



COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE STAKEHOLDERS' MEETING ON METHANE ABATEMENT IN NIGERIA WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON ANTHROPOGENIC SOURCES OF EMISSIONS HELD AT VISA KARENA HOTELS, 3 WONODI ROAD, PORT HARCOURT ON MONDAY, MARCH 11TH, 2024.

Preamble

Globally, efforts to cut gaseous emissions and address climate change are being tackled in various ways. Methane (CH₄) is said to be the second most significant contributor to emissions after Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), which has caused about a 30% rise in global temperatures since the Industrial Revolution (iea.org). An increase in methane levels in the atmosphere accounts for raising average global temperatures by 4–8 °C (7.2–14.4 °F) to over a few thousand (britannica.com). While contending with and focusing on methane emissions from oil and gas production, little attention is paid to emissions from anthropogenic sources linked to man's natural activities like farming, waste management, etc.

Methane is an odorless, colorless, flammable gas that enters the atmosphere via natural sources and human-related (anthropogenic) activities. It is formed from the decay of natural materials in landfills, marshes, septic systems, sewers, pit toilets, compressed dustbins, coal, gas, etc. It is used in manufacturing organic chemicals and as fuel for lighting and heating. Proactive governments are working on capturing and utilizing methane from dumpsites and landfills to curtail atmospheric emissions.

Nigeria and 150 other countries signed the Global Methane Pledge to reverse climate change. To achieve this, governments are deploying technologies to cut emissions, provide cleaner energy, and reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Thus, countries are sun-setting the production of fossil fuels to reduce greenhouse pollution and the heat associated with methane-related emissions.

Under President Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria decided to leverage its resource advantage in gas to build cleaner energy, attain energy self-sufficiency in the short to medium term, and drive economic growth. Nigeria developed the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) and the Agenda 2050, focusing on exploiting and developing Nigeria's substantial natural gas resources. The Decade of Gas Plan also intends to use gas as a transition fuel.

Matters Arising

- Enough accounts of the consequences of such massive gas exploitation have not been taken, and therefore, increasing methane from other sources will worsen emissions from gas flaring and oil spills from pipeline vandalism and complicate climate change effects.
- The release of methane into the atmosphere has direct and indirect hazards to humans.

- The majority of the people who will be directly impacted by the saturation of methane in the atmosphere do not understand the hazards associated with the emissions.
- Most advocacy on methane abatement focuses on methane emissions from fossil fuels.
- Methane emissions from food waste, food systems' emissions, trash, landfills, livestock breeding, and bush burning, which contribute about 60% of global emissions, don't seem to have the type of attention carbon dioxide has concerning climate change.
- When methane from a landfill escapes into the atmosphere, it causes more emissions than cars, as evidenced by the "Meet the Methane, the Invisible Climate Villain" video. The video shows that emissions from one landfill in Beuno Aires cause equivalent pollution to 1.4 million cars.
- According to the Global Methane Assessment, cutting 45% of human activity-caused methane emissions could prevent 255,000 premature deaths and 775,000 asthma-related hospital visits.
- It is imperative for CSOs to rise and advocate for methane curtailment in the shortest possible time.

Abating methane emissions

Concerned about the issues associated with Methane emissions in Nigeria, the Environmental Centre for Oil Spills and Gas Flaring (ECOSGF) and the African Initiative for Transparency, Accountability, and Responsible Leadership (AfriTAL) worked to get funding to carry out activities to reduce methane from anthropogenic sources, including research and advocacy with civil society organizations (CSOs). In February 2024, TrustAfrica provided a take-off seed fund for the project.

It is hoped that as the project progresses, other funding partners will show interest in collaborating with ECOSGF and AfriTAL to achieve their project goals.

Goals of the Methane Abatement in Nigeria Project

The main goal of the project is to carry out advocacy on methane emission reduction and utilization in Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Delta, and Rivers states in the Niger Delta. The objectives are:

1. To raise awareness among stakeholders and policymakers through a multisectoral approach regarding the adverse effects of methane and advocate for implementing adequate policies to reduce methane emissions.
2. To provide CSOs, media, and other stakeholders with advocacy tools for promoting methane reduction in Nigeria and to foster public consciousness at various levels of society and
3. To maintain the momentum of the methane abatement program through ongoing advocacy, research, and impact evaluation.

