THE PERENNIAL CONFLICTS BETWEEN PASTORALISTS AND CROP PRODUCERS IN NIGERIA AND THE 1978 LAND USE ACT

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ABSTRACT

There is a functional link between crop producers and pastoralists' conflicts with the issues of access to and use of land and its associated resources—water, pasture, etc. Understanding the conflict between farmers and herders requires examination of land management and the land tenure system. The intent of the Land Use Act of 1978 was to ensure the availability of land, through alienation for commercial, agricultural, grazing, and other economic activities, for the benefit of all Nigerians. Forty years after the promulgation of the Land Use Act and its subsequent incorporation into the 1979 Constitution as well as the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, competition over access and use of land for crop production and pastoralism persists. This paper examines why, despite the Land Use Act, competition over access and use of land remains volatile. To address this problem, the paper adopts the political ecology theory. Data was generated using the desk research method and was analyzed qualitatively using the processual approach. The paper finds, among others, that although the Land Use Act has been severely criticised, its principles of nationalism, in theory, are highly relevant to Nigeria's social, economic, and political development; and that the factors that combine to undermine the efficacy of the Land Use Act in resolving the herders-farmers conflict are problems of diligent implementation and politicisation of government activities. The paper recommends diligent implementation of the government's policies.

Keywords: Conflicts, Crop Producers, Land Use Act, Nexus, Pastoralists, Perennial

1. Introduction

The return of Nigeria to democratic rule in May 1999 birthed the renewed specters of violent conflicts among various segments of the society. These conflicts range from ethnic crises, religious intolerance, political instability, and resource use conflicts, as well as many others. One of the most intractable conflicts is the resource-based conflict—represented by the militancy in the oil-rich Niger Delta region and the perennial pastoralist-crop producers' conflict. The most protracted conflict in Nigeria today is, no doubt, the pastoralist and crop producer conflict.

In fact, the pastoralist-crop producers' conflict appears pervasive in Africa (Nassef et al., 2023). Evidence of farmer-herder conflict in central, west and east Africa has been documented with varied causal factors (Nassef et al., 2023; Omotola, 2025). In Nigeria, the pastoralist-crop producers' conflict dates to

pre-colonial Nigeria (Momale, 2017). There is also a considerable body of evidence for an increase of herder-farmer conflict within living memory and especially during the post-independence period (Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehin, 2018; Momale, 2017). According to Blench, "*West Africa in general and Nigeria in particular have experienced a considerable increase in natural resource conflict since the beginning of the 1990s. Of particular concern are the clashes between farmer and pastoralist ….*" (2004, p. 1)

There seems to be some level of agreement that the violent confrontation taking place between crop producers and pastoralists across the various regions of Nigeria is largely related to the issues of access to and use of land and its associated resources—water, pasture, etc. (Ugwueze et al., 2022). This land dimension makes managing land and land tenure essential in understanding the conflict between farmers and herders.

The intent of the Land Use Act of 1978 was to ensure the availability of land, through alienation for commercial, agricultural, grazing and other economic purposes, for the benefit of all Nigerians. It was expected that land would be available for all productive and developmental programmes of government and private individuals. Forty years after the promulgation of the Land Use Act and its subsequent incorporation into the 1979 Constitution as well as the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, competition over access and use of land for crop production and pastoralism persists in the form of farmer-herder conflict.

This paper examines why, despite the Land Use Act, competition over access and use of land remains intractable. The objectives are to a) establish the dynamics and persistence of the pastoralist-crop producer conflict; b) establish the nexus between the pastoralist-farmer conflict and the land tenure system; and c) examine why the Land Use Act has failed to curb the perennial pastoralist-crop producers' conflict.

The paper is divided into seven sections. This introduction is followed by a theoretical review on pastoralist-farmer conflict. The third section deals with methods of study. An overview of the Land Use Act constitutes the body of section four. The nexus between the Land Use Act and the pastoralists–crop producers' conflict forms the crux of section five. Section six examines the reasons why the Act failed to curb the violent conflict between the pastoralists and farmers. Finally, section seven concludes the paper.

2. **Theoretical Review.**

Most of the studies on farmer-herder conflict approach the topic from the political ecology perspective (Olamide-Sowale, 2024; Nwankwo, 2024; Otu & Sarfo, 2023). Political ecology is concerned with the study of the relationship between political, economic, and social factors with environmental issues and dynamics (Olamide-Sowale, 2024). It is characterized by 'ecological determinism,' which assumes that "any change in environmental conditions must affect the political and economic status quo (Winter, 2024). It is from this perspective that the eco-violence theory emerged.

