



Economic History and Environmental Degradation of the Niger Delta, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria's Niger Delta region has abundant natural and human resources, including natural gas and crude oil, as well as diverse ecosystems and a sizable population. Due to its harbors, which promote the berthing of commerce vessels, the area has the ability to boost international trade. Due to poverty and underdevelopment wreaking havoc on the environment and its people, the Niger Delta region, despite its tremendous resources, has become excessively unstable and insecure. Environmental issues that include heightened soil erosion, floods, salinization or alkalization, desertification, gas flaring, pipeline vandalism, bush burning, and pollution of water, air, and land as a result of improper land use planning and management from the disposal of household and industrial wastes, as well as oil spills, noise pollution, the growth of informal settlements in urban areas, unsafe and unhygienic housing, and traffic congestion. With its wealth of resources, the region has been blessed and cursed, and this article explores these issues from an economic historical standpoint. For the area to experience sustainable growth and a high-quality environment, current environmental planning and management laws, rules, and standards must be upheld.

Keywords: Economic History, Environmental Degradation, Niger Delta, Nigeria

Introduction

Cities and towns situated between the Atlantic Ocean and the River Niger's coast make up Nigeria's Niger Delta area (Francis, Agomuo, & Chukwulet, 2021). Certain upland settlements have been added to these central Delta regions due to administrative and political conveniences. It is impossible to overstate how crucial the Niger Delta has been to Nigeria's socioeconomic and political development since the era of the slave trade. Aside from the fact that the residents in this area can immediately engage in their primary professions of fishing and subsistence farming due to the proximity of the River Niger and the Atlantic Ocean (Dike, 1956). For many people in the region and beyond, including Europeans, the area has served as a bustling hub for trade and economic activity (Alagoa, 1970).

European explorers and missionaries revealed the Niger Delta coast to be a bustling hub of trade. Mutual traders from Portugal were the first to settle in the region, bringing with them the European capitalism system and its economy (Dike, 1956). Beyond exchanging their European commodities for the people's raw resources at the coast, where they were confined, the Portuguese did not interfere with the trade rights of the Delta intermediaries (Ofonagoro, 1979). When the nature of the goods trade changed, the Europeans who provided the middlemen traders in the Niger Delta with weapons and material gifts encouraged widespread slave raids to meet the Europeans' demand for labor for their plantations in Sao Tome and Fernando Po (Ejituwu, 2002). This led to the middlemen traders becoming extremely corrupt. The Niger Delta developed become a haven for the harvest of slaves as the plantation economy grew throughout the New World and slave services were necessary in Europe. The area was a key supplier of African slaves to the Americas and Europe for over four centuries (Imbua, 2012).

Slave labor helped Europe and the Americas become industrialized economies as the slave trade and its slave entrepreneurs prospered. As the steady flow of slaves into the Western world proved unsustainable economically, Europe outlawed the slave trade as a criminal operation. From that point on, the trade was outlawed in the Americas as well, which were still under European dominion. Trade in palm goods, used to make soap and lubricate the machinery of the European industrial revolution, took the place of the trade in slaves. The chiefs of the area received sponsorship and encouragement to bring oil for the Europeans from their settlements in the hinterland.

Therefore, the state of the economy in Europe and the Americas dictated how well-off the people were in the Niger Delta. In order to keep the suppliers in the hinterlands submissive and loyal in their commercial dealings with the Delta intermediaries, the European traders in the area armed the native dealers as they fought for larger percentages of the legal trade (Ikime, 1968). The scenario persisted until the middle of the 20th century, when the

Niger Delta region was found to contain crude oil (Nwankwo, 1982). At that point, multinational businesses from imperial Europe and America completely uprooted the local population from managing their own affairs. Once more, the international organizations' divide and rule policy promoted an unending armaments race throughout the region. The extreme poverty and misery that they had been tricked into caused the people to become violent even against themselves in the aftermath, erasing the once-jolly people's culture of restlessness (Middleton, 2007). The multinational corporations whose capitalist ideology fosters these negative impacts are the ones that benefit from these bad repercussions of oil. Is oil really a curse for the Niger Delta? is a question posed by Obayiuwa (2012) in light of this detrimental effect on a people who appear to be favored by God. This claim would highlight the extent of environmental deterioration in Nigeria's Niger Delta.

