the gas flare tracker of the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) of Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Environment, from January 2013 to December 2021, the country flared 3.4 billion million standard cubic feet (Mscf) valued at \$12.0 billion. That resulted in CO₂ emissions of 182.3 million tonnes, reveals data from the tracker [23]. This has had severe consequences for aquatic life, biodiversity, and the livelihoods of communities dependent on these ecosystems. Gas flaring hinders agricultural production in the Niger Delta. The burning process elevates soil temperatures, resulting in reduced crop yields and the occurrence of acid rains, among other consequences. Additionally, the smoke emitted from the flares contributes to black rainfall, negatively impacting aquatic life and wildlife [24].

There is also increased deforestation and biodiversity loss. The large-scale deforestation, driven by logging, agricultural expansion, and urbanization, has resulted in the loss of critical ecosystems. This contributes to a decline in biodiversity, as wildlife habitats are destroyed and indigenous plant species are lost. Primary challenges encompass habitat degradation, stemming from unregulated logging, agricultural initiatives, industrial plantations, highway and urban expansion, and exploitation for fuelwood. Over-hunting and poaching are also significant issues [25]. The increasing air and water pollution has caused severe challenges to the environment. The rapid industrialization, urbanization, and inadequate waste management contribute to air and water pollution. This has implications for public health, leading to respiratory illnesses from air pollutants and waterborne diseases from contaminated water sources.

There is an increasing level of soil erosion and desertification. This includes the improper land use practices, including deforestation and unsustainable agricultural practices, that contribute to soil erosion. Desertification in the northern regions poses threats to agricultural productivity, leading to food insecurity. Thus, there is an increase climate change vulnerability. Nigeria is vulnerable to climate change impacts, including extreme weather events, rising temperatures, and changing precipitation patterns. Furthermore, increased demand for water, energy, infrastructure, and other natural resources has resulted from an increase in anthropocentric activities recently, which has led to climate change, land erosion, pollution growth, and a decline in biodiversity [26]. These impacts can exacerbate existing environmental challenges and have wide-ranging effects on agriculture, water resources, and overall livelihoods.

There are many health implications of climate change. The environmental degradation resulting from ecocide has direct health implications for local communities. Water pollution, air pollution, and exposure to hazardous substances contribute to various health issues, including respiratory diseases, waterborne illnesses, and long-term health effects. Furthermore, the social and economic consequences cannot be underestimated. Ecocide contributes to social and economic challenges, particularly in communities directly affected. Loss of livelihoods,

displacement of communities, and disruptions to traditional ways of life can lead to increased poverty and social unrest.

The destruction of natural environments can also result in the loss of cultural heritage for indigenous communities that are closely connected to their ecosystems. Traditional practices, knowledge, and cultural identity are often intertwined with the natural surroundings. Addressing the impacts of ecocide in Nigeria requires a comprehensive and coordinated effort involving government agencies, environmental organizations, communities, and the international community. This effort should include sustainable development practices, effective environmental policies, and measures to hold those responsible for environmental degradation accountable.

5. The aphorism ‘Work it and take care of it’ in Genesis 2:15

The warning against extensive damage or destruction of ecosystems, usually caused by human activities, has been given since the creation of man in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 2:15 is a biblical verse that is often referenced in discussions related to environmental stewardship. It says: “Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to ‘work it and take care of it’” (Genesis 2:15).

This verse is part of the creation narrative in the book of Genesis and emphasizes humanity’s responsibility to care for the environment. Adam was called to cultivate the gift God had given him. The earth was his to manage. He was called to work and to take care of it [27]. The phrase ‘work it and take care of it’ suggests a role of stewardship, indicating that the first humans were entrusted with the care and preservation of the natural world. It is on this basis that Biblical exegetes and environmental advocates draw on the concept of stewardship to emphasize the importance of responsible and sustainable interaction with the environment. This perspective encourages ethical treatment of the Earth and its resources, recognizing the interconnectedness of all creation—man and the ecosystem.

The Hebrew לְעָבְדָהּ means work, tend, serve, keep, observe, and among others. This shows that humans were created to keep the environment and observe that the ecosystem is working well. Adam was busy with doing the work commanded by God, that of tilling and keeping the garden and of naming cattle, birds, and every animal of the field [28]. This was to ensure that he did not go against the instruction of God with regards to taking care of the environment.