The political ecology thesis is built on the foundation of the structural approach, which emphasizes the causal factors of conflict. The core interest of political ecology is erected on what Blench (cited in Martínez-Alier, 2023) refers to as "environmental marginalisation," that is, the process by which certain disadvantaged communities are disproportionately burdened by environmental degradation while being excluded from environmental decision-making and access to natural resources (Okonkwo, 2023). Political ecology's focus on environmental conflicts is, therefore, predicated on natural resource use, which is

scarcity-driven. Struggles over grazing land and scarce resources have over the years resulted in perennial and growing violent conflicts in terms of frequency, intensity, and geographic scope. This ecological problem led to inefficient resource utilization by creating scarcity of material resources (Deckert, 2016).

In Africa, Nassef (2023) posits that competition over resources, including 'reduced access to land, water, and other natural resources,' is a factor in ongoing conflicts along the Kenya/Uganda border. He argues that these pressures have interacted with demographic changes and environmental degradation, 'reduced access to credit, markets, and extension services,' and a 'long history of economic and social marginalization from central authority.'

Abbas (2010) equally points to climate change and land acquisitions by capitalist farmers as reasons why Fulani herders have moved southwards in search of grazing lands and, consequently, why they often come into conflict with farming communities. The causes of farmer-herder conflict range from the obstruction of traditional access to communal grazing and water resources, inadequacy of grazing resources, population growth that leads to an increase in crop production, and farmers encroachment into marginal lands that had been the traditional pasture routes for the cattle (Ottu, 2022). All these structural factors, Adam and Umar (2015, p. 198) insist, are nothing but "manifestations of ecological marginalization which create a deleterious impact on the perception of the pastoralists."

There has emerged a new explanation, which sees resource-related conflict as only symptomatic and has, therefore, advanced the argument beyond access and use of resources. By so doing, these scholars underplay the emphasis on the climate-conflict nexus.. Elaborating on these new perspectives, Robbins (2004, p. 173) identifies the "politicization of environmental problems," through resource enclosure or appropriation by state authorities, private firms, or social elites, as accelerating conflict between groups.

Eck (2014), similarly, argues against the thesis of environmental scarcity. He contends, instead, that institutional structures of the legal system are central to understanding which countries are more prone to experience communal land conflict. Introducing a moral dimension, Turner (2004) questioned the materiality of the agro-pastoral production and the complex relationships between political interests, moralities, and resource access that underlie violent conflicts.

Benjaminsen et al. (2012) interrogate the nexus between climate and conflict using a dataset of court cases of land use conflict from 1902 to 2009 in Mali and find no plausible connection between resource scarcity and land use conflict. However, their study finds structural factors such as the encroachment that obstructs the mobility of herders, increasing political vacuum, corruption, and rent-seeking among local government officials as factors that exacerbate herder-farmer conflict. Okeke (2014) also reached a similar conclusion when he argues that it is the agricultural policies of the government that are directly responsible for the perennial pastoralist-farmer conflict in Nigeria. He further argues that the agricultural development policies of government, right from colonial days to date, were designed and implemented to marginalize the poor rural farmers and peasant's herders

All the studies cited above, whether emphasizing or de-emphasizing the climate-conflict nexus, are united in adopting the structural approach, which only explains why conflicts occur between farmers and herders. But the relationship between farmers and herders is not at all times defined by violence. Therefore, to understand the variability of the outcome of farmer-herders conflict, Moritz (2010) introduces processual

approach, which engage a more rigorous multidimensional analysis of factors, to study why some conflicts are resolved peacefully, while others result in violent confrontation. This approach is very important because historically, interaction between farmers and herders has been a long-standing one, defined by periods of fluctuating conflict, competition and cooperation. The conflicting encounters include periods of violent herder disruptions over farming production systems and the conversion of pastoral grazing lands to cultivation plots. The cooperative relationship has been defined by symbiotic and mutually beneficial engagements in which the farmers allow the cow's access to the farms' fodder after harvesting and the herder bequeaths an organically manured land for the farmer to cultivate during planting season.

