

CHANGING PARADIGMS TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF ENVIRONMENTALISM IN AFRICA

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Abstract

This paper set out to assess the state of environmental advocacy and action the world over and looked at how environmentalism has metamorphosed through the years and has now become domiciled in United Nations Agencies. It looked at the various forms of the concept and later zeroed in on the various conventions and treaties that have been set up to advance the course of environmentalism. The paper posits that despite the myriad of these conventions, treaties and protocols, the basic ingredient of environmentalism is still lacking especially in Africa; the ingredient of “Environmental Education”. The paper recommends among others that for African Nations to fully embrace Environmentalism as a philosophy and action, a new paradigm should be adopted where stakeholders would be encouraged to adopt a bottom-top approach to environmental issues where the locals of Africa would be actively involved in environmental awareness, conservation, protection and remediation programmes and Environmental Education as a school subject should be taught in schools so as to groom the young ones from the beginning of their careers to see the environment as a partner in the development of the society.

Key words: Paradigms, Environmentalism, Conventions, treaties/protocols, Environmental Education.

Introduction and background

All conventions aimed at promoting environmentalism and making it an eco-philosophical triumph amongst individuals, households, corporations and governments in Africa and the world over seem not to be yielding the expected results – the goal of “attitudinal change” is still quite far from being achieved.

At its crux, environmentalism is an attempt to balance relations between humans and the various natural systems on which they depend in such a way that all the components are accorded a proper degree of sustainability (Wikipedia). Environmentalism or environmental rights is a broad philosophy, ideology, and social movement regarding concerns for environmental protection and improvement of the health of the environment, particularly as the measure for this health seeks to incorporate the impact of changes to the environment on humans, animals, plants and non-living matter. Environmentalism as a theory holds that environment, as opposed to heredity, has the primary influence on the development of a person or group.

Merriam Webster dictionary sees environmentalism on the one hand as a theory that views environment rather than heredity as the important factor in the development and especially the cultural and intellectual development of an individual or group; and on the second hand as an advocacy of the preservation, restoration, or improvement of the natural environment especially, the movement to control pollution.

Brisibois (2018) defined Environmentalism as a social movement or as an ideology focused on the welfare of the environment. Environmentalism seeks to protect and conserve the elements of earth's ecosystem, including water, air, land, animals, and plants, along with entire habitats such as rainforests, deserts and oceans. Concepts dealing with environmental issues include the management of natural resources, overpopulation, commercial logging, urbanization and global warming. The effects of human development and activity have harmed and altered the earth's natural state. Environmentalism works to correct the damage as well as prevent future destruction.

Two types of environmentalism have been identified, namely:

1. Wilderness movement: this group focuses on the health of the planet –they hold that the wilderness, forests and oceans cannot protect themselves hence human must make frantic efforts to protect these natural environments.
2. Environmental justice movement: this group is concerned with environmental hazards and social and economic inequalities faced by the poor.

The changing 'perception' on environmentalism, however, aims at human well-being, and is focused on the belief that this is possible only if Nature is accorded its rightful place as a partner in the process of development and growth. It is built upon a deep faith that survival of humankind is dependent on the survival of a healthy and ecologically balanced environment.

The current debate on environmentalism according to O'Riordan (1991) revolves around two fundamental issues. Firstly, Resource exploitation: this issue is inevitable for human survival and in this process, it is inevitable that man shall take more than he returns; and the Second issue revolves around the hope for a better future based on the faith that ultimately the moral fibre in human nature shall prevail, leading to greater concern for the survival of other species as against narrow personal gain.

The current thinking on environmentalism also attempts a greater sensitivity and awareness about the 'environment' that can be linked to promoting and reorienting practical action 'towards' the environment. This is the direction paradigms should shift in Africa if we must attain the objectives of environmentalism.

O'Riordan (1991) noted that "environmentalism is a collage of values and views of the world, a general patterning of predispositions, being first and foremost a social movement, though with political overtones.... It is based on the philosophy that embraces Earth- centredness, a sense of ultimate communalism, non-violence and concept of time that is almost timeless".

Many environmental movements were formed in the 1970s. Such Green movements with many groups, like Greenpeace. The first Earth Day was marked in this decade and the UN's first environmental conference also happened in the 70s. In the 1980s, the growing awareness on global warming brought the environmental movement even deeper into the mainstream of development. Unfortunately, the environmental movement's strength has declined somewhat since the late 2000s after it hit a high with the anger following the great recession in the developed world.

