



Julie's Bicycle

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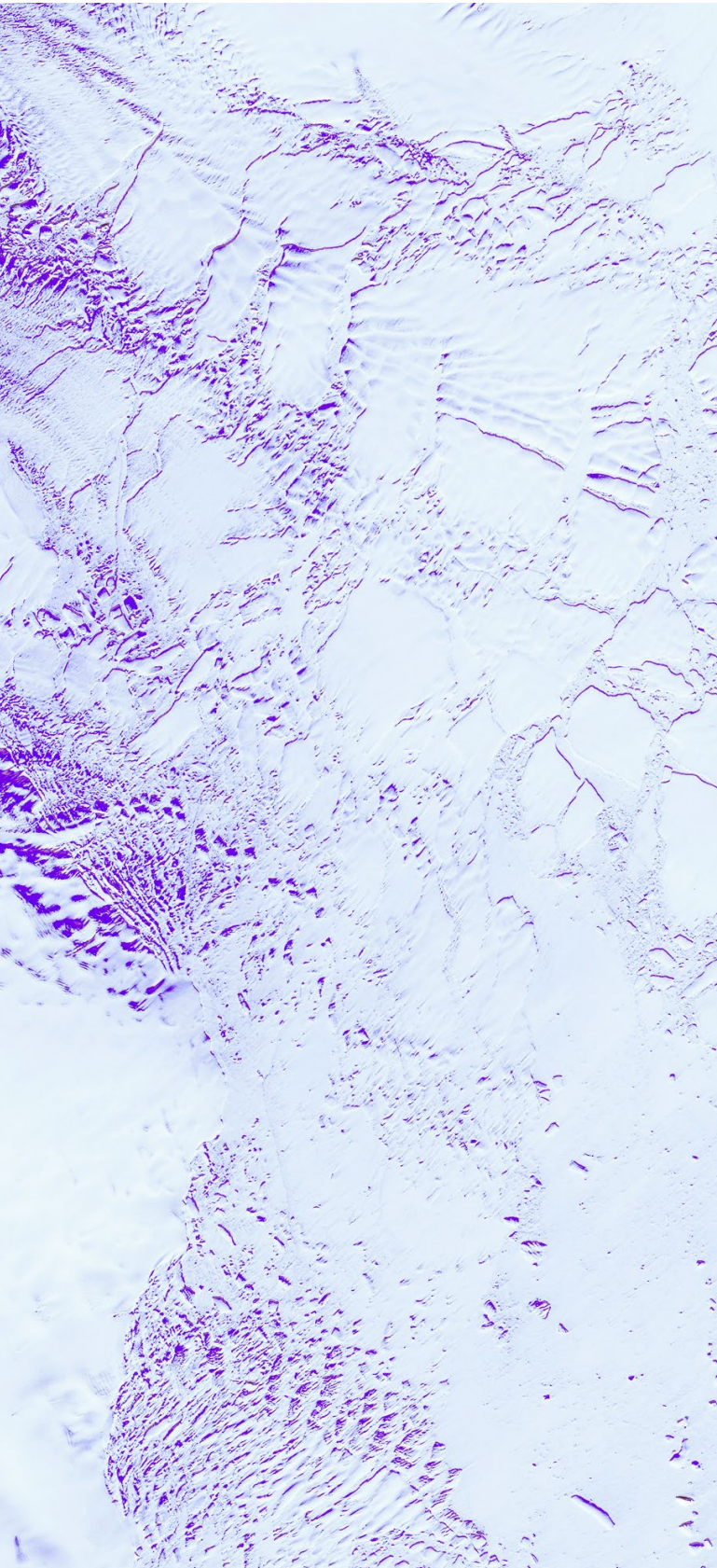
# The Climate Connection

## Culture and Environment Roundtable Nigeria

Outcomes and Insights Report



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## Global context

The most important attempt to commit all countries in the world to tackling the climate crisis, the United Nations COP26 climate summit will host 200 heads of state, ministers and thousands of delegates, with civil society, including artists and activists, locking arms. These negotiations, taking place in Scotland, will be guided by the Sixth IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) Assessment Report. The most current and comprehensive report on climate change to date, it was published, co-commissioned, and agreed by the world's 195 national governments, and shows that emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) from human activities are responsible for approximately 1.1°C of warming since 1850-1900. This has led to the unprecedented rates of global warming we are seeing today and has locked in climate-related impacts and threats for decades to come.

