

Land, Territory and Natural Resource Issues Affecting the Economies of the Indigenous Communities of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa

BABAGANA Abubakar, Nigeria

Key word: Land, Environment, Resources, Lake Chad, Nigeria

SUMMARY

This is a summary on the paper on Land, Territory and Natural Resource Issues Affecting the Economies of the Indigenous communities of the Sahel and Horn of Africa. This explains the latest developments in these issues in the Sahel Region and Horn of Africa.

Land, Territory and Natural Resource Issues Affecting the Economies of the Indigenous Communities of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa

BABAGANA Abubakar, Nigeria

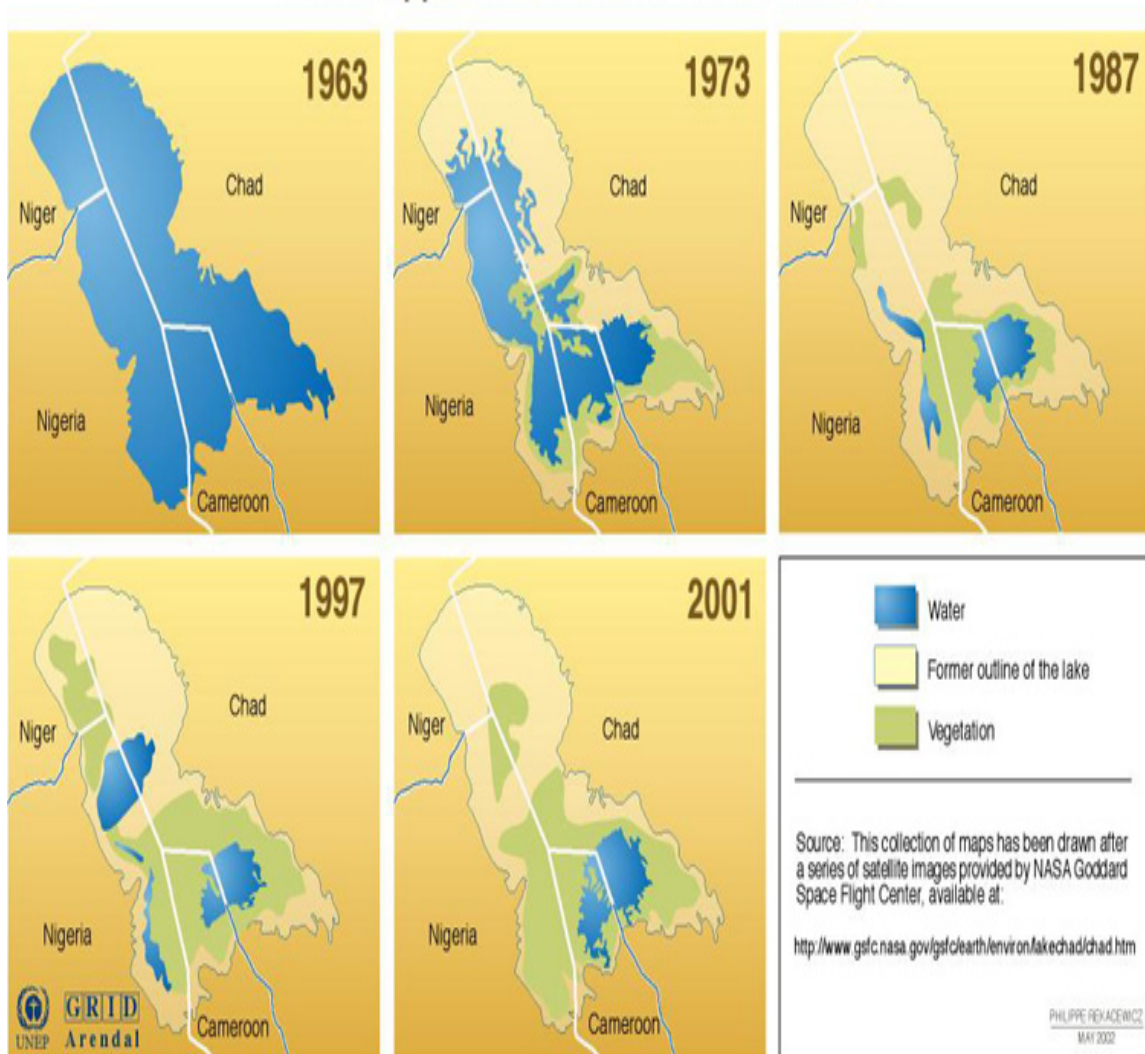
This Sahelian environment that stretches all the way from Senegal to Somalia cutting across over ten African countries bordering the " Sahara desert" in the north and the "Sudan savannah" in the south, with an annual rainfall of less than 50cm per annum, is the home for many indigenous communities like the Mbororo (Cameroon and Chad), Tuareg (Niger) and the Kanuris (Nigeria) who depend on pastoralism, fishing, irrigation farming and mineral extraction as their main activities of livelihoods.