Woodford (2010) argued that environmental problems stem from resources and energy supply/consumption to waste pollution, habitats and species to social justice issues. Solutions to these problems could come from conservation, laws/legislation, sustainable economics, appropriate technology, social justice/equality and most importantly education (environmental education) which could lead to behavioural/attitudinal change. Other solutions could come from activism under which

environmentalism squarely falls. Activism could be in the form of direct action namely; eco-activists, eco-femist, deep eco-ecologist, green capitalists; and the politically convenient ideology of sustainable development, upon which despite its popularity we still have these and many other environmental problems bedeviling us: Air pollution, Climate change and global warming, Fracking, Land pollution, Organic food and farming, Public attitudes to the environment, Recycling, Water pollution.

Environmentalism has become the front line in a global battle for the survival of the natural world. The UN Conference on the Human Environment (1972) noted that there must be a “new environmentalism: where men must act 'as gods' to save the planet.” Kingsnorth (2012) reported that the neo-greens, believe that science and business will provide while nature can adapt. It is a message gaining traction. Society that takes progress as its religion does not look kindly on despair. If you are expected to believe everything will keep getting better, it can be difficult to admit to believing otherwise

Neo-environmentalism is a progressive, business-friendly, postmodern take on the environmental dilemma. It dismisses traditional green thinking, with its emphasis on limits and transforming societal values, as naive. New technologies, global capitalism and western-style development are not the problem but the solution. The future lies in enthusiastically embracing biotechnology, synthetic biology, nuclear power, nanotechnology, geo-engineering and anything else new and complex that annoys Greenpeace.

But maybe the green movement was asking for it. For some time, mainstream environmentalism has demonstrated a single-minded obsession with climate change and technological solutions to it, to the exclusion of other concerns.

Environmentalism can simply be considered as a social movement that mainly concerns for environmental conservation and improving the state of the environment. Green color often represents environmentalism and environmental concerns. In simple words, it is just a social movement that strives to persuade or induce the political process by lobbying, activism as well as education for protecting natural resources & eco-systems. Talking about environmentalism, it has now become very essential for people to care about the planet Earth and the long-term survival of life on this planet. The introduction to environmentalism clearly shows the importance of being earth friendly.

Going further with environmentalism introduction, the solutions actually come up with a mixture of several approaches which involves conservation, law, economics, technology, education, social justice, personal change, and activism. We can therefore classify the present environmental movement into core areas that include: Environmental Education, Environmental Science, Environmental Activism, Environmental Advocacy, and Environmental Justice

Platt (1948) observed that Environmentalism is a metaphor for how we feel about the natural world, and how we feel we ought to behave towards all living and inanimate objects. Because our values are not consistent, so our environmental ideologies are not consonant. We all experience, to a greater or lesser extent, three levels of “greenness” — dry, shallow and deep. And our individual level of greenness reflects on our actions towards the environment.

Importance of environmentalism

Brisibois (2018) advanced four reasons why environmentalism is important to mankind, these are:

1. Prevention has always been better than cure – the Earth is better in its pristine state, but when necessity requires that man must make use of the resources of the

environment for his survival, early checks and balances should be put in place to prevent over-exploitation, environmental degradation and environmental pollution. This action is better than allowing the degradation to occur before you make efforts to remedy or cure the problem.

2. Everyone is affected in equal measure – environmental problems know no international, regional, local or household boundaries. If they occur at one point, whether on air, water or land, elements of weather (wind, water etc) will ultimately transport them to other areas. The effects of these contaminants will affect everyone.
3. Future generations need our help – the critical essence of the spirit of environmentalism is to use resources wisely so that generations yet unborn will equally meet these resources and use them as well.
4. It's your responsibility as a citizen of this planet – every human being must put his hands on the plough to prevent environmental degradation. In the same vein, where degradation has occurred, it behooves on every citizen to participate in the remediation of these problems.

Brisibois (2018) also suggested ways on how to get people interested in environmentalism, these are:

1. Apply some creativity in your messaging
2. Focus on providing solutions.
3. Make people realize that even a little contribution makes a difference
4. Don't turn it into a debate,
5. Make good use of social media

Although, some scientists still see environmentalism from a negative antagonistic point. Views such as this still exist.