Genesis 2:15 is part of the biblical narrative describing the creation of man and the placement of Adam in the Garden of Eden. A critical look at verse 15 shows that alternative verbs are employed, that is וּלְשַׁמְרָהּ לְעָבְדָהּ [Work it and take care of it] instead of כָּבַשׁ “subdue” and וָרָדוּ “have dominion”. This indicates the underlying regard that God has for plants and animals and the entire ecosystem. The crux is for humans to utilize the resources of the earth to fulfil their needs [28], without keeping the earth in a disadvantageous position.

From a historical perspective, God creates Adam (the first man) from the dust of the ground and breathes life into him, making him a living being [תָּיָהּ לְנֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּים] (Genesis 2:7). After man became a living being, he was placed in the garden to keep it for the efficient working of the ecosystem. The Garden is described as a

paradisiacal environment, symbolizing a place of abundance, beauty, and harmony. In fact, in Genesis 2:8a, God planted (עָרַב) in the garden, which served as a footstep for Adam to follow in taking care of the environment. Hebrew עָרַב is derived from עָרַב, meaning to plant, establish, cultivate, and fasten. This entails that God took an andromorphic role in his creative activities, in which God's creation is expected to follow.

Genesis 2:15 emphasises Adam's role in the garden. The terms "work" and "keep" signify responsibility and stewardship. Adam is not merely a passive inhabitant; he is given the task of caring for the garden. This implies that he is entrusted with the care, cultivation, and preservation of the environment. After God finished creating and situating the man He crafted in the Garden of Eden, Adam initiated his task of cultivating the land and tending to it, as indicated in Verse 15. Adam commenced his divine calling to steward and govern over creation. He was entrusted with the duty and honour of assigning names to the animals that God had brought into existence [29]. Genesis 2:15 is often cited as a foundational biblical principle for environmental stewardship for efficient working of the ecosystem. It suggests that humanity has a responsibility to take care of the earth, recognising that the natural world is a gift from God, and God's expect man to take proper care of the gift he has given to man.

The concept of stewardship, emphasising the ethical and responsible use of the earth's resources, is the theme of Genesis 2:15. This perspective encourages believers to be mindful of their impact on the environment and to engage in practices that contribute to the well-being of creation.

6. The need for legal policy on ecocide in Nigeria

The need for a law against ecocide in Nigeria is grounded in several critical considerations, given the environmental challenges the country faces.

A law against ecocide would demonstrate a commitment to the protection and preservation of Nigeria's environment. It can serve as a legal tool to prevent and address activities that lead to extensive and irreversible damage to ecosystems, biodiversity, and natural resources. The prospect of Nigeria's environmental laws hinges more on judicial intervention in interpreting and applying the relevant environmental laws. Whether or not justice can be produced in any given case depends on the impartiality of the judge himself and his philosophy of the laws he is administering (whether they are just or harsh and oppressive) and on the extent of the discretion the laws allow him [30]. Establishing ecocide as a crime creates a legal basis for holding individuals, corporations, or entities accountable for environmental destruction. Legal consequences, such as penalties and sanctions, can act as a deterrent, discouraging activities that contribute to ecocide.

Given the interconnectedness of environmental issues, addressing ecocide aligns with global efforts to combat climate change and promote sustainable development. By enacting laws against ecocide, Nigeria can contribute to the international discourse on environmental protection and sustainable practices. Many communities in Nigeria, especially those in environmentally sensitive areas, are directly impacted by ecocide. The regulatory structure governing environmental

aspects of the petroleum industry is a blend of national laws and international regulations, with a notable emphasis on domestic legislation. Consequently, there exist numerous statutory laws and regulations at the national level, along with international environmental laws, overseeing and addressing petroleum-related pollution in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria [31]. A dedicated law can provide these communities with legal recourse and protection against activities that threaten their health, livelihoods, and overall well-being.

Because of the government's indifferent approach to enforcing environmental laws, oil companies have exploited the situation to engage in substandard environmental practices [32]. Incorporating ecocide legislation into Nigeria's legal framework can support the country's commitment to sustainable development. It encourages practices that balance economic development with environmental conservation, ensuring the well-being of current and future generations. Nigeria is rich in biodiversity, and ecocide legislation can help safeguard diverse ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and endangered species. Protecting biodiversity is crucial for ecological balance, ecosystem services, and the overall health of the planet.

