

Human Rights, Health and Environment

By

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Abstract

The objectives of this paper were two-fold: to explore the critical linkages between environment, health and human rights; and to explore the human rights-based approach to health and environment. Environment, health and human rights are often considered in isolation thus the need for a holistic and integrated approach to tackle the development issues surrounding them, with a particular focus on the Nigerian situation. No discussion on health can exclude the environment because environmental quality is a major underlying determinant of health. Likewise, right to health cannot be discussed in isolation to the right to a healthy environment. The degradation of environmental resources such as air, water, soil, and biodiversity directly and indirectly impinge on health. This article is in four parts, the first part attempts to define 'environment' and 'health'. The second presents the concept of human rights while the third reviews the literature on the linkages and interactions between health and environment, environmental protection and human rights, health and human rights and sustainable development and human rights. The fourth analysed the human rights-based approach as an emerging paradigm for addressing health-environment nexus and strives to use this framework to critically review the Nigerian situation. The work concludes by summarising the key principles and insights enunciated in the work and makes recommendations on integrating health and environment with human rights.