The IPCC authors have synthesised leading research from thousands of sources to inform effective policy decisions. They now pass the torch to the COP26 negotiating team, who have the vital job of securing ambitious climate action.

## Culture and Environment Roundtables

In summer 2021, a series of digital Roundtables were held in four countries: Turkey, Indonesia, Colombia and Nigeria, with a final event in Milan during Youth4Climate and the Pre-COP 26 Summit.

The Culture and Environment Roundtables brought selected participants together from policy-makers and institutions, municipalities,

fundors, youth participants, civil society organisations and cultural and arts practitioners to explore how culture, and cultural policy specifically, is responding to the climate crisis. All the Roundtables were conducted under amended Chatham House Rule.

A cross-section of cultural and environmental voices came together to explore the dynamics of culture. These conversations have already created new perspectives and collaborations.

This report is not a set of minutes, nor a verbatim account; it offers glimpses into the rich conversations and presentations and makes the case that culture is the missing link in climate action.

## Nigeria Roundtable

14 September 2021 – 14:00-17:00 (Nigeria and UK) – Online, hosted by Five Cowries Arts Education Initiative + Julie's Bicycle for the British Council's The Climate Connection

**40 participants**

**6 speakers**

**3 performances**

This Culture and Environment Roundtable was hosted in Nigeria and convened by UK non-profit organisation Julie's Bicycle and Five Cowries in partnership with The British Council as part of The Climate Connection. The Climate Connection is a global platform for dialogue, cooperation and action against climate change, in the lead up to the United Nations climate conference, COP26. International cooperation through cultural relations is key to addressing shared development solutions.

*“Economically, socially, politically there is no other issue that is as important as climate change.”*

## Nigeria context

Nigeria has Africa's largest economy and population, and it is the world's 17th biggest emitter of greenhouse gases.<sup>[1]</sup> In a country that has one of the highest rates of energy poverty in the world, we asked how culture can tackle environmental challenges. As Nigeria experiences sharp increases in extreme heat, changes in rain precipitation are putting pressure on a rain-dependent agricultural sector. Desertification and lack of access to fresh water is resulting in reduced food security that is destabilising the country, with some regions particularly badly affected, while increasing occurrences of extreme flooding are affecting urban centres. With an average age of 18.1 years, Nigeria is a young country with a vibrant and globally influential cultural sector, which could be key to mobilising action on climate mitigation and adaptation.

Creativity in Nigeria is flourishing and of global importance. With Nollywood, Davido, and thousands of internationally renowned artists, writers and designers, Nigeria is a creative powerhouse: as such it is in a position to influence all our futures.

<sup>[1]</sup> Carbonbrief August 2020

## Nigeria's contribution to global climate change

The Federal Government of Nigeria submitted an interim updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in May 2021. In 2015 Nigeria set an economy-wide target and the 2021 interim report updates and improves their ambition. The updated baseline projections for GHG emissions are estimated to be half of what was predicted in 2015, representing a 31% increase in total GHG emissions between 2018 and 2030.

## Cultural policy in Nigeria

**Ministry:** Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism  
**Devolves to:** The National Council for Arts and Culture  
**Cultural policy:** Announced in 2019 awaiting publication

There are no policy publications accessible on the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism website<sup>[2]</sup>, although the ecotourism branch of the ministry refers to environmental issues.

The National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) broadly aims for sustainable growth in its Mission Statement webpage, stating that the NCAC is “dedicated to the development and promotion of the best of the living Arts and Cultures of Nigeria, using it as resources for National integration and Unity as well as to serve as catalyst for sustainable growth and development of the Nation.”<sup>[3]</sup>

In October 2019, the Minister of Information and Culture announced a new National Policy on Culture (awaiting publication). The *Nigeria Country Strategy Paper 2020-2024* states: “Nigeria does not have a state of the environment report and there are currently no unified baseline environmental or social conditions.”<sup>[4]</sup>

<sup>[2]</sup> Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, relevant departments: Entertainment & Creative Service; Cultural Industries & Heritage; International Cultural Relations; Domestic and Eco-Tourism Promotion and Control

<sup>[3]</sup> National Council for Arts and Culture, Mission Statement <https://www.ncac.gov.ng/about-us/mission-statement>

<sup>[4]</sup> Nigeria-Country Strategy Paper 2020-2024, p10, <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/nigeria-country-strategy-paper-2020-2024>



## The big questions

During the Roundtable, stakeholders from the intersection of culture and climate were invited to discuss current culture/climate trends, challenges and solutions.