Origin of the Niger Delta Peoples

It will continue to be challenging to trace the ancestry of the Niger Delta's inhabitants because, prior to 1500, all of them lived in prehistoric communities in the southern portion of what would eventually become Nigeria. According to Afigbo (1980), providing a historical history of these communities is challenging. According to Alagoa (1980), "the earliest scholars to work among the Ibibio concluded that the people were of hoar antiquity 'who could no longer remember an earlier home' because they had no traditions of origin." The Niger Delta peoples' early houses before they arrived where they are now is not specifically mentioned in the sources that are currently available regarding their origins. Because each academic had a distinct perspective on the communities they had chosen to study, scholars who attempted to investigate the origins of the many groups located in the region appeared to be "ensnared by the one or the other" overlook (Afigbo, 1980). The Ijaws were among the first people to live in the area; they seem to have existed before the arrival of the Portuguese (Dike, 1957). According to a thorough examination of their origin myths, they consider Benin to be their ancestral home (Dike, 1957). However, Dike issued a warning, saying that "this claim, which may be true of some places, must be received with reservations in the case of others until more supporting evidence is forth coming, especially as the temptation to claim Benin origin is very strong" (Dike, 1956).

According to Jones (1963), Okorobia (2009) report on the list of early Kings of the Ijo and other Niger Delta peoples was a desperate attempt by a colonial officer to appease European demands or an odd reaction to European stimuli. Approximately 80,000 Ijaw people live in the Eastern Region's streams and wetlands, making up the majority of the population in the Western Ijaw Division. According to Commission's Report (1958), they are a people who have lived in what is now known as Nigeria for a longer period of time than any other of the larger tribes. It is likely that they were driven down into the Delta region. In addition, Crowder claimed that the Ijo people had lived in the delta region for a very long time prior to the Portuguese invasion, but that they had taken up residence in little, dispersed communities in the tidal zone. They have a history of migrating from the northwest southward. Alagoa (1999) asserts that the Ijo have probably lived in the Niger Delta as a distinct ethnic group for at least 5,000 years. He insisted that rather than coming from outside the region, the people had moved throughout the entire length and width of the Niger Delta. Alagoa did point out that many clans did, however, subsequently migrate out of the central delta, forming villages like as Ogobiri, Oporoma, Ikibiri, Obiama, and the Apo Creek. From these settlements, secondary dispersals spread to create delta communities in the east, such as Ke and Oboloma, and in the west, Oproza (Alagoa, 1980). The Nembe moved from Obiama and later from Itsekiri in the Western Delta, according to Alagoa (1980). Elem Kalabari and Bonny moved from a region between Ogobiri and Kolokuma in the Central Delta into the Hinterland area, but were forced to return to the delta region due to their lack of environmental knowledge and the hostility of previous occupants. It was thought that some Ijo migrants moved to Okirika Island from Ikibiri, where they coexisted with various groups from other parts of the delta.

Economic History of the Niger Delta

It is certain that the Niger Delta's inhabitants coexisted peacefully with their neighbors prior to the entrance of Portuguese traders, primarily through trade. Different social structures that helped firmly establish the people's affairs were fostered by that commerce. The Portuguese arrived as mutual traders in the delta region later, around 1500. Under the European mercantile system, reciprocal trade continued for a considerable amount of time (Derefaka, 1997). The delta traders merely traded forest products for the foreign items the Portuguese brought with them.

The hinterland trade and the associated political climate remained foreign to the Portuguese traders. They got their commodities from the middlemen in the delta and were stationed there continuously. These delta intermediaries were what the European traders relied upon for their human commodities in the nascent slave trade. As a result, they swiftly trained the intermediaries to use firearms and provided them with enough of them to conduct regular attacks on the slave suppliers in the hinterland (Crowder, 1976). That was how the Niger Delta region was first affected by the early stages of European imperialism. Many Delta traders benefited so much from this imperial expansion that they felt compelled to establish themselves as a class of leaders and authority in their local communities, facilitating the pursuit of commercial interests by European traders (Ikime, 1968; Crowder, 1976). Because established and rich traders alone controlled authority over smaller traders and suppliers from the hinterland, the Europeans benefited handsomely from the stratification, which enabled them regulate the "trust" conditions of the trade. For commodities handed to them on confidence, the affluent traders served as guarantors to the smaller traders. Rich traders acquired enough firearms from their European trading partners to force the hinterland communities to fully comply with all trade terms, especially when those communities appeared to be neglecting their obligations to the wealthy Delta middlemen. These wealthy traders made their enormous income from the "comey," a type of trade duty paid to the Delta middlemen by European traders, and the various taxes from the small traders. (Cookey, 1973; Ikime, 1980). These trips frequently pitted the delta middlemen against certain European traders who were keen to reach the hinterland regions, the very source of the items they were after. The Niger Delta's imperial impulses quickly grew as a result of its delta partners' refusal to support that goal. The European slave traders found it impossible to envision a post-slavery

