

# **Zaria Journal of Liberal Arts (ZAJOLA)**

*Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria*

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Vol. 11, No. 2, December 2023

Faculty of Arts,  
Ahmadu Bello University,  
Samaru Main Campus,  
Zaria - Nigeria.

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## EDITORIAL POLICY

*Zaria Journal of Liberal Arts* (ZAJOLA) is a peer-reviewed journal, published bi-annually by the Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. The journal welcomes manuscript of original articles, from scholars around the globe, in the various areas of Liberal Arts. The articles may be product of descriptive or analytical research, field research notes, reviews of publications and printed materials, drawn from, but not limited to Languages and Linguistics; Law; Environmental Sciences, Education; Management Studies; Cultural and Literally Studies; Theatre Arts; Philosophy; Religion; History and Strategic Studies; Archaeology and Heritage Studies; Developmental Studies and Social Sciences.

All manuscripts submitted for publication should adopt APA 8<sup>th</sup> Edition Style of referencing. The manuscripts should be typed double-spaced with sufficient margins and should count between 4,000 and 6,000 words, including the abstract, references, and appendices. The Manuscripts should not be under consideration for publication in any other research outlet.

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

This Edition of *Zaria Journal of Liberal Arts* marks the end of the year 2023. In this Edition, there are twelve well written articles by distinguished scholars.

The Edition opens with Ibrahim Muhammad Abdullahi's article on the implications of the New Normal on 21<sup>st</sup> century African novel and the impact of ICT. In a related study, Saleh Ahmad Abdullahi explores a semiotic approach of Emoji characters as used in WhatsApp chat messages. Through Ahmed Yerima's *Pari* and Fosudo's *Another Episode of Trauma*, Oladolapo Ojediran and Olayinka Magbagbeola interrogate enraged voices and social realities in Nigeria.

In linguistics, Hassan Usman Gadaka carries out a morphological analysis of Polar tone in Gudi and Yaya dialects of Ngamo language while Abdulrahman Umar works on the semantic aspects of repudiation in Basa language.

Ezekwesiri Okebugwu Nwosu, Nwaoha Chimaroke Chizoba and Tobeckukwu Odunze are concerned about the attack on Igbo indigenous religion. To them, this act can be defined as imperialism while Azuka Felix God's presence and Emily Oghale God's presence are concerned with the issues and perspectives in teaching and learning in urban society with the integration of multimedia, developmental and career guidance.

In his article on archaeology, Ogunlade Simeon Oluwole assesses some potential heritage sites in Nigeria. Following this is the article of Eraye Chistopher Michael and Jimoh Buhari Edun. The two scholars examine the implications of forest crime on socio economic development in Boki local government area of Cross River State. Alawode Musa Ajibola, on his own, examines the ideological nexus between Zaria and Ife Art schools.

In French studies, Tajudeen Abodunrin Osunniran and Hannah Kojusola Kuponiyi bring out the linguistic characteristics and discursive functions of filler words in French and Yoruba films. In a related field, Aliyy Abolaji Abdulrazaq carries out a reflection of lexical gaps in some translation works by Yoruba translators.

It is important to note that the view and opinions presented in these articles are solely those of the authors. Happy reading.

**Prof. Abubakar Sule Sani**

Editor-in-chief

30<sup>th</sup> November, 2023

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## **An Assessment of Potential Heritage Sites in Nigeria**

**Ogunlade Simeon Oluwole, Oboh Ganiyu, & Ayeni Dorcas A.**

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### **Abstract**

*Heritage sites have become a global phenomenon hence the global attention on their conservation for posterity. The research assessed the potential heritage sites in Nigeria to illuminate all concerned. The place of heritage and the sites were highlighted, followed by a brief on the administration of World Heritage Sites. The nomination process of enlistment for the inscription of sites and the existing heritage sites in Nigeria from the National Commission for Museums and Monument (NCMM) register that regulates the establishment and maintenance of heritage sites in Nigeria were discussed. The state of heritage sites in Nigeria was examined to x-ray potential sites for enlistment for UNESCO inscription. Findings show that out of the numerous heritage sites in the 774 local government areas in the Six geopolitical zones in the country, only 30 were registered with NCMM, only two have gained UNESCO inscription, while 14 of the remaining 28 are in the UNESCO tentative list; also, first and second 6 submissions were in 1995 and 2007, one in 2018 and 2020 respectively at a rate of two submissions per two years. The research concluded that a tiny percentage of tapped potential heritage sites and slow progress of improvement by the NCMM to develop the potential of many untapped sites. The research is thus recommended to get at least one heritage site per five local government areas enlisted and inscribed into the UNESCO World Heritage Site.*

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### **Introduction**

According to the definition provided by Dictionary.com (2023), heritage pertains to the transfer of elements from one generation to another through inheritance or as a customary practice inherited from previous generations. These elements are evident in diverse manifestations and are typically situated in designated areas referred to as heritage sites, historic sites (Collins et al., 2023; 9ja Top10, 2020), or archaeological sites (Babalola & Ajekigbe, 2007). Heritage sites, also known as historic sites, are formally acknowledged locations designated for preserving political, military, cultural, or social history due to their significant cultural heritage significance. Many of these websites possess legal safeguards and maintain notable historical significance. These entities can include a wide range of elements, including but not limited to buildings, landscapes, structures, or distinctive natural environments. They possess significance at the local, regional, national, or global level, contributing to the cultural heritage of a particular

country or region. In general, heritage sites are typically characterised by their age of at least 50 years, as Landmark (2023) stated. These sites are designated explicitly due to their cultural, historical, scientific, or other forms of significance. It is imperative to acknowledge that heritage sites may encompass cultural and natural heritage components, provided that they possess extraordinary value to humanity (UNESCO, 2020). Cultural heritage comprises tangible and intangible elements inherited from previous generations. Tangible assets include buildings, monuments, landscapes, archival materials, books, works of art, and artefacts, while intangible assets encompass folklore, traditions, language, and knowledge. According to Ann (2016), natural heritage encompasses both culturally significant landscapes and biodiversity and is regarded as an integral component of cultural heritage.

Heritage sites can be categorised into three distinct classifications, namely cultural, natural, or mixed, contingent upon cultural, natural, or both forms of significance. Mixed heritage sites are characterised by the presence of both cultural and natural elements that hold significant value. Britannica (2023) states that the World Heritage List exhibits a greater prevalence of cultural sites, with approximately three cultural sites for every natural site.