All of those beliefs and assumptions are associated with social sciences, not with natural sciences. That is why environmentalism — unlike scientific ecology — does not belong to the natural sciences and can be classified as an ideology. That fact is, however, not understood by the average person and by numerous politicians. It is not my intention here to present arguments for the refutation of that hypothesis. What I find much more important is to protest against the efforts of the environmentalists to manipulate people. Their recommendations would take us back into the era of statism and restricted freedom. It is therefore our task to draw a clear line and differentiate between ideological environmentalism and scientific ecology (Klaus, 2007)

Trends of Environmentalism

Environmentalism, which is a synonym for environmental determinism, is as old as man's civilization. Hippocrates' book, *De aëre, aquis et locis* (*Air, Waters, and Places*), as reported by Weyler, (2018) is the earliest surviving European work on human ecology which emphasized environmentalism as a philosophy.

Environmentalism is said began as romanticism in the 1800 in the form of love for nature, it later moved to Britain as some form of concern forever increasing pollution that was coming as a result of Europe's pursuit for industrialization.

The green medium (2015) noted that "Early conservation groups, like 'the Society for the Protection of Birds (1889)' and 'the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty (1894),' began popping up all over England".

In the USA, John Muir who founded the Sierra Club in 1892 (a progenitor of Greenpeace movement which came up 70 years later) pioneered the calls for the creation

of the Yosemite National Park followed by the formation of the National Park Service in 1916. Rachel Carson's book titled *Silent Spring* published in 1962 became a reference material for environmental movement in the 1960s and 70s. "It is a wholesome and necessary thing for us to turn again to the Earth and in the contemplation of her beauties to know the sense of wonder and humility." Said Rachel Carson.

With the creation of the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) in 1970, dichloro diphynil triochloro ethane (DDT) a poisonous herbicide was immediately banned due to the efforts of NEPA.

United Nations Organization (UNO) and Environmentalism

Environmentalism has spawned numerous environmental groups in America and around the world and continues to develop. Among the UN conventions that draw inspiration from the debut of environmentalism are:

A. In 1972, the first major worldwide discussion on environmental issues was held at a United Nations conference in Stockholm, Sweden, and attended by 114 nations. It led to the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The conference was tagged UN conference on the Human Environment. The Outcome document is reported by UN in document: A/CONF.48/14/Rev.1. The conference enumerated the 26 principles of sustainable development, and 108 recommendations covering all aspects of the human environment which serve as a benchmark for member nations to follow on the course of environmentalism.

The document opens with the admonition that "A point has been reached in history when we must shape our actions throughout the world with a more prudent care for their environmental consequences. Through ignorance or indifference we can do massive and irreversible harm to the earthly environment on which our life and well-being depend. Conversely, through fuller knowledge and wiser action, we can achieve for ourselves and our posterity a better life in an environment more in keeping with human needs and hopes" (pg 3).

The 1972 conference equally came up with the framework of the Action plan for the environment in the coming years. The broad types of action that make up the Plan are: (a) The global environmental assessment programme (Earthwatch); (b) Environmental management activities; (c) International measures to support the national and international actions of assessment and management.

B. The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), Entitled *Our Common Future*, also known as the Brundtland report; developed the theme of sustainable development, based on a four-year study, the report was transmitted by UN document A/42/427. The conference report came up with the following sub-themes: A Threatened Future: Symptoms and Causes, New Approaches to Environment and Development. Towards Sustainable Development; The Concept of Sustainable Development Equity and the Common Interest Strategic Imperatives Conclusion; The Role of the International Economy; the Environment and Development Decline in the 1980s, Enabling Sustainable Development A Sustainable World Economy; Common Challenges - Population and Human Resources; The Links with Environment and Development.

The document also looked at the population perspective, a policy framework; food security: Sustaining the potential. Strategies for Sustainable Food Security, food for the future, The Problem: Character and Extent Extinction Patterns and Trends Some Causes of Extinction Economic Value. Energy: Choices for Environment and Development; Energy, Economy and Environment Fossil Fuels: The Continuing

Dilemma Nuclear Energy: Unsolved Problems Wood Fuels: The Vanishing Resource Renewable Energy: The Untapped Potential Energy Efficiency: Maintaining the Momentum; Energy Conservation Measure. The Urban Challenge - The Growth of Cities; the Urban Challenge in Developing Countries International Cooperation. Managing the Commons – Oceans.