Stakeholders meeting

A meeting of key stakeholders and CSOs involved in human-related activities that would likely cause methane emission was held at the Visa Karena Hotels, Port Harcourt, on March 11, 2024,

to kickstart the project. Speakers made presentations and contributions with knowledge of the issues.

Opening Remarks/presentations

In his opening remarks, Dr. Louis Brown Ogbeifun, the Executive Director at AfriTAL, stated that the project would focus on decreasing methane emissions from anthropogenic sources such as human wastes, landfills, the rearing of ruminant animals, rice cultivation, and other agricultural processes. He noted that, from the information gathered thus far, there is a lack of knowledge about anthropogenic methane and its hazards to human health.

He stressed that Nigeria's methane emissions situation is more precarious because methane emissions from oil and gas activities like gas flares, pipeline vandalism, artisanal refining, etc., are already high; hence, CSOs must advocate for its curtailment as soon as possible.

He presented the scope of the initial methane abatement in Nigeria project to be carried out with a particular focus on anthropogenic causes within four pilot states in Nigeria, namely, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Delta, and Rivers states in the Niger Delta, including:

- Equipping CSOs and the Media with knowledge and advocacy tools for "Methane Action;"
- Encouraging governmental entities to be more proactive in methane abatement and
- Increased awareness and interest by farmers and livestock owners on the effect of improperly disposed wastes and their impacts on humans.

Rev. Fr. Edward Obi, *MSP* of the Environmental Centre for Oil Spillage and Gas Flaring, stressed that CSOs could do a lot to lessen the impact of global warming, and he was happy to be a part of the methane abatement project. He reiterated that 60% of global methane emissions come from anthropogenic sources, especially agriculture, citing examples from cows' feeding habits. To bolster the need for urgency in methane abatement, he played a video, "Meet the Methane, the Invisible Climate Villain" video, which shows that emissions from 1 landfill in Beuno Aires cause an equivalent to pollution from 1.4 million cars. As a result, he highlighted that the project is timely in addressing the issue of climate change.

Goodwill messages were given by organizations such as Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN), Peace Point Development Foundation (PPDF), Centre for Environment and Human Rights (CHERD), and We the People (WTP).

Suggestions (Key Highlights)

After the presentations, participants shared their thoughts and made suggestions as follows:

- There is a need to develop fact sheets to establish the realities regarding methane emission from anthropogenic sources in Nigeria and its impact on humans and the environment.
- There is a lack of awareness of methane emissions and their impact on the environment and humans.
- Paucity of data on methane emissions.










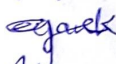




- There is a lack of robust methane research and development infrastructures.
- Advocacy on methane emissions has mainly focused on methane emissions from fossil fuel sources, i.e., gas flaring leaks from vandalized petroleum pipelines.
- Appropriate technologies for measuring anthropogenic methane emissions, methane digesters in homes and offices, etc., are lacking.
- There is a lack of synergy among critical government stakeholders, including the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, Health, Education, NESREA, etc.

Resolutions (Action Points)

The Civil Society Organizations overwhelmingly complemented TrustAfrica and the methane abatement partners working on the methane abatement program in Nigeria. After that, they made the following actionable commitments:

- i. Liaise with the National Council on Climate Change and other climate change actors for the necessary information that would assist in birthing the project objectives.
- ii. Assist in fact-finding, research, and development.
- iii. Carry out documentation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.
- iv. Conduct field visits, training, and engagement with stakeholders.
- v. Produce public communication materials to increase awareness.
- vi. Conduct advocacy visits to communities, farmers, women's groups, and environment clubs.
- vii. Provide capacity building and technology development.
- viii. Reach out to larger audiences through webinars and flyers.
- ix. Assist with advocacy tools targeting communities and policymakers.
- x. Leverage on structures and platforms of partners to assist ECOSGF and AfriTAL in the enlightenment of communities and policymakers in the various states of the project,
- xi. Integrate ways of handling human and agricultural waste into educational curriculums.
- xii. Engage with farmers' associations, cooperatives, The National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency NESREA, Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Environment, and Education, women groups, and the private sector to promote innovative climate farming practices.
- xiii. Engage private entities through the Chambers of Commerce to set up businesses related to methane abatement (Methane laboratories, methane trackers, methane digesters, biogas, etc.)
- xiv. Propose policies to strengthen the regulation of methane gas emissions.
- xv. Assist in monitoring and tracking performance and progress of commitments made by each partner.

SIGNATORIES TO THE COMMUNIQUE

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