This approach discovers that the conflict is more complicated than simply an issue dealing with farmer-pastoralist conflicts. Adopting this approach, Momale (2017) identifies cattle rustling as the major trigger of conflict. In itself, Momale (2017) argues, the practice of cattle rustling is driven by different needs, which may include the need for cash, some ethnic groups' need for meat, or as a means of revenge for damaged crops. A study conducted by the Centre for Democratic Development Research and Training (CERDDERT) supports this position. The report highlighted how local herders could engage in rustling just to increase their herd or for quick cash. This has been an established venture going on for several decades. The recent drivers of rustling for meat and/or as a means of revenge are the more worrisome dimensions of rustling that have engendered the notorious armed banditry. The rustling of pastoralists' herds means depletion of household income and communal resources of the herding community.

Livestock production is not only a significant aspect of agriculture in Nigeria's quest to diversify its economy, but it also remains crucial to the overall well-being of pastoralist communities, particularly the nomadic Fulani herders. Therefore, the pastoralist considers a loss of his herd as a loss to self-respect and esteem and can necessitate any action, including banditry. The farmer considers the destruction of his farm produce as a threat to his survival and therefore justifies his rustling of herds for meat or for cash. Evidently, what plays out as farmer-pastoralist conflict is effectively a by-product of rustling and banditry (CERDDERT, 2014; Momale, 2017).

Another dimension of the causes of the escalating intensity of the conflict is the increasing proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria. Given that host communities (including farmers) also have access to sophisticated weapons, minor disagreements or provocations often degenerate into violent clashes, resulting in widespread destruction of property and human casualties (Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehin, 2014).

3. Method of Study

This study relies on secondary sources of data derived through literature and theoretical reviews**.** The data was analyzed using the processual method of qualitative analysis. This method entails identifying multidimensional factors complicating or exacerbating land-resource conflict. This is in contradistinction to the structural perspective of the political ecologist approach, which focuses only on causes of climate-resource violent conflict. By so doing, efforts towards peace building were also analyzed.

4. An Overview of the Land Use Act

In all societies, land is among the most valuable assets. Land generally refers to all endowments of nature that exist on, below, or above a given territorial area. Land use refers to human activities that are

undertaken by individuals, groups, and organisations on, below, or above a given area (Momale, 2017). Land tenure refers to the ways by which societies and nations regulate how individuals and groups access, own, transfer and use land, as well as the conditions governing such rights and ownership (Mabogunje, n.d.). Land tenure practices are governed by land use laws and regulations. In ancient societies, such laws were normally in the form of unwritten social conventions (Ojigi, 2014). As societies advanced, such conventions were transformed to written laws.

Until the land reform of 1978, there were no universal land administration practices in Nigeria. In northern Nigeria, land was held in trust by the governor, who administered the land for the use and common benefits of the people. By contrast, in southern Nigeria, the system recognized land ownership by lineages or extended family systems. With increased government attention towards urban expansion and the need to commercialize agricultural production to increase production to meet an equally increasing population growth, the problem of access and use of land by the government became a serious challenge, especially in the southern part of the country. It is therefore in the face of this challenge that the government sought sort to unify the two systems through the Land Use Decree of 1978 (later Land Use Act of 1978) (Mabogunje, n.d.).

The thrust of the decree was largely to extend the land tenure system in northern Nigeria to the whole country so as to ensure easier access to land for the government and, apparently, for individuals. According to Ojigi (2012), the Act simply transferred the ownership of land to the state, which is to hold the land in the public interest.

According to Momale (2017), the Land Use Act of 1978 has four significant policy effects: nationalisation **p**olicy**,** leasehold policy, trusteeship policy, and egalitarian policy. The nationalisation policy was aimed at eliminating the provisions of native laws that only allow members of a particular village or family to own land. The intendment of the leasehold policy was to eliminate the practice under native laws where the rights of a family or community on its land are absolute. Here every person can only own land on lease for a term, usually 99 years. The trusteeship policy, by vesting powers over all land in the governor as the trustee of all lands, implied that nobody in Nigeria will have absolute powers over land ownership. Finally, the egalitarian effect limits all people to ownership of a maximum land size to eliminate excessive dominance by certain individuals (Momale, 2017).

Arguably, the Land Use Act came with some innovations in the administration of land in Nigeria; it, however, was criticised by those who viewed the abrogation of the right of ownership of land, hitherto enjoyed by Nigerians, at least in the southern part of the country, and its nationalization by the government as inconsistent with democratic practices and the operation of a free and fair market economy (Mabogunje, nd). Furthermore, the incorporation of the Land Use Act into the 1979 constitution and the subsequent 1999 Nigerian constitution has been criticised due to the cumbersome nature of effecting constitutional amendment. On the basis of these criticisms, there have been calls for the reform of the Land Use Act.