### **Methodology**

The motivation behind this research Work stems from a strong desire to increase the quantity of UNESCO-designated heritage sites in Nigeria. The main goal is to identify and reveal potential locations that satisfy the rigorous criteria established by UNESCO for inclusion. The primary dataset used in this study consists of a compilation of worldwide data obtained from multiple UNESCO websites and other reputable online sources. By bringing together a wide range of diverse sources of information, a comprehensive and thorough overview of the multitude of heritage sites scattered across the country's six geopolitical zones was compiled. This study thoroughly investigates the origins, geographical dispersion, local importance, and the specific criteria employed by UNESCO in the selection process of world heritage sites. Through a comprehensive examination of the mentioned variables on the registered heritage sites in Nigeria, individuals with the necessary attributes for inscription were identified as potential candidates. This extensive investigation aims to promote the inclusion of deserving heritage sites in Nigeria on the esteemed list of properties inscribed by UNESCO. The primary objective is to enhance the nation's attempts to preserve its cultural and historical heritage while also seeking global acknowledgement and assistance for

protecting and safeguarding these priceless locations. The acquisition of additional UNESCO inscriptions by Nigeria would enable the country to commemorate and safeguard its abundant cultural heritage while promoting sustainable tourism and facilitating socio-economic development within the neighboring communities associated with these remarkable sites.

### **UNESCO World Heritage Sites**

The issue of heritage and its associated concerns has surpassed geographical limitations, emerging as a worldwide phenomenon that necessitates a cohesive strategy to guarantee its conservation and protection for subsequent cohorts. Given this perspective, there is an increasingly acknowledged necessity for a worldwide governance and legal structure to effectively tackle the difficulties encountered by diverse cultural and natural legacies across the globe.

Assuming this crucial role is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). UNESCO is pivotal in preserving and transmitting cultural heritage to future generations. It recognises that these historical legacies not only shape the collective identity of communities but also profoundly impact contemporary lifestyles and serve as a wellspring of inspiration for the future. UNESCO maintains a steadfast belief in the invaluable nature of these cultural heritages, recognising them as significant reservoirs of knowledge and cultural abundance that necessitate safeguarding for the collective benefit of humanity.

The primary aim of UNESCO is to promote global recognition, safeguarding, and conservation of cultural and natural heritage sites. According to UNESCO (2023), The organisation accomplishes this objective by officially designating specific locations as "World Heritage Sites" due to their exceptional significance to humanity. According to UNESCO (2020), These sites encompass various forms, such as landmarks, historical areas, or areas of scientific significance. Each site provides a distinct opportunity to gain insights into our collective human history and the extraordinary natural phenomena found on our planet. The process of designation entails a thorough evaluation and certification conducted by UNESCO. The organisation bestows the esteemed World Heritage status upon

sites that satisfy the rigorous criteria established by UNESCO (2016, 2017, 2020). The designation mentioned above bestows global acknowledgement and affords legal safeguarding to the site through adherence to the World Heritage Convention, an international treaty. The convention in question is a legally enforceable instrument of global consensus that guides the activities of the World Heritage Committee to promote the conscientious stewardship and safeguarding of these designated sites (UNESCO, 2023).

Over time, UNESCO's endeavours have led to the acquisition of World Heritage status by many sites across the globe. These websites function as symbols of cultural diversity, historical importance, and natural magnificence, eliciting admiration and wonder from individuals across the globe. Using this procedure, UNESCO actively contributes to the cultivation of a collective consciousness regarding preserving our commonly shared heritage, promoting sustainable tourism, and facilitating intercultural comprehension.

The various manifestations of heritage possess significant intrinsic worth for the human race. The preservation of this entity is not solely a matter of significance at the national level but rather a collective global obligation. Implementing a worldwide governing body and legal safeguards overseen by UNESCO is an essential measure in preserving these invaluable reservoirs of vitality and motivation for both current and forthcoming cohorts. By designating and safeguarding World Heritage Sites, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) effectively guarantees the preservation of our shared historical and cultural heritage. This commitment creates a lasting global influence, enhancing the experiences and perspectives of individuals from various societal backgrounds.

### **Heritage Sites in Nigeria**

Nigeria, a nation located in West Africa, exhibits a rich tapestry of cultural and historical sites that possess significant intrinsic worth. These sites have garnered the interest of diverse authors and platforms, each presenting their distinct viewpoints on the importance of these valuable artefacts. Culture Trip (2018) is a notable source that has undertaken to showcase Nigeria's abundant cultural and historical assets. Based on their scholarly investigation, the researchers have successfully discerned ten prominent sites that distinguish themselves due to their profound cultural legacy and significant historical significance. These heritage sites show the country's abundant and varied history, showcasing the numerous

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civilisations that have thrived on Nigerian land. Yewande (2018) presents a more comprehensive viewpoint by identifying eleven cultural and historical sites that bear significance in Nigeria. This observation suggests that the nation's extensive and diverse cultural legacy has motivated authors to explore beyond the usual well-known locations, unearthing hidden gems that also deserve recognition.

Similarly, 9ja Top 10 has undertaken the work of evaluating and cataloguing Nigeria's foremost cultural and historical sites. Through this approach, individuals present a carefully chosen assortment that can assist tourists and enthusiasts in strategizing their trips to observe the country's most renowned and captivating locations. In their independent investigation, Oto (2022) deliberately decided to narrow their scope and concentrate on a more succinct assortment, wherein they identified seven locations that hold cultural and historical importance. By engaging in such an approach, individuals could explore each site's historical backdrop and distinctive characteristics in a more comprehensive manner, thereby offering readers a more profound comprehension of these particular locales. According to Wikipedia (2020), as a platform encompassing a wide range of user-generated knowledge, it illuminates Nigeria's cultural and historical sites. The compilation of eleven sites presented by the author encompasses a comprehensive viewpoint, encompassing a diverse array of sites from different geographical regions and historical epochs. In scholarly discourse, it is imperative to acknowledge the profound importance of Nigeria's intangible cultural heritage, thereby expanding upon the existing body of knowledge. A wide array of traditions, languages, music, dance, and rituals enriches the country's cultural fabric. It is imperative to underscore the significance of safeguarding and advancing these intangible elements to uphold the nation's abundant cultural identity. It is anticipated that with time, more researchers and writers will discover supplementary cultural and historical sites within Nigeria. The ongoing endeavours to excavate and record these valuable artefacts will enhance our comprehension of the nation's history and bolster the recognition and preservation of its cultural legacy. Nigeria possesses a substantial and diverse cultural and historical heritage, encompassing a wide range of sites that have garnered the interest of various authors and platforms. Every site contributes to the narrative of Nigeria's dynamic historical and culturally diverse heritage, from prominent

landmarks to lesser-known treasures. As the ongoing exploration and documentation of these sites persist, the global community will acquire a more profound recognition of Nigeria's cultural heritage.