### These questions included:

- What is being done to tackle climate and environmental issues with culture?
- As arts and culture organisations, practitioners, artists, academics; what would be most helpful in working towards ecological transformation?
- How can the connections between policy-makers and the cultural sector be strengthened to develop solutions to tackle the climate crisis?

*“Climate is a risk that needs to be underwritten. Once we understand this, all of us who want to participate in solving the problem; will have access to the finance to deal with that need.”*

## Emerging themes

Cultural systems change  
 Bottom-up policy dialogue urgently needed  
 Skills development for cultural practitioners at all levels  
 Access to skills development and careers for young emerging talent  
 Empowering youth to speak out  
 Material, infrastructure  
 Fairer economy that includes recognising value beyond GDP  
 Economic emphasis on justice and transition  
 Fair access to the digital creative economy  
 Finance for innovation, especially for the circular economy  
 Advocating for culturally specific indigenous knowledge as a solution  
 Protecting, and cataloguing indigenous cultural knowledge and practices  
 Building infrastructure (especially knowledge-networks and research) for culturally specific indigenous knowledge  
 Cultural and educational opportunities in Nigerian languages and vernaculars  
 Public education and campaigns on environmental impacts, behaviours and solutions  
 Cultural communities connecting and collaborating nationally  
 Ongoing dialogue with cultural practitioners and government at all levels  
 Fairer redistribution of financial opportunities for culture, the arts and creative industries  
 Rebuilding the commons especially in urban contexts

## Snippets and insights

### Founding principles for effective systems change

Bottom-up and people-centric approaches to policy making.

Transparent communication through engagement with all sectors.

Practical, on the ground solutions with local communities, grassroots organisations, and private and public sector stakeholders.

Re-thinking urban design for public spaces, including net zero design but going further to incorporate waste-free, and nature-based design and construction.

Adapting framing, and translating into local languages and vernaculars.

Popularising terms such as sustainable cities, regenerative cities, transition towns, smart cities, zero carbon cities to re-imagine and be part of a positive future.

### Bottom-up policy dialogue urgently needed

Consistently throughout the project there have been calls for policy dialogue that creates space and place for the expertise and the experience from local and creative practitioners working from the ground up to inform policy.

*“Art and culture, if allowed to engage in conversations and collaboration on the modalities of the city’s ‘shared spaces’, offers an opportunity to enrich and reframe the public realm.”*

### New economies to prompt cultural change

Building the commons.

Shared ownership/personal stakes in the environment and shared belonging to public spaces especially in urban settings.

Connecting to civil society through art events and campaigns to create a stronger community voice on the environment.

### Governance/Government support

More and stronger policy on environment and climate for culture generally.

Government support to develop policy-making partnerships with culture centred on environmental themes.

Revising current lengthy bureaucratic processes at all levels would speed up the adoption (and therefore the impact) of green policies.

*“I spent a decade telling people that I do what I do because I care about the environment. But I started to understand that if I was going to reach people I would need to speak not just to passion about climate and environment, but also about business opportunities for business and people.”*

### **Financial support/fairer redistribution of financial resources**

Government recognition via funding sustainable cultural practices and campaigns would transform economic incentives for practitioners and organisations.

### **Digital shifts and arts and culture related data**

Africa-centric digital investment to disseminate culturally specific knowledge on climate and social issues should be a priority, such as focusing on African histories and geographies, told in African languages, building localised solutions for the Nigerian context.

*“From the way we eat, shop, dress, the music we listen to – culture has a huge amount to contribute to climate change”*

### **Innovation and technology**

Young people are innovators of social change (and climate change) and need support to operate creatively. By 2035, 75% of Nigeria’s population will be under 35 years old.

Tapping into the huge potential for transformative change that is represented by young people is an immediate priority.

*“The raw material of social change (and climate change) is around the capacity of young people to think and do and operate creatively.”*

### **Connection and integration within the arts**

Cross-collaborations between the arts and environment are needed at all levels – community, sector, national, local, academic and institutional, city and urban.

