LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE EXTENSION OF NIGERIA'S EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE

By

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Abstract

The marine ecosystem holds abundant economic resources. As expected therefore, the right of access and usage of the maritime area has historically been a subject of international disputes. Current international law approach under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 seeks to provide equitable legal framework for the enjoyment of maritime resources. The aim of this paper was to examine the legal implications of the approval of the extension of the exclusive economic zone of Nigeria. The paper adopted a doctrinal methodology using a textual analysis of primary and secondary data. The primary sources include Based on the analysis, conclusion was drawn based on logical inference. The primary sources used are statutes and treaties. The secondary sources included journal articles, books and online materials. The paper argued that the basis of the right to exclusivity of any economic zone is sovereignty of a State which extends to the doctrine of permanent sovereignty over natural resources within the territory of the State. This is in addition to the right of the State to economic self-determination. The paper argued further that under international law, approval of the extension of the exclusive economic zone of a State does not represent the acquisition of new maritime area but rather the establishment by credible evidence of the historical maritime territory of the State beyond the 200 nautical miles threshold in international law. Nevertheless, the approval of the extension holds significant legal implications for Nigeria. Nigeria will have to amend her Exclusive Economic Zone Act to reflect the approved extension. Furthermore, there will have to be review of the map of Nigeria and relevant chats to properly integrate the new areas covered. The extension of the jurisdiction of Nigeria over an additional economic zone also holds significant economic potentials for Nigeria. The article concluded by urging Nigeria to maximize the opportunities created by the extension by making necessary and consequential amendments in her national laws.

Introduction

Nigeria operates a constitutional democracy which is anchored on the fundamental purpose of promotion of good government and the welfare of all persons.[1] Within this framework, the Nigerian State has a constitutional obligation to "harness the resources of the nation and promote national prosperity and an efficient, a dynamic and self-reliant economy".[2] Yet, a State must have legal authority over a particular resource in order to harness the resource. And because of the strategic importance of available access to resources in meeting the welfare and other developmental objectives of States, control of resources has remained a primary cause of international armed conflicts.[3]

The problem of right of resource control in international law is acerbated by the inequitable distribution of strategic living and non-living resources among States both offshore and onshore. Resource control offers States economic advantages which can be harnessed for their national development and the

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[1] Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, preamble.

[2] Ibid, s 16(1)(a).

[3] M Żakowska, 'The Roots of Armed Conflicts: Multilevel Security Perspective' [2020] (30)(50) *Security and Defence Quarterly* 54-57.

enhancement of their international influence.[4] Consequently, resource control continues to be a major issue in international law. It was also the major incentive for the scrambling for the partitioning and consequential colonization of African States.[5] Against this background, this article shall explore the legal implications of the extension of Nigeria's exclusive economic zone by the United Nations.

Exclusive Economic Zone

The sea holds arguably the largest deposit of economic resources. This ranges from oil, natural gas and other mineral deposits to large varieties of aquatic life. The sea is used for over 80% of global transportation of goods and services. In fact, the sea is estimated to represent 71% of the total surface of the earth.[6] The economic zone is a maritime terminology in international law of the seas. It refers to areas in the sea/ocean which are explored for economic purposes. Based on the vast economic potentials of the seas, the entire ocean is considered an economic zone.[7] Under international law, the principle of freedom of the sea is one of the oldest. The right of States to freely use the seas for legitimate purposes is considered fundamental for international economic development. Consequently, the concept of exclusive economic zone is understood narrowly.[8]

In the description of the exclusive economic zone, article 55 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS) provides:

> The exclusive economic zone is an area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea, subject to the specific legal regime established in this Part, under which the rights and jurisdiction of the coastal State and the rights and freedoms of other States are governed by the relevant provisions of this Convention.

By this this, the UNCLOS adopts a functional definition which characterizes the EEZ based on the provisions of chapter V of the Convention. The core legal elements of the EEZ based on the description are as follows:

a) The EEZ is beyond as well as adjacent to the territorial sea of a State;
b) The EEZ is under the rights and jurisdiction of the coastal State
c) The rights and freedoms of other States within the EEZ is also recognized and respected.