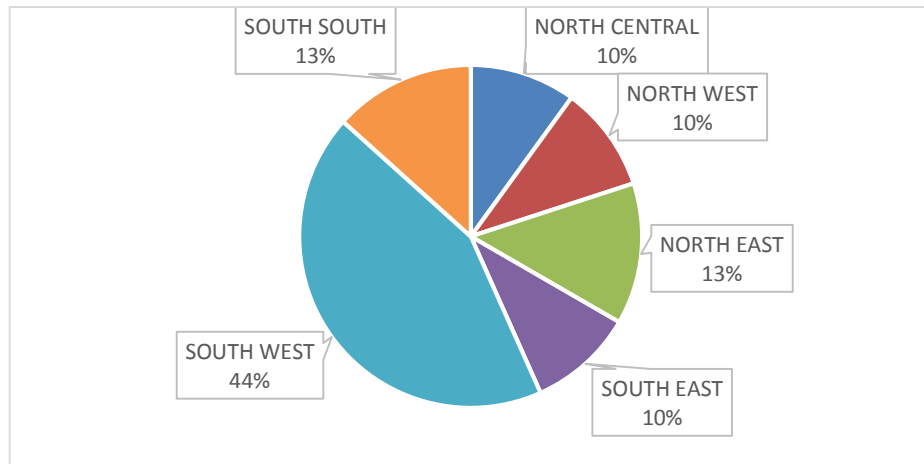


Figure 1: Heritage Sites In Nigeria by geopolitical Zones and Location

Source: NCMM, 2023

Table 1: Heritage Sites by Geo-political Zones and Location

<b>GP Zones</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Heritage Site</b>	<b>Total</b>
NORTH CENTRAL	Kogi	Lokoja	Lord Lugard House/ Museum	3
	Abuja	Suleija	Zuma Rock	
	Nasarawa	Lafia	Salt Lake	
NORTH EAST	Taraba	Gashaka	Gashaki-Gumpti National Park	4
	Adamawa	Gembu Damai,	Mambilla Plateau Sukur Cultural Landscape	
		Lamurde Arochukwu	Ruwan Zafi Long JuJu Shrine of Arochukwu	3
SOUTH EAST	Abia	Azumini	Azumini Blue River	
	Anambra	Ogbunike	Ogunike Caves Ogba Ukwu Cave and Waterfalls (Owerre-Ezukala Cave)	
SOUTH WEST	Ondo	Idanre	Oke Idanre Hill	
	Oyo	Oyo town Ado Awaiye	Old Oyo National Park Ado Awaye Suspended Lake	13
	Osun	Osogbo Erin Ijesha	Osun Osogbo Grove Erin Ijesha (Olumirin) Waterfalls	
	Ogun	Abeokuta	Olumo Rocks	
	Lagos	BADAGRY	First storey building in Nigeria. Lord luggard heritage museum, Seriki Williams abass slave museum, Mobee slaves' relics.	

			Vlekete slave market	
			First Primary School In	
			Nigeria	
			Door of Return	
	Ekiti	Ikogosi	Ikogosi Warm Spring	
NORTH	Sokoto	Surame	Surame Cultural	3
WEST			Landscape	
	Kano	Kano	Ancient Kano City	
			Walls	
	Kaduna	Kaduna	Kajuru Castle	
SOUTH-	Cross	Ikoma	Alok Ikoma Stone	
SOUTH	River		Monoliths	
		Ikot Abasi	Lord Lugard & Bridge	4
			of no return	
		Obudu	Obudu Mountain	
			Resort, (Obudu	
			Cattle Ranch)	
		Oban	(Egui) Oban Hills	
	Edo	Benin	Benin Iya	
				30
	TOTAL			

Source: National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM), (2023).

The administration of heritage sites in Nigeria is under the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM). It is the agency of the Federal government of Nigeria saddled with the responsibility of preserving, promoting and developing Nigeria's Cultural heritage. NCMM provided an insight into some registered sites in its records according to the geopolitical zones and location (Table 1). Figure 1 shows percentage of the 30 NCMM registered Heritage sites in the six (6) geopolitical (GP) zones in Nigeria. It is believed that there are others yet unrecognized or considered as minors that will be made available and put into records in time to come.

### **UNESCO recognized Heritage Sites in Nigeria**

Nigeria boasts many heritage sites distributed across its six geopolitical zones, reflecting its rich history and cultural diversity. Among these sites, thirty have been carefully selected and preserved under the administration of the Nigerian National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NMMC). However, despite

the abundance of such sites, only two out of the thirty have received the prestigious recognition of being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Both of these culturally significant sites are the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove in Osun State, located in the South West Geopolitical Zone, which was listed in 2005, and the Sukur Cultural Landscape in the North East Geopolitical Zone, which received recognition in 1999 (Britannica, 2023; 9ja Top 10, 2020).

The fact that only 7% of Nigeria's heritage sites have gained global recognition on UNESCO's list (Figure 2) reveals a missed opportunity for the country to capitalize on tourism as a potent source of economic growth. UNESCO's designations often attract significant tourists, contributing substantially to the local economy. Unfortunately, Nigeria cannot fully harness this potential due to the limited number of globally recognized heritage sites. The resulting lack of tourism revenue exacerbates the nation's overdependence on oil as the primary source of income. This challenge must be addressed by diversifying the economy and exploring other sectors that can boost the gross national product.

UNESCO acknowledges and promotes world heritage sites and actively funds and oversees preservation and restoration efforts for these cultural treasures around the globe (Britannica, 2023). However, Nigeria must still adequately maximize these opportunities to safeguard and maintain its heritage sites. By not fully capitalizing on UNESCO's support and resources, Nigeria needs to take advantage of potential avenues for enhancing its tourism industry and, consequently, its economic growth.

A comparative analysis with other countries reveals the vast disparity in revenue generation through tourism. For instance, Italy boasts an impressive 58 UNESCO-inscribed and recognized sites, China has 56, Germany 55, Spain and France each have 49, and India has 40 (Chichenitza, 2022). These countries have successfully leveraged their cultural heritage to attract tourists and boost their economies. In contrast, Nigeria's limited representation on the UNESCO list could help it compete for global tourism revenue.

Nigeria must intensify efforts to identify, preserve, and promote its hidden cultural gems to rectify this situation. By nominating more heritage sites for inclusion on UNESCO's list, the country can tap into the immense potential of international tourism. Additionally, Nigeria should prioritize effectively managing and marketing these sites to attract domestic and international visitors. Collaborating with UNESCO to access funding for conservation projects will not only help protect the sites for future generations but also create job opportunities and stimulate economic growth.

