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The Journal promotes the dissemination of research results and scholarly papers by teaching and research scholars in Africa and across the world in broad areas of sustainable development law and policy. The thematic focus of the journal spans across broad areas of sustainable development law and policy ranging from the economic, social, and environmental dimensions. As such papers that explore broad themes of sustainable development such environment, natural resources, green economy, international trade, banking, taxation, public policy, public private partnerships, alternative dispute resolution, human rights, peace, and conflict studies are normally given top consideration.

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- quotations have been checked for accuracy; and
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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Prof. Ifeoluwa A. Olubiyi
Guest Editor

I am pleased to present to you this Special Issue of the Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy themed '*Legal and Regulatory Responses to Economic Challenges.*' This edition focuses on using the instrumentality of the law to address growing economic challenges and their adverse impacts on sustainable development. We received numerous submissions focusing on this theme and its relationship with the attainment of sustainable development in economies. After the peer-review process, sixteen articles were accepted for publication.

The first article, by Paul Atagamen Aidonojie, Godswill Owoche Antai, Esther Chetachukwu Aidonojie, Saminu Wakili Abacha and Muhammad Kibuuka, examines legal and regulatory issues relating to economic challenges posed by the metaverse in Nigeria's economy. Although the metaverse has potentials to aid development in Nigeria and contributes to its economy, the paper reveals how regulatory gaps, infrastructure limitations, and inadequate legal frameworks hinder economic participation in the growth of virtual spaces in the country. Challenges identified include inadequacies in data privacy protection, recognition and conceptualisation of digital property rights, taxation, consumer protection, and cybersecurity concerns. The study recommends a balanced regulatory regime that considers the rights and economic interests in the deployment of metaverse technology in order to ensure the potentials of the metaverse are harnessed for the economic development of the country.

The role of intellectual property rights in promoting sustainable development and food security through innovation in Nigeria's agricultural sector is the focus of the second article by Ifeoluwa A. Olubiyi, Omobo Joy Oghenefego and Igbogbo Oritsemisan Pamela. The paper recognises the important role of the agricultural sector in enhancing the Nigerian economy and contributing to its development. Setbacks explored include poor awareness of intellectual property rights, limited resources, lack of specialized courts for enforcement and poor technological capacity. It recommends regulatory reforms that encourage agricultural practices that promote sustainable development, increased rural public enlightenment schemes, and investment in technological advancement.

In the third article, Adaramola Emmanuel Opeyemi, Muniru Elizabeth Kehinde and Bajulaye Esther Arinola embarked on a critical analysis of the Value Added Tax System in Nigeria. the paper established that Nigeria's VAT system faces challenges, including insufficient taxpayer data, low compliance rates, and corruption in tax administration. Suggestions made include legislative reforms that will ensure clarity and remove ambiguities, improvement in data collection on taxed and strengthening punishments for tax corruption.

In the fourth article, Ifeoluwayimika Bamidele and Chiyem Laura Boiye examine the issues of food security, climate change and sustainable development in Nigeria from both legal and policy perspectives. In Nigeria, climate change poses a significant threat to food

security through extreme weather conditions, unpredictable rainfall, droughts, and flooding, which negatively impact agricultural productivity. Extant legal and policy frameworks examined include the Climate Change Act 2021, the National Environmental (Agricultural Sector) Regulations 2009, and the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP) 2022–2027. International and regional legal frameworks, such as the Paris Agreement2015) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) (adopted in 2003) were also analysed. In all, the authors recommend strengthening environmental laws, implementing climate-smart agriculture policies, supporting smallholder farmers, and integrating disaster risk reduction strategies. these are essential in ensuring food security as the country seeks to fuflill its obligation under the UN SDGs 2 and 13.

The fifth article by Vera Bidemi Monehin, Peace Amayo Ogbodo-Nathaniel and Oluseye Afuye recognise the challenge of lack of infrastructural facilities in Nigeria, which hinders the nation's progress; reduces the quality of life; and limits opportunities for job employment, poverty alleviation and economic diversification. Independent efforts by the public and private sectors have been insufficient in addressing the inadequacy. The public sector has constraints such as lack of funding, bureaucratic delays, and governance related issues; while the private sector initiatives face regulatory challenges, market risks and limited access to public support systems. Hence, this paper advocates for a partnership between the public and private sectors in addressing the challenge. Although such public-private partnerships (PPP) have been deployed, this has also been bedevilled by challenges such as weak institutional capacity which can create significant challenges to private investors and political instability which can hinder the execution of long-term projects. Hence, the paper recommends addressing these challenges by strengthening legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks, creating a transparent environment for local and foreign investors, and promoting financial sustainability through sourcing for alternative funding mechanisms.

In the sixth article to this issue, Ifeoluwa A Olubiyi and Fola-Adebayo Devine explore necessary legal reforms for economic sustainability in the consumer credit system in Nigeria. Consumer credit transactions facilitate access to financial resources for individuals and enterprises, serving as a catalyst for economic expansion, financial inclusion, and enhanced purchasing capacity. The paper analyses various extant regulations pertinent to consumer credit such as the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2018, Banks and Financial Institutions Act 2020, Credit Reporting Act 2017, Secured Transactions in Movable Assets Act 2017, CBN Act 2007, the Consumer Protection Agency Law 2012 of Lagos alongside guidelines like the FCCPC Fair Lending and Debt Collection Guidelines (2024) and CBN Guidelines on Responsible Digital Lending (2024). It identifies challenges in regard to consumer protection, capital stability and equitable access to credit. Hence, it emphasises the need for Nigeria to adopt tailor made consumer credit regulations in line with international best practices, in order to achieve sustainable development.

