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Redefining Sustainability

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Banking Sector
RECAPITALISATION

BUREAU OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT (BPP) SET TO EMBRACE SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

Africa Development Bank and Green Hydrogen Project

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* We equip individuals and organizations to contribute to a healthy planet.
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* We value sustainable research and innovation.
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THE PLANET AS THE HEART OF SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability discussions often drift into corporate buzzwords, economic policy, and abstract carbon credits. By treating the issue as a human management problem, we place ourselves at the center of the story. But humans are not the authors of this system; we are its guests. The true heart of sustainability is the planet itself; the physical, biological, and self-regulating Earth that dictates the rules of survival.

The Earth's atmosphere contains just the right amount of gases that trap heat from the sun, resulting in a moderate climate suitable for water to exist in liquid form. The atmospheric ozone layer helps block radiation from the sun that would be harmful to life. About 71 percent of Earth's surface is covered by water, which is essential to life. The rest is land, mostly in the form of continents that rise above the oceans. Below the surface is a hot interior of rocky materials and two core layers composed of the metals nickel and iron in solid and liquid form.

For thousands of years, the Earth is constantly changing. Over long periods of time the land is built up and worn away, oceans are formed and re-formed, and continents move around, breakup, and merge. Life itself contributes to changes on Earth's atmosphere. For example, Earth at one time had the small amount of carbon dioxide (0.03%) in its atmosphere, but over the years the amount of carbon dioxide is gradually on the increase to 0.042% which represents 28.57%.

The Earth is also endowed with other natural resources that are considered valuable in their relatively unmodified (natural) form. A nation's natural resources often determine its wealth and status in the world economic system, by determining its political influence. Natural resources are natural capital converted to commodity inputs to infrastructural capital processes. Natural resources are classified: renewable and nonrenewable. Renewable resources are those that naturally replenished on a human timescale. Examples of renewable natural resources are; sunlight, wind, water, geothermal etc. Non-renewable resources are those that that does not renew itself at a sufficient rate for sustainable economic extraction in meaningful human time-frames. They are unable to regenerate relatively quickly, and hence they are exhaustible. Examples of non-renewable natural resources are; fossil fuels such as oil and gas and mineral resources.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) periodically update on the state of the world's ecosystems. Recent publication shows that humanity's Ecological Footprint (a sustainability metric that measures **how much biologically productive land and water area** an individual, city, or nation requires to produce the resources it consumes and to absorb the waste it generates) grew by 150% between 1961 and 2000. Today's economic paradigms do not protect the natural environment, yet they deepen human dependency on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Ecologically, massive environmental degradation and climate change threaten the stability of ecological systems that humanity depends on. Our use of land, water, minerals and other natural resources has increased more than ten-fold during the past 200 years, and future increases in population and development will only intensify this pressure. During the last few decades we have seen increasing disruption of local ecosystems up to global disturbance of the biosphere as a whole.

In addition to the report of World Wide Fund for Nature on the state of the global environment is the evidence from the planetary boundaries. The concept of planetary boundaries largely proposed limits for the anthropogenic appropriation of the earth's providing capacity. Planetary boundaries, put simply, are thresholds within which humanity can survive, develop and thrive for generations to come. Scientists have identified 9 planetary boundaries that define the safe operating space for humanity. According to the latest scientific assessments, **seven** of these nine boundaries have now been exceeded, pushing Earth systems into zones of increasing risk and instability.

The 7 planetary limits have been transgressed due to human activities, putting the Earth's life-support systems at risk are:

Climate Change: Atmospheric carbon dioxide levels and radiative forcing have surpassed safe limits, driving global warming and accelerating extreme weather.

Biosphere Integrity (Biodiversity Loss & Extinction): Species extinction rates and the loss of genetic/functional diversity are escalating, severely weakening ecosystem resilience.

Land-System Change: Massive deforestation and the conversion of natural habitats for agriculture and infrastructure have reduced the Earth's carbon-storing capacity.

Biogeochemical Flows: The massive overuse of nitrogen and phosphorus in agricultural fertilizers has caused severe pollution and created hundreds of oceanic "dead zones".

Freshwater Use: Both blue water (rivers/lakes) and green water (soil moisture required for plant growth) changes have exceeded safe, sustainable limits.

Chemical Pollution: The unchecked release of synthetic chemicals, pesticides, plastics, and nuclear waste into the environment has passed safe boundaries.

Ocean Acidification: Driven by the ocean absorbing excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, surface water acidity has increased by 30-40% since the industrial era, threatening marine food chains and coral reefs.

Currently, only two Earth-system processes remain within the globally recognized safe zone:

Stratospheric Ozone Depletion: Following the globally coordinated phase-out of ozone-depleting chemicals (via the Montreal Protocol), the ozone layer is actively healing.

Atmospheric Aerosol Loading: While air pollution regionally exceeds limits (particularly in parts of South Asia), the global boundary has not yet been transgressed.

The modern concept of sustainability did not emerge overnight. Sustainability is not about rescuing a helpless Earth. It is about aligning human civilization with the non-negotiable boundaries of a living, breathing planet. It evolved through a series of ecological crises, scientific warnings, and international diplomatic milestones that forced a shift from unchecked industrial growth to a balanced, triple-bottom-line paradigm. Placing the planet at the heart of sustainability means prioritizing Earth's ecological boundaries above all else. This approach recognizes that functioning ecosystems are the essential foundation for human well-being and economic stability, shifting focus from mere resource management to active environmental regeneration. Placing the planet at the center of the sustainability model is often visualized through the interconnected 3Ps of Sustainability (People, Planet, Profit). When the planet is treated as the primary heartbeat of this model, every operational and daily choice is evaluated by its environmental footprint.

Nature runs on a perfect, closed-loop economy where waste does not exist. To center the planet in our sustainability efforts, we must stop trying to re-engineer nature and start copying it. We cannot run a business or build a society on a dead planet. Every money spent, item manufactured, and calorie consumed traces back to the Earth's systems. When we prioritize economic growth over planetary health, we pull the rug out from under our own feet. True sustainability treats the Earth's resources not as income to spend, but as capital to protect.

Without a healthy, thriving environment, the other pillars of sustainability simply collapse. Human societies and global economies are inherently dependent on natural systems for clean air, water, fertile soil, and raw materials. By nurturing planetary health, we ensure intergenerational equity, guaranteeing that future generations inherit a habitable and prosperous home. We need to remind people of the raw, physical reality of our dependence on the Earth. Every breath of oxygen connects us to the oceans. Every meal connects us to the soil. By putting the planet back at the center of the conversation, we move away from guilt-driven metrics and return to a sense of awe, respect, and biological reality.

The Green Transition:

The Urgency of a Greenwashing Act in Nigeria

As Nigeria navigates its ambitious Energy Transition Plan and seeks to attract billions in sustainable finance, a silent predator stalks the market place: Greenwashing. In this era where environmental consciousness has become a key factor in consumer decision-making, corporations worldwide are scrambling to align themselves with sustainability. From multinational conglomerates to small businesses, companies are eager to showcase their eco- friendly initiatives, often using words like "green," "sustainable," and "eco-conscious" across their marketing materials. However, not all of these claims are genuine as some falls under the realm of greenwashing—a deceptive practice where companies exaggerate or fabricate their environmental efforts to appear more sustainable than they actually are. Greenwashing not only misleads consumers but also hampers genuine sustainability efforts, allowing harmful environmental practices to persist behind a veil of false promises.

Nigeria possesses no specific legislation to define, monitor, or punish the act of misleading consumers and investors about environmental benefits. In the absence of a dedicated Greenwashing Act, "green" has become a marketing buzzword rather than a measurable metric. When companies claim "carbon neutrality" or "biodegradable packaging" without scientific proof or regulatory oversight, they don't just deceive the public—they distort the market. Authentic sustainable enterprises, burdened by the costs of real innovation, are forced to compete on an uneven playing field against those who merely invest in better public relations. Nigeria's transition to a green economy cannot be built on a foundation of alternative facts. To secure the integrity of our burgeoning ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) landscape, the National Assembly must prioritize a dedicated Anti-Greenwashing Act. This legislation should:

- Clearly codify what constitutes a "misleading environmental claim."
- Grant the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) and ARCON specific mandates to vet "eco" claims in advertising.
- Require third-party audits for any sustainability claims made by Public Interest Entities.
- Provide for Civil and Administrative Penalties for Violators.



Engr. (Professor) Akpofure Rim-Rukeh
Publisher/Editor-In-Chief

For Nigeria to lead the African continent in the green transition, we must move from" anything goes" to a structured legal framework. A Greenwashing Act would serve as a powerful signal to international investors that Nigeria is a high-integrity destination for climate finance. It would protect the Nigerian consumer from the deceit of fake sustainability and ensure that our journey toward Net Zero 2060 is paved with data, not just dreams.

The sun is setting on the age of corporate camouflage. It is time for Nigeria to legislate for truth.

Engineering a Greener Future:

Adano Engineering Commitment to Sustainable Infrastructure

In the complex landscape of Nigeria's energy sector characterized with unsustainable practices, Adano Engineering Limited stands out as our corporate sustainability. Adano Engineering Limited is 100% Nigerian-owned firm that is focused on Engineering, Procurement, Construction, Installation, and Commissioning (EPCIC) within the oil and gas sector of the Nigeria economy. Established in 1993, the company has evolved from a local service provider into a market leader in Engineering, Procurement, Construction, Installation, and Commissioning (EPCIC), demonstrating its technical leadership and corporate sustainability.



In an era where the global energy landscape is rapidly shifting toward decarbonisation, **Adano Engineering Company Nigeria Limited** stands at the forefront of sustainable development in the Nigerian oil and gas sector. Adano Engineering is actively supporting Nigeria's energy transition goals by delivering critical midstream infrastructure. At Adano, Sustainability is not just a policy but a core operational philosophy.

The Company's Core Sustainability Pillars are;

Environmental Stewardship & HSE Excellence: Adano's core philosophy is that accidents and environmental injuries are preventable. The Company's Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) policy is not just a manual but an operational standard designed to minimize environmental impact and protect the health of their workforce and the communities they serve. The company's HSE Policy explicitly commits to minimizing the impact of its operations on the environment. Ongoing safety measures include 100% tie-off for personnel, daily Job Safety Analysis (JSA) reviews, and weekly safety meetings. Adano maintains a "Safety First" culture, recently achieving major project milestones with zero Lost Time Injuries (LTI).



Asset Life Extension through Innovation: A key sustainable practice at Adano is their focus on Rehabilitation and Maintenance. By specializing in tank jacking, bottom replacements, and roof repairs, they extend the life of existing infrastructure. This reduces the need for new materials and minimizes the carbon footprint associated with large-scale new construction.

Indigenous Capacity & Local Content: As a holder of Nigerian Content Equipment Certificates (NCEC), Adano is a prime example of sustainable economic growth. By investing in local human resources and state-of-the-art equipment, they contribute meaningfully to the Nigerian economy while fostering a skilled local workforce. Adano is a

champion for local content development. By investing in the training and development of a highly skilled local workforce, the company fosters economic resilience and provides sustainable livelihoods within the communities where it operates.