In conclusion, Nigeria's rich cultural heritage and historic sites offer immense potential for tourism-driven economic growth. However, the country's limited representation on UNESCO's World Heritage List hinders its ability to capitalize on this opportunity entirely. By increasing the number of globally recognized heritage sites and actively engaging with UNESCO for preservation efforts, Nigeria can unlock the economic benefits of tourism and reduce its reliance on oil as the primary revenue source. Embracing and showcasing its cultural treasures will boost the local economy and foster a sense of pride and appreciation for Nigeria's unique heritage both locally and on the global stage.

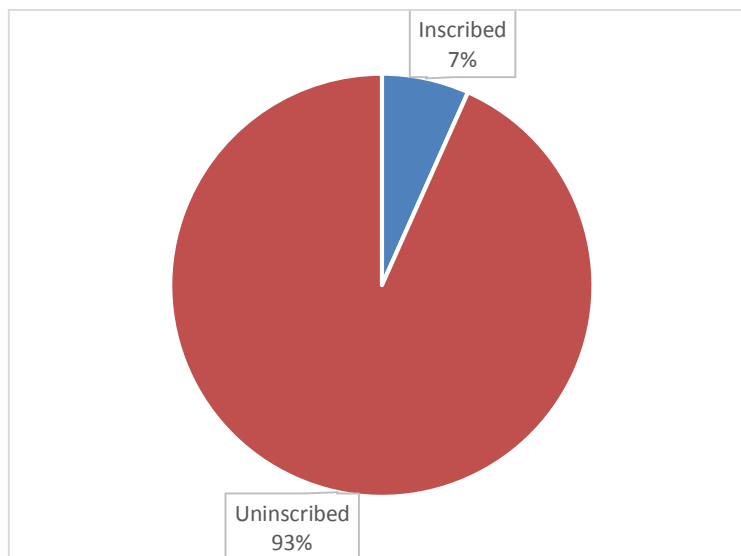


Figure 2: UNESCO Inscribed of Nigeria's Heritage Sites

Source: UNESCO, 2023

**Enlistment into World Heritage Site: Potential Heritage Sites**

Every nation desires that its heritage sites receive global recognition. This is achieved by being listed and inscribed in the global UNESCO World Heritage Site. But being included in a WHS is not automatic. There are procedures lined up by the World Heritage Committee. There are also criteria to be satisfied before a site can be selected and included as a UNESCO WHS (UNESCO 2006). UNESCO (2017) attest that there is a nomination process. UNESCO (2017) stated the nomination process: that a country must first identify its significant cultural and natural sites and register the sites in a document known as the Tentative List - an inventory of those properties which each State Party intends to consider for nomination. Only the sites that have been registered in the tentative list are allowed in the nomination file. Then the selected sites from the tentative list are placed into a Nomination File. The selected sites in the nomination files are then subjected to evaluation by the International Council on Monuments and Sites and the World Conservation Union. The two international bodies then make recommends sites from the nomination files to the World Heritage Committee to be considered for new designations. The Committee at their yearly meeting determines the sites that qualifies to be included World Heritage List based on the ten selection criteria from which a site must meet at least one to be included on the list.

Heritage sites that have been identified by a country as having significant cultural and natural value in the tentative list and placed into a Nomination File, ready for evaluation and selection (UNESCO 2017) are referred to as Potential Heritage sites. Refinedng.com attests that Nigeria is blessed with rich heritages with outstanding cultural significance such as old towns, monuments, ancient places of worship, artefacts, and historical sites. NMMC has recorded thirty of such (Table 1). Two of these historical sites have received UNESCO World Heritage Sites approval and inscription (Figure 2) while others are on the tentative list for future nominations (Refining, 2021).

**Nigeria Heritage Sites on the Tentative List**

Out of 195 States Parties to the Convention of which Nigeria is one, 186 have submitted a Tentative List (UNESCO, 2023b). Nigeria submitted fourteen (14)

out of the remaining twenty-eight (28) registered sites (NMMC, 2023). Heritage Sites on the UNESCO Tentative list in Nigeria and their date of enlistment is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Tentative heritage Sites in Nigeria, their date of enlistment, State and Geopolitical Zone

	<b>Heritage Site</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Geo-Political Zone</b>
	Benin Iya	01/11/1995	Edo	South South
	Old Oyo	01/11/1995	Oyo	South West
	Kwiambana and/or Ningi	01/11/1995	Zamfara	North West
	Oban Hills / Korup	01/11/1995	Cross River	South East
	Niger Delta Mangroves	01/11/1995	Delta	South South
	Gashaki-Gumpti National Park	01/11/1995	Taraba and Adamawa / Cameroon	North East
	Idanre Hill	08/10/2007	Ondo	South West
	Arochkwu Long Juju Slave Route (Cave Temple Complex)	08/10/2007	Abia	South East
	Ancient Kano City Walls	08/10/2007	Kano	North West
10	Surame Cultural Landscape	08/10/2007	Sokoto	North West
11	Alok Ikom Stone Monoliths	08/10/2007	Cross-River	South South
12	Ogbunike Caves	08/10/2007	Anambra	South East
13	Korup – Takamanda (CRIKOT) National Parks	04/06/2020	Cross-River	South South
14	Lake Chad Cultural Landscape	07/11/2018	Borno /Yobe	North East

Source: NMMC. 2023

A careful look into the tentative list showed that the last time Nigeria made a submission for tentative listing was in the year 2020. This is no 13 in table 1 which is Korup – Takamanda (CRIKOT) National Parks in the Cross River state, South-South geopolitical zone (Figure 3). The record also showed there were 6 submissions in 1995 and 2007, one in 2018 and 2020 respectively (Figure 4).