### **Agency – connection and collaboration**

Collaboration between the cultural sector and policy-makers is important to greening Nigeria’s creative industries, as well as increasing civic engagement to climate issues in everyday practices.

*“I believe that societies need culture to provide inspiration. To find new ways of coexisting with each other and with the natural environment. And addressing challenges we face.”*



### **Youth and education as innovators of social change**

Education plays an important role in raising climate change awareness locally, especially because community engagement in climate change is measurably low. Knowledge of climate and environmental issues is critical for young people and should be integrated into the curriculum using arts educators and artists.

### **Indigenous peoples are championed/practising indigenous environmental methods**

Practising indigenous environmental methods would encourage both nature-based solutions to disaster risks and rehabilitate ecologies with local community collaborations. In addition, these are seen as important to sustaining traditional cultural heritages that connect people with place and the environment.

### **Self-awareness on environmentally impactful behaviours**

Self-awareness on environmentally impactful behaviours throughout the sector would stimulate more conscious practices, beyond recycling, with holistic solutions that accelerate the green transition.

“The environment is not an abstract thing, it is integrated into your environment and cultural history.”



## ANNEX 1 – Keynote speakers:

### **Abubakar Suleiman, CEO, Sterling Bank: Welcome speech**

Abubakar Suleiman stated it is important for financial institutions and services to include climate change as an underwritten risk in business models. They could also highlight the economic benefits of protecting the environment, such as greener energy use, as positive actions corporations can take. Using arts and culture as influence, he spoke about Sterling Bank's HEART initiative that links the health, education, agriculture, renewable energy, and transport sectors as an economic ecosystem with environmentally conscious practices, while Sterling Environmental Makers and RECYCLART raised environmental awareness to larger audiences by collaborating with the entertainment industry, media and urban public arts alike.

### **Alhanislam, poet and an exponent of the spoken word: live performance, "She"**

Maryam Bukar Hassan, also known as Alhanislam, performed a spoken word piece about being a "change agent" for the environment.

### **Professor Chukwumerije Okereke, Professor of Global Environmental and Climate Governance, Center for Climate Change and Development at Alex Ekwueme University, Ndufu-Aliku, Nigeria: Promoting Climate Action through Arts**

Professor Chukwumerije Okereke explained Nigeria faces not only climate risks, but also a huge transition risk as a result of climate change through projected loss of jobs, stranded assets and financial market losses. He stated African nations have long suffered damages from climate impacts that the Global North itself now begins to experience and validate in economic terms. He suggested culture can encourage environmentally positive actions, where economics, science and the disconnection between governments cannot reach.

### **Adama Sanneh, CEO and Co-founder, The Moleskine Foundation: Inspiring a new generation of knowledge producers – WikiAfrica Education**

Adama Sanneh opened with a video produced by the World Economic Forum about WikiAfrica Education. He then described how the programme aims to inspire, empower, and connect young people to use their creativity, critical thinking and knowledge to transform themselves and their communities for social change. Additionally it organises, records and digitalises high quality knowledge about the African continent in African languages online. Partnering with local communities and using technology to expand creative culture towards practical and scalable activism, WikiAfrica Education seeks to transform young people across the continent from passive knowledge consumers of Western centric knowledge into active producers of knowledge that is connected with their history and geography.

### **Papa Omotayo, Creative Director, MOE+Architects: A New Generation Building a Culture for Environmental Activism**

Papa Omotayo placed value on creating tangible participation methods for citizens to shape their own ecologically balanced civic spaces, specifically for youths in Lagos, where by 2035, 75% of the population will be under 35. He explained two models of the sustainable city: the incomplete, constantly evolving city, and the green city, noting the loss of sense of place in Ikoyi due to its 60% deforestation. He highlighted how thinking about materiality through environmental footprints of the urban space and a building's structure can both contextualise environmental awareness into architectural, or cultural aesthetic forms for younger generations, as well as reconnect to traditional African cultures that integrate community, materiality and the environment.