Operational Discipline: Their project execution policy emphasizes safety first and stakeholder communication. This ensures transparency and alignment with both client needs and international sustainability benchmarks, such as their ISO 9001:2015 certification.

Innovation and Resilience: Adano utilizes advanced engineering, procurement, and construction (EDPC) solutions to tackle complex challenges in remote and demanding locations. By integrating digital technologies and innovative fabrication techniques, the company enhances its adaptive capacity, ensuring that its infrastructure projects remain viable and efficient for decades to come.

Examples of Adano's Sustainability & Environmental Initiatives are;

Cleaner Energy Infrastructure: Adano is actively involved in projects that transit the energy landscape, such as the ANOH Gas Plant, which aims to increase domestic gas supply for power generation and industrialization. ANOH plant itself is one of Nigeria's seven critical gas development projects, aimed at producing 300 million standard cubic feet (MMscfd) of gas per day to power industrial hubs. Adano successfully completed the fabrication and construction of two 100,000-barrel condensate buffer tanks in September 2025. This included associated piping, structural, mechanical, electrical, and instrumentation installations. These tanks are critical for the safe storage and handling of condensate, a byproduct of gas processing.

Asset Life Extension: Through its maintenance and rehabilitation services, the company repairs and upgrades storage tanks (e.g., replacing corroded plates and bottoms), which prevents environmental contamination from leaks and reduces the need for new material-intensive construction. Adano have a long history of revamping critical infrastructure for major clients like the NNPCL and Shell (SPDC), including the reconstruction of tanks at the Atlas Cove Depot and Forcados Terminal.

Innovation for a Sustainable Future: Adano participates in industry exhibitions like NOG Energy Week and the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE) Exhibition, which often focus on "Smart Engineering for a Sustainable Future".

Safety Record: They recently completed over 242,000 man-hours without incident on the ANOH Gas Processing Plant project.

Produced Water Handling (OML 34): As of 2023, Adano was engaged in an ongoing project at Ughelli East involving the construction and installation of eight storage tanks, a 60,000 B/D water treatment plant, and a water injection line.

Advanced Fabrication Capabilities: Adano utilizes proprietary systems and specialized equipment to handle complex structural and piping fabrication.

Tank Jacking System: Adano Engineering are a leading provider of Tank Jacking equipment, which allows for the top-down construction or lifting of storage tanks. This method is safer and more efficient than traditional scaffolding for large-scale tank builds.

Heavy Equipment Leasing Fleet: Adano provides equipment leasing services to support upstream and midstream operations. Their fleet includes specialized machinery for complex industrial dismantling and construction.

Conclusion

As Adano Engineering continues to expand its reach, its mission remains clear: to promote professionalism and effectiveness in the industry while maintaining a sensitive, responsive, and innovative approach to business. Through its unwavering dedication to quality and sustainability, Adano is not just building tanks and pipelines; it is engineering the foundation for a sustainable Nigerian economy. Adano Engineering Limited provides a strong case study of how indigenous firms integrate sustainability into high-impact sectors like oil and gas.



BUREAU OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT (BPP)

SET TO EMBRACE SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT



The Director-General, Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), Dr Adebowale Adedokun, has said that Nigeria needs sustainable procurement to reduce waste, promote social equity, minimise environmental harm and strengthen governance and transparency. He spoke on Monday 17th November, 2025 at the International Conference on Sustainable Procurement (officially known as the International Conference on Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards was hosted by the UNILAG Centre of Excellence (UNILAG-SPESSCE). The conference had the theme: 'Enhancing Sustainable Development Impact through Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards.' The landmark gathering brought together key stakeholders from academia, the private sector, and government agencies to institutionalize responsible governance and risk management in Nigeria's public expenditure.

Adedokun said sustainable procurement would ensure economic efficiency, social responsibility and environmental protection, aligning national practices with global development goals and long-term value creation. He noted that while the Public Procurement Act (PPA) 2007 did not expressly mention sustainability, its objectives supported fairness, efficiency and prudent resource use. He added that procurement accounted for up to 17 per cent of global gross domestic product, making sustainability an urgent priority for responsible governance worldwide. According to Adedokun, the Bureau's core roles include policy formulation, regulatory oversight and ensuring compliance with approved procurement thresholds. He said the BPP also drove capacity building for procurement officers and maintained a national contractor database to promote integrity and transparency.

On 2025 strategies, he said all MDAs must upload procurement plans on NOCOPO and publish contract awards to ensure accountability in public spending. He warned that BPP would not process 2025 procurements if MDAs failed to upload records for the past two years. Adedokun listed offences under the PPA to include collusion, bid rigging, fraudulent documentations, contract splitting and refusal to provide procurement records. "Between January 2025 and now, recent reforms have led to N350 billion in potential savings. "We have also improved transparency, and expanded the participation of local and women-led enterprises.



"Also, for the first time, a debarment process has been approved by the current administration to debar contractors who do the wrong things," Adedokun said.

He, however, identified capacity gaps, noting that budget constraints, resistance to change and manipulation of bid processes

were barriers to sustainable procurement. He stressed the need for improved cash backing, strict enforcement of sanctions, updated contractor databases and sector-based procurement frameworks to address the challenges. Adedokun also urged partners, including the University of Lagos, to support research on sustainability metrics and help to develop training programmes for environmental sustainability and governance-focused procurement.

On the role of local governments, he said the BPP was developing a procurement framework that would bring the three tiers of government on the same page. This, he said, would enable the bureau to effectively monitor projects being done at the local government level. “We are also working closely with financial bodies to ensure that monies released to local governments are implemented with the project they are meant for.

“Interestingly, we are also developing what is called Community Based Procurement that is targeted towards people at the grassroots level to be able to give them a sense of belonging in procurement processes for this country,” he said. Adedokun reaffirmed BPP's commitment to deepening collaboration with the academia, innovators and global partners to advance sustainable procurement nationwide.

Earlier, in her welcome address, the Vice-Chancellor, University of Lagos, Prof. Folasade Ogunsola, said the conference came at a critical moment in the country's national, regional and global development journey. Represented by Prof. Muyiwa Falaiye, her Deputy (Management Services), Ogunsola said the world was witnessing unprecedented investments in infrastructure, climate adaptation, social protection and technological transformation. She, however, said that setbacks from environmental degradation and social conflict, among others, had continued to emerge where procurement, environmental and social safeguards were weak or inconsistently implemented. “This gathering provides an important platform to reflect, learn and collaborate on how we can strengthen the procurement environmental and social systems that underpin sustainable development.

Africa Development Bank and Green Hydrogen Project

The African Development Bank (AfDB) had on April 8, 2026 announced a $20 million funding initiative through its Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA) to accelerate green hydrogen development. The announcement called for proposals for developing green hydrogen and its derivatives across Africa. The funding covers critical early-stage milestones like feasibility studies, transaction advisory, and pre-FEED engineering design. Green hydrogen represents a real opportunity for Africa, both to decarbonise hard-to-abate industries and to build new value chains, while contributing to socio-economic development.

Hydrogen is considered a clean energy source primarily because its use whether burned in an engine or used in a fuel cell produces only water vapor and heat as byproducts, rather than carbon dioxide (CO_2). Hydrogen is widely considered a transition fuel, but its role varies depending on its colour (and in this case - green) and the sector in which it is used. It acts as a critical bridge for industries that are difficult to power with electricity alone, helping the global energy system shift away from traditional fossil fuels toward a net-zero future. By 2050, hydrogen is expected to meet up to 24% of the world's energy needs, specifically in sectors like long-haul shipping, aviation, and heavy-duty trucking where batteries are often impractical.



Dr. Sidi Ould Tah
is the President of the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group.

The 13th Edition of the Africa CEO Forum

The 13th edition of the Africa CEO Forum, was held at the Kigali Convention Center in Kigali, Rwanda from May 14 to May 15, 2026. The summit brought together over 2,500 political leaders, CEOs, global investors and heads of state from over 75 countries. Notable attendees included Rwandan President Paul Kagame, Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and prominent business magnate Aliko Dangote. The central theme for the event was "Scale or Fail: Why Africa Must Embrace Shared Ownership".

The 13th edition of the Africa CEO Forum concluded with **nearly $2 billion in signed commercial agreements, partnerships, and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)** geared toward building continental champions. The event marked a critical transition from theoretical growth potential to concrete investment execution across the continent.

The major outcomes and landmark transactions of the forum span several key sectors:

1. Major Financial Deals & Local Currency Lending:
BOAD/IFC Facility: A €600 million reciprocal facility was signed to boost local-currency lending across WAEMU states.

Access Bank & IFC: A $500 million framework was established to support MSMEs, agriculture, and infrastructure.
Risk-Sharing Facility: The IFC and Baobab Group launched a $100 million initiative for women-led small businesses.

2. Infrastructure and Industrial Agreements:
Elsewedy Electric & RDB: A partnership was secured for smart-meter manufacturing, EV chargers, and solar projects.

Investments: Major commitments were finalized for real estate ($100 million by Groupe Duval) and luxury hospitality (Sunrise Resorts & Cruise).

3. Cross-Border Trade & Policy Commitments

Benin-Rwanda Trade: A new bilateral investment corridor was formed to facilitate trade in key sectors like agro-industry and energy.

AfCFTA Action: Leaders focused on accelerating the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.



Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Rwandan President Paul Kagame, at the Summit

Afri-Caribbean Investment Summit (AACIS 2026)

The Afri-Caribbean Investment Summit (AACIS 2026) was recently held in Abuja, Nigeria, from March 23 to 28, 2026 with the theme "One Voice, One Vision: Advancing Afri-Caribbean Unity". Organized byAquarian Consult Limited in partnership with the government of Saint Kitts and Nevis, the event brought together over 2,000 participants to strengthen economic and trade ties between Africa and the Caribbean.



To move beyond diplomatic dialogue and foster tangible, transaction-driven partnerships across a combined $40 trillion market spanning Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas.

Prime Minister Terrance Drew of Saint Kitts and Nevis led a delegation of over 100 people, including 10 ministers and business leaders. President Bola Tinubu of Nigeria, who met with PM Drew to agree on appointing envoys to further boost bilateral ties. Former President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim of Mauritius and other heads of state, sovereign wealth funds, and multilateral institutions like Afreximbank.

The summit featured specialized sessions across several key sectors:

(i). Focused on Agriculture and Food Security, discussing agro-processing and food sovereignty.

(ii). A spotlight on the Health Sector, exploring pharmaceutical innovation and healthcare infrastructure.

(iii). Renewable energy, digital technology, tourism, and the Creative Economy (music, art, and film).

(iv). Discussions centered on establishing direct flights between Nigeria and Caribbean destinations to eliminate the need for layovers in Europe or North America.

(v). Afreximbank Commitment: The bank announced an increase in its Caribbean (CARICOM) financing cap from $3 billion to $5 billion to support regional transformation.