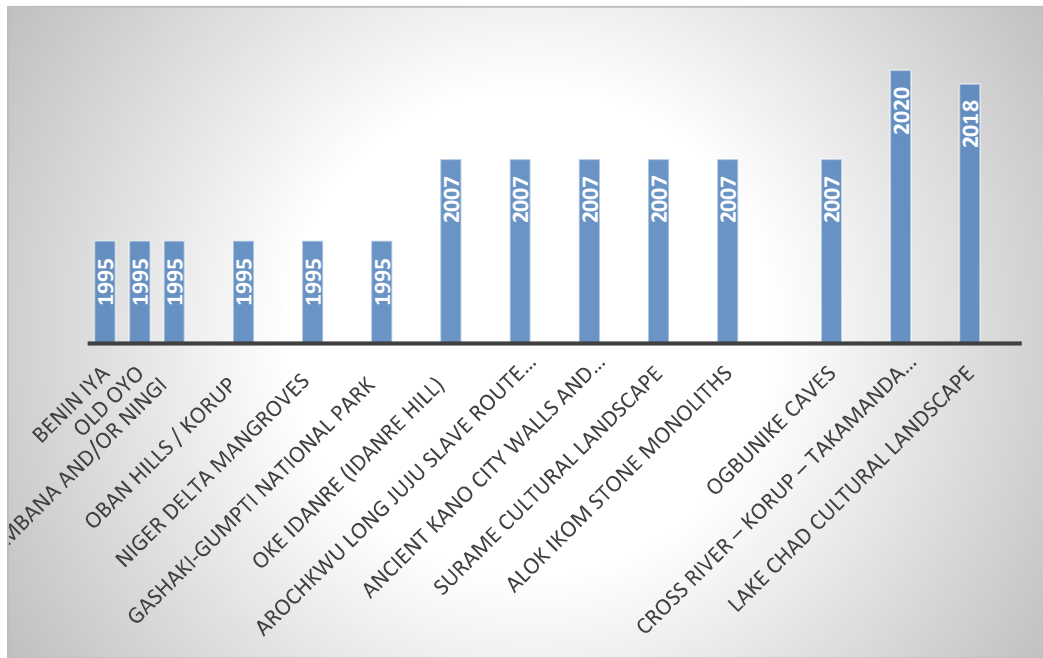


Figure 3: Heritage Sites in Nigeria and years of enlistment  
 Source: UNESCO (2023b)

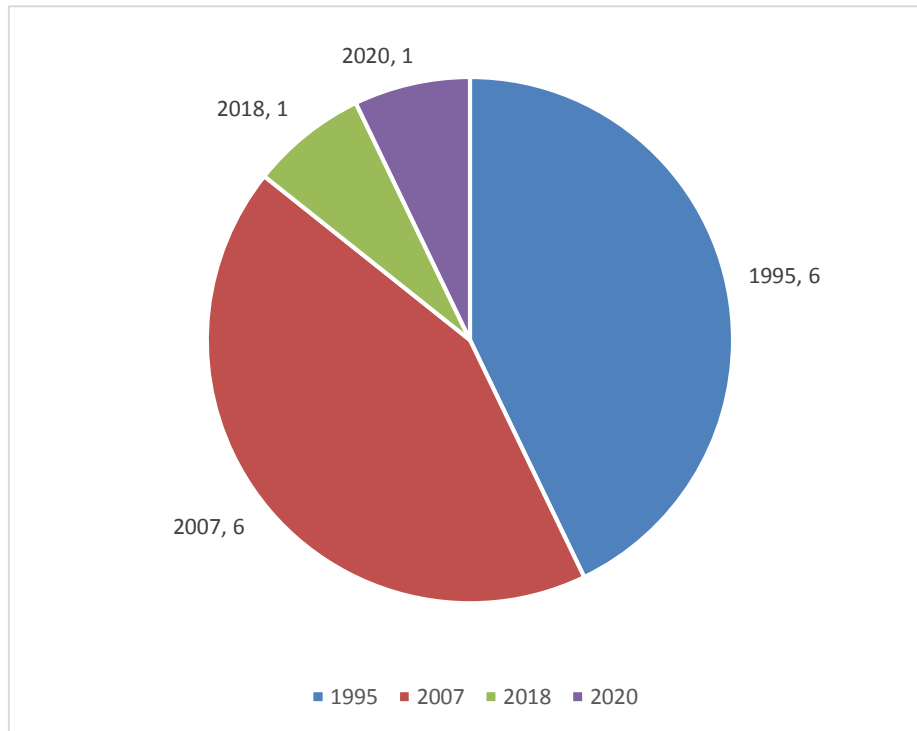


Figure 4: Epochal Submission of tentative list  
Source: NMMC. 2023

It was also observed that submission to the convention started in 1995 that is 23 years after its establishment. Six (6) submissions were made that year. It took another 12 years (2007) to make another (6) submissions, followed by 11 years (2018) with just one submission, then 2 years after (2020) with one (1) other submission. On the average, Nigeria submitted a list in every two years. If this is continued it means it will take up till the year 2028 before all the remaining 14 NMMC registered sites are taken to the tentative list. This is not a good progression for Nigeria looking at the poverty rate of the country and the need to boost the economy outside the dependence on oil.