The Balance of Life Space: A Key to Sustainable Development Antarctica: Towards Global Cooperation. Peace, Security, Development and the Environment. Environmental Stress as a Source of Conflict, Conflict as a Cause of Unsustainable Development.

- C.** United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992) held in Rio de Janeiro, from 3rd to 14th of June 1992; it was otherwise known at the time as the Earth Summit, Later came to be called the Rio Conference, it led to the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The outcome document was published in 3 volumes: A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 the three major agreements adopted at the conference are:

1. Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, a series of principles defining the rights and responsibilities of States;
2. Agenda 21, a global plan of action to promote sustainable development;
3. Statement of Forest Principles, a set of principles to underpin the sustainable management of forests worldwide.

At this conference, two multilateral treaties were opened for signature, these were: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity. The conference also called for several major initiatives in other key areas of sustainable development, such as, a global conference on Small Island Developing States; negotiations began for a Convention to Combat Desertification, and for an agreement on highly migratory and straddling fish stocks.

- D.** General Assembly Special Session on the Environment (1997) also Known as the Earth Summit +5 Held in New York, from 23rd to 27th of June 1997, it reviewed the implementation of Agenda 21, the outcome document is anchored in General Assembly resolution S-19/2 of 27th June 1997, Programme for further Implementation of Agenda 21.
- E.** World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002), also known as Rio +10, held in Johannesburg, from 26 August to 4 September 2002, it reviewed progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 since its adoption in 1992, recorded in WSSD website, the outcome document which is recorded in A/CONF.199/20 + Corr.1, includes: Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, Plan of Implementation.
- F.** UN Conference on Sustainable Development (2012), Known as Rio+20; held in Rio De Janeiro, from 20-22 June 2012, the outcome document which is recorded in A/CONF.216/16, includes "The future we want"
- G.** UN Sustainable Development Summit (2015), New York, 25 - 27 September 2015, the outcome document is recorded in A/RES/70/1, it includes "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"
- H.** The fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly gathered in Nairobi, Kenya from 11 - 15 March 2019 under the theme: innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production. The session had three areas of focus: (a) tackling the environmental challenges related to poverty and natural resources management, including sustainable food systems, food security and halting

biodiversity loss; (b) introducing life-cycle approaches to resource efficiency, energy, chemicals and waste management; (c) ensuring sustainable business development at a time of rapid technological change.

The following resolutions and decisions were adopted by the Committee of the whole at the session with focus on:

Innovative pathways to achieve sustainable consumption and production; promoting sustainable practices and innovative solutions for curbing food loss and waste, sustainable mobility; addressing environmental challenges through sustainable business practices, sustainable infrastructure; marine plastic litter and micro-plastics; other themes were: environmentally sound management of waste; sound management of chemicals and waste; addressing single-use plastic products pollution; innovations on biodiversity and land degradation.

Discussions also focused on innovations on biodiversity and land degradation; protection of the marine Environment from land-based activities; sustainable management for global health of mangrove; sustainable nitrogen management; innovations in sustainable rangelands and pastoralism; conservation and sustainable management of peat lands; promote gender equality, and the human rights and empowerment of women and girls in environmental governance as well as mineral resource governance.

It is evidenced from the forgoing conferences and sessions of the United Nations that a great majority of environmental themes have and are being discussed based on the same old paradigms of conferences and workshops at the highest world level with focus on Chief Executives and Heads of government agencies. There has been little touch on the grassroots, the common man who experiences the environment directly on a day-to-day basis. The local African farmer, the Native Americans, the Aborigines etc.

List of world environmental treaties

Outcomes of the various sessions of the UN agencies on the environment have resulted in the drafting of a host of treaties which have over the years been signed and others ratified by several member nations of the UN; among these treaties are:

1. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Also known as the Convention on Wetlands, is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. The convention held in Ramsar, Iran, and was signed on 2 February 1971 by 169 member nations. It took effect on 21 December 1975 and has been ratified by only by 7 states. This is an indication that this treaty has not been able to meet the intent and purpose of its creation and subsequent signings, the need for a change in paradigms.
2. The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (a protocol to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer) is an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production of numerous substances that are responsible for ozone depletion. It has been ratification by 20 states and was signed on 26th August 1982 and signed by 46 member nations.

