

## Features

When it started the campaign for environmental conservation 25 years ago, not many people reckoned then that the issue would later dominate governance and businesses around the world. But today, the push for a cleaner environment and enduring biodiversity began in this country by the Nigerian Conservation Foundation has even become more pronounced than it was in 1980.

The need for meaningful reduction in pollution levels and the rethinking of greenhouse effects as a way of fighting global warming has continued to dominate discourses around the world. It is in line with this crusade that the NCF is marking its 25 years of active campaign in a stocktaking manner that would contribute meaningfully to the current debate on global warming.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), BirdLife International, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), World Conservation Union (IUCN), Wetlands International, World Conservation Society and Flora and Fauna International are among the international organisations expected in Lagos to celebrate the 25 years intervention of the Nigerian Conservation Foundation in nature conservation in Nigeria.

For 25 years, these international organisations have directly and indirectly committed up to 10 million United States dollars to the cause of nature and biodiversity conservation in Nigeria.

The organisations are expected to join the NCF at 25, to showcase to Nigerians their efforts at developing nature and create awareness on the relevance of preserving nature for economic reasons.

"Since 1980, we have utilised the technical expertise and financial capacity of these international organisations towards conserving some of Nigeria's rare and endemic plant and animal species. Her partnership with these organisations has also initiated and coordinated the wise use of natural resources by several thousands of Nigerians in rural communities. This has not only helped to alleviate poverty in

# NCF and the challenge of cleaner environment

A journey began in 1980 by the Nigerian Conservation Foundation for a cleaner environment and sustenance of the earth's biodiversity has assumed a larger than life image as the whole world joins the campaign for less pollution and a greener earth, writes AUSTIN IMHONLELE

many economically vulnerable areas in Nigeria, it has also helped to ensure that such resources are managed sustainably," says Emmanuel Obot, executive director, NCF.

For example, "the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in association with NCF has hinged on the recognition of the dire need for joint and shared promotion of conservation objectives. It is equally aimed at encouraging both parties to gain strength and support through the development of a mutually beneficial relationship but today, this relationship has resulted in a number of conservation achievements."

As part of its aim to promote environmental education in Nigeria, WWF of UK has provided sponsorship to researchers from Nigeria for post graduate courses in Environmental Education at the Jordanhill College of the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow United Kingdom. Through NCF, the recipients of these scholarship have contributed to the continuous and steady growth of environmental education in Nigeria.

The WWF Family has been on top of activities that have facilitated increased environmental awareness and education for a variety of target audiences in Nigeria. The WWF-UK/NCF, Integrated Environmental Awareness and Education Programme marked a unique point in the history of Environmental Education in the Nigerian Education System. Formal curricula have been developed for different educational levels and the courses are now being run at the undergraduate and post graduate levels of some Nigerian Universities.

At various times, between 1994 and 2000, the WWF also supported NCF conservation efforts in Okomu Wildlife Santu-



ary, Edo state.

WWF was officially formed and registered as a charity on September 11, 1961 and is one of the world's largest and most respected private international organisations. It has played and continues to play a major role in the evolution, development and globalisation of international conservation movement.

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is another organisation that has since 1987 to date collaborated with NCF's and IUCN to launch the Hadeija Nguru Wetland Conservation Project in Northern Nigeria. Since then, the relationship has grown tremendously as about two doctorate (PhD) scholarships had been issued to Nigeria's pre-eminent ornithologists in the 1990s.

There has also been the support for the participatory Sustainable Management of Renewal Natural Resources project in collaboration with WWF and NCF with funding from DFD between 2001-2005.

It has equally supported in the nationwide sur-

vey of Important Bird Areas across Nigeria, which resulted in the book "Critical Sites for Biodiversity Conservation in Nigeria" published by NCF Partners with NCF in the development and implementation of the DFID and Darwin Initiative funded project "Participatory Management of Priority Biodiversity Sites in Taraba state, Nigeria between 2005-2010"

The partnership has also led to the support for PhD studentship at Unijos and A P Leventis Ornithological Research Institute, Jos, between 2004 - 2006.

The conservation and sustainable protection of the Afi Mountain Wildlife sanctuary in Cross River State of Nigeria. NCF has also through a network with NGOs like FFI, WCS and the Environment and Rural Development Foundation of Cameroon, engaged in conservation of endangered species and their habitats in developing countries. One of the projects sponsored by FFI "Flagship Species Fund Contract" has facilitated the identification and putting in place complementary conservation approaches for the protection of the Cross River Gorilla and the Nigerian-Cameroon Chimpanzee in both countries.

Also, Flora and Fauna International (FFI) as a UK-registered charity organisation has over the years established a relationship with NCF. FFI has been very responsive to NCF distress calls for the sponsorship of conservation programmes and activities. The relationship between NCF and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) another organisation began in 2000 following the establishment of the NCF South-East regional office in Calabar, Cross River State. The need for collaboration was jointly found in the common interest and concern for the conservation of forest and wildlife species in Afi-Mbe-Okwangwo forest complex in Cross River State.

Through partnership with Birdlife, NCF was able to host the global conservation community from Birdlife International Offices all over the world at the Global Council and the Council for African Partnership (CAP) meeting in 2002.

Through Birdlife International Partnership, NCF partnered with another Birdlife African Partner - Cameroon

Biodiversity Conservation Society (CBCS) to implement a Transboundary collaboration for Ecosystem Conservation Project in and around montane forests of Gashaka Gumti National Park and Tchabal Mbabo in Cameroon.

NCF and Birdlife had jointly warned the government of Bauchi state on the proposed construction of the Jama'are Dam in Kafin Zaki area of the state. NCF and Birdlife had stated that the Dam would put the farmlands, fishing grounds and other means of livelihood of millions of people living downstream of the Jama'are River in danger.

NCF and Flora and Fauna International (FFI) partner-

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