Global Water Sustainability

Water is the most abundant universal natural resource that is essential to all forms of life. Potable water is water which is fit for consumption by humans and other animals. It may be naturally potable, as is the case with pristine springs, or it may need to be treated in order to be safe. It serves as the physiological baseline for every living cell, the structural backbone of global ecosystems, and the literal fluid that drives human civilization. Without this sustainable resource to living organisms and humans, life would cease to exist. No water! No life! The presence or absence of clean freshwater dictates where societies can flourish, how ecosystems self-regulate, and whether a nation can maintain foundational security. Water which is not safe to drink can carry diseases causing organisms and loads of metals. People who drink such water out of desperation may become ill as a result of water related diseases - cholera, typhoid, dysentery, diarrheal and are at the risk of death.

In most parts of Nigeria, the Government public utility water supply no longer functions and as such individuals resort to digging their own privately owned boreholes. Most residents consume waters from such underground sources untreated. Availability of sufficient clean, fresh water is one of the most vital natural resource issues facing humanity. Water shortage is becoming a global issue, due to increasing population, economic growth and climate change. Lack of clean, fresh water can hinder the efforts to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Beyond its absolute biological necessity, water plays an important role in the world's economy. The global utilization of water spans a vast, interconnected web of applications that can be split into public consumption and industrial driving forces.

These extensive applications imply that water is a great determinant on the health, environmental, industrial, agricultural, and economic sectors and the general wellbeing of a Nation, hence water is an ultimate determinant of life and economies. When a water system is managed sustainably, it functions as a multiplier for public wealth and stability. Conversely, when a water system degrades due to pollution, climate shocks, or institutional neglect, it triggers a destructive cascade that can collapse public health systems, paralyze industrial output, and cause deep regional food insecurity.



Situational Analysis

Less than 1% of the Earth's water is fresh, liquid, and accessible for human use. While our planet looks like a blue marble from space, the reality on the ground is drastically different. We are currently using our most vital resource faster than nature can replenish it. Water sustainability is no longer a distant environmental goal. It is an immediate requirement for human survival.

The global water crisis is driven by three main pressures: population growth, pollution, and climate change. As cities expand, the demand for water skyrockets. At the same time, industrial runoff and untreated sewage pollute rivers and lakes, making existing sources unusable. Climate change makes this worse by causing unpredictable weather. This leads to longer droughts in some areas and severe flooding in others. We are over-pumping our underground aquifers, creating a hidden deficit that threatens global food security and economic stability.

Innovation in Motion: How We Can Save It

Solving this crisis requires a complete overhaul of how we manage water sustainably across different sectors:

Smart Farming: Agriculture uses nearly 70% of the world's accessible freshwater. Moving from wasteful flooding methods to precision drip irrigation can reduce agricultural water use by half.

Industrial Recycling: Forward-thinking factories are adopting "circular water economies." Instead of discharging wastewater, they treat and reuse it continuously within

their production lines.

Smart Cities: Modern urban centers are deploying acoustic sensors in underground pipes. These sensors detect and pinpoint tiny leaks before millions of gallons of water are wasted.

The Power of Individual Ripples: While systemic changes are critical, individual habits collectively make a massive impact. True water sustainability begins at home. Simple actions, like fixing leaky faucets, installing low-flow showerheads, and harvesting rainwater for gardens save thousands of gallons annually. Furthermore, reducing food waste and choosing sustainably manufactured goods lowers our "virtual water footprint," which is the hidden water used to produce everyday items.

Every Drop Counts: Water is a finite resource, but our capacity for innovation and conservation is limitless. Achieving water sustainability requires action from governments, industries, and individuals alike. The choices we make today will decide whether future generations inherit a thriving planet or a thirsty desert. Every drop we save today secures a lifetime tomorrow.

The Role of Conjunctive Management: In conjunctive management, there is the need to harmonize surface and subsurface hydrology. Thus, in order to protect this critical resource, modern environmental engineering must abandon obsolete, fragmented management models. Conjunctive management is the coordinated, simultaneous optimization of both surface water and groundwater resources. It recognizes that surface and subsurface water are intrinsically linked through continuous hydrological fluxes. The fundamental mass balance equation governing a combined watershed can be expressed as:

$$\Delta S_{surface} + \Delta S_{subsurface} = P - (ET + Q_{out} + U_{extraction})$$

Where:
P = total precipitation
ET = evapotranspiration
Q_{out} = the natural surface water outflow
$U_{extraction}$ = anthropogenic pumping abstractions, and
ΔS = the respective changes in storage

Conjunctive management seeks to actively manipulate these storage dynamics to maximize water availability and structural resilience. The practical execution of conjunctive management relies heavily on Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR). During wet seasons or periods of high river discharge, excess surface water, which would otherwise cause downstream flooding or evaporate inefficiently is strategically redirected into infiltration basins, injection wells, or natural wetlands. This water percolates down through porous soil and rock formations, filtering out suspended solids and replenishing unconfined and confined aquifers. The subterranean formation functions as a massive, natural, zero-evaporation storage facility. During subsequent dry seasons or prolonged droughts, this stored groundwater is systematically pumped to meet municipal, agricultural, and industrial demands. This shields vulnerable surface ecosystems from total depletion and ensures an uninterrupted water supply for the economy.

The Role of Groundwater Governance: Groundwater governance is the legal framework, which prevents internal deviance. Groundwater is often called the invisible resource. Because it is hidden beneath the earth's surface, widespread, and easily accessed by anyone with the means to drill a borehole, it is exceptionally vulnerable to the Tragedy of the Commons. In an environment lacking strong governance, individual house owners, farmers, factory owners, and municipal water providers would extract water to maximize their short-term profits. This uncoordinated behaviour leads to catastrophic aquifer depletion, land subsidence, and the irreversible intrusion of saltwater into freshwater tables. Robust Groundwater Governance encompasses the legal, institutional, and socio-economic frameworks required to regulate human interactions with subterranean water assets. It requires moving away from ancient property laws that tie water rights directly to land ownership, thereby, establishing clear statutory rules that treat groundwater as a shared public trust. The three operational pillars of effective governance include:

i. **Statutory allocation and metering:** Codifying clear licensing systems that place hard caps on volumetric extraction based on verified aquifer recharge rates. Making inline flow-meters mandatory for all industrial and commercial users eliminates unmonitored water theft.
ii. **Analytical and forensic monitoring:** Establishing networks of telemetry-enabled monitoring wells to track water table elevations in real time. This must be paired with regular chemical and isotopic testing to trace contamination and identify illegal polluters.
iii. **Community-led enforcement:** Creating localized water user associations that give frontline stakeholders a direct voice and shared accountability in managing their watershed. Top-down regulations succeed only when paired with bottom-up community enforcement.

The Need for Cooperation on Transboundary Aquifers: Subterranean (ground) water systems do not respect political borders. A massive aquifer can sit quietly beneath two, three, or more sovereign countries. Since, groundwater moves slowly through porous rock based on pressure gradients, heavy pumping in one nation can create a localized cone of depression. This subterranean vacuum draws water away from

neighbouring countries, effectively lowering their water tables without a single drop ever crossing a visible surface border. Managing these transboundary aquifers requires high-level international cooperation and hydro-diplomacy. If neighbouring nations operate in isolation, they risk triggering bitter international disputes, resource hoarding, and mutual environmental ruin. International cooperation on shared subterranean water is anchored by the UN International Law Commission (ILC) Draft Articles, on the Law of Transboundary Aquifers. These articles outline three non-negotiable legal and ethical principles:

i. **Equitable and reasonable utilization:** Sovereign states have a right to utilize shared aquifer resources, but this utilization must maximize human and ecological well-being without exhausting the asset.
ii. **The obligation not to cause significant harm:** States must enforce strict environmental laws within their borders to prevent chemical seepage, agricultural runoff, or industrial accidents from permanently poisoning a shared aquifer's recharge zone.
iii. **Regular exchange of data and information:** Riparian nations are legally obligated to harmonize their geological mapping methods and transparently share water quality, water table levels, and extraction metrics.



A Roadmap for Global Water Security

Water sustainability cannot be achieved through short-term engineering fixes, reactive policies, or isolated national strategies. Securing our global freshwater future requires a fundamental paradigm shift in how we value, monitor, and govern this life-sustaining resource. To successfully protect our global water assets and achieve UN SDGs 3, 6, 14 and 17, international institutions and local governments must prioritize three strategic imperatives:

i. **Enforce Statutory Source Water Protection:** Transition from paper-only policies to active legal enforcement. Implement and fund strict Source Water Protection Plans that establish mandatory protection zones around river catchments and aquifer recharge areas, preventing industrial or residential encroachment.
ii. **Deploy Telemetric Monitoring Networks:** Invest heavily in modern, real-time monitoring infrastructure. Every major municipal and industrial extraction point must be metered, and groundwater aquifers must be continuously monitored using automated sensors to track water levels and chemical parameters.
iii. **Formalize Transboundary Aquifer Treaties:** Replace competitive, uncoordinated water extraction with binding transboundary treaties based on the UN ILC Draft Articles. Establish shared data clearinghouses between nations to ensure transparent, collaborative management of all shared water bodies.

Conclusion

By binding surface and subsurface water into a single management framework, holding environmental polluters legally accountable, and using shared water assets as opportunities for international partnership, we can reverse the degradation of this vital ecosystems. Water is the essence of basic survival. Without it, life on Earth would cease to exist. When the quality of drinking water is good, human health is also good. Securing our water protects public health, preserves planetary ecosystems, and ensures a stable, thriving world for generations to come.

Prof. Doris F. Ogeleka, writes from Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun, Delta State



DEEPENING CHINA-NIGERIA COOPERATION

STRIDES TOWARDS MODERNIZATION

The "Deepening China-Nigeria Cooperation" broadcast on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, was a special joint program co-produced by CGTN and Channels Television. Broadcast live from Lagos, Nigeria, the media forum focused intensely on expanding bilateral ties through economic synergy, industrialization, and people-to-people exchanges.

The program aired at a critical strategic intersection for both countries. It marked the rollout of China's 15th Five-Year Plan shifting focus from rapid expansion to high-quality, innovation-driven, and green manufacturing and aligned with the "Renewed Hope Agenda" and Agenda 2050 framework of Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu, which prioritizes economic diversification.

Just days before the broadcast, on March 27, 2026, Nigeria and China solidified this direction by signing a Framework Agreement on Economic Partnership for Shared Development.
The televised forum and the newly signed framework shifted the traditional narrative from isolated construction projects to long-term economic integration:

From Infrastructure to Tech Transfer: Industry leaders on the program emphasized moving away from isolated manufacturing hubs toward active technology transfer. The focus is on training young Nigerian talents in China to absorb industrial know-how and build a localized talent pool.