**Adesuwa Obasuyi, *Climate Change Policy Manager, British High Commission, Abuja:*  
The intersection of culture and climate policy**

Adesuwa Obasuyi presented that culture informs how people differently respond to climate disasters, negotiate their opposing views on Nigeria's green transition, and rewire the consumption habits of the planet's resources. She spoke about the new culture informed by research data leading governments, financial and developmental institutions to declare a climate emergency, and how Nigeria's policies on the environment and climate change also promote nature-based solutions. She highlighted the need to generate environmental engagement and support interconnected policy agendas, such as with health, urban planning and food security, and that Nigeria's creative industries bring together communities and the media to influence policy-makers towards greener activities.

**Chuma Nwokolo, *poet:* Live performance, poem**

Chuma Nwokolo performed a poem aligned with the issues included in his latest novel, "The Extinction of Manai", which is themed on the "linguistic, cultural and actual extinction of an ethnic nation". The poem, set in the latter stage of the climate crisis, described the changed and empty places through the remnants of old signposts.

**Polly Alakija, *artist, founder of Five Cowries Arts Education Initiative***

Polly Alakija spoke about Nigeria as a country with deep cultural connections to its environment and people's spirituality. She echoed Adama Sanneh's stance on the deficit in access to information, such as digitally and at grassroots levels, and called for good governance that ensures climate has clear, electoral, political consequences. She explained "the need to invest in activism that protects the environment", and the importance of being accountable and working with young people, in order to support them with their futures.

**Clément Boutillier, *EU Delegation to Nigeria, European Commission***

Clément Boutillier spoke about the launch of the youth sounding board for the Nigeria European Commission, assisting dynamic young entrepreneurs who work on innovative, green solutions across the sectors. He described the European Commission's support in the arts to influence awareness on climate change in Nigeria, and collaborating with the British Council to mobilise artists in the fight against sexual and gender-based violence.

**Wole Adegboye, *youth climate change advocate, songwriter, performer and climate radio talk host:* CLIMATE IS CHANGING – Introduction and song**

Wole performed CLIMATE IS CHANGING, a song that captures the effects of an impacted environment and raises awareness about our agency to act.

## ANNEX 2 – Attendees:

Attendees included the people listed below. There were other attendees who joined the discussions, for whom we do not have formal permissions for their names to be shared. We would like to thank everyone who attended for their valuable contributions.

First Name	Last name	Organisation	Job title
Abubakar	Sambo	Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto	Professor
Abubakar	Suleiman	Sterling Bank Plc	MD/CEO
Adama	Sanneh	Moleskine foundation	CEO
Adesuwa	Obasuyi	British High Commission	Climate Change Policy Manager
Akin	Disu	Riteonthebeach	Founder
Amuche	Nnabueze	University of Nigeria Nsukka	Artist-Activist
Azeezat	Afinowi-Subair	Ministry of the Environment & Water Resources	Asst Director
Azu	Nwabogu	Lagos Photo Festival/African Artists Foundation	Founder
Bola	Onadele.Koko	FMDQ Group	Chief Executive Officer
Chukwumerije	Okereke	Professor	Global Environmental and Climate Governance, Center for Climate Change and Development at Alex Ekwueme University
Chuma	Nwokolo		Author and Advocate
Clément	Boutillier	European External Action Service	Team Leader - Democracy, Governance and Migration
Desmond	Majekodumni	LUFASI	CEO
Emmanuel	Etaderhi	The Financial Centre for Sustainability Lagos	Executive Secretary
Folasade	Medebem Abrose	World Business Angels Forum	Senator
Giles	Omezi	STRATA DB	Director
His Excellency Mr. Sarafa	Isola	Hon High Commissioner of Nigeria to UK	High Commissioner
ifesinachi	Nwanyanwu	Environmental Art Garden	Environmental Artist
Iniyé	Spiff	Africappractice	Associate Consultant
Lucy	Pearson	British Council, Nigeria	Director



First Name	Last name	Organisation	Job title
Maryam	Bukar Hassan	Poet – Organisation – Alhanislam	Alhanislam
Olu	Alake	The Peel Institute	CEO
Olumide	Adeosun	Arдова Plc	CEO
Oluwadmilola	Emmanuel	Lagos State	MD LASWA Lagos State Waterways
Oyinda	Fakeye	British Council	Arts Consultant
Papa	Omotayo	MOE+ Architects	Creative Director
Peju	Ibekwe	Sterling One Foundation	CEO
Polly	Alakija	Five Cowries	Director
Tim	Newbold	Africappractice	Director
Tolu	Ami Williams	Five Cowries	International Partnerships lead
Tomi	Owó		Performing Artist, Entrepreneur
Tomi	Soyinka	British Council	Director, Programmes
Tunji	Bello	Environment Lagos State	Honourable Commissioner Environment Lagos State
Wole	Adegbule	Society for Planet and Prosperity/ISEC NIGERIA	Environmental Advocate/Consultant
Zakari	Momodu	Aliko Dangote Foundation	Programmes Director