The Montreal Protocol is an international environmental agreement with universal ratification to protect the earth's ozone layer by eliminating use of ozone depleting substances (ODS), which would otherwise allow increased UV radiation to reach the earth, resulting in higher incidence of skin cancers and eye cataracts, more-compromised immune systems, and negative effects on watersheds, agricultural lands and forests. Since its adoption in 1987 and as of end-2014, it has successfully eliminated over 98 percent of controlled ODS, helping reverse the damage to the

- ozone layer. A very significant co-benefit is that it has - during period 1989-2013 - reduced cumulative CO₂-eq. emissions by 135 billion tonnes.
3. The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals held on 1st November 1983, it is otherwise called the Convention on Migratory Species or the Bonn Convention and CMS COP or Global Wildlife conference. It was held in Bonn, Germany; its purpose is to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species. It was convened by 127 Parties or member Nations.
 4. The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer is a multilateral environmental agreement signed in 1985 that provided frameworks for international reductions in the production of ozone layer depleting substances. This was necessitated by the discovery of the ozone hole over the Antarctica in 1985. It had 28 signatories and has so far been ratified by 197 member Nations. The treaty took effect on 22nd September 1988.
 5. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international environmental treaty adopted on 9 May 1992 and opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992. It then entered into force on 21 March 1994, after a sufficient number of countries had ratified it. The UNFCCC objective is to "stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system". The framework sets non-binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions for individual countries and contains no enforcement mechanisms. Instead, the framework outlines how specific international treaties (called "protocols" or "Agreements") may be negotiated to specify further action towards the objective of the UNFCCC.
 6. The Kyoto Protocol is an international treaty which extends the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); it was signed on 11 December 1997 by 84 members and took effect on 16th February 2005. The treaty commits state parties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, based on the scientific consensus that (part one) global warming is occurring and (part two) it is extremely likely to exacerbate the changes in the world climate. The targets for the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol cover cuts on emissions of the six main greenhouse gases, namely: Carbon dioxide(CO₂); Methane(CH₄); Nitrous oxide (N₂O); Hydro fluorocarbons (HFCs); Per fluorocarbons (PFCs); and Sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆).
 7. The Convention on Biological Diversity, known informally as the Biodiversity Convention, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It is a multilateral treaty signed on 5 June 1992, by 168 parties out of 198. It took effect on 29 December 1993 and has 30 ratifications.
 8. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa was drafted on 17 June 1994 and so far has 50 ratifications, it took effect on 26th December 1996.
 9. Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity, also known as the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit sharing is a 2010 supplementary agreement to the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity; with 105 member signatures and effective date of 12 October 2014, it held at Nagoya, Japan.
 10. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international agreement on biosafety as a supplement to the Convention on

Biological Diversity effective since 2003 with 103 member signatures. It held at Montreal, Quebec, Canada on 29 January 2000 (originally scheduled for 1999 at Cartagena, Colombia) it took effect on 11 September 2003

11. Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants is an international environmental treaty, signed in 2001 and effective from May 2004, that aims to eliminate or restrict the production and use of persistent organic pollutants. It took place in Stockholm, Sweden, It was signed by 152 member nations. And became effective on 17 May 2004, conditions were that ninety days after the ratification by at least 50 signatory states.
12. Basel Convention on the Control of Trans boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. The Convention on Long-Range Trans boundary Air Pollution, often abbreviated as Air Pollution or CLRTAP, is intended to protect the human environment against air pollution and to gradually reduce and prevent air pollution, including long-range Trans-boundary air pollution. It was signed on 22 March 1989 in Basel, Switzerland by 53 member nations and took effect on 5 May 1992
13. Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Water birds, or African-Eurasian Water bird Agreement is an independent international treaty developed under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme's Convention on Migratory Species drafted on 16 June 1995 at The Hague, Netherland and signed by 65 members and became effective on 1 November 1999
14. Convention on the Protection and Use of Trans boundary Watercourses and International Lakes, also known as the Water Convention, is an international environmental agreement and one of five UNECE's negotiated environmental treaties. Held on 6 October 1996 and signed by 41 parties.
15. The North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation is an environmental agreement between the United States of America, Canada and Mexico as a side-treaty of the North American Free Trade Agreement. The agreement came into effect January 1, 1994. Signed by the 3 Nations involved effective on 1 January 1994.
16. International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation is an international maritime convention establishing measures for dealing with marine oil pollution incidents nationally and in co-operation with other countries. As of November 2018, there are 112 State parties to the convention

Other environmental conventions are:

1. Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, Aarhus, 1998
2. Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Trans-boundary Context, Espoo, 1991.