Value-Added Industrialization: Experts highlighted that Nigeria must transition from exporting raw materials to developing local processing industries. Adding value to products domestically is seen as the primary vehicle to correct the bilateral trade balance.
The Four Priority Pillars: The March 27 economic framework officially outlined four strategic pillars for future engagement:

1. Trade facilitation
2. Inclusive and green growth
3. Resilient supply chains
4. The digital economy

People-to-People & Cultural Exchanges: Because 2026 is designated as the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges, a major segment of the program emphasized cultural diplomacy, youth seminars, and educational exchanges to strengthen mutual trust beyond government-to-government agreements.

Cultural & Educational Synergy: Participants highlighted the role of language training, academic collaborations, and cultural programs in building mutual understanding.
Trade Milestone: It was noted that



bilateral trade has reached a historic high of $28 billion, reflecting a 28% year-on-year growth.

Future Focus: The discussion emphasized moving toward a more balanced trade relationship, focusing on digital economy, green growth, and resilient supply chains.



Dr. Doris Uzoka-Anite is the Nigerian Minister of State for Budget and Economic Planning

Nigeria Aircraft Acquisition and Investment Summit (NAAIS) 2026



The Nigerian Aircraft Acquisition and Investment Summit (NAAIS) 2026 was a landmark business summit and investment forum hosted by the Honourable Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, from April 1–2, 2026, at the Federal Palace Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos. In his opening remark, Minister Keyamo highlighted active structural shifts, such as the strict domestic enforcement of the Cape Town Convention and Aircraft Protocol and revised aircraft insurance guidelines to transform Nigeria from a historically high-risk market into a secure, predictable, and bankable destination for global aircraft lessors.

The theme of the summit was "Unlocking Capital, Confidence and Capacity in the Nigerian Aviation Industry." The summit successfully shifted the narrative of Nigeria as a high-risk market into a bankable, structured aviation destination. It aimed to bridge the severe aircraft capacity shortfall, as Nigeria currently ranks only fifth in African aviation seat capacity despite having the continent's largest population.

The Nigerian Aircraft Acquisition and Investment Summit (NAAIS) was a high-level, transaction-oriented platform created to accelerate aircraft acquisition pathways and attract scalable investment into Nigeria's aviation value chain. With growing demand for air transport, cargo expansion opportunities, and strategic regional connectivity needs, the sector now requires a new "confidence architecture"; one that can translate Nigeria's market potential into bankable transactions, investable infrastructure pipelines, and credible risk frameworks that global capital can price competitively.

This Summit was built on a practical deal-chain logic: aircraft acquisition and aviation investment are not unlocked by speeches alone; they are unlocked when regulatory clarity, credit enhancement mechanisms, FX and repatriation confidence, insurance/reinsurance capacity, and standardized transaction documentation converge around credible counterparties.

The Summit therefore convened the complete ecosystem, government and regulators, financiers and DFIs, insurers and reinsurers, lessors, Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) ecosystem partners, and operators around structured technical outputs and controlled deal-making sessions.

Key takeaways at the event included;

(i). A landmark aircraft financing and leasing partnership was sealed between Aircraft Finance Germany (AFG) and Fidelity Bank Plc to deliver structured financing tailored to local operators. This alliance combines global aircraft sourcing capabilities with local structured finance to lower upfront capital burdens for local operators via competitive leasing structures.

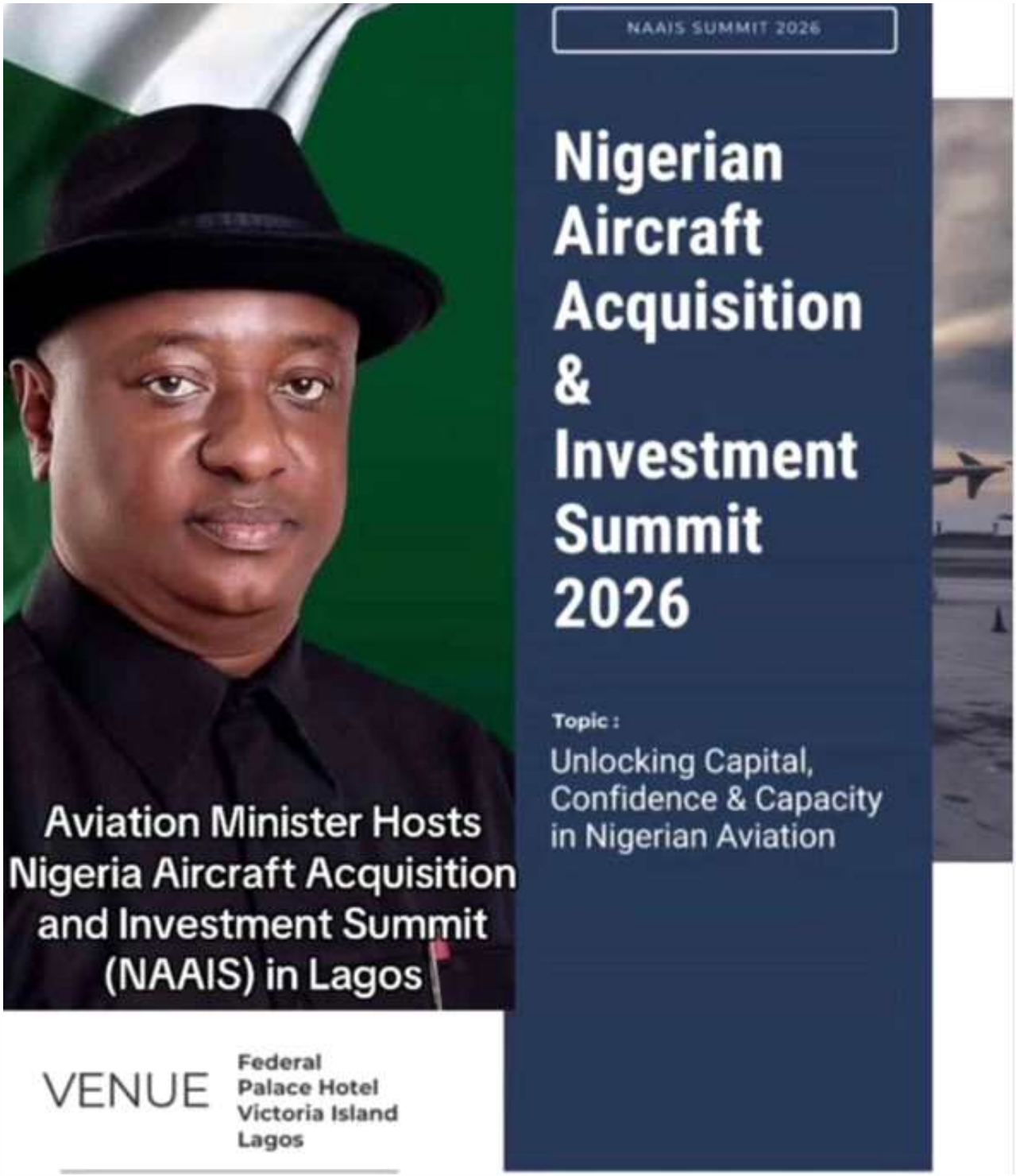
(ii). The event convened major aviation giants including Airbus, ATR, and Embraer, alongside local regulators, development institutions, and lessors.

(iii). The summit featured highly focused 'Deal Rooms' and technical breakout sessions aimed at producing draft term



Festus Keyamo SAN

The Hon. Minister of Aviation & Aerospace Devt,


NAAIS SUMMIT 2026
Nigerian Aircraft Acquisition & Investment Summit 2026
Topic :
Unlocking Capital, Confidence & Capacity in Nigerian Aviation
Aviation Minister Hosts Nigeria Aircraft Acquisition and Investment Summit (NAAIS) in Lagos
VENUE
Federal Palace Hotel
Victoria Island
Lagos



What New ISO 14001:2026 Is Saying

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) recently announced the release of ISO 14001:2026, the new edition of its flagship environmental management standard, aimed at enabling organizations to design and implement environmental management systems to improve environmental performance, minimize impact, and comply with laws and regulations.



First launched in 1996, ISO 14001 provides a framework for organizations to design and implement an environmental management system (EMS) to minimize their environmental footprint, comply with legal requirements and achieve environmental goals. The standard supports organizations in managing their impact across areas such as biodiversity, resource use, waste and pollution, to drive more sustainable practices throughout operations and value chains.

ISO 14001:2026 reflects a moment of acceleration, where environmental responsibility is moving from principle to practice, from narrative to measurable outcome. The landscape has changed: expectations are higher, scrutiny is sharper, and environmental performance is now judged on what organizations achieve, not what they promise. The new edition responds with clarity and direction, helping organizations focus their efforts, embed environmental management into decision-making and drive results with consistency and credibility. As environmental risks become more complex and interconnected, and expectations for transparency and accountability continue to rise, this latest revision represents far more than a routine update. It is a major step forward, strengthening governance, enhancing resilience and aligning with emerging priorities such as climate change, biodiversity and natural capital.

The new ISO 14001:2026 is a stronger alignment with key environmental priorities. It introduces clearer guidance and more intuitive navigation, as well as a greater emphasis on leadership, governance and a more integrated approach to managing impacts across operations and value chains.

Some key areas introduced into ISO 14001:2026 are:

(i). ISO 14001:2026 underlines that supplier-related risks, over which the organization has control and influence, must also be included in Clause 8.2 Emergency Planning. This means emergency preparedness must consider situations such as: Supplier spills or releases, Failures in waste contractors, Supply chain disruptions affecting environmental controls, Contractor accidents with environmental consequences and Contamination caused by externally provided materials.

(ii). The new standard strengthens links between the EMS and climate-related challenges and other environmental conditions directly into multiple clauses, especially Clause 4.1 Understanding the organization and its context, Clause 4.2 Understanding the needs and expectation of interested parties and Clause 6.1 Actions to address risks and opportunities. Climate change, use of natural resources and biodiversity are all now required considerations.

(iii). Climate change considerations were formally required in ISO 14001:2015 as of February 2024. ISO issued a climate-action amendment affecting all major management system standards. This amendment is now incorporated into ISO 14001:2026. These changes strengthen how organizations are required to evaluate climate change and its effects on environmental performance, including consideration of: Extreme weather events, Flooding heat waves and wildfires, Changes in resource availability, Regulatory responses like carbon taxes.

(iv). ISO 14001:2026 has expanded Clause 4.1. Understanding the organization and its context, to include natural resource use as a factor that organizations must evaluate when understanding environmental conditions that could influence the organization's environmental performance. ISO 14001:2026 places much stronger emphasis on how operations rely on and impact natural resources such as:

- Water consumption - operational water use for processes, cooling, cleaning or production.
- Raw materials - inputs such as timber, aggregates, chemicals, packaging materials or industrial feedstocks,
- Minerals and metals - mined or refined materials used in manufacturing, electronics, construction and equipment.
- Energy sources - both renewables (solar, wind, hydro) and non-renewables (oil, gas, coal) sources used to power operations
- Biomass and organic inputs - agricultural products, biological feedstocks, food ingredients, fiber or other biological materials.