## ANNEX 3 – About the partners:

### British Council

British Council is the UK's international organisation responsible for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We connect, build understanding and trust between the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education, and the English language. Last year, we communicated face-to-face with more than 80 million people, and over 791 million people online, through our radio and TV programs and our print publications. Founded in 1934, the British Council is a charity and public organisation that has become a legal entity with the Royal Charter. Fifteen percent of our revenue is covered by the UK government.

### Julie's Bicycle

Julie's Bicycle is a pioneering not-for-profit organisation mobilising the arts and culture to take action on the climate and ecological crisis. Founded by the music industry in 2007 and now working across the arts and culture, Julie's Bicycle has partnered with over 2,000 organisations in the UK and internationally. Combining cultural and environmental expertise, Julie's Bicycle focuses on high-impact programmes and policy change to meet the climate crisis head-on.

Julie's Bicycle works with cultural policy-makers to create structural change at a local, national and international level. Julie's Bicycle's freely available resources are the most comprehensive library of good environmental practice for culture anywhere, co-created with the thousands of artists, cultural workers, and creative organisations we have worked with. We exist at the heart of a thriving informal network of organisations and individuals who share our vision across the world, using our 14 years of experience to support others on their journey, and helping to catalyse new projects at the intersection of culture and climate. Find out more: [www.juliesbicycle.com](http://www.juliesbicycle.com)

### Five Cowries Arts Education Initiative

Five Cowries Arts Education Initiative (FCI) leverages the arts to offer inclusive pathways to education that are responsive to individual learning, social and cultural needs. FCI works with arts educators and artists to help develop the capacity for creative education in classrooms, communities and in homes. With projects that aim to empower communities and individuals to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, awareness of the environment and responsible citizenship is key to our pedagogy. [fivecowries.org](http://fivecowries.org)

### What is the Climate Connection?

The Climate Connection is the British Council's global platform for dialogue, cooperation and action against climate change. It connects millions of people from the UK and the rest of the world through collaborative and creative solutions to the climate crisis.

### Why?

International cooperation through cultural relations is key to addressing shared development solutions. By encouraging cross-sectoral, inter-generational and international collaboration, and bringing in new voices across the arts, education and English, the Climate Connection will enable more innovative, creative and sustainable solutions to our shared climate crisis. Through this approach, the Climate Connection will make climate action as inclusive as possible, by strengthening cooperation between the UK and the world, and across all parts of society, to enable everyone to contribute to a better future for our planet.



## Acknowledgements

Thank you to the British Council team in Nigeria and our partners at Five Cowries, as well as the British Council's The Climate Connection team. Thank you to The Honourable Commissioner Environment Lagos State, Tunji Bello.

Many thanks to the facilitator of the session: Juliana Olayinka, Director of IORMA Africa.

Thank you to all the Roundtable participants for your invaluable time and insights. We would especially like to thank the speakers and facilitators: Abubakar Suleiman, CEO of Sterling Bank; Chukwumerije Okereke, Professor of Global Environmental and Climate Governance, Center for Climate Change and Development at Alex Ekwueme University; Papa Omotayo, Creative Director, MOE+Architects; Adama Sanneh, CEO and Co-founder, The Moleskine Foundation; Adesuwa Obasuyi, Climate Change Policy Manager, British High Commission Abuja; Clément Boutillier, EU Delegation to Nigeria, European Commission; Lucy Pearson, Director, British Council, Nigeria; Polly Alakija, Director, Five Cowries Arts Education Initiative and Tolu Ami-Williams, International Partnerships Officer, Five Cowries Arts Education Initiative.

Many thanks to the artists: Alhanislam, Chuma Nwokolo, and Wole Adegbule for bringing life and creativity to the climate and environmental challenge. Further thanks to the captioners, moderators and technical teams, particularly the INSPIRIT team for your organisation and support. Thanks to Ada Jusic for the visual minutes.







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## The Climate Connection

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