Desertification is a primary issue faced by Sahelian communities; the indigenous communities are continuously losing their grazing fields, farmlands, and even villages to the encroaching "Sahara desert" from the north. Indigenous communities in the Sahelian region are currently trying their best in control of the desert encroachment through tree-planting campaigns and other programmes on their own; however, the UN does not currently recognize their contributions and does not include their participation in its desertification activities in the region.

A second issue is the rapid decline in the volume of the water of the "Lake Chad" because this is main source of water supply, fishing and some other natural resources like the potassium, in addition to irrigation and pastoral farming by the indigenous communities along the shores of the lake. Sahelian indigenous peoples depend on Lake Chad, so the more the Lake dries, poverty and unemployment increases among indigenous communities. There is currently far too little attention paid by governments and UN agencies working in the area to address the impact of the declining Lake Chad upon the futures of Sahelian indigenous communities.

Figure 1: Shows the various positions of Lake Chad since 1963.

The Disappearance of Lake Chad in Africa



Recommendation:

1. I call on Sahelian governments via the African Union and UN development agencies such as UNDP, UNESCO, UNEP, FAO, and IFAD, to ensure the participation of the indigenous communities of the Sahel and the Horn in all decision-making related to land and territory.
2. Indigenous issues should be mainstreamed into the UN Convention on Control of Desertification (CCD) and related desertification conventions. Indigenous peoples should be recognized as a 'major group' for the CCD Conference of Parties.

TS 2D - Societal Balance: Resources and Rights

BABAGANA Abubakar

Land, Territory and Natural Resource Issues Affecting the Economies of the Indigenous Communities of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa

7th FIG Regional Conference

Spatial Data Serving People: Land Governance and the Environment – Building the Capacity

Hanoi Vietnam 19-22 October 2009

3. Recognition by African governments to communal lands and stopping to give lands and territories to bio-fuels.
4. Constructions of dams along all feeder rivers of the Lake Chad should be stopped. Just like Nigeria, all the other countries bordering Lake Chad should establish Lake Chad Development Commissions in their respective countries in order to promote irrigation and pastoral farmings in the Sahelian environment.
5. Cooperation with UNESCO, CCD and CBD on traditional knowledge of biodiversity and sustainable development of arid areas in the Sahelian region; indigenous peoples must be involved in decision-making processes.

REFERENCES

1. Abubakar, B. 2008, the Perception of Archaeology in Africa: Opportunities and Potential, IJNA 37.2, 387-388.
2. Babagana, A. 2007, Water Availability, Supply and its Associated Problems in Rural Communities of Borno State. A. Case Study of Nganzai Local Government Area of Borno State, Nigeria 10-19. (Unpublished)

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

The author is an indigenous person from the Kanuri community of Nigeria, over the years he has been working on the environment, climate, land, human rights as well as indigenous issues.

He holds a masters degree in Public administration and a bachelor degree in Geography. In addition he has several publications in journals including international journals and he has over the years made presentations at so many seminars, workshops, forums and meetings including presentations at the United Nations headquarters New York, USA.

CONTACTS

Name: Mr. Babagana Abubakar

Address: Alhaji Bukar Kuya House, Opposite Aburos Mosque, Fezzan Ward, Maiduguri, Borno state.

City: Maiduguri

COUNTRY: Nigeria

Tel: +2348062220179

Fax: +2348042105028

Email: Babaganabubakar2002@yahoo.com, kanuridevelopmentassociation@gmail.com

Web site: http://www.unodc.org/ngo/showSingleDetailed.do?req_org_uid=16999

TS 2D - Societal Balance: Resources and Rights

BABAGANA Abubakar

Land, Territory and Natural Resource Issues Affecting the Economies of the Indigenous Communities of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa

7th FIG Regional Conference

Spatial Data Serving People: Land Governance and the Environment – Building the Capacity

Hanoi Vietnam 19-22 October 2009