ISO 14001:2026 connects these resource-use examples to environmental impacts, meaning that they must now be contemplated by the organization in its review and inventory of significant environmental aspects and impacts, with risk assessment requiring consideration of: Resource scarcity; Cost volatility; Environmental degradation; Ecosystem protection and Increasing regulatory and stakeholder expectations.

(v). ISO 14001:2026 places more emphasis on biodiversity as a core environmental condition that organizations must understand and manage. Biodiversity is now treated as a central component of environmental sustainability. This expectation applies to any organization whose activities may influence or depend on local ecosystems species and natural habitats. Like other aspects, ISO 14001:2026 now requires more explicit and evidenced consideration of biodiversity impacts. Activities that affect biodiversity may include:

· Land use changes
· Water withdrawals that may affect aquatic ecosystems
· Air emissions or noise affecting sensitive species
· Waste or runoff affecting soil, water or habitat quality
· Sourcing of raw materials that influence biodiversity indirectly through supply chains

Organizations are now expected to:

· Demonstrate their understanding of how operations affect living systems
· Prevent negative impacts where possible
· Protect or restore ecological value
· Consider biodiversity in strategic and operational decisions

(vi). ISO 14001:2026 strengthens expectations around how organizations evaluate and control changes within the EMS. The update clarifies what must be considered when changes occur and reinforces structured evaluation and communication. The requirement to manage change existed in the 2015 version of the standard but is now captured by various requirements in the 2026 standard and in a standalone Clause 6.3 Planning of changes. This new clause explicitly requires organizations to more systematically control change that could influence the environmental performance of the organization: Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the planned changes, Ensure changes are communicated, Review results of changes.

Organizations that do not currently have a formal process for evaluating and controlling changes to materials, suppliers, processes, or organizational structure will need to build one.

(vii). ISO 14001:2026 reinforces that environmental management cannot be delegated solely to technical or environmental teams. Enhanced leadership engagement is emphasized to drive environmental performance and align the EMS with organizational strategy. Top management must be able to explicitly show personal involvement and remain accountable, even when tasks are delegated.

Top management can delegate certain responsibilities for actions to others as indicated by the word "ensuring" in 5.1 Leadership and commitment; however, top management retains accountability. In practical terms, this means top management can no longer treat the EMS as something that lives in the environmental department. Auditors will look for evidence of personal involvement: meeting minutes, resource allocation decisions, strategic planning inputs, and active promotion of environmental performance.

(viii). ISO 14001:2026 strengthens the language around life cycle to ensure that environmental impacts are considered beyond the boundaries of a single facility. Organizations must now actively apply life cycle thinking, not just "consider" it. In scoping its EMS, the organization is expected to consider "its authority and ability to exercise control and influence over the full life cycle of its activities, products and services" (4.3 Determining the scope of the environmental management system). This includes inputs and outputs the organization can control. For example, climate change, biodiversity and natural resource use must be considered through a life-cycle lens, including supply chains and externally provided processes. This includes: Upstream impacts, such as resource extraction and supplier practices and Downstream impacts such as waste and disposal.

Organizations are now expected to be able to evidence how life-cycle thinking has informed:

· Product or service design and development
· Procurement of goods and services and supply chain controls
· Communication of environmental requirements to external providers

(viii). ISO 14001:2026 provides clarity around risk-based thinking and compliance obligations. The new standard makes it clear that organizations must plan actions based on environmental risks, opportunities and life-cycle impacts. ISO 14001:2026 reorganizes Section 6 Planning with the following changes: Risks and opportunities move to Clause 6.1.4; Planning actions to address significant aspects, compliance obligations and risks and opportunities moves to Clause 6.1.5 Planning action.

According to the Secretary-General Sergio Mujica of ISO, "The new edition of ISO 14001 is smoother to implement and integrates seamlessly with other ISO management system standards, making it easier for organizations of all sizes to embed environmental management into their strategy, achieve tangible results and demonstrate real impact."



Sergio Mujica
Secretary-General of ISO

The International Family Business Conference (IFBC) 2026

The International Family Business Conference (IFBC) 2026, hosted by the Lagos Business School (LBS) Family Business Initiative, was held on Thursday, March 26, 2026 with the theme "Beyond Survival: Governance & Culture as the Foundation of Lasting Family Legacies". The conference focused on the high mortality rate of family enterprises in Nigeria, where approximately 70% of family businesses fail to survive the transition from the first to the second generation. The Keynote Speaker at the event was Mr John Momoh, OON, Chairman and Founder of Channels Media Group.

The conference, highlighted structural weaknesses that continue to limit the longevity of many African family-owned businesses. Stakeholders at the program noted that while family businesses play a critical role globally, accounting for about two-thirds of businesses, 60 per cent of employment, and over 70 per cent of global GDP, their sustainability in Nigeria is often threatened by weak governance systems and informal management structures. A central message from the conference was that growth without governance is fragile.

It was also observed that many family businesses fail to transition beyond the first generation due to a lack of structured systems. In addition, stakeholders, emphasised that governance must go beyond documentation and be embedded in daily operations through clear roles, structured decision-making, and effective conflict resolution. The conference also underscored the interdependence of governance, culture, and capital in sustaining family enterprises. While governance provides structure, culture fosters shared identity, and capital supports long-term vision, weaknesses in any of these pillars can undermine business continuity.

Providing data-backed insights, Okey Nwuke, Director of the initiative, revealed that only 28 per cent of surveyed businesses have formal and transparent succession plans. He identified poor succession planning as a major risk, especially as many founders' approach retirement without clear transition strategies.

In his keynote address, John Momoh, Chairman of Channels Media Group, warned against overdependence on founders, stating that “if the founder is the system, the system will fail.” He urged family businesses to build institutional frameworks that can operate independently of individuals.

Panel sessions at the event offered practical recommendations, including the use of external advisers, the adoption of merit-based roles for next-generation members, and the establishment of professional management structures. Participants also highlighted the role of culture in shaping behaviour, especially in the absence of founders.

The conference concluded with key takeaways for family enterprises: succession planning must be deliberate, governance structures must be functional, and organisational culture must be intentionally developed. Experts also called for a clear separation between family and management roles, as well as the integration of external expertise to strengthen operations.

Ultimately, IFBC 2026 reframed the definition of success for family businesses, pointing out that internal challenges, such as weak governance, unclear roles, and unplanned succession, pose as much risk as external economic pressures.
With family businesses playing a vital role in Nigeria's economy, stakeholders warned that their failure could have far-reaching implications for employment, wealth creation, and economic stability. They urged business owners to move beyond survival and focus on building institutions capable of sustaining legacy across generations.

The future of Nigerian family businesses depends on today's succession planning decisions. By embracing these principles and taking concrete action, business families can avoid value loss, preserve their legacies, and contribute to Nigeria's continued economic development for generations to come.


International Family Business Conference 2026
Beyond Survival:
Governance & Culture as the Foundation of Lasting Family Legacies
Thursday
March 26, 2026
Time
8:00 a.m.
Ecobank Pan African Centre (EPAC),
270 Ozumba Mbadiwe Avenue, Victoria Island, Lagos.
CONVENERS
KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Prof. Enase Okonedo
Vice Chancellor
Pan-Atlantic University
Prof. Olayinka David-West
Dean,
Lagos Business School
Dr. Okey Nwuke
Director,
Family Business Initiative,
Lagos Business School
Mr. Rasheed Sarunmi
Group CEO,
Sarofrica-SIAT Group,
Chairman FBI Advisory Committee
Mr. John Momoh (OON)
Founder/Chairman,
Channels Media Group
Channels Television
PANEL SESSION 1 - Governance as a Lifeline – Role of Boards in Family Business Sustainability
MODERATOR
PANELLISTS
Mr. Kunle Elebute
Chairman,
Gerrard Capital Advisory
Barr. (Mrs.) Bernadette Eyisi
Chief Corporate Service Officer & Executive Director, SIMS Nigeria Ltd.
Mrs. Toyin Bakare
COO/Executive Director,
SAS Textiles Ltd
Engr. Alfred Okoigun
Founder/
Group Managing Director,
ARCO Group
Mrs. Kemi Ojenike
Managing Director,
Menahem Family Office
PANEL SESSION 2 - Culture as the Glue: Driving Engagement, Innovation, and Longevity in Family Enterprises.
MODERATOR
PANELLISTS
Dr. Belinda Nwosu
Director,
Hospitality Initiative
Lagos Business School
Mazi Okechukwu Ikoro
Chairman/MD
Camela Vegetable Oil Company Ltd
Ms. Kenechi Chidolue
Executive Director,
Chelsea Hotel
A. U. Mustapha (SAN)
Principal Partner,
A.U. Mustapha & Co
Mr. Mahmud Tukur
Founder,
Ashgrove Group



SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS

Sustainability Strategies

According to a report from the World Economic Forum (WEF), 90% of executives believe sustainability is important, but only 60% of organisations have sustainability strategies. This illustrates how many organisations now consider sustainability as a defining factor in how they manage risk, secure investment, meet regulatory expectations and remain competitive in a rapidly changing market. However, while many have taken initial steps, far fewer have developed successful business sustainability strategies that deliver measurable impact over the long term.

Research from Harvard Business School shows that organisations with embedded sustainability practices significantly outperform their peers over time, including achieving higher stock market performance. These organisations treat sustainability in business as a core operational priority rather than a standalone initiative. This is the foundation of successful business sustainability strategies; at every stage, they operate on frameworks that guide decisions across procurement, operations, product development and corporate planning.

Many organisations begin their sustainability journey with strong intent, either by publishing commitments, setting targets or publicly aligning with regulations and frameworks specific to their sector. However, without a structured approach, these efforts often fail to translate into long-term outcomes. An effective sustainability strategy must: (i). Set clear governance structure, (ii). Set measurable objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), (iii). Have defined ownership across departments, and (iv). be integrated into business decision-making

Governance is the core foundation of any effective sustainability strategy. Without it, even the most well-intentioned initiatives can lose direction, stall or fail to deliver meaningful outcomes. Clear governance structures ensure that sustainability is embedded at the highest levels of the organisation. This typically involves: (i). How involved was your board in shaping your organisation's sustainability objective? Sustainability should be regularly discussed at the board level, with clear visibility on risks, opportunities and performance. This aligns sustainability with the overall business strategy. (ii). Organisations need clarity on how sustainability information flows internally, from operational teams to leadership. (iii). Establishing internal standards ensures consistency across business units and geographies.

Organisations navigating evolving sustainability regulations and frameworks such as the UK Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) must recognise how essential governance is for ensuring compliance and transparency. It has the potential to transform sustainability into a core business discipline, which is a defining characteristic of successful business sustainability strategies.

A sustainability strategy without measurable objectives is difficult to manage and impossible to optimise. Organisations must be able to track progress, demonstrate impact and identify areas for improvement. This is where clear objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) become critical. These typically include: Carbon and emissions metrics (Scope 1, 2 and 3); Resource efficiency indicators (energy, water and materials); Waste and circularity measures; Supply chain

sustainability metrics and Biodiversity or nature-related indicators, where relevant

Setting measurable targets allows organisations to move from intention to action. It also supports more robust sustainability reporting, which is becoming increasingly important as frameworks aligned with the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) and IFRS continue to develop. Companies that actively measure and manage sustainability performance can unlock significant operational efficiencies, including cost savings from reduced resource use.