Conventions on the Atmosphere

3. Convention on Long-Range Trans boundary Air Pollution (LRTAP), Geneva, 1979
4. Environmental Protection: Aircraft Engine Emissions, Annex 16, vol. 2 to the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, Montreal 1981
5. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), New York, 1992, including the Kyoto Protocol, 1997, and the Paris Agreement, 2015
6. Georgia Basin-Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy, Vancouver, Statement of Intent, 2002.
7. U.S.-Canada Air Quality Agreement (bilateral U.S.-Canadian agreement on acid rain), 1986

8. Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, Vienna, 1985, including the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, Montreal 1987.

Freshwater resources conventions are:

9. Convention on the Protection and Use of Trans boundary Watercourses and International Lakes (ECE Water Convention), Helsinki, 1992.

Conventions on Hazardous substances

10. Convention on Civil Liability for Damage Caused during Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, Rail, and Inland Navigation Vessels (CRTD), Geneva, 1989
11. Convention on the Control of Trans boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, Basel, 1989
12. Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Trans boundary Movements and Management of Hazardous Wastes Within Africa, Bamako, 1991
13. Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, Rotterdam, 1998
14. Convention on the Trans boundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, Helsinki, 1992
15. European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (AND), Geneva, 2000
16. European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), Geneva, 1957
17. FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, Rome, 1985
18. Minamata Convention on Mercury, Minamata 2013
19. Stockholm Convention Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants Stockholm, 2001
20. Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Trans boundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region, Waigani, 1995

All these continue to keep alive the body and soul of environmentalism at the global level.

Sub-Saharan Africa and Environmental Performance Index

The need for Africa to change paradigms for achievement of environmental goals can best be expressed in the 2018 Environmental Performance Index (EPI). In this index, 180 countries of the world with 46 coming from sub-Saharan Africa are ranked in terms of performance on high-priority environmental issues. This ranking is based on 24 performance indicators across ten issue categories culled from Environmental Health and Ecosystem Vitality. The essence of this global metrics for environment according to the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy (2019) is to gauge at a national scale how close countries are to establish environmental policy goals.

The 2018 EPI framework drew data from two main objectives: Environmental Health (40%) and Ecosystem vitality (60%). Environmental Health was assessed based on three issues – air quality (65%), water quality (30%), and heavy metals (5%) whereas, ecosystems vitality was assessed based on seven key issues – biodiversity and habitat (25%), forests (10%), Fisheries(10%), climate and energy (30%), air pollution (10%), water resources (10%) and agriculture (5%).

These 10 issues were organized into 24 indicators, among these indicators are sanitation, lead exposure, drinking water and household solid fuels. And tree cover loss, biome protection, species protection, fish stock status, waste water treatment and CO₂

emissions. Table 1 shows the Environmental performance indices of 46 sampled Sub-Saharan African nations as compared to global performance of nations of other continents. The continents performance is abysmally poor and strengthens our advocacy for a paradigm change if environmentalism would have its way in Africa.

Table 1: 2018 Environmental Performance Index Rankings For Sub-Sahara Africa.

Sub-Saharan African Country	EPI score	Regional rank	World rank
Seychelles	66.02	1	39
Equatorial Guinea	60.40	2	71
Namibia	58.46	3	79
Cape Verde	56.94	4	89
Mauritius	56.63	5	90
Nigeria	54.76	6	100
Sao Tome & Principe	54.01	7	104
Botswana	51.70	8	113
Zambia	50.97	9	117
Tanzania	50.83	10	119
Ghana	49.66	11	124
Senegal	49.52	12	126
Malawi	49.21	13	127
Kenya	47.25	14	130
Guinea	46.62	15	134
Mozambique	46.37	16	135
Chad	45.34	17	137
Cote d'Ivoire	45.25	18	139
Gabon	45.05	19	140
Ethiopia	44.78	20	141
South Africa	44.73	21	142
Guinea Bissau	44.67	22	143
Uganda	44.28	23	145
Comoros	44.24	24	146
Mali	43.71	25	147
Rwanda	43.68	26	148
Zimbabwe	43.41	27	149
Burkina Faso	42.83	28	154
Sierra Leone	42.54	29	155
Gambia	42.42	30	156
Rep. of Congo	42.39	31	157
Togo	41.78	32	159
Liberia	41.62	33	160
Cameroon	40.81	34	161
Swaziland	40.32	35	162
Djibouti	40.04	36	163
Eritrea	39.34	37	165
Mauritania	39.24	38	166
Benin	38.17	39	167
Angola	37.44	40	170
Central African Republic	36.42	41	171
Niger	35.74	42	172
Lesotho	33.78	43	173
Madagascar	33.73	44	175
Democratic Republic of Congo	30.41	45	178
Burundi	27.43	46	180