The introduction of ecocide laws can contribute to public awareness and education about the importance of environmental protection. It can foster a culture of responsible environmental stewardship among citizens and businesses. While Nigeria may have existing environmental laws, specific legislation addressing ecocide can enhance the legal framework for environmental protection and provide a more targeted approach to addressing severe environmental damage. Such a law should be well-crafted, enforceable, and complement existing regulations to create a comprehensive framework for environmental conservation.

7. Recommendation

- (1) There is the need to enhance and enforce existing environmental laws to provide comprehensive coverage against ecocide. The introduction of specific legislation targeting activities that lead to severe environmental damage. The establishment of penalties and consequences for individuals and entities responsible for ecocide.
- (2) Community involvement and awareness are necessary to curb ecocide in Nigeria. There is the need to engage local communities in environmental conservation efforts. Also, there is the necessity of raising awareness about the importance of sustainable practices and the impact of ecocide on communities and ecosystems. Community-driven initiatives for environmental protection should be encouraged.
- (3) There should be regulation and monitoring of industrial activities. This could be through the implementation of stringent regulations for industries, particularly those with a high potential for environmental impact. The conduct of regular environmental impact assessments for industrial projects should be encouraged. There should be the monitoring and enforcement of compliance with environmental standards to prevent pollution and degradation.
- (4) The promotion of sustainable agriculture should be emphasised. The government and other concerned individuals should encourage and support

sustainable agricultural practices that reduce deforestation, soil erosion, and chemical pollution. They could provide training and incentives for farmers to adopt eco-friendly farming methods. Also, promote agroforestry to enhance biodiversity, combat deforestation, and invest in renewable energy.

- (5) There is the need for reforestation and ecosystem restoration. Thus, launching large-scale reforestation initiatives to counter deforestation and restore degraded ecosystems is needed. The implementation of projects that promote the restoration of wetlands, mangroves, and other critical habitats is necessary.

There is the need to provide training programs for government officials, industry professionals, and communities on sustainable practices. Implementing these solutions requires a coordinated effort from governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, local communities, and the private sector. By combining legal, educational, and practical measures, Nigeria can work toward mitigating the impacts of ecocide and fostering a more sustainable and resilient environment.

8. Conclusion

The importance of a legal policy in Nigeria is multifaceted and plays a crucial role in maintaining order, justice, and the well-being of individuals and communities. The imperative for a legal policy addressing ecocide in Nigeria, viewed through the lens of Genesis 2:15, underscores the profound responsibility bestowed upon humanity to care for and protect the environment. The biblical injunction to “tend and keep” the earth serves as a timeless principle guiding ethical stewardship and sustainable practices. As Nigeria grapples with severe environmental challenges, including oil pollution, deforestation, and climate vulnerabilities, the alignment of legal frameworks with this biblical mandate becomes increasingly relevant. The call for a legal policy against ecocide emanates from a recognition of the interconnectedness between environmental degradation and the well-being of communities, ecosystems, and future generations. Such a policy should be anchored in robust legislation, incorporating stringent measures to deter and penalize activities leading to ecocide. The enforcement of existing environmental laws must be strengthened, and new legislation should be enacted to address the evolving nature of environmental threats. Engaging local communities is paramount, as environmental stewardship is not solely a legal matter but a shared responsibility. Awareness campaigns and educational initiatives should be intensified to empower communities with the knowledge and tools needed for sustainable living. Collaboration efforts with international organizations can provide additional resources and expertise to address transboundary environmental issues. According to Ibunge [33], everyone is urged to be eco-defenders by securing the environment and by this secure human well-being and that of future generations. This is a way of seeing the earth as the mother of creation rather than the enemy of creation. Promoting renewable energy sources, regulating industrial activities, and supporting sustainable agricultural practices are critical components of a comprehensive strategy. The reforestation of degraded areas and the restoration of ecosystems should be prioritized to counteract the impacts of deforestation and land degradation. In essence, the need for a legal

policy against ecocide in Nigeria reflects a commitment to harmonizing legal, ethical, and biblical principles. By integrating these perspectives, Nigeria can forge a path toward a more sustainable and resilient future. The pursuit of such a policy aligns not only with the moral imperative set forth in Genesis 2:15 but also with the urgent call to safeguard the environment for the prosperity and well-being of current and future generations.

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