Sustainability requires coordinated action across the entire organisation. Defined ownership ensures that responsibilities are clearly allocated and that sustainability is embedded into day-to-day operations. This typically involves: Procurement teams managing supplier sustainability and supply chain risks; Operations teams improving efficiency and reducing environmental impact; Finance teams integrating sustainability into investment decisions; Product and R&D teams designing lower-impact products and Leadership teams setting direction and maintaining accountability.

When ownership is unclear, sustainability initiatives can become fragmented or deprioritised. In contrast, organisations with clear roles and responsibilities are better able to maintain momentum and deliver consistent results. This cross-functional integration is a key feature of successful business sustainability strategies, as it ensures that sustainability is not siloed but embedded across all business activities. Companies exploring broader approaches such as nature-positive pathways or developing a corporate nature strategy will need to adopt cross-departmental collaboration, as these areas often span multiple functions and value chain stages.

One of the most important factors in achieving long term sustainability across a business' operation is ensuring that sustainability is integrated into everyday business decisions. This goes beyond setting targets or publishing reports and encompasses using sustainability data and insights to actively shape how the business operates. Key areas of integration include:

(i) Evaluating environmental and social impacts alongside financial returns.

(ii) Incorporating sustainability criteria into supplier selection and contract management.

(iii) Designing products with lower environmental impact and improved lifecycle performance.

(iv) Assessing climate, regulatory and supply chain risks as part of core business planning.

(v) Aligning sustainability objectives with long-term business goals and market positioning.

Organisations that fully integrate sustainability into their core strategy are better positioned to manage risk, respond to regulatory changes and capture new market opportunities. This level of integration is what distinguishes successful business sustainability strategies from more low-level approaches. It ensures that sustainability is not treated as an add-on, but as a central driver of business performance.

Ultimately, successful business sustainability strategies are those that are built to last. They are structured, measurable and embedded across the organisation. They link sustainability to business value, prioritise what matters most and adapt to an evolving landscape of sustainability regulations and reporting requirements. The focus should be on developing a strategy that delivers consistent, long-term impact.



The Place of Nature's Risk In The Procurement Circle

For decades, procurement was a straight line: extract raw materials, use them, and discard the waste. This linear mindset has pushed planetary boundaries to their breaking points through deforestation, soil depletion, and biodiversity loss.

By reshaping procurement into a circle, purchasing teams stop treating nature as an infinite well. Instead, they position procurement as a steward of a closed-loop system where materials flow continuously, drastically reducing the extraction pressure on fragile ecosystems. In a procurement circle, every stage of buying affects the next. Neglecting nature at any point breaks the entire loop. What then is nature's? According to the taskforce on nature-related financial disclosures (TNFD) nature broadly regarded as: land, water, oceans, air, and the ecosystems that sustain life and economic activity. Business impacts and dependencies on nature create real business risks. Water scarcity disrupts supply chains. Soil degradation reduces agricultural productivity. Deforestation drives regulatory and reputational exposure.

Nature risk is no longer a future projection; it is actively draining corporate revenue today through three primary financial channels. For example, supply chains can be rendered permanently useless by ecological collapse. If a beverage company's factory relies on a local aquifer that runs dry due to over-extraction, that multi-million-naira facility becomes a stranded, worthless asset. In addition, financial institutions are pricing nature risk into their loans. Banks and private equity firms are increasingly raising interest rates or denying capital altogether for companies with high biodiversity risks, treating them as bad debts. As natural systems break down, extreme weather and resource scarcity become unpredictable. Insurers are skyrocketing premiums or pulling out of high-risk ecological zones completely, leaving businesses uninsured.

In a procurement circle, mitigation means designing out risk before it happens, monitoring the supply loop in real-time, and restoring the ecosystems that feed the business. Here are the concrete mitigation strategies that can be deplored:

1. Understand nature risks and impacts in your supply chain

The first step is understanding the nature risks and impacts embedded in existing supply chains. Nature impacts occur across the full lifecycle: resource extraction, manufacturing, transport, use, and disposal. However, the majority of nature impacts and risks occur at extraction of a commodity from a mine or a field, so focusing your analysis there makes strategic sense.

To conduct a commodity-first nature assessment, companies need visibility into where their commodities are being sourced, in what volumes, and how those extraction activities interact with ecosystems. This information allows you to assess their dependencies on natural systems such as pollination, soil fertility, and water availability that underpin long-term production. It also allows you to calculate the risks they may be exposed to, such as those linked to water use, pollution, land conversion, biodiversity protection rules, and exposure to ecosystem decline. Once nature risk is clearly understood, it can be prioritised more easily alongside other procurement considerations.



2. Buy less before buying better

The first question in sustainable procurement is often the most uncomfortable one: do we need to buy this at all? Reducing consumption is usually the most effective way to reduce environmental impact. Extending the lifespan of products, sharing resources across teams, and repairing equipment rather than replacing it can significantly reduce pressure on natural resources.

This logic applies across sectors. A manufacturing company can refurbish machinery instead of replacing it. A retailer can extend the lifecycle of store fixtures. A financial services firm can delay technology upgrades where existing systems still perform well. Procurement teams should therefore treat “do not buy” or other circular alternatives as legitimate outcomes of a purchasing process.

3. Support suppliers to tackle their nature risks

Most large companies rely on long-standing supplier relationships that span years or even decades. These partners often have the technical expertise and operational scale needed to reduce environmental impacts if

they are given the right incentives and support. This means asking suppliers three simple questions:

What nature impacts and risks exist across your operations and supply chain?

What actions are you already taking to manage them?

How could those actions be strengthened?

Many suppliers already have sustainability programmes in place. What they often lack is clear expectations from buyers, access to the right data, or the resources needed to implement improvements at scale.

This is where collaboration becomes essential.

Companies can work with suppliers to develop clearer transition plans. They can help identify the most material risks, set measurable targets, and track progress over time. Procurement contracts can then reinforce these expectations by linking supplier performance to environmental outcomes.

Suppliers need incentives to do this work. But it doesn't always have to be in the form of higher prices. Companies can offer other carrots that don't increase costs including but not limited to longer contract lengths, more favourable payment terms, public recommendations for marketing materials.

Strategic supplier forums can also play an important role. Bringing together major suppliers to share experience, tools, and best practice helps companies tackle sustainability challenges that cut across entire industries. One good example is the Tesco Sustainable Dairy Group (TSDG). Set up in 2007, it is the largest group of dairy farmers working directly with a retailer. Herds range from 40 to 1,900 cows, and they supply Tesco with fresh milk. In return, Tesco pay guaranteed prices and agree long-term contracts. The long term relationship allows Tesco to help farmers invest in animal health and welfare, carbon reduction, and nature recovery initiatives.

Reducing nature risk across supply chains will not happen through procurement rules alone. It requires long-term partnerships between buyers and suppliers, with incentives for suppliers to engage.

4. Shift demand toward lower-impact suppliers

You will need to shift demand to lower-impact suppliers if existing suppliers are unable to meet your new expectations or you are sourcing a new product altogether.

Doing this requires you to embed data on your most material nature related risks at the supplier level so they can be embedded directly into procurement processes. This will enable comparison across suppliers based on critical nature related risks and dependencies.

For example, procurement teams might prioritise suppliers that operate in regions with lower exposure to deforestation, or those whose operations depend less heavily on water resources that are already under stress. They might also favour suppliers whose production systems protect ecosystem services, such as those that use pheromone pest control rather than traditional pesticides.

Over time, this shifts demand across entire supply chains. Suppliers that manage nature risks more effectively gain a competitive advantage, encouraging others to improve.

Conclusion

Supply chains face severe vulnerabilities from biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and water scarcity. Integrating nature-related risks into the procurement cycle is no longer a corporate social responsibility checkbox. It is a core requirement for business resilience, regulatory compliance, and long-term value creation.

The procurement cycle dictates how humanity interacts with the natural world. By embedding nature risk into every purchasing decision, businesses secure their own supply chains against environmental volatility. True supply chain resilience treats nature not as an infinite resource, but as a critical, finite partner.

The shift to a nature-positive economy will not be delivered through sustainability reporting alone. It will be delivered through thousands of daily purchasing decisions. Every tender, supplier contract, and sourcing strategy shapes how natural resources are used across global supply chains. Procurement teams therefore sit at the centre of corporate nature strategy whether they realise it or not.

The companies that recognise this early will gain a strategic advantage. They will understand their exposure to nature-related risks sooner. They will build stronger relationships with suppliers that manage resources responsibly. And they will be better prepared for the wave of disclosure frameworks and regulations now emerging around nature.



The 2026 Africa-France Summit



The 2026 Africa-France summit, officially named the *Africa Forward Summit*, took place in Nairobi, Kenya, on May 11–12, 2026. Co-hosted by Kenyan President William Ruto and French President Emmanuel Macron, this historic gathering marked the first time the summit was held in an Anglophone African country. The Africa Forward Summit 2026, hosted jointly by Kenya and France, brings together Heads of State, business leaders, and innovators to forge a new partnership built on equal ground. The Africa Forward Summit is a landmark gathering of African Heads of State, the President of France, the African Union, international financial institutions, and development partners, convened to produce concrete commitments and a new model of partnership between Africa and France.

Themed *"Africa-France Partnerships for Innovation and Growth,"* the event shifted focus from traditional development assistance to tangible economic partnerships, youth empowerment, and mutual investment.

The 2026 Africa Forward Summit in Nairobi drew more than **30 African Heads of State, government representatives, and global dignitaries** (António Guterres – Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kristalina Georgieva – Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Louise Mushikiwabo – Secretary-General of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), Odile Renaud-Basso – President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and Sidi Ould Tah – President of the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), amongst others. Notable Business Leaders and Ministers are Aliko Dangote – Prominent Nigerian industrialist and Africa's richest businessman; Ibrahim Imedi Matola – Minister for Energy of Malawi, Khadija Al-Makhzoumi – Minister for Family Affairs and Human Rights of Somalia and Nhlanhla Nene – Former South African Finance Minister, attending as Chairperson of the Thebe Investment Corporation.

The primary co-hosts leading the historic bilateral opening and closing ceremonies were President William Ruto of Kenya and President Emmanuel Macron of France.

The Seven Themes that shaped the agenda for discussion are:

(I). Energy transition and green industrailisation

(ii). Reform of the international financial architecture

(iii). Blue economy

(iv). Sustainable agriculture

(v). AI and Digital Technologies

(vi). Resilient Health Systems

(vii). Peace and Security

(i). The summit successfully mobilized over $27 billion in investments dedicated to transformative projects across the continent. This included $16 billion driven by French public and private sectors alongside $11 billion from African governments and partners.

(ii). The event kicked off with the *Africa Forward Inspire & Connect* forum, bringing together over 2,000 public and private decision-makers, tech entrepreneurs, and civil society leaders.