Adapted from: Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy (2019).

The EPI rankings on Table 1 shows the first nation in sub-Africa Seychelles coming a distant 39th position in the world and as expected Africa dominated the bottom of the table and was crowned the 180th position with Burundi with an abysmal score of 27.43 as her representative. Little wonder Environmentalism has not taken root in the continent, widespread poverty still pushes the populace to degrade the forests in search of food, wood, farming and other non-timber forest products. The poor still utilize crude methods to fish, utilize crude energy sources that downgrade air quality, causing loss of biodiversity and overall environmental health risks and destroys ecosystems vitality.

For a lack of penetration and acceptability into Africa of the various environmental policies and principles over the years, Africa's population is on the rise almost outwitting the available resources which strengthen the fangs of poverty on the continents people. The few available industries especially in the petrochemical sector flare a myriad of gases into the atmosphere and the lack of environmental awareness on the locals does not give them the foresight to challenge these multinationals to stop these fares or adopt better disposal techniques. Same thing goes for use of carbon bases fuels by both the multinationals and the locals. "Environmental Ignorance or negligence". These are the reasons for the poor performance of African nations on EPI at the global level.

Setbacks to the advancement of the course of environmentalism in Africa

The global environmental outlook seems to put Africa at the back seat. Africa ought to be the hub of environmentalism from the rich history of affinity with mother earth. How Africa is unable to play in the

1. Lip-service on the part of world powers: it is no longer news that the United States of America through her President has pulled out of the 2015 Paris Climate Change agreement. Actions such as these and the refusal to sign or ratify worthwhile protocols that would have gone a long way to positively affect the health of the environment have caused several environmentalists to accuse the Western world powers of lip service. They speak loftily of their environmental plans in public fora and act in ambivalence in actual practice. They do not want to slow their industrialization process.
2. The Multi-disciplinary approach to teaching Environmental Education: agreed that Environmental Education is an Inter-disciplinary subject and can be taught using several approaches and different subject areas, using this approach alone has not been able to integrate environmentalism in the spirit and actions of the average African. Africa is still stuck in her old methods of farming, Africa industrialists are hardly regulated as they are the law makers for themselves using money and the conditions of prevailing poverty in the continent to perpetuate their rape on the environment.
3. The concept of outdoor education: the developed world teaches outdoor education to her kindergartens and high school students as of policy. But the curriculum developers in Africa do not see the need to include EE as an outdoor subject in the schools timetable and hence the objective is missed especially with non-professionals without environmental bias made to do the integration of EE concepts as advocated. Little wonder no hardliner environmentalist has arisen from the shores of Africa.
4. Lack of commitment to mainstream economic growth with a cleaner environment.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The paradigm shift advocated in this paper is as a result of the near failure of all the conventions, conferences, treaties and protocols embarked upon by the United Nations, her agencies and member nations as well as parties to all these agreements.

1. For African Nations to fully embrace Environmentalism as a philosophy and action, a new paradigm should be adopted where stakeholders would be encouraged to adopt a bottom-top approach to environmental issues where the locals of Africa would be actively involved in environmental awareness, conservation, protection and remediation programmes. Environmental degradation in Africa stems essentially from traditional farming practices. New farming techniques should be incorporated into environmental programmes and taught to the locals so as to help them appropriately anchor environmentalism in their lifestyles/farming styles.
2. Multinational corporations who own the few industries that exist should do well to obey the ISO Standards of Environmental management so as to conform to world environmental remediation policies.
3. Environmental Education should be taught as a school subject so as to groom the young ones from the beginning of their careers to see the environment as a partner in their development of the society. Anthropocentrism is a crisis of the mind and building deep ecological attitude can be very effective when deployed 'we catch them young' philosophy.

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