

LECTURE 1

1.1 What is Land?

Land is the space that encompasses the surface of the earth and all things that are attached to it. It includes areas covered by water such as seas and lakes, as well as the air space above it, including natural resources found on it, such as rocks and minerals that are just below it and all natural vegetation. Also, includes buildings and other permanent attachments.

1.2 Significance of Land

1. Land is an emotive issue in Nigeria
2. Significance of land and land based resources for livelihood, identity, security
3. Land is not just a commodity that can be traded in the market. It represents multiple values which should be protected by both policy and law
4. An economic resource that should be managed productively
5. A significant resource for equitable access of livelihood
6. A finite resource which should be utilized sustainably
7. A cultural heritage which should be conserved for future generations
8. Has social, cultural and religious significance for individuals, families and communities

1.3 Environment and Natural Resources

Environment has a very broad meaning and includes:

- a. the physical factors of the surroundings of human beings including land, water, atmosphere, sound, odour, taste,
- b. the biological factors of animals and plants; and
- c. the social factors of aesthetics, and includes both the natural and the built

environment.

1.4.1 Environment

Significance of the environment

1. Crucial for the survival and socio-economic wellbeing of mankind
2. Fragility of ecosystems requires care for the environment
3. Finite resources, therefore need to be properly managed and used in a sustainable manner
4. Environmental degradation stems from two main types of human activities:
 - a. Use of resources at unsustainable levels; and
 - b. Contamination of the environment through pollution and waste at levels beyond the capacity of the environment to absorb them or render them harmless.

Natural Resources

Importance of natural resources for livelihood and economic development Nigeria has diverse natural resources, namely:

1. Biodiversity in its widest sense, including fisheries, etc;
2. Forest and Water Towers; Wildlife; Water; Industrial Minerals and Rocks e.g. limestone, feldspar, mica, salt, etc.
3. Ore (Metallic) Minerals e.g. gold, copper, zinc, iron, titanium, uranium, niobium and rare earth metals, etc.
4. Gemstones.
5. Energy Resources: Coal, Oil and Gas, Geothermal resources, Wind, Sunlight, the Ocean

Nigeria, Land and Resources

Nigeria covers an area of 923,768 sq km (356,669 sq mi). At its widest, it measures about 1,200 km (about 750 mi) from east to west and about 1,050 km (about 650 mi) from north to south. The country's topography ranges from lowlands along the coast and in the lower Niger Valley to high plateaus in the north and mountains along the eastern border. Much of the country is laced with productive rivers. The Nigerian ecology varies from tropical forest in the south to dry savanna in the far north, yielding a diverse mix of plant and animal life. Human population and development pose serious threats to both the ecological and the human environment.