Article 57 of UNCLOS provides further that the breadth of the exclusive economic zone shall not extend beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured. This limitation is important for two purposes. The first is that it reduces disputes over the right of the use of seas. The point remains that economic resources are scarce and in high demand. Each State seeks

[4] K N Gess, 'Permanent Sovereignty of National Resources' [1964] (23)(2*) International and Comparative Law* 398-449.
[5] W Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Howard University Press 1981) 2-29.
[6] O Ndikom and Others, 'Critical Assessment of Maritime Industry in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects of Policy Issues' [2017] (20)(3) *African Journal for the Psychological Study of Social Issues* 113.
[7] D Patuzi, 'The Concept of the Economic Exclusive Zone' [2015] (1)(1) *Academic Journal of Business, Administration, Law and Social Sciences* 149.
[8] Ibid, 150.

to maximize its advantage in terms of access and control of available resources. Potential conflicts over resources are therefore inevitable.[9]

Defining the limits of the EEZ of a coastal state reduces the potential disputes amount coastal rights over jurisdiction of the sea.[10] The second is that it protects the right of other States in respect of areas outside the EEZ which is regarded as international waters. In an EEZ, the coastal State's rights extend to all ocean strata from the ocean's surface to its subsoil. Essentially, the EEZ concept attempts "to secure for the coastal State the resources of sea, seabed and subsoil irrespective of variations in geographic or economic or ecological circumstances".[11]

The exclusive economic zone of a coastal State is not absolutely exclusive to the State. This is because what the State enjoys is relative exclusivity subject to the freedom of the use of the sea and rights of other States. Yet, the exclusivity carries some legal implications for the benefit of the coastal State;

a) sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources, whether living or non-living, of the waters superjacent to the seabed and of the seabed and its subsoil, and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone, such as the production of energy from the water, currents and winds;
b) Jurisdiction over the establishment and use of artificial islands, installations and structures, marine scientific research, the protection and preservation of the marine environment, other rights and duties provided for in this Convention.[12]

It is the above jurisdiction that represents exclusivity of the zone in international law. However, despite the jurisdiction, the coastal State must have due regard to the rights and duties of other States.[13] The rights of other States include navigation, overflight, laying of submarine cables and pipelines and other internationally lawful uses of the sea.[14]

Legal Basis of Exclusivity of Economic Zones

The foundation of the exclusivity of the economic zone is statehood. This is clear from the definition of State in article 55 of the UNCLOS. State in international law may be defined as a group of people, occupying a defined territory and having a sovereign government in charge of its administration.[15] Three critical indexes define a State- people, territory and sovereignty. Here, sovereignty relates to the powers of the State to administer its territory through lawmaking and enforcement without external control.[16]

Sovereignty is the most fundamental character of statehood and hence jealously guided in international relations. Consequently, international relations are based on two corner stones- sovereign equality of

[9] M F Giordano and Others, 'International Resource Conflict and Mitigation' [2005] (42)(1) *Journal of Peace Research* 47-65.
[10] *Camaeron v Nigeria* [1998] ICJ 275.
[11] J E Bailey, 'The Exclusive Economic Zone: Its Development and Future in International and Domestic Law' [1985] (45)(6) *Louisiana Law Review* 1268, 1270.
[12] United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982, art 56(1).
[13] Ibid, art 56(2).
[14] Ibid, art 58
[15] H J Morgenthan, *Politics Among Nations* (6th edn, Kalyani Publishers 2018) 331.
[16] Ibid.