Britain, which had been industrialized mostly through the use of slave labor, outlawing the slave trade. Meanwhile, their African agents held the belief that the slave trade was divinely mandated and therefore beyond human comprehension.

William Dappa Pepple, the King of Great Bonny Kingdom, had informed the local abolitionists: "We (the King and Council) think that this trade must go on." That's also what our priests and oracle have decided. It is said that no matter how powerful your nation is, it can never halt a commerce that God has ordained (Dike, 1956). The resistance of numerous African leaders to ending the vile trade when it was almost unprofitable for the British economy was the driving force for the expansion of British armed forces in the Niger Delta and the subsequent growth of imperialism in the area. Through gunboat diplomacy, which replaced the slave trade with a legal trade in palm products and other forest items provided by the hinterland communities, many delta kings lost their positions and their sovereignty. The steaming competition presented a fantastic chance for direct European traders to get involved in the affairs of the Delta villages. Consular politics were thus established to supervise European commercial interests. All native economic and governmental systems were gradually replaced by Courts of Equity, which arbitrated all delta people disputes. The aim was for European traders to get unrestricted access to peaceful trade and establish a legal framework capable of penalizing any community that resisted (Cookey, 1973). Subsequently, the Europeans obtained protection rights on par with those of the lesser delta nations by dubious treaties or accords, which required them to submit to full European imperial control.

Niger Delta in Global Trade

Scholars today might be inclined to view the Niger Delta region as the center of the world's commerce in natural gas and crude oil along the coast of West Africa. In order to achieve this, the academics will be analyzing the significant amount of crude oil—also known as the "Black Gold"—that is extracted from the region and traded elsewhere, with the wealth of those transferring the oil being used to the detriment of the region itself. Even though such conclusion might be accurate and somewhat appropriate, it's crucial to remember that the Niger Delta's current position in the world oil trade is a result of earlier events in the region (Alagoa, 1971).

Therefore, it is thought that the majority of the delta's communities originated in the Central Delta, a central area where farming was both feasible and common. Although it was just a secondary occupation for men, fishing was nevertheless viable there. Over time, the environment became more constrained due to population growth and its aftereffects, forcing some villages to relocate to areas under water in the delta's eastern section. There, fishing and salt mining became the only viable industries for villagers to survive (Alagoa, 1971). The Niger Delta's significance as a hub for international trade began with the trade of fish and salt between the Eastern Delta's residents and the Central Delta's agricultural produce. With time, the little internal trade between the coastal settlements and their hinterland neighbors expanded into international trade (ibid: 273). The formation of trading states in the area was facilitated by the Niger Delta peoples' early international trade.

The mutual trade that the Portuguese brought to the Niger Delta in the fifteenth century was based on the pre-existing trading networks in the area. The Dutch arrived as the next group of European traders in the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, French and English businessmen followed them. However, the groups shared the swift recognition of the lineage leaders of the delta villages and the office of the Kings (Amanyabos and Ibenanaoweis) in order to better administer the "trust" system that underpinned their trade with the delta peoples. Before their sons, the Kings and the heads of their lineage were the first to benefit from the trust system (Alagoa, ibid). Through the transatlantic slave trade in the early 16th century, the delta trade was firmly integrated into the global economy from that initial point of contact. Because it was more profitable, Europeans in the Atlantic trade desired more slaves than the natural things that delta traders sold. As a result, the Portuguese, who had built sugar plantations in Sao Tome and were therefore in high demand for slave labor from the delta region, brought the Mediterranean and Black Sea trade closer to the delta region. The market for African slaves grew once they expanded their plantation business to Brazil later in 1580.