These calls can be summarized into two: the first is to expunge the Land Use Act of 1978 from the constitution and delete those clauses that gave state governors the power to have to consent to mortgage transactions and assignment of land; the second is simply calling for the removal of all uncertainties under which most Nigerians continue to enjoy their possessory rights to their land. The attempt by the Yar'adua administration to reform the land tenure system in 2009 was abandoned.

5. The Nexus between the Conflict and the Land Use Act

As shown in previous sections of this paper, one of the driving forces of the clashes between the two groups is the competition for available resources, especially grazing land. The farmers and herders are united in their quest for land resources. Therefore, the issue of access and use of land is central to understanding the conflict. The farmers require the land to grow crops, and the herders require land to graze their herds. Due to environmental and ecological factors as well as deliberate government policies, both the farmer and the herder find it increasingly difficult to access land; thereby engender competition for the available land.

The nexus between the conflict and the land use act is located in the management of available land and/or the management of the pastoral-farmer conflict in a peaceful and orderly manner. The Land Use Act was expected to make the acquisition of land much easier, especially by new entrants into farming. It is also expected to allow non-indigenes of a state, especially nomads, to acquire statutory right of occupancy (Awoyemi, n.d.).

In the past, the Northern region government, in 1965, based on the subsisting land administration ordinance, created over 417 grazing reserves across the region. Under the grazing reserve system, the government provided space, water, and vaccinations for the livestock, while the herdsmen paid taxes to the government in return. However, the discovery of oil and subsequent exploration and export made Nigeria an oil economy, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. Subsequently, the grazing reserve system was abandoned due to the neglect of the agricultural sector as the mainstay of the country's economy. As such, intensive crop farming has expanded into grazing lands in many areas over these years.

These areas of encroachment agree with most of the conflict points (Muhammed et al., 2015). This explains the argument that the incessant clashes between farmers and herdsmen were partly caused by an increase in population, which led to utilization of grazing pathways for agricultural activities and residential purposes. So, as land becomes very scarce for herdsmen, they most often graze on farmers' crops, which leads to clashes (Ajibo et al., 2018).

6. The Persistence of the Pastoralist-Crop Producers' Conflict and the Land Use Act.

One of the objectives of this paper is to examine why the Land Use Act has been unable to resolve the pastoralist-crop producers' conflict in Nigeria. This section, therefore, outlines some of the issues, factors, and challenges responsible for the persistence of the farmer-herder conflict. On the whole, the paper argues that the persistence of the farmer-herder conflict, in spite of the Land Use Act, is a result of the following: the intent of the Land Use Act; severe ecological and environmental factors; agricultural development policies of the government; lack of diligent implementation of the policy; politicization of the conflict; general insecurity in the country; and mismanagement of government solutions to the problem.

7. Intent of the Land Use Act

While it is agreeable that provisions of the Land Use Act of 1978 have the capacity to resolve some of the issues arising from land use and access between farmers and herders, the Act was never designed with the conflict in mind. According to Mabogunje (n.d.), the major driving force behind the introduction of the Land Use Act of 1978 was to discourage the practice of multiple sale of same land to different buyers by

landowners in the absence of a title and appropriate registration mechanisms for transaction; to prevent the huge land of speculation that followed the post-independence agricultural development policies of government towards targeting commercial agriculture by agent of capitalist institutions and interests; and the urge to ease access to land by government for infrastructural development.

The objectives of the Land Use Act, neither took into consideration the interest of the rural farmer nor the peasant herder. Therefore, it is even presumptuous to think that the Land Use Act will resolve the perennial farmer-herder conflict. Secondly, the provisions of the law that would have adequately addressed the problem of farmer-herder conflict are not well disseminated. As such, there is inadequate awareness and sensitization among the very poor farmers and herders, to the extent that people do not know how it will benefit them. This has made it easy for the pastoralists and farmers rights to land ownership and even access to be constrained in many parts of the country. Consequently, people see any efforts of the government towards providing access to pastoralists as an attempt at taking away their ancestral land.

