

AFRICAN NATURAL RESOURCES EXPLOITATION AND THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

Africa has enormous natural resources, which the West and are tapping, yet the continent remains underdeveloped, with wars, poverty and slow development. African countries lack of transparency in governance and in resource development and revenue generation. To bring about the needed development, there ought be reforms to enable the governments fight both exploitation and corruption in the sector. There also the to ensure the employment of the most recent methods and technologies in the exploitation of the various mineral resources.

Introduction

The African continent is the second largest on earth with enormous abundance of untapped natural resources. It is believed that much more of these resources are yet undiscovered for exploration, exploitation, mining and development. The scourge of African colonialism would have been prolonged if early discovery of all of the precious raw materials was made by the colonialists. The continent suffered severe underdevelopment in the hands of the imperial European colonialists for over a century. Today, in the neocolonial era, Africa has been put under heavy pressure and tensions

leading to wars, poverty and slow development. The western nations as well as emerging economic powers like China, exploit Africa's economic powerhouses. China exploits Africa's natural resources, taking most of the value and money from it. That informed why the region receives the largest foreign direct investment. In combating the situation African leaders should be mindful of sustainable environment strategy for the benefit of present and future human society.

Review of relevant literature

A map of Africa's natural resources revealed that no part of the continent is empty of a mineral resource that put the continent on a sound prospects and potentials of future economic prosperity and development. The North African countries of Libya, Tunisia, Egypt Mauritania and Morocco are endowed with vast oil and natural gas deposits. The Western Sahara has phosphates in large growth quantity, while the Sahara Desert holds the most strategic nuclear ore raw material. In West Africa are found large deposits of gold, iron ore petroleum, aluminum, diamonds, pozzolana and timber. Most of the countries, and particularly Niger, has very good quality uranium.

Sudan and her neighbors in the central African countries have deposits of Gold, Petroleum and the horn of Africa Somalia has high quality uranium. In the southern part of Africa, countries of Namibia, Angola Zimbabwe South Africa and Lesotho all have abundance of Diamond's Silver Gold. There is also copper platinum Graphite and coal in all these countries.

Fish and water riches are found in all the Pacific Ocean shores from Morocco to West Africa and in the Indian Ocean Shores from Somalia to Kenya down to Mozambique Island shores. Other rare mineral resources found in the continent include titanium, nickel, cobalt, Chromium bauxite, cocoa, beans, woods and tropical fruits. The Africa's

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low human density and vast virgin land are also counted as natural resources.

Challenges

African countries lack of transparency in governance and in resource development and revenue remains the most daring challenge of African leadership. In other words, fighting corruption in governance and establishing prudence in the management of resources is desperately needed. Most of the resource-rich countries have suffered a history of squandered or embezzled revenue and government's inability to deliver basic services such as health and education. A Human Rights Watch research report in 2010 indicted both Nigerian and Angolan Governments in oil sector revenues from 1997 to 2002 with a call for reforms to enable the governments fight both exploitation and corruption in the sector.

Another major challenge would be ensuring the employment of the most recent methods and technology in the exploitation of the various mineral resources. They should insist on the best that is friendly to the environment which protect future usage. The exploitation and mining must be based on sustainable environmental strategy that optimize exploitation purify and protect the environment. That include Geochemical, Geological, Geophysical methods of hydrocarbons exploitation of minerals in the earth, others include Modern Airborne Geophysical and Modern Ground water exploitation methods for the different resources.

Protecting the resources neighboring communities is another challenge which African leaders should address. Such community's settlement and compensation often become a source of communal clashes and conflicts in many countries. They often fail to tolerate how they are displaced from their homeland farmland and livelihood.

Purification of contaminated areas where illegal crude exploitation and mining have been taking place. The need to curtle further loses of

lives and properties by employing latest technology in environmental purification is timely now.

Illiteracy and ignorance of the populace compound the state of affairs in most these countries.

Conclusion

African continent is made up of 63 countries making it the second – largest and bestowed by God with abundance of many types of natural resources, However, poor governance has bedeviled the continent, lack of prudence, corruption, squandans and embezzlement of such resources funds continue to deprive the citizens and the benefits.

The leaders of Africa need to embark upon an aggressive exploitation of all the Natural Resources available to us. That in the process they should explore the use of safe methods and technology to protect the environment. There is greater need for purifying the contaminated areas as well as provision of quality education and a sustained enlightenment campaign programme.

Recommendations

For Africa to achieve the much needed development, there is no second to good governance. It is only under good prudent authority that can fight corruption and stamp it out that we can achieve development. The need for establishing democratic rule and order with broad structure of checks and balance is hereby advocated. Stressing the need for an aggressive exploitation of Africa's natural resources caution is also loaded on the necessity of sustainable environment strategy. Experts advice should be sought to ensure exploration techniques and sequences for sustainable protection of the environment and promotion of sustainable healthy environment.

Leaders of African Countries should enact enabling environmental laws that would provide for the protection, purification and exploitation of the Natural resources. The laws should also provide protection to the

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revenues from the resources against embezzlement, internal or external exploitation and corruption and ensure proper accounting. It is also advocated that leaders of African Countries should embark on strategic provision of qualitative education to fight the general illiteracy of the populace to enable them rise the poor level of literacy associated with the continent. Strategic enlightenment campaign programme of environment education that specifically teach preservation, protection and healthy environment for a lasting benefit of present future human society.

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