The Portuguese held the exclusive right to provide other Europeans, such as the Spaniards who operated plantations in the Caribbean and other parts of the New World, with slaves. After several centuries, when European powers other than the Portuguese had become wealthy from the trade and realized it was no longer beneficial to their own economies, they outlawed it and looked to the Niger Delta for new trade and to sell the final products produced in their factories. As the delta communities banded together to compete with one another for better trade deals with the foreign traders, the new course of events frequently fostered fierce competition among them. For instance, Kalabari and Obolo (Andoni) formed an alliance against Bonny because they believed that Bonny had a monopoly on the trade of the Eastern Delta. Also, against the Kalabari, Okrika frequently formed alliances with Bonny or Nembe (Brass) (Ejituwu, 2002). The Europeans were happy with these deadly partnerships because they benefited their trading interests. With the building of railroads and motorable roads as new modes of transportation from the hinterland communities where raw materials were obtained to the new centers of trade like Port Harcourt and Lokoja which were close to the big rivers and Atlantic Ocean, the new trade in the Niger Delta contributed to hasten Nigeria's integration into the global economy.

Discovery and Exploration of Crude Oil in the Niger Delta and its Impact

By the time the history of crude oil in Nigeria started, the nation had become a fully-fledged British colony, with a variety of English businessmen vying for success across the various colonial territories. The British colonial government awarded the first mineral oil concession to Shell-d'Archy Petroleum business of Nigeria, a Dutch oil business that was a subsidiary of Shell Petroleum Company and British Petroleum Company, in 1938. The Company started conducting geological and geophysical testing right away, but its operations were put on hold in 1939 when World War II broke out (Nwankwo, 1982). In 1955, other oil corporations joined the quest for oil in the Niger Delta, including Mobil Exploration Nigeria, a subsidiary of

Socony-Mobil Oil business of USA; SAFRAP, a French business; Philips; Tenneco; Delta/Pan Ocean; Japanese Petroleum; Occidental; Ashland; and many more. In 1957, the first oil well was drilled by Shell-d'Archy Petroleum at Olobiri in Ogbia LGA, Bayelsa State. In 1959, the company exported its first oil from Nigeria. Other oil firms' exploratory efforts have increased Nigeria's overall oil earnings in foreign currency by more than 80%. Other than the Niger Delta, no other area of Nigeria is currently used for oil mining. However, while making a significant economic contribution to the country, the delta region has nothing to show for it. Following the discovery of oil in the delta region, agriculture—which had previously been the backbone of the nation's economy—was abandoned, leaving every region of Nigeria entirely dependent on oil. During the colonial era, every region of Nigeria produced a variety of crops for export to help the national economy.

Nwankwo (1982) claims that prior to Nigeria's 1973 designation as a major oil producer, key agricultural items like groundnuts, cocoa, and palm produce prospered due to regional production specialization. According to Nwankwo (1982), these products' export value was between 70 and 80 percent in foreign currency. Aside from these export commodities, the nation's promoted growth of cassava, rice, millet, yam, beans, and vegetables essentially met all of its domestic food needs. Despite the fact that Nigeria's agricultural economy was designed to meet the imperial demands of the colonialists, the country's decision to forsake it in favor of oil even after independence has left a festering wound. According to Nwankwo (1982), Offiong (2007), and Odeke (2020), capitalism is inherently exploitative, enriching a small number of people at the expense of the great majority of people living in suffering. As long as earnings are rolling in, it doesn't give a damn about the miserable living circumstances of any individuals or their suffering while wearing its shackles. The British Parliament established a Commission of Enquiry in 1957 to investigate the anxieties of Nigeria's minority groups and offer solutions to calm them because of the mistreatment of the humanity of the Niger Delta peoples. The Commission's final report and conclusions were too vague and deceptive to meet the requirements of the Niger Delta people, which sparked new agitations for their right to self-determination and management of the region's resources. On the surface, the development appeared satisfactory, but it was soon revealed to be a sort of internal colonialism that suited the North's economic objectives. The federal military government, which was established by Decrees No. 51 of 1969 and No. 9 of 1971, was controlled by the North and quickly assumed control over the distribution and collection of oil revenues. The Distribution Pool Account (DPA) or federation account, which based revenue allocation on population size, against revenue derivation, and the new revenue sharing formula introduced by the military that was based on State contributions to the federal purse favoring only those States with larger populations at the expense of Niger Delta States (Alagoa, 1971). They demanded that the nation be restructured in order to obtain resource control, citing their many years of neglect and marginalization in spite of the fact that the oil revenue divided against them originates from their territory. No one paid attention to the call until May 1999, when international campaigns and local protests forced Nigeria back to democratic rule prior to the derivation principle being raised to 13 percent. The politicians' pledge was broken, and the people's suffering continued to worsen in the face of the complexity and allure of today's globalized goods. The 2005 National Constitution Reform Conference saw a significant divide between Northern and Southern delegates over the equitable distribution of oil wealth. The Niger Delta delegates' demand for an upward review of the derivation formula, which would have increased it from 13 percent to 25 percent with a progressive increase to 50 percent within five years, was turned down.