States and non-interference in the domestic affairs of a State.[17] The principle of sovereign equality of States disregards the status of States to treat States as equal. Every State is equal by the fact of statehood and other differences are immaterial.[18]International law is firmly settled that the irreducible attribute of statehood is sovereignty and that sovereign equality is the pivotal pillar of international relations. Thus, in the international legal order, all States rank equal on the index of sovereignty. As equals, States have equal rights and equal obligations.[19]

Closely related to sovereign equality is the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of a State. By this, as long as the subject matter is within the domestic jurisdiction of a State, interference by any State or international organisation is general prohibited in international law. This strengthens the sovereignty of the State and serves to promote international peace and cooperation based on mutual respect.[20]

Sovereignty presupposes exclusivity of the jurisdiction of a State over its territory. The said territory consists of land, seas and air. Hence, since the territorial waters and exclusive economic zones are part of the territory of the State, the principle of sovereignty operates the give the State exclusivity of jurisdiction. This is then enhanced by the principle of non-interference. The sovereignty of a State over its natural resources is permanent.[21]

The principle of permanent sovereignty over natural resources has its roots in the claim for self-determination by newly independent States. Before them States have always insisted on an inalienable jurisdiction over resources within their territories. The principle in a nutshell means that every State is sovereign over its natural resources and that the sovereign is permanent. Being permanent, sovereignty over natural resources is never lost and cannot be extinguished not even by contract.[22]

The United Nations Resolution 1803 of 1962 in its declaration 1(1) and 7 provide that:

> 1) The right of peoples and nations to permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources must be exercised in the interest of their national development and of the well-being of the people of the State concerned.
>
> 7) Violation of the rights of peoples and nations to sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources is contrary to the spirit and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and hinders the development of international co-operation and the maintenance of peace.

[17] Charter of the United Nations 1945, art 2(1) for instance provides that the UN shall be based on the principle of sovereign equality of States.
[18] A Ansong, 'The Concept of Sovereign Equality of States in International Law' (2016) 2(1) *Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration* 2, 14-15.
[19] S Besson, *Sovereignty* (Oxford University Press 2023) 2.
[20] P Pustorino, 'The Principle of Non-intervention in recent Non-international Armed Conflicts' (2018) 53(2) *Questions of International Law* 17-19.
[21] Ibid.
[22] S Hobe, 'Evolution of the Principle of Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources' in M Bungenberg (ed), *Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources* (Springer 2005) 1-13.

This principle has been restated under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to the effect that:

> 1) All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
>
> 2) All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.[23]

Similarly, article 21(1) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights 1981 provides that all peoples shall freely dispose of their wealth and natural resources. This right shall be exercised in the exclusive interest of the people. In no case shall a people be deprived of it. This right protects the sacrosanctity of the territorial integrity of a State and does not confer a right to fragmentation or proliferation of States through the creation of new States.[24]The right of self-determination which is necessary character of sovereignty therefore provides a legal basis for the exclusivity or recognition of exclusive economic zones.

The territorial sea, continental shelf and exclusive economic zone are therefore areas over which a State has a right of self-determination based on its sovereignty over the area. For instance, a coastal State is entitled to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles, measured from baselines determined in accordance with the UNCLOS.[25] With respect to continental shelf of a coastal State, article 77 of UNCLOS provides:

> 1) The coastal State exercises over the continental shelf sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring it and exploiting its natural resources.
>
> 2) The rights referred to in paragraph 1 are exclusive in the sense that if the coastal State does not explore the continental shelf or exploit its natural resources, no one may undertake these activities without the express consent of the coastal State.
>
> 3) The rights of the coastal State over the continental shelf do not depend on occupation, effective or notional, or on any express proclamation.
>
> 4) The natural resources referred to in this Part consist of the mineral and other non-living resources of the seabed and subsoil together with living organisms belonging to sedentary species, that is to say, organisms which, at the harvestable stage, either are immobile on or under the seabed or are unable to move except in constant physical contact with the seabed or the subsoil.

[23] International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966, art 1(1) and (2).
[24] B Simpson, 'The United States and the Curious History of Self-Determination' [2012] (36) *Diplomatic History* 36, 676.
[25] UNCLOS. art 3.

The permanent of the State over resources within the mentioned, which is further re-enforced by the right of self-determination, provides the legal basis for the establishment of the exclusive economic zone by coastal States.

