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**GOVERNMENT POLICIES CONCERNING RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES AND THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA**

The Federal Republic of Nigeria’s current energy status has been the topic of worldwide energy forums for decades. The role of energy in development can not be overemphasized. However, around 70% of global energy supply today is from fossil fuels which in turn contributes significantly to climate change. Efforts are underway to mitigate climate change and different countries across the world are tasked to develop robust strategies to limit their national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories. However, it remains to be seen how effective these strategies will be towards mitigating GHGs. Despite boasting of the largest economy in Africa, about 60% of Nigerians still live below the poverty line. This can be linked to the energy access rate in the country. Currently, about 40% of Nigerian’s do not have access to electricity, and those who have may consider the supply to be erratic. The current situation shows that the country’s growing population is underserved and is constantly yearning for socio-economic development. This current situation has been named the “Nigerian energy supply crisis”. It refers to the ongoing failure of the Nigerian power sector to provide adequate electricity supply to domestic households and industrial producers despite a rapidly growing economy. At best, average daily power supply is estimated at four hours, although several days can go without power at all. Neither power cuts nor restorations are announced, leading to calls for a load shedding schedule during the COVID-19 lockdowns to aid fair distribution and predictability.

Power supply difficulties cripple the agricultural, industrial and mining sectors and impede the nation’s ongoing economic development. The energy supply crisis is complex, stems from variety of issues and has been going on for decades. Most Nigerian businesses and households that can afford to do so run one or more diesel-fueled generators to supplement the intermittent supply.

Prior to the enactment of the Electric Power Sector Reforms Act in 2005(ESPR Act), the electricity sector was state owned and operated through a monopoly known as the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA). In May 2005, it was restructured along the lines of generation, transmission and distribution under a holding company called Power Holding Company Nigeria (PHCN) and subsequently unbundled into successor companies of six generation, one transmission and 11 distribution companies (Discos). The ESPR act also provided for the establishment of the various government participants in the electricity sector. Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) was set up as a transparent and independent regulator of the sector. NERC undertakes the role of technical and economic regulation of the electricity sector. Its functions includes promoting competition and private sector participation, when and where feasible; licensing and regulating persons engaged in the engaged in the generation, transmission system operation, distribution and training of electricity: approving amendment of the market rules and monitoring the operation of the electricity market. In specific relation to renewable energy, NERC issues generation licenses to applicants in renewable energy, and administers and implements preferential tariffs(e.g, the MYTO feed-in tarrifs) and issues orders or regulations to govern markets.

The first Renewal Energy Master Plan(REMP) was drafted in 2005, then revised and redeveloped in 2012, but it was not approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC). In April 2015, the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Policy was expected to fix a structure and capability of dealing with Nigeria’s energy supply crisis. It is intended to prove that by 2020 Nigeria’s renewable electricity generation activities will surpass the ECOWAS regional target for 2020, and beyond. Renewable energy will be based on hydropower, biomass, solar, wind, geothermal, wave, and tidal energy, all to be utilized in vast scale. Use of renewable energy will also reduce air pollution from heavy use of generators, which of course will lower health cost.