Environmental Degradation and Poverty Spread

Ecology and Resources Destruction and Depletion

Prior to the start of commercial oil production in the Niger Delta in the middle of the 1950s, the area was basically unspoiled and provided abundant supplies for the sedentary communities. These contained, among other things, fish, shrimp, crabs, clams, wood for energy and shelter, solid soil for cultivation, and habitat for rare species of animals. Together with a vibrant assortment of exotic birds, crocodiles, turtles, and alligators, there were also the Delta elephant, the white-crowned monkey, and the river hippopotamus. Additionally, a sizable portion of Nigeria's commercial fishing industry was centered in this region. However, the distribution and prospecting of oil and gas are linked to the devastation of human villages, farms, and forests to make way for seismic cutting lines that deplete and destroy these priceless resources in the Niger Delta region. Fish and certain other aquatic species, both marine and freshwater, are destroyed around the prospecting areas, which poses serious environmental risks. Humans are also impacted by noise, air, and water pollution, vibration from seismographic blasting, buildings, fence walls, wooden bridges, and access roads. These elements were introduced into the environment through unethical practices that also introduced ammonia, heavy metals, hydrogen sulfide, oil and grease, and other toxic and poisonous substances. There is typically no attempt made to repair the harm done to the environment, human health and social welfare, and the delicate ecosystems when the effect occurs, as has become commonplace in the Niger Delta. There is absolutely no consideration for compensation (Eyinla & Ukpo, 2006). Dredging operations for pipeline installation next to broken flow stations and other oil infrastructure disturb the sea bed as part of the petroleum resource distribution process. In addition to pollution from tank cleaning, deck drainage, and loading activities, sedimentation also happens along pipeline channels. The recurrent occurrence is the destruction of areas that are sensitive to the environment, such as farmlands, marshes, lowlands, and fish ponds. Loss of soil fertility and overall land degradation are also factoring in this. In addition to issues related to blow-outs and other oil spills, environmental deterioration, equipment malfunction, human mistake, and pipeline vandalism all contribute to poverty by causing the loss or depletion of livelihood systems and other important resources.

Consequently, Eyinla and Ukpo (2006) claim that there are a number of distinct effects of oil spills that are connected to the devastation of wetlands. These include, but are not limited to, the loss of fish, crustaceans, and other aquatic resources; the loss of fishing grounds and gear; wildlife migration; the destruction of farmlands; decreased agricultural productivity and yield; the uprooting of residents; and the spread of water-borne diseases. All of these lead to hunger, greater poverty, and illnesses in areas without hospitals or herbal cures that have been rendered useless by the manufacturing and distribution of oil. Moreover, the countless gas flares that adorn the Niger Delta's terrain constantly emit light and heat every day. Building damage, the

introduction of acid rain, discomfort for both humans and animals, and the loss of vegetation and wildlife are all consequences of atmospheric and thermal pollution (Eyinla & Ukpo, 2006).