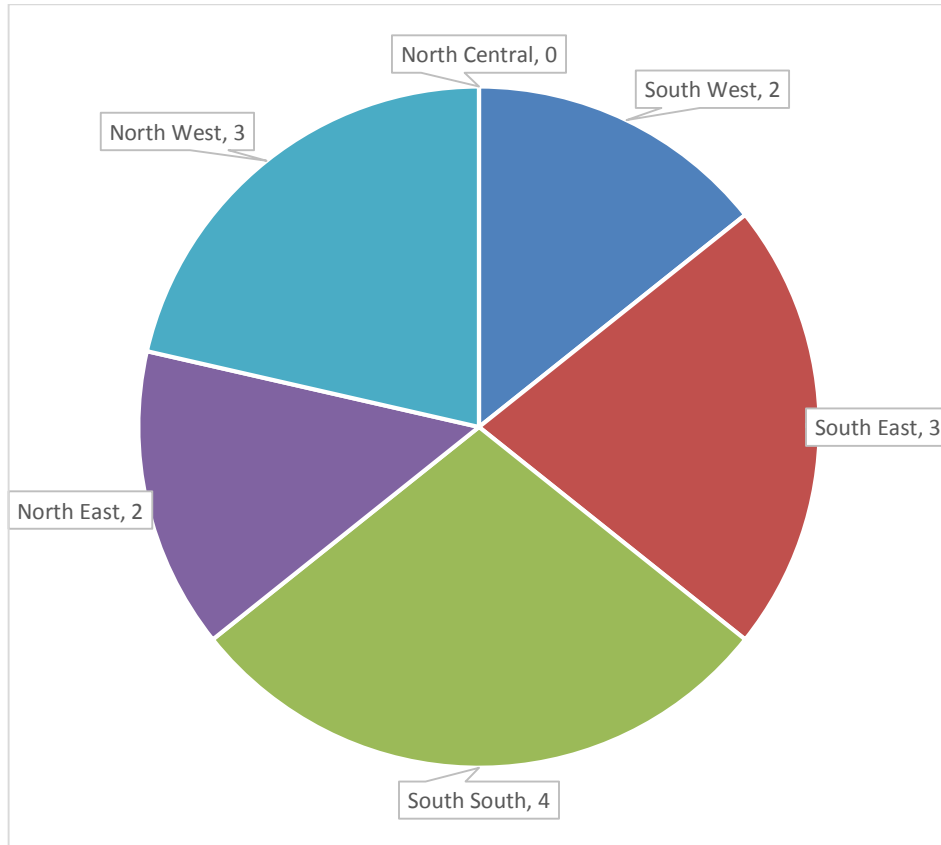


Figure 4: Tentative list in each geopolitical zones  
Source: NMMC. 2023

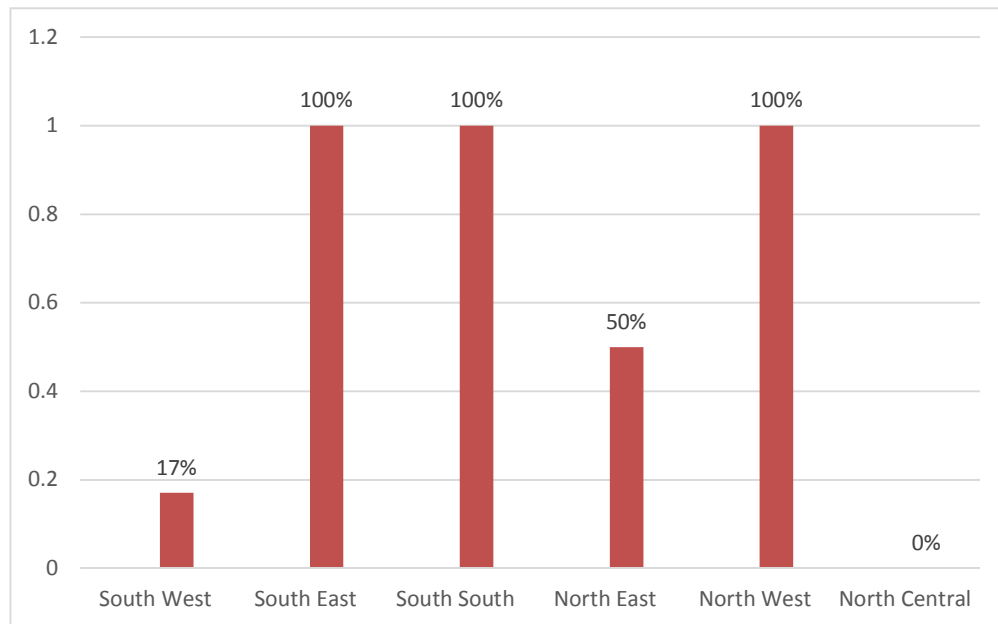


Figure 5: Percentage of tentative list in NNMC registered sites

Source: NMMC. 2023

### Conclusion

Table 1 presents an intriguing revelation, indicating that only 30 heritage sites have been officially registered by the National Monuments Management Committee (NMMC), Nigeria's controlling body responsible for heritage preservation. Furthermore, a mere two sites, accounting for only 7% of the registered sites, have received the prestigious inscription status (Figure 2). Such a small number of recognized heritage sites for a country as diverse as Nigeria, which comprises six geopolitical zones and many ethnic groups, raises the need for further investigation and exploration in this area.

In 2007, Babalola and Ajekigbe conducted a study identifying thirty-one archaeological sites across Nigeria (Figure 8a, 8b, 8c). The distribution of these sites was noteworthy, with eight sites located in the South West, eleven in the South East, seven in the Middle Niger, and five in the Northern region (Figure 6). Heritage sites have been scattered across the country, reflecting each region's rich historical and cultural heritage. The establishment of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones in 1995 (Figure 9), as reported by Incommoding (2023), marked a

significant milestone in the country's administrative division. Despite this, the number of NMMC-registered heritage sites appears disproportionately low compared to Nigeria's vast geographical expanse and diverse heritage.

Analyzing the regional breakdown of heritage site registrations, it is intriguing that the South West takes the lead with eight registered sites, all designated as historic (Figure 7). In the South East, two out of the eleven registered sites have received recognition, while the Middle Niger and Northern regions have yet to secure any registered heritage sites. This discrepancy in the distribution of registered sites calls for a comprehensive and concerted effort to explore and document heritage across all country regions.

The current state of heritage site registrations in Nigeria is far from comprehensive, with only a limited number of sites recognized by the NMMC. The findings suggest a considerable need for further research, exploration, and discovery of historical and cultural heritage sites across all six geopolitical zones. This effort would enrich Nigeria's cultural identity and contribute to preserving and promoting its diverse heritage for future generations.

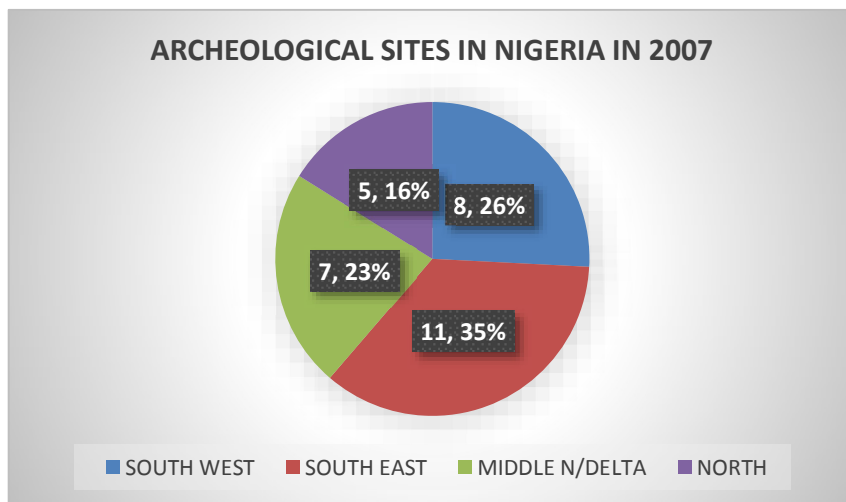


Figure 6 : Archeological Sites In Nigeria as at 2007  
[Source: Babalola and Ajekigbe (2007)]