(iii). The summit underscored a concerted effort by France to rebalance its diplomatic footprint in Africa by expanding beyond its traditional Francophone sphere and building equitable, business-oriented relationships.

How Sustainability Can Drive Business Growth



Businesses have a key role to play in the fight against climate change, as they are collectively responsible for a significant proportion of the world's emissions. Businesses have a key role to play in reducing our global carbon footprint. And it is becoming increasingly apparent that they shouldn't wait to be regulated into a net zero future. Instead, they need to embrace their own sustainability pathways. Sustainability is also a business opportunity, enabling companies of all sizes to build competitive advantage, meet their customers' demands, and be more attractive employers. Let's take a closer look at what benefits your business can reap from implementing a sustainability strategy.

Sustainability can help businesses win more tenders: Sustainability has a direct, positive impact on the reputation of many businesses and is therefore a key contributor to their growth. Studies have shown that consumers have become more conscious about the type of products that they buy and the way in which respective sellers operate. The Global Sustainability Study 2021, conducted by Simon-Kucher & Partners, reveals that 85% of people globally have shifted their purchase behaviour towards being more sustainable in the past five years. This has in turn put pressure on retailers to evaluate their supply chains to ensure that they are offering more sustainable delivery options. It's why an increasing number of logistics tenders now include demand for emissions data.

A good example of a company which is widely recognised for its sustainability efforts is Lego. Lego runs the Engage-to-Reduce program which aims to lower its suppliers' carbon emissions. The program helps suppliers report data and identify carbon reduction projects specific to their business. Following the announcement of the program, the company's reputation has grown exponentially, leading to new business which has also benefited its suppliers.

Sustainable partnerships can boost business growth: Effective partnerships are a key driver of business growth and they have been a core part of many organisations' sustainability strategies for a number of years. A strong partnership can mean access to new customers and an opportunity to reach new markets. And if the partnership is underpinned by the common goal of sustainability, it makes it all the more likely that these companies will invest in long-term growth and development together.

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are currently adopted by almost 2,000 companies through the UN Global Compact alone, and they are all underpinned by the 17th Goal 'Partnerships for the Goals.' There are certain measures that should be put in place to ensure that partnerships are effective in delivering on the sustainability goals that they promise and in doing so benefit the businesses involved. This includes ensuring that all businesses in the partnership are aligned on commonly-agreed targets, and that these targets are measurable and relevant to their key stakeholders. It's also vital that stakeholders are provided with consistent updates on progress against these targets, and businesses respond accordingly when progress is off track.

Sustainability drives investment: According to a study by Charles Schwab, which surveyed 1,000 individual investors, as many as 71% thought that companies with good sustainability strategies make good investments. In addition, 44% of respondents said that they consider ESG factors when making a new investment.

The number of investors looking to put their money into sustainable companies has grown significantly over the past 10 years. The creation of the Principles of Responsible Investment (PRI) supports this upward trend. The PRI is the world's leading proponent of responsible investment, bringing together 2,300 institutional investors and managing more than US$80t in assets. It encourages investors to use responsible investment to enhance returns and better manage risks, and is supported by the United Nations.

Sustainable actions can improve profit margins: Companies which measure their carbon footprint are able to identify their top emitters and take the appropriate climate action. Often, this activity has a direct positive impact on profit margins due to the increased efficiencies that it generates. They result in fewer wasted miles, and fewer routes with empty or

partially empty loads, leading to significant cost savings.

In addition, using green vehicles lowers the amount of money spent on fuel in the long run, which is particularly beneficial to those companies operating in regions where fuel costs are high. A study from the US Department of Energy has revealed that by 2030, nearly half of electric medium- and heavy-duty trucks will be cheaper to buy, operate, and maintain than diesel trucks. Companies such as Ford and Rivian are already paving the way for mass scale electric truck production.

Sustainability simply makes business sense: Sustainability doesn't mean sacrificing profits or putting success on the backburner. Instead, it has become a crucial element of any organisation's successful strategy. It enables companies of all sizes to build competitive advantage, meet their customers' demands, win over investors and improve profit margins. If you're looking to get started on your sustainability journey, take a look at what Pledge can offer.

It supports you to drive business efficiency and reduce risk: According to 2020 research by MSCI, companies with high ESG scores, on average, experienced lower costs of capital compared to companies with poor ESG scores in both developed and emerging markets during a four-year study period. The cost of equity and debt followed the same relationship. A study by McKinsey has found a significant correlation between a company's resource efficiency and the strength of its financial performance. It also discovered that reducing resource costs can improve operating profits by up to 60%.

It helps you meet the latest sustainability regulations: Effective management of environmental issues can also ease regulatory pressure on businesses. Those companies that implement environmental social governance (ESG) strategies are likely to be better placed to deal with new sustainability regulations that come into force. And worldwide, such legislation is likely to be increasingly imposed by governments. As an example, in October 2021, the UK government announced that listed firms will be required to disclose climate-related financial information. And in March 2022, The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission proposed rule changes that would require registered companies to include climate-related information in their registration statements and reports.

If you fail to take adequate steps towards sustainability, your business won't just be susceptible to regulatory risks, but you will also likely have to pay more for insurance.

Embrace Sustainability Now and Reap the Business Rewards: As the above points illustrate, building a sustainability strategy for your business doesn't mean putting profitability on the back burner. In fact, the opposite is true. Embracing sustainability now can set you up for future success when it comes to investment, compliance with new regulations and recruitment of a stellar workforce.

And perhaps the better question that we should ask ourselves is: “What's the cost of not taking action?” Not only would we risk losing prospective business partners and employees, and missing out on investment, but we'd also start lagging behind when it comes to consumer appeal. Sustainability bolsters the bottom-line and corporate reputations. This is why it should be deemed mission critical.

We're still at a relatively early stage in the business sustainability journey, which is why, from a business perspective, it's more important than ever to be an early adopter. As McKinsey points out, leaders in the net-zero transition will be the companies that recognise new possibilities for value creation and make credible efforts to pursue them.

Conclusion

The common thread across these shifts is resilience, and its critical role in defining long-term business value. Businesses that integrate sustainability into capital allocation, investment decisions and risk management can be better positioned to operate and grow through volatility and disruption.

Those that enable this integration through stronger data, clearer insight and AI-enabled analysis likely stand to gain a more practical understanding of where risks sit and where opportunities for growth exist. In taking this approach, sustainability can move from a target to an operational discipline.

In this context, sustainability is likely no longer peripheral to business performance. It can be a core driver of competitiveness, resilience and long-term value creation in an increasingly uncertain global environment.





The 2026 Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Group (WBG)

The 2026 Spring Meetings of the IMF and World Bank Group took place from April 13 to April 18, 2026, in Washington, D.C. Held under the theme "Building prosperity through policy," the event convened global policymakers, central bankers, and private sector leaders to address economic growth, job creation, and policy reform.

The IMF and the World Bank were created in July 1944 at an international conference in the United States (in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire) that established a framework for economic cooperation aimed at creating a more stable and prosperous global economy. While this goal remains central to both institutions, their work constantly evolves in response to economic developments and challenges.

The IMF promotes global macroeconomic and financial stability and provides policy advice and capacity development support to help countries build and maintain strong economies. The IMF provides short and medium term loans to help



countries that are experiencing balance of payments problems and difficulty meeting international payment obligations. IMF loans are funded mainly by quota contributions from its members. IMF staff are primarily economists with wide experience in macroeconomic and financial policies.

The World Bank promotes long-term economic development and poverty reduction by providing technical and financial support to help countries implement reforms or projects, such as building schools, providing water and electricity, fighting disease, and protecting the environment. World Bank assistance is generally long-term and is funded by member country contributions and by issuing bonds. World Bank staff are often specialists on specific issues, such as climate, or sectors, such as education.

The 2026 IMF Spring Meetings highlighted a slowing global economy, with growth projected to dip to 3.1% due to commodity supply shocks triggered by the conflict in the Middle East. Rising energy costs and potential wage-price spirals are expected to drive up inflation in 2026, with an adverse scenario potentially lowering global growth to 2.0%. Read more about the economic outlook at IMF.

Under the overarching theme "**Building prosperity through policy**," the meetings focus on driving growth and job creation. A major highlight was the April 15 launch of a new flagship initiative aimed at improving water security for 1 billion people and catalytic job growth.

Discussions are heavily influenced by the economic shocks from the war in the Middle East, specifically tensions



involving Iran and the potential disruption of the Strait of Hormuz.

Central banks remain committed to price stability and data-dependent policy adjustments.

Members agreed to pivot toward growth-friendly fiscal adjustments to ensure debt sustainability while protecting the most vulnerable.

Discussions highlighted the launch of the Borrowers' Platform, aimed at giving debtor countries a stronger collective voice in debt restructuring.

A continued push to use World Bank resources to create "enabling environments" for private investment, specifically in digital health and agriculture.





Banking Sector Recapitalisation

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has reached a critical milestone today, March 31, 2026, as the two-year deadline for the Banking Sector Recapitalisation exercise has officially closed. The primary directive that closed on March 31, 2026 required banks to meet new minimum paid-up capital thresholds based on their license type:

Commercial Banks (International): ₦500 Billion

Commercial Banks (National): ₦200 Billion

Commercial Banks (Regional): ₦50 Billion

Merchant Banks (National): ₦50 Billion

Non-Interest Banks (National/Regional): ₦20 Billion / ₦10 Billion

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has successfully concluded its 24-month banking sector recapitalisation programme, with 33 banks raising ₦4.65 trillion in fresh capital. All institutions remain fully operational, and no customer funds are at risk during the transition period. Banks failing to comply now face potential license downgrades or forced mergers, though the CBN has reassured the public that all deposits remain safe.

The outcome of the recapitalization status of banks compliance are:

International License (₦500B+): First Bank PLC (₦789.42 Billion); Access Bank (₦662.22 Billion); Zenith Bank: ₦614.65 Billion; Fidelity Bank: ₦506.81 Billion; GTBank (GTCO): ₦514.04 Billion; UBA: ₦512.82 Billion and FCMB: ₦535.79 Billion.

National License (₦200B+): Ecobank Nigeria: ₦353.51 Billion; Stanbic IBTC: ₦257.96 Billion; Sterling Bank: ₦248.94 Billion; Wema Bank: ₦215.13 Billion; Citibank Nigeria & Standard Chartered: Both ₦200 Billion (via parent injection).

The implications of this for the economy includes;

(i). The massive capital injection provides the financial depth required to underwrite large-scale infrastructure, power, and manufacturing projects, aligning with national economic growth targets.

(ii). Foreign investors contributed roughly 27% (approx. $706 million) of the total capital raised. This inflow helped boost external reserves and stabilized the Naira.

(iii). Banks now possess significantly higher single-obligor limits. This allows them to issue larger volumes of credit to the private sector and real economy.

(iv). The new capital buffers act as shields against systemic shocks, inflation, and currency volatility, heavily reducing the risk of commercial bank failures.