Delineation of Exclusive Economic Zone

As a result of the vast resources of the sea, maritime boundary between or among coastal States often generate disputes and sometimes may degenerate into armed conflict. For instance Nigeria and Cameroun had maritime boundary disputes.[26] Another major maritime dispute was the Great Renaissance Dam Case (Egypt v Ethiopia). The main dispute between the parties was the perceived or feared impacts of the dam. Egypt and Sudan contended that the dam will dangerously diminish the share of water flowing to their own countries from the Nile River. This effect they argued will adversely affect their economies and survival.[27] Although the contiguous States formed the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) to provide a platform to collectively negotiate and plan the use of the river, this has not effectively addressed the concerns over the dam. Relatedly, although negotiation has been helpful in avoiding hostilities, it has not sustainably addressed the tensions.[28]

The delineation of exclusive economic zone of a State is therefore very important to reduce international conflict over right of exploitation. For instance, where two or more coastal States have adjacent coastline it may be impossible for any of the States to have an exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles without encroaching into the territorial sea of the other State. Consequently, in such a circumstance, UNCLOS recognises the right of the States to mutually agree on the limits of their territorial seas. Where they are unable to agree, the boundary may be taken as the median line every point of which is equidistant from the nearest points on the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial seas of each of the two States is measured. However, where there is historical title or special circumstances, variance may be allowed.[29]

Article 57 of the UNCLOS sets a clear limitation on the exclusive economic zone. It provides that the 'exclusive economic zone shall not extend beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured.' This represents the international baseline standard for the delineation of exclusive economic zone by a coastal State. The standard is a maximum threshold meaning that a State may have an exclusive economic zone with a lesser breadth from its coastal baseline.

The Nigerian law adopts the maximum threshold allowed. Section 1(1) of the Exclusive Economic Zone Act 1978 states that:

> Subject to the other provisions of this Act, there is hereby denominated a zone to be known as the Exclusive Economic Zone of Nigeria (in this Act referred to as the "Exclusive Zone") which shall be an area extending from the external limits of the

[26] *Cameron v Nigeria* [1998] ICJ Rep 275.
[27] E M Kenawy, 'Potential Economic Impacts of Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on Egypt' (2013) 3(3) *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Research* 1.
[28] F Verre, 'The Dispute between Ethiopia and Egypt over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam' (2022) 13(14) *The Ideological* 79, 84-85.
[29] UNCLOS, art 15.

territorial waters of Nigeria up to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baseline from which the breadth of the territorial waters of Nigeria is measured.

This, as pointed out follows the maximum threshold allowed under the UNCLOS for exclusive economic zones. Within the zone, Nigeria exercises exclusivity of jurisdiction and enjoys a right to self-determination and the exploitation of resources therein. Article 73 of the UNCLOS entitles the coastal State to the enforcement of laws and regulations within its EEZ. Hence, Nigeria may take such measures, including boarding, inspection, arrest and judicial proceedings, as may be necessary to ensure compliance with the laws and regulations adopted by it in conformity with the UNCLOS.

United Nations' Approval of Extension of Nigeria's Exclusive Economic Zone

The formation of the UN was a direct consequence of the Second World War although this was preceded by several conferences and consultations. The first major milestone in its establishment was the Declaration issued by twenty-six participating States in the Second World under the auspices of the 'United Nations' in 1942. This was followed by the Joint Four-Nation Declaration of 30 October 1943 issued by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the United States of America, United Kingdom, China and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.[30]

The 1943 Declaration emphasised the necessity of rapidly ending the Second World War and implementation of an orderly transition to peace including the establishment and maintenance of peace and security at the international level which shall involve least diversion of the resources of the world for the development of arms.[31] This international peace and security under the Declaration consequently necessitated recognition of the need to establish an international organisation of general nature for the maintenance of international peace and security. This was to be done at the "earliest practicable date". The fundamental principles of the organisation are to be sovereign equality of States that all peace loving irrespective of their sizes and membership is to be open to all such States.[32]

The general purpose of the UN is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war; to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.[33] The specific purposes of the UN include:

a) To maintain international peace and security
b) To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equality of rights and self-determination of peoples.
c) To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character.