Solid Waste

Solid waste has emerged as the nation's most significant environmental issue, endangering women's health and social welfare in addition to causing contamination of the land, water, and air (Uchegbu 2002). One may argue that the solid waste issue in our urban rural areas is a very new one. With its rapid population growth and high rate of consumption, the oil boom era opened the door for significant waste generation. Solid waste management is currently a big issue in almost all of our major cities and villages nationwide. For example, in Lagos State, these piles restrict the roadways to one or two narrow lanes, which causes persistent traffic congestion and the emission of disagreeable odors. In addition, incorrect waste disposal has been linked to a number of communicable diseases, including cholera, yaw, malaria, yellow fever, and relapsing fever in women. The disease may spread through biological vectors, mechanical and physical means, airborne infection, water and food supplies, direct contact, or other routes connected to the socioeconomic standing of the woman and her household. Furthermore, valuable and uncommon plants of wildlife may be killed by water supplies through leaching, run-off during rainy seasons, and other factors (Uchegbu, 2002).

Global Warming

This is the result of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere continuing to accumulate. A portion of the heat radiated from the earth is blocked by these gases, which include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and chlorofluorocarbons. This results in the greenhouse effect. The latter two decades of the 20th century was the hottest on record, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (UN, 1998). The burning of fossil fuels for energy and transportation, forest destruction that lowers carbon dioxide absorption, growing livestock that releases methane as a byproduct, and the use of polluting technology are some of the main factors contributing to rising emissions of greenhouse gases. As a result, drought, flooding, and a rise in sea level are all caused by global warming.

Ozone Layer Depletion

Basically, the ozone layer is located between 20 and 30 kilometers above sea level. The sun's dangerous ultraviolet rays are kept from penetrating because of the protective layer that the ozone layer provides. Degradation of the environment is the outcome of ozone layer depletion brought on by atmospheric pollution from the emission of chemicals known as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCS). UV radiation, according to Ukpong (1994), is the main cause of skin illnesses and low agricultural output. Furthermore, an increase in UV radiation damages aquatic ecosystems, upends aquatic life, which maintains the food chain, and kills fish that provide our food. In addition, it leads to the degradation of synthetic materials like paints and other building industry products, which eventually affects our growing human population.

Flooding

Research has also been done on how sea level rise and global warming would affect Nigeria and West Africa. The Niger Delta's height over large areas makes it especially vulnerable to sea level rise, according to the study. In many places, erosion and flooding are common and severe, increasing the risks (Ologunorisa, 2001).

Land Degradation

One of the toughest environmental issues that many people worldwide are dealing with is land degradation. In Nigeria, the affected number is about 40 million. Even in years with typical rainfall, the increased exploitation of fragile and marginal ecosystems has resulted in the gradual degradation and ongoing desertification of marginal agricultural lands. Many beneficial plant species may have lost their genetic makeup as a result of population pressure and drought-related damage. Numerous tragic socio-political and sectarian wars have broken out in the country as a result of pressure on the diminishing resources in the dry prone areas, resulting in significant losses in terms of life, property, and money. According to Ukpong (1994), there are a number of factors that contribute to land degradation, such as poor resource management, destructive logging of our forest, overgrazing and over cropping of arable land, wind erosion and flooding, strip mining in certain parts of Nigeria, destruction of wetlands and marches for development, and some known natural land-slides. Ukpong also noted that the use of inappropriate technology for farming and even the production of manufactured goods, lack of control, property ownership issues, enforcement measures, jurisdictional overlap, and lack of authority are additional indirect causes of land degradation.

Conclusion

Nevertheless, the region's history is noteworthy not only for being the center of Nigeria's oil politics today, but also for serving as a major hub for trade between local and foreign merchants since the 15th century. Despite its vast resources, the Niger Delta region has suffered from environmental degradation, which has led to increased poverty and underdevelopment. In the past, the Europeans' exploration and trade of resources to support their economy and industrialization process have led to the destruction and reduction of ecology and resources, increased environmental solid waste deposits, depletion of the ozone layer, persistent flooding, and land degradation across cities and communities in the delta. The Niger Delta's environmental degradation and rising poverty are made worse by the political system and structure that the Europeans left behind, which also has the tendency to under develop the region's population. People have been protesting since the colonial era, demanding answers to their situation, but they haven't gotten the attention they deserve. It should be mentioned that if these problems are not sufficiently resolved, Nigeria could suffer financial and resource losses. To ensure that the efforts being made to revitalize the ecosystem are not in vain, all hands should be on deck. To encourage sustainable development

and improve the region's environmental quality, all levels of government should, nevertheless, implement the current environmental laws, rules, and standards for appropriate land use planning and management through environmental planning and protection ministries and agencies at various levels.

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