8. Severe ecological and environmental factors

As earlier noted, climate variability and environmental degradation have posed serious economic, political, and security challenges across Nigeria. The forests and other protected areas are increasingly disappearing due to a massive increase in the degradation of land and the quality of the environment due to improper uses of land—overgrazing, over-exploitation of forests, indiscriminate land clearance, etc. As Okeke (2014, p. 203) notes, ecological problems resulted in the inefficient utilization of resources by creating scarcity. Consequently, competition over access and use of natural resources, particularly land, vegetation, and water resources, resulted in violent confrontation between and among groups.

This conflictive relationship engendered by ecological dynamics is made worse by claims and contestation over land ownership and/or tenure rights. While it is worth noting that ecological and environmental challenges are global concerns and require more than the land tenure system of a particular country to resolve. In fact, it requires deliberate and holistic environmental policy direction to curtail its menace. However, if the nationalization policy of the land tenure system had been followed through, it would have reduced the vagaries of the problem through prudent management of the available land resources. But holding onto the old system of communal or family ownership of land by various communities, especially in the rural areas, tends to aggravate the problem.

8.1. Agricultural development policies of government

More often, governments at different levels, conceives agricultural development policies that are skewed towards crop production, neglecting the livestock sector. As Dan-Azumi (2025) posits, government has always favored commercial crop cultivators at the expense of peasant animal producers. With the introduction of commercial farming, certain systematic changes with the traditional agricultural system have been affected. These changes include the change from seasonal to perennial crop cultivation under modern irrigation farming style.

Furthermore, Dan-Azumi (2025) further argues that the agricultural policies of the government, through the Land Use Act, alienated community landholding by rural farmers and herders through a capitalist system of accumulation that eventually resulted in the displacement of rural farmers and herders, leading

to antagonistic competition for land use and access by farmers and herders. This increasing commercialization of crop production also comes with the attendant commercialization of crop residues, which makes pastoralism very expensive. In essence, the argument is that virtually all the agricultural development policies of post-independent Nigeria were designed and implemented to serve the capitalist interest of industrialized society and their local appendages.

Presently, the policy direction of government is conceived as promotion of ranches, which are very difficult to implement and require "ownership of land" by pastoralists, for which many parts of the country are not prepared to accept. Hence, addressing the problems of the relationship between cattle-rearing and crop-farming populations was made more complex.

8.2. Lack of diligent implementation of the government policy

There are a number of good policies and programmes developed to address the farmer-herder issues, what has always been lacking is the political will at the federal and state level to implement them (Daniel Ilesanmi, 2023; Ugwueze et al., 2022) Therefore, there is a need to revisit those policies and programmes for appropriate reviews and effective implementation. For example, the grazing reserve systems of 1965 responded positively to these problems. But its abandonment by successive governments resulted in the present quagmire.

Also, the programme on nomadic education, whose main goal was to economically and socially integrate nomadic pastoralists into the national life through the provision of relevant, functional, and mobile basic education and livelihood skills provision, laudable as it was, was abandoned by successive governments (Idris, 2025). The nationalization policy of the Land Use Act of 1978, if diligently executed, has the capacity to resolve the herder-farmer clashes. It would have ensured that those sedentary pastoralists, who have long settled in the *Fadama* plains of the rivers Niger and Benue, would not be considered as invaders or occupiers. This argument becomes valid because the spirit of the Act was that land should be available to all Nigerians in every state, LGA, or district for any legitimate purpose, such as agriculture, grazing, commercial use, industrial use, etc.

Land grabbing is on the rise in both the urban and rural areas–individuals are speculatively amassing lands beyond the provisions of the Law leading to the gradual emergence of landless citizens (Odoemene, 2015). There is growing exclusion of marginal groups from access to and ownership of land—ethnic minorities; periodic land users like pastoralists; hunters and fisher folk. In response to the challenges posed by climate change and its consequential environmental degradation, the Nigerian government keyed into the African Union Great Green Wall Initiative in 2013 by establishing the Great Green Wall Agency (GGWA) to fight desertification, which has been responsible for the migration of herders from the northern part of the country to the Middle Belt region in search of water and pastures. Since its inauguration, very little has been heard about the activities of the agency.