[30] T G Weiss, 'The United Nations: Before, During and After 1945' [2015] (91)(6) *International Affairs* 1221, 1224.
[31] Joint Four-Nation Declaration of 30 October 1943, preamble.
[32] Ibid, paragraph 4.
[33] Charter of the United Nations 1945, preamble

d) To be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.[34]

Based on the above purposes, the UNCLOS was adopted in 1982 under the auspices of the UN. Moreover, the UN as the apex international organization by its almost universal membership,[35]is the appropriate forum for the regulation of the rights and duties regarding the seas.

It is important to point out that the EEZ of coastal State must fall within its continental shelf or put differently, cannot extend beyond its continental shelf. The legal implication is that an extension or reduction of the continental shelf will have a correlational impact on the EEZ. Consequently, a coastal State may increase its EEZ by taking benefit of the provisions for the extension of its continental shelf.

Article 76 of the UNCLOS provides the procedure for extension of the continental shelf and by implication the EEZ. The relevant paragraphs in article 76 of the UNCLOS provide thus:

> 7) The coastal State shall delineate the outer limits of its continental shelf, where that shelf extends beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured, by straight lines not exceeding 60 nautical miles in length, connecting fixed points, defined by coordinates of latitude and longitude.
>
> 8) Information on the limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured shall be submitted by the coastal State to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf set up under Annex II on the basis of equitable geographical representation. The Commission shall make recommendations to coastal States on matters related to the establishment of the outer limits of their continental shelf. The limits of the shelf established by a coastal State on the basis of these recommendations shall be final and binding.
>
> 9) The coastal State shall deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations charts and relevant information, including geodetic data, permanently describing the outer limits of its continental shelf. The Secretary-General shall give due publicity thereto.

It is important to note that the procedure for the extension of the continental shelf is not intended to claim new maritime territory by a State but rather to establish existing ownership of the maritime area beyond 200 nautical miles. Hence, the State has the burden to establish that its outer continental shelf limits extend beyond the conventional 200 nautical miles. In any case, the extension cannot be beyond 60 nautical miles. This claim is to be established by providing the relevant information to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. The information includes charts and relevant information such as geodetic data, permanently describing the outer limits of its continental shelf.

[34] Ibid, article 1

[35] J E Krasno, 'The UN Landscape: An Overview' in J E Krasno (ed), *The United Nations: Confronting the Challenges of a Global Society* (Lynne Rienner Publsihers 2004) 5

Based on the above provisions, in December 2023, the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, approved the extension of the exclusive economic zone of Nigeria by 20 nautical miles to make it a total of 220 nautical miles.[36] This represents a 10% gain of maritime territory by Nigeria based.

The Federal Government of Nigeria through National Boundary Commission has also gotten approval from UN to extend it Exclusive Economic Zone, EEZ, from 200 nautical miles to 350 nautical miles. The benefit of this extension is that all ships coming through the extended area must come under Nigeria's authority and she is going to be in control of all mineral exploitations and fisheries resources

Legal Implications of the Extension of Nigeria's Exclusive Economic Zone

The approval of the extension of the EEZ of Nigeria by the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf holds several implications for Nigeria. The first implication is that it imposes a duty on Nigeria amend it laws to reflect the approval. This is because the international law threshold is a maximum extension of the territorial sea, exclusive economic zone or continental shelf. The coastal State by its national law determines its appropriated breadth of the maritime territory which may be lesser but cannot exceed the international law threshold.

Section 1(1) of the Exclusive Economic Zone Act 1978, puts the exclusive economic zone of Nigeria as an extension from the external limits of the territorial waters of Nigeria up to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baseline from which the breadth of the territorial waters of Nigeria is measured. The UN approval for extension does not and cannot in law amend this statutory limit. This position is fortified by section 12(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 which provides that "No treaty between the Federation and any other country shall have the force of law to the extent to which any such treaty has been enacted into law by the National Assembly."

The legal implication is that the extension is enacted into law by the National Assembly, it does not have any legal force. That is, in complying with Nigeria's constitutional standard, the extension must be domesticated in national law. Until then, the EEZ of Nigeria remains 200 nautical miles as provided in the law. Beyond securing the approval of the United Nations, the executive will have to initiate executive bill and lobby the National Assembly to make consequential amendments to section 1(1) of the Exclusive Economic Zone Act 1978.