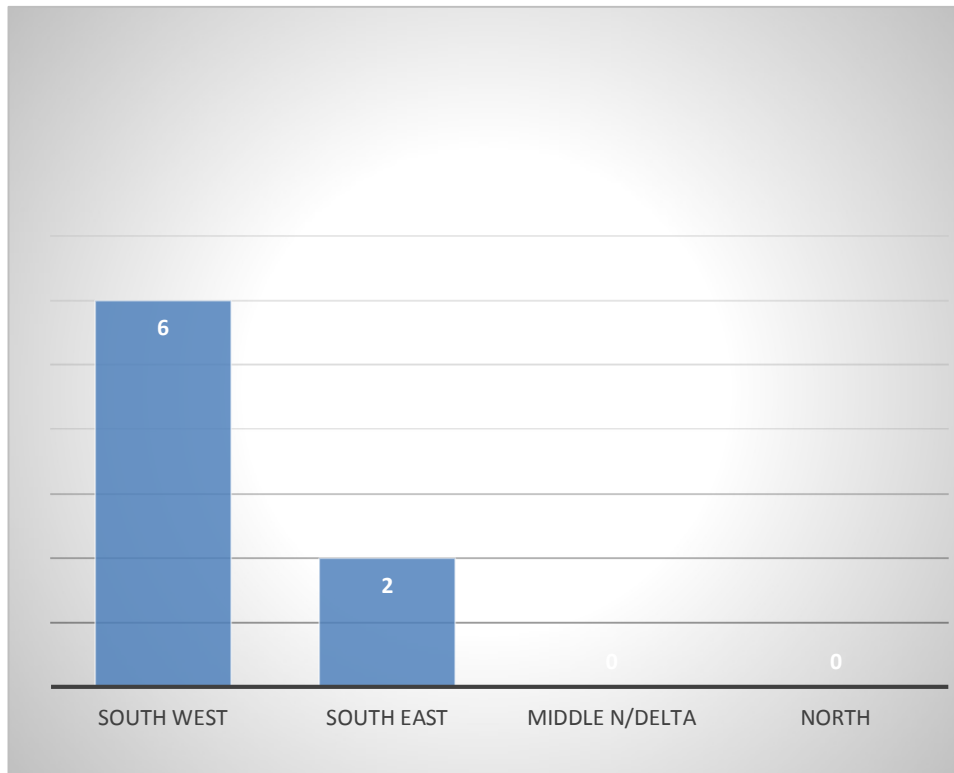


Figure 7 : Historic Sites In Nigeria as at 2007  
Source: Author's Work, 2023

It is amazing that the findings of Babalola and Ajekigbe (2007) (Figure 8a, 8b, 8c) is yet unimproved as at 2023 (16 years after) even from the local front as shown in Table 1. Only 30 sites have been duly certified locally. Little wonder only 2 has met the global standard. NMMC have big work on their hands to search for more sites and emulate the global body improving, promoting to conserve the available ones so as to meet the international standard of a World Heritage Site. Thus, more inscription will be gained from UNESCO to the advantage of the Country in all ramifications

Region	Site	Author(s)/Researcher (s)	Type/Nature	Contents	Chronology
Southwest	Iwo-Eleru	Thurstan Shaw	Rockshelter, L.S.A site	Evidence of Negroid like population/microliths	10,000 – 12,000 YA
	Old Oyo	Willet, Soper, Darling, Agbaje-Williams, e.t.c	L. S. A/ Historic (Urban Site)	Cave with Lithics, Potsherds, Whole pots, Mounds, ditches and embankments e.t.c.	Urban Population phase (17 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> C.
	Ile-Ife	Garlake, Willet, Eyo, Fagg, Murray, Eluyemi, Ogunfolakan, e.t.c.	Urban Historic Site	Potsherd pavement, Terracotta, Various vessels and potsherds, beads, copper bracelet e.t.c.	12 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> Century A.D.
	Sungbo Eredo	Lloyd, Darling	Historic Monument	Massive encircle earthen wall	12 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> century A.D.
	Egbejoda	Eluyemi	Rockshelter	Terracotta and pottery	--
	Orile Ijaye	Smirth, Folorunso and Olayinka	Historic site	Ditches and embankment, mound (ash and refuse), pottery	--
Southeast	Isundunrin	Aremu	Iron working	Dme furnance, iron slag	--
	Benin	Goodwin, Willet, Ciroma, Connah and Darling.	Urban Historic	Variety of Pottery, Bronze, Terracotta, Beads, Smoking pipes, Embankments e.t.c.	1180 - A.D ± 105
	Ezi-Ukwu Ukpa	Hartle, T. Shaw, Andah and Anozie	Rockshelter	Stone tools and potsherds	3000 B. C
	Ugwuagu	Hartle and Chikwendu	Rockshelter/Habitat on	Stone tools comprise of grinding stone and microliths and potsherds	1000B.C and 1400-1600 AD

Region	Site	Author(s)/Researcher (s)	Type/Nature	Contents	Chronology
	Igbo-Ukwu	T. Shaw	Historic	Burial Chamber, Store-house, ritual/ceremonial pottery, beads, bronze e.L.C.	10 <sup>th</sup> century AD
	Ugwuele Uburu	Anozie, Chikwendu and Emeji	Stones Age Site	Variety of Stone Tools (e.g. Handaxes, Cleavers, scrapers, Flakes and Picks)	-
	Umukete Aguleri	Anozie, Andah and Okpokko	Habitation	Pottery, Polished stone axe, Mounds e.L.C.	1240 ± 75 AD.
	Umundu	Anozie	Historical Iron Smelting Site	Furnace remains, iron Slag, Mounds, Tuyeres and pottery.	1625-1775 A. D
	Lejja	Anozie	Iron working	Tuyeres, Pit furnace and Iron Slag	-
	Okochiri	Nzewunwa	Shell midden, Abandoned settlement site	Sea Shell burnt or baked clay, iron fragment, pottery e.L.C.	14 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup> Century A. D.
	Onyoma	T. Shaw, Alagoo, Anozie	Shell midden	Sea Shell (Typanotonus fuscatus), fish and mammalian bones, fragment of crucibles.	1335 ± 85 A. D.
	Agadagbabou	Derefaka and Nzewunwa	Abandoned Settlement	Pottery, glass beads, Smoking pipe, worked bone	1730 A. D
	Igbo' Laja	Eyo	Shrine or Ritual Site	Terracotta, pottery, iron objects, polished stone axes, e.L.C.	1785 A. D.
Middle Niger/Nok valley	Dusten Kongba	York, Bassey and Fatunsin	Rockshelter (Microlithic Industry)	Microoliths, pottery and iron fragments	6 <sup>th</sup> – 1 <sup>st</sup> Millennium BC
	Samun Dukya	Angela Fagg	Habitation Site (of Nok culture)	Nokstyle figurine fragments, granite pebbles, pottery, grinding stone, iron objects, stone beads, e.t.c.	1520 ± 115 BC