The seventh article by Rufus Adeoluwa Olodude PhD and Olalekan Moyosore Lalude PhD focuses on the improvement of the institutional and legal frameworks for environmental protection in Nigeria towards sustainable development. Concerns raised include institutional weakness, inadequate legal framework and the judiciary's often nonprogressive stance on environmental protection. It highlights solutions such as reforming environmental laws, enhancing institutional capacity, public sensitization, and adopting a liberal interpretation of locus standi which are all essential for advancing environmental justice and sustainability in Nigeria.

The eighth article by Omoleke Muslim, Jadesinmi Mohammed and Adefisayo Ifeoluwa Oyedeji was a legal comparative study on dual citizenship and nationality in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. With increased migration of people. Dual citizenship has become more common thereby raising legal and policy concerns about national identity, security, and governance. It also examines the nexus between dual citizenship on one hand and economic growth, social inclusion, and legal certainty on the other hand. By drawing on international best practices and human rights principles, the study suggests reforms that could make nationality laws fairer and more effective. A well-regulated approach to dual citizenship can strengthen institutions, improve governance, and contribute to social and economic development in both Nigeria and the UK.

Godswill Owoche Antai and Paul Atagamen Aidonojie, in the ninth article, critically examined the 'Legal Mechanisms for Combating Transnational Corruption and Enhancing Economic Resilience in Selected West Africa Countries'. It examined relevant laws such as the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, and ECOWAS-specific protocols. Case studies of successful anti-corruption efforts and challenges in Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal were also analysed. The paper identified the need for harmonisation of anti-corruption laws, building institutional capacity and sound economic policies to foster resilience.

The tenth article by Oyetola Mary Adeniyi, Ifeoluwayimika Bamidele and Ngozi Maureen Agbasi examined the rights of children in Nigeria born through assisted reproductive technology (ART) and its link to the UN SDG 3 0- ensuring good healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. The paper condemns biases against children born through ART and couples who choose to opt for this reproductive pathway. It highlights healthy benefits of ART including ensuring that such children are free from certain congenital diseases. Other challenges identified include the absence of specific policies and guidelines regulating the practice of ART in Nigeria which has indirectly rendered unspoken the rights of children produced through these methods. It recommends a holistic approach that upholds the rights of all such children are held sacrosanct irrespective of the circumstances of birth.

The eleventh article, by Michael Kehinde Osadare, takes a look at corruption as anathema to economic growth, sustainability and development in Nigeria. It discusses the connection between corruption and lack of economic development as it perpetuates poverty in the society. The paper finds that corruption permeates all sectors and

institutions both public and private in Nigeria and has significantly hindered and serves as anathema to her economic development and growth. Strong preventive, punitive and inter-agency cooperative measures were recommended to combat corruption in Nigeria.

Temidayo Peter Akeredolu, Ifeoluwayimika Bamidele and Adebola Oba in the twelfth article examined the legal and economic implications of digital healthcare technology on patient safety and rights in Nigeria. The development and increasing use of technology in modern healthcare raises a number of socio-economic and legal concerns including breach of patient's safety. It identified relevant actors in upholding patients' rights under the Nigerian Patients' Bill of Rights (PBoR) to include the government, the medical institution, the medical personnel, the patient, and the patient's family. The research postulates that the law on patient safety indicates scenarios of contract, human rights, and tort as the case may be, while the challenge of funding may require institutional reforms towards ensuring sustainable development goal on good health and wellbeing.

The thirteenth article by Olawunmi Opeyemi Obisesan and Dayo Benedict Olanipekun on the legal approaches to promote sustainable development through green fiscal policies and economic stimulus in Nigeria reveals law and policy goals that ensure human well-being and social equity and how they foster long-run economic development and transition from a traditional economy structure. The paper underscores the need for Nigeria to undertake some legal strategies for integrating economic, social, and environmental aims in making decisions or solutions on how money is collected and spent to further the country's transition to and sustenance of a green economy in its national budget concerning financial emergency due to shortfalls in oil, and as a wider policy directive. The fourteenth article by Ilesanmi, Ilugbusi and Anwana examines the role of sustainability literacy in advancing energy citizenship and eco-entrepreneurship in Nigeria. It unpacks strategies to address citizens' low capabilities and skills to advance eco-entrepreneurial ventures that promote decarbonization, sustainable development which contribute to the advancement of climate action and low carbon transition plans. The fifteenth article by Ademola Adeniran examines the social and human rights challenges facing e-hailing platform drivers in Nigeria and the innovative legal and contractual framework required to address such challenges. Given the crucial roles played by drivers and companies in this technology driven sector, the article argues for legal reforms to enhance restorative justice and human rights protection to e-platform drivers. The sixteenth article by Judge Talal Abdulla Al-Emadi of the Qatar International Court unpacks the need for hybrid mediation frameworks designed based on local contexts and needs to provide fair, timely and effective resolution of high-stakes energy disputes in a manner that advances global energy security and sustainable development in Middle East countries.

I appreciate the Editor-in-Chief, Editorial Board, Editorial Committee and the President and Founder of Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti – **Aare Afe Babalola SAN, OFR, LLD** – for the opportunity to be the editor of this special issue and their invaluable and continuing support.

I wish all our readers an insightful and rewarding time as they go through the scholarly contributions of the authors in this issue.

Yours sincerely,

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