8.3. Politicization of the conflict

The politicization of the farmer-herder conflict through mobilization of clannish, ethnic, religious, and indigene-settler sentiments is one of the most formidable and dangerous explanations for the persistence of

the conflict. This entails the mobilization of primordial identity for achieving group or individual political interest. As Nchi illustrates:

…. the parties in a conflict may be carrying or expressing different religious identities. A simple argument between a Fulani herdsman and a farmer from a community that is predominantly Christian over land, for example, may take on the terror of a sectarian crisis since the Fulani herdsman almost always is a Muslim. (Cited in Okeke, 2014, p. 83).

It is in this context that the conflict between the Tiv majority farmers and Fulani majority herders is contextualized. The Tiv formulated a theory of Fulani colonialism forgetting that the relationship between the Tiv and Fulani herdsmen dates to pre-colonial Nigeria (Emmanuel, 2021). The relationship has been mutual and symbiotic, with moments of intermittent conflict resolved through community dialogue and compensation.

At the height of the farmer-herder conflict in north-central Nigeria, a proposal for the National Grazing Reserve (Establishment) Bill 2016 was initiated at the National Assembly in 2016. Rather than discuss the merits and demerits of the bill, members of the National Assembly were divided along ethnic and religious lines in support and opposition to the bill (Vanguard, April 30, 2016). The bill, whose object was to address conflicts between farmers and herders, was consigned to the dustbin of ethnic conspiracy.

This politicization of the conflict partly plays out in the establishment of state-level legislation prohibiting open grazing in some states. It is clear that the laws negate the provisions of the Land Use Act. Whereas, the intent of the Land Use Act is to make land available to all Nigerians, irrespective of tribe, religion, gender, region, and/or ethnicity; the state-level legislations banned open grazing in favor of ranching yet claimed, as is the case with Benue, not to have land for Fulani herdsmen. No doubt, the Land Use Act bestows the power of appropriating land on the state governor, and being a political leader, often, the governors 'have tended towards pacifying farmers or herders to curry political support. The ethnicization of land ownership and exclusion based on socio-economic or religious identity has increased the alienation of citizens' rights to access and use land in many of the urban and rural areas of Nigeria.

8.4. General insecurity in the Africa

The general tense atmospheres within Africa, occasioned by the level of general insecurity, have contributed, partly, to heightening the tempo of the farmer-herder 'crisis (Atidoga et al., 2024). This general state of insecurity has provided an avenue for the militarization of the various groups in conflict. Therefore, increased proliferation of small and light weapons in the hands of warring factions has promoted, in no small measure, the level of violent conflict across Africa. In Nigeria, the Boko Haram insurgency, the Niger Delta militancy, and the activities of armed banditry and cattle rustling have complicated the farmer-herder conflict.

8.5. Mismanagement of government solutions to the problem

From the activities of government, it is very clear that government is neither oblivious of what the problems are nor unaware of what is to be done. The problem seems to be in the muddling up of the solution to the problem. It is either that programmes are not diligently implemented or they are wrongly conceptualized.

Recently, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development formulated a 10-year National Comprehensive Livestock Development Plan (NCLDP); as a matter of policy, the Federal Executive Council approved implementation at a cost of about 179 billion naira. The plan would culminate in the establishment of 94 ranches in 10 pilot states of the federation (Yusuf, 2018). But, instead of calling it what it is, 'NCLDP,' the ministry referred to it, first, as 'cattle colony,' which instantly provided opponents of the programme with the arsenal to shoot it down; second, it was named 'RUGA' policy, which was met with similar criticisms. This unnecessary mismanagement of sound policy options characterized the handling of government interventions in most issues of national concern (Dan-Azumi, 2025).

9. Conclusion

No doubt there are several factors that combine to escalate the farmer-herders' conflict. Some of these include climate change and environmental degradation, depleting arable land for farming, and lack of political will to tackle the challenges. Although the Land Use Act has been severely criticised, its principles of nationalism, in theory, are highly relevant to Nigeria's social, economic and political development. However, as the paper argued above, certain factors have combined to undermine its efficacy in resolving the herders-farmers conflict.

Overall the problems of diligent implementation and politicisation of government activities are chiefly responsible for the persistence of the perennial conflict. The Land Use Act has the potential of minimizing the problem of unplanned development, improving the quality of the environment, enhancing the development of infrastructure, and reducing the risks of pollution, as well as poor sanitation and environmental degradation, which all combine to create the problem of land resource scarcity. Furthermore, the law will increase the prospects for improved productivity of the land and better opportunities for management of key land resources for optimal productivity. What is, therefore urgently required is diligent implementation of the government's policies, and all resource-based violent conflict would be grossly minimized.

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