Another implication is that Nigeria will have to redraw its territorial map within the Gulf of Guinea to cover the approved 20 nautical miles. In this paper, it is has been established that it is important to delineate State boundaries with precision so as to reduce disputes over jurisdictional rights. The additional 20 nautical miles to the Nigerian exclusive economic zone must therefore be properly chatted and represented in the map of Nigeria.[37]

[36] A Anagor-Ewuzie, 'UN approves extension of Nigeria's Maritime Border by 20 Nautical miles' [2023] < https://businessday.ng/maritime/article/un-approves-extension-of-nigerias-maritime-border-by-20-nautical-miles/ > Accessed 10 March 2025.

[37] G Nwafor, 'Nigeria gets approval to extend Exclusive Economic Zone' [2023] < https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria-gets-approval-to-extend-exclusive-economic-zone/ > Accessed 10 March 2025.

Furthermore, the extension of the EEZ of Nigeria holds significant economic implications for Nigeria. The extended area is believed to hold large mineral deposits and other important aquatic resources.[38] By this extension, Nigeria acquires sovereign jurisdictional rights over the new maritime area covered to exploit and to authorize exploitation in accordance with the UNCLOS and its national laws. This holds significant economic potentials for the blue economic of Nigeria.

The Potentials and effect of the extended Exclusive Economic Zone of Nigeria

Economic Opportunities: The expansion may create new economic opportunities through increased maritime activities, trade, and the development of offshore industries.
Resource Control: Nigeria would gain exclusive rights to exploit and manage marine resources within the extended zone, potentially boosting its control over fisheries, oil and gas reserves, and other valuable resources.
Diplomatic Relations: Diplomatic efforts may be required to address any concerns or disputes that arise with neighboring countries, fostering positive relations and cooperation in managing shared maritime areas.
Compliance with International Law: Nigeria would need to ensure that the extension aligns with international maritime laws, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), to avoid disputes and ensure recognition by the international community.
Infrastructure Development: Developing infrastructure, such as ports and surveillance systems, becomes essential to support increased maritime activities and security within the expanded zone.
Presence of Naval and Coast Guard: Nigeria may need to enhance its naval and coast guard presence to monitor and enforce regulations within the extended zone, ensuring compliance with maritime laws.
Geopolitical Dynamics: The extension may influence regional geopolitics, potentially leading to discussions or negotiations with neighboring countries regarding overlapping maritime claims.
Environmental Concerns: Managing the environmental impact of increased human activities in the extended zone becomes crucial to prevent ecological damage and ensure sustainable resource utilization.[39]

Investors in the maritime sector can benefit from the extended EEZs by participating in various aspects, such as fisheries, energy exploration, infrastructure development, maritime services etc. These zones offer potential investment and business opportunities and the chance to tap into emerging markets for economic gain. There are expanded opportunities for fishing, offshore oil and gas exploration, and maritime transportation. This extended zone allows for increased resource exploitation, leading to economic growth and job creation within the sector. To crown it all, it enhances the country's maritime security and control over its waters, fostering a more stable and prosperous environment for maritime activities.

[38] Ibid.
[39] Cornelius Okey Gabrial " implication of Nigeria's extended Exclusive Economic Zone" https;//www.mondaq.com Accssed 1/04/2025

Conclusion

The territorial integrity of a State is jealously guarded due to its significance to the socio-economic and political development of the State. With the extra 150 nautical miles additional space, there must be a deliberate effort to cover the water by satellite. The territory of a State which comprises of its landmass, seas and airspace holds the resources upon which the survival of the State depends. The approval of the extension of the exclusive economic zone of Nigeria by the United Nations therefore is significant to the economic development of Nigeria. Legally, by the approval the sovereign jurisdiction of Nigeria is extended to cover the additional maritime area approved. The potential economic implications of the extension are also enormous for Nigeria. However, for Nigeria to take full benefits of the extension and there is need to amend the Exclusive Economic Zone Act to accommodate the approved extension of the EEZ of Nigeria.