Figure 8a: Archeological Sites In Nigeria

## Source: Babalola and Ajekigbe (2007)

Region	Site	Author(s)/Researcher (s)	Type/Nature	Contents	Chronology
	Rop	Fagg, Eyo, Soper and David	Rockshelter (Microlithic Industry)	Microlithics, pottery, polished axes, quartz tools, rubbing stone, e.t.c.	25BC ± 120
	Tanuga	Fagg	Occupation site	Iron objects, iron slag, tuyeres, pottery, figurines	440 BC ± 140
	Mai Idon Toro	Burton and Soper	Acheulean	Cleavers and Hand axes	--
	Yeiwa	Soper and Priddy	Settlement Mound	Terracotta, Potsherds, iron fragments, beads, ear plugs e.t.c	AD 100 – AD 700
	Kagoge	Soper, Priddy and Breternitz	Settlement/Burial	Potsherds, burials, iron objects, beads e.t.c.	--
Northern	Daima	Connah	Large Settlement Mound	Broken animal bones, potshers, grinding stone, smoking pipes, figurines, quartz bead, iron chain e.t.c	570 BC ± 110 – AD 1016 ± 90
	Bama	Soper and Connah	Settlement Mound of LSA	Molluscs, pottery, bone point, ground stone axes, grind-stone, beads e.t.c.	640 BC ± 170 – 1880BC ± 250
	Birnin Kudu	Fagg and Goodwin	Rock Painting	Painting of domestic cattle, potshers, iron objects, stone flake e.t.c.	Late Stone Age Site
	Geji	Sassoon	Rock Painting	Painting of antelopes, cows, monkeys and human	15 <sup>th</sup> Century BC
	Samaru-West	Sutton, Obayemi and Effah-Gyamfi	Occupation Site	Furnaces, tuyeres, and slag heaps	1 <sup>st</sup> Millennium AD

Figure 8b: Archeological Sites In Nigeria  
Source: Babalola and Ajekigbe (2007)

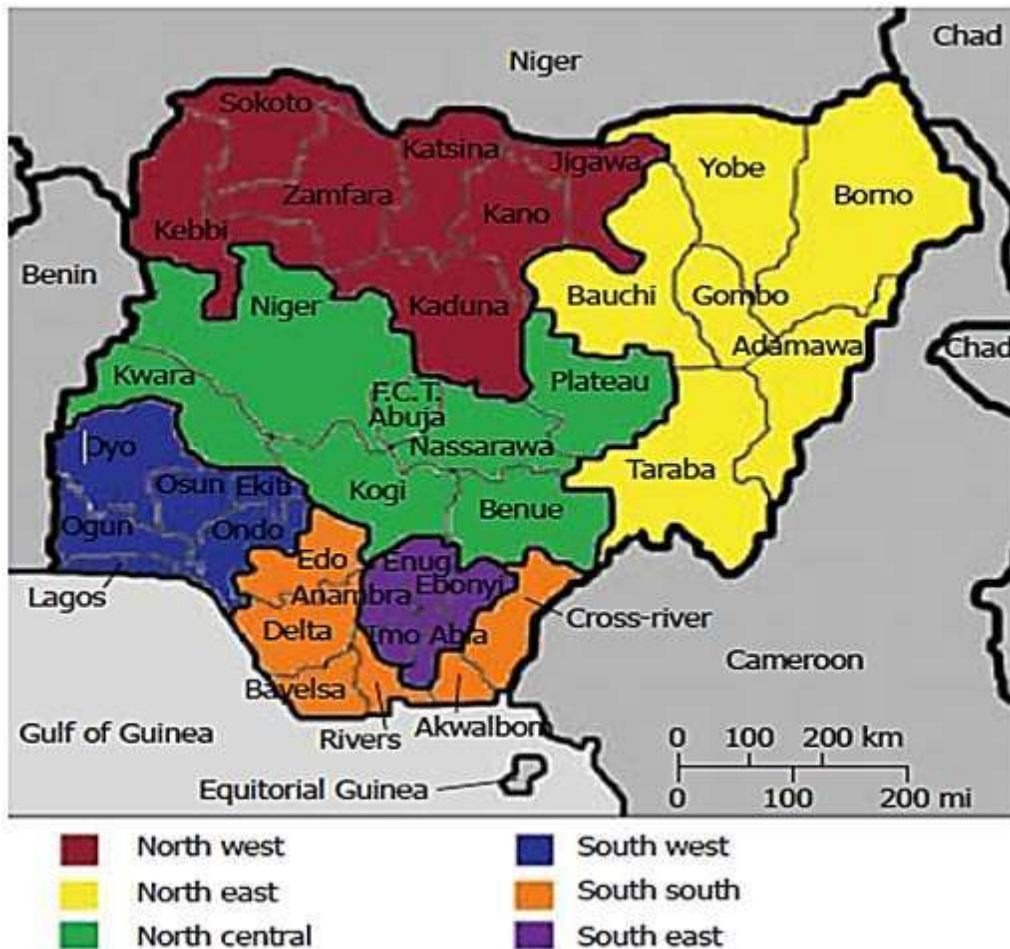


Figure 9: Nigeria's Six Geopolitical Zones

Source: Author, 2023

### Recommendation

Harvesting potential heritage sites in Nigeria has proven to be challenging, as the number of submissions has been low and is even on the decline. It is concerning that two years have passed since the last submission, and yet, not a single site has been proposed for inclusion in the tentative list. Moreover, those few sites previously submitted to the tentative list have yet to gain approval for inscription since as far back as 2009, marking a substantial period of 14 years without any new inclusions.

This stagnation raises questions about the reasons behind the lack of progress. One possibility is that Nigeria may have yet to fully follow the necessary process to move sites from the tentative list to the nomination file. Alternatively, it is plausible that the submitted sites still need to meet the strict criteria set by UNESCO for inscription.

It is essential for the relevant body responsible for heritage preservation, such as the National Commission for Museum and Monuments (NCMM), to investigate this matter thoroughly.

Considering the significance of UNESCO World Heritage Site status for promoting cultural and natural heritage, the research strongly recommends that the NMMC take immediate action. The country benefits greatly from having more sites inscribed on the prestigious list, as it fosters global recognition, boosts tourism, and provides opportunities for sustainable development.

To address this issue, the NMMC should conduct comprehensive research and surveys to identify potential heritage sites nationwide. Nigeria is rich in history and cultural diversity, with 774 local government areas spanning its six geopolitical zones and more than 525 distinct languages spoken. With such vast cultural and natural diversity, there is immense potential for discovering and preserving new sites of great historical and ecological value.

As a benchmark, the research suggests Nigeria should strive to have at least one heritage site per five local government areas. This target is reasonable given the country's abundant resources and cultural wealth. Identifying and working on the potential heritage sites would contribute significantly to the country's heritage conservation efforts and provide a more diverse representation of Nigeria's cultural and natural treasures on the global stage.

Addressing the decline in heritage site submissions and striving to include more sites in the UNESCO World Heritage List should be a priority for Nigeria. By heeding the research's recommendation and conducting thorough surveys of the country's myriad of sites, the NMMC can pave the way for a more vibrant and robust heritage conservation program, benefiting both the present and future generations. Preserving and showcasing Nigeria's cultural and natural heritage is not only a matter of national pride but also a responsibility toward preserving humanity's shared heritage.

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