(v). The recapitalisation helps stabilize the national currency in two ways:

(a). Reduced FX Pressure: By encouraging local banks to fund local projects in Naira, the demand for foreign exchange to fund imports for those same projects decreases.

(b). Capital Inflow: The rights issues and IPOs conducted over the last two years attracted significant foreign portfolio investment, boosting Nigeria's foreign reserves during the transition.

(vi). Enhanced Financial Stability & Trust: A better-capitalized banking sector is a "shock absorber" for the national economy.

(a). Systemic Resilience: Banks are now better positioned to withstand global economic volatility, such as oil price crashes or currency fluctuations, without requiring government bailouts.

(b). Foreign Investment: International investors are more likely to bring capital into a country where the banking sector is perceived as "fortress-like" and well-regulated.

(vii). Lower Interest Rates (Long-term): As banks become larger and more efficient through mergers and fresh capital, the cost of doing business should drop.

(a). Economies of Scale: Larger banks can spread their fixed costs over a bigger balance sheet, which theoretically allows them to offer more competitive (lower) interest rates to SMEs and retail borrowers.

(b). Increased Competition: With 30+ mega-banks now competing for high-quality borrowers, the pressure to offer better terms will intensify.

The banking sector recapitalisation exercise marks a historic turning point that structurally transforms Nigeria's financial ecosystem into a highly resilient, well-capitalised engine capable of driving a $1 trillion economy. By permanently elevating capital thresholds, the Central Bank of Nigeria has successfully mitigated systemic risks, restored long-term investor confidence, and positioned local institutions to fund nation-building projects.

THE FUNCTION, IMPACT, PROSPERITY, RESILIENCE, AND EQUITY (FIPRE)

Framework: Translating ESG Commitments into Better Infrastructure Decisions (Volume 1)

Stand first

Infrastructure has always been the foundation of civilisation, shaping how societies grow, economies prosper, and communities thrive. Yet the demands placed on infrastructure have changed fundamentally. Today, governments, engineers, investors, and communities expect infrastructure not only to function safely and efficiently, but also to support climate resilience, social inclusion, economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and public trust.

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles have transformed expectations for responsible investment and sustainable development. However, translating these commitments into infrastructure that consistently delivers long-term public value remains one of the defining challenges of modern development.

This three-part series explores that challenge. It argues that the future of infrastructure lies not in replacing existing engineering standards or sustainability frameworks, but in integrating them more effectively. It introduces the Function, Impact, Prosperity, Resilience, and Equity (FIPRE) Framework as a practical decision architecture designed to help governments, engineers, investors, and communities bridge the gap between sustainability commitments and infrastructure outcomes.

Introduction

Infrastructure is often described as the backbone of development. Roads connect producers to markets, ports facilitate trade, power systems drive industrialisation, water networks protect public health, schools and hospitals build human capital, and digital infrastructure increasingly underpins participation in the modern economy. Every nation, regardless of its level of development, depends on infrastructure to create opportunity, improve quality of life, and support long-term prosperity.

Yet infrastructure is much more than a collection of physical assets. It is a long-term societal investment whose benefits—and failures—can shape generations. Decisions taken during planning and design influence economic competitiveness, environmental quality, social cohesion, fiscal sustainability, and resilience to future shocks for decades after construction is complete. A bridge may stand for one hundred years; a poorly planned urban transport corridor may determine patterns of inequality for equally as long.

This reality has profound implications for how infrastructure should be conceived, evaluated, and managed. Success can no longer be measured solely by whether an asset is delivered on time, within budget, or according to specification. Increasingly, success is judged by whether infrastructure creates enduring value for society while adapting to changing environmental, economic, and social conditions.

The central argument of this volume is therefore straightforward: **better infrastructure begins with better decisions**. Technical excellence remains indispensable, but it is no longer sufficient on its own. Infrastructure must also be planned, financed, delivered, and managed in ways that strengthen resilience, promote inclusion, protect natural systems, support sustainable economic growth, and maintain public confidence.

This is not a call to replace engineering principles with sustainability objectives, nor to substitute ESG for sound technical practice. Rather, it is an argument for integrating these complementary perspectives into a coherent approach to infrastructure decision-making. The chapters that follow examine why this integration has become essential and why achieving it remains one of the greatest challenges facing infrastructure professionals today.

Why Infrastructure Matters

From the earliest civilisations to the digital economies of the twenty-first century, infrastructure has been a defining determinant of societal progress. Ancient irrigation systems transformed agricultural productivity. Roman roads enabled trade and governance across vast territories. Railways accelerated industrialisation, while modern electricity networks, telecommunications, and transport systems have become indispensable foundations of economic competitiveness and social well-being.

Today, infrastructure remains central to virtually every national development objective. It enables



access to education and healthcare, supports employment and industrial growth, facilitates domestic and international trade, improves food security, and enhances the quality of life for millions of people. It also plays a critical role in responding to some of humanity's most pressing challenges, including climate change, rapid urbanisation, demographic growth, and technological transformation.

Recognising this importance, governments around the world continue to invest heavily in infrastructure as a catalyst for development. Multilateral development banks, sovereign wealth funds, pension funds, and private investors increasingly regard infrastructure as both an economic necessity and a strategic investment capable of generating long-term public and financial returns.
For countries such as Nigeria, the importance of infrastructure is particularly acute. Expanding transport networks, improving energy reliability, strengthening water and sanitation systems, enhancing digital connectivity, and modernising public facilities are essential to achieving economic diversification, regional integration, and improved living standards. Infrastructure therefore occupies a central place within national development strategies, climate commitments, and investment priorities.

However, building more infrastructure is not enough. The quality of infrastructure decisions increasingly determines whether investments generate lasting prosperity or become costly liabilities. Infrastructure that is technically sound but environmentally damaging, socially divisive, economically unsustainable, or vulnerable to foreseeable climate risks cannot fully achieve its intended development purpose.

The challenge facing policymakers and practitioners is therefore not simply how to build infrastructure, but how to ensure that infrastructure consistently delivers value across multiple dimensions throughout its lifecycle.

The Changing Purpose of Infrastructure

For much of the twentieth century, infrastructure planning was guided primarily by engineering and economic considerations. Success was measured through familiar indicators such as structural performance, construction quality, capital cost, operational efficiency, and financial return. These measures remain fundamental and continue to underpin sound engineering practice.
The twenty-first century has broadened this understanding of infrastructure success.

Climate change is exposing assets to increasingly severe floods, droughts, heatwaves, coastal erosion, and extreme weather events. Rapid urbanisation is placing unprecedented pressure on transport, housing, water, sanitation, and energy systems. Biodiversity loss has highlighted the importance of preserving natural capital alongside physical capital. Public expectations regarding transparency, participation, and accountability have also grown significantly, while governments face increasing fiscal constraints that demand greater value from every infrastructure investment.
These changes have transformed infrastructure from a predominantly technical undertaking into a multidimensional public policy challenge.

Infrastructure is now expected to support low-carbon transitions, strengthen climate resilience, promote inclusive growth, protect ecosystems, create decent employment, reduce inequalities, and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Increasingly, it must also demonstrate value throughout its lifecycle rather than only during construction.

Engineering excellence remains the foundation upon which these outcomes depend, but infrastructure is now expected to achieve much more than technical functionality alone.
This broader perspective reflects an important shift in thinking. Infrastructure is no longer viewed simply as an asset to be delivered; it is increasingly understood as a long-term system that influences environmental sustainability, economic opportunity, institutional trust, and societal wellbeing.

The Rise of ESG

The growing complexity of development challenges has encouraged governments, investors, corporations, and development institutions to adopt broader approaches to evaluating long-term performance. Among the most influential of these has been the emergence of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles.
Originally developed within the investment community to improve understanding of non-financial risks and long-term value creation, ESG has evolved into an internationally recognised framework for responsible business practice, sustainable finance, and institutional accountability. It has encouraged organisations to consider environmental stewardship, social responsibility, ethical governance, transparency, stakeholder engagement, and risk management alongside traditional financial metrics.
For infrastructure, ESG has been particularly significant. Major investors and development finance institutions increasingly expect projects to demonstrate robust environmental management, meaningful community engagement, respect for human rights, sound governance arrangements, and responsible lifecycle management. These expectations have strengthened project appraisal processes and encouraged greater attention to sustainability throughout infrastructure development.

ESG has therefore made an important contribution by broadening the definition of infrastructure success. It has reinforced the understanding that infrastructure should create value not only for investors and governments but also for communities, future generations, and the natural environment.
However, while ESG establishes important principles and expectations, infrastructure practitioners frequently face a practical question: **How should these principles be integrated into day-to-day engineering and investment decisions?**
Answering that question requires more than additional reporting requirements or compliance checklists. It requires decision-making processes that bring together technical performance, environmental stewardship, economic viability,

resilience, governance, and social inclusion from the earliest stages of project conception.

Why Good Infrastructure Still Fails

Despite remarkable advances in engineering, project management, and sustainability practice, infrastructure failures continue to occur in every region of the world. Importantly, many of these failures are not the result of inadequate engineering alone. Rather, they reflect shortcomings in how projects are conceived, evaluated, governed, and managed throughout their lifecycle.

Across the world, examples abound of infrastructure that met technical specifications yet failed to deliver its intended public value. Some projects have imposed unsustainable maintenance burdens on governments. Others have displaced communities without adequate engagement or compensation, degraded ecosystems that supported local livelihoods, or proved vulnerable to climate conditions that could reasonably have been anticipated. In other cases, infrastructure has been delivered successfully but has failed to stimulate the economic transformation or social benefits originally envisioned.

International evidence consistently shows that many infrastructure challenges originate long before construction begins. Weak project preparation, fragmented decision-making, insufficient stakeholder engagement, poor governance, inadequate risk assessment, and limited integration of environmental and social considerations continue to undermine project performance across sectors.

Nigeria reflects many of these global challenges. Significant investments have expanded transport networks, energy systems, urban infrastructure, and public facilities. Yet persistent issues—including maintenance backlogs, flooding, erosion, project delays, cost overruns, community disputes, environmental degradation, and underutilised assets—demonstrate that delivering infrastructure is only one part of achieving successful development outcomes.

These experiences do not suggest that engineering has failed. On the contrary, they demonstrate that engineering excellence alone cannot resolve increasingly interconnected environmental, economic, social, governance, and resilience challenges. Infrastructure succeeds when these dimensions are considered together rather than sequentially or in isolation.

This insight has emerged repeatedly throughout my own professional experience working with governments, multilateral development banks, financial institutions, and development partners across seventeen African countries. Whether developing climate policy, designing environmental and social management systems, supporting infrastructure resilience, or advising on national development strategies, one observation has remained remarkably consistent: institutions generally understand *what* sustainable infrastructure should achieve, but they often struggle with *how* to integrate these objectives into practical infrastructure decisions.

That implementation gap—not a lack of ambition—is the central challenge this series seeks to address.

In my view, this provides a much stronger foundation for the series because it **does not begin with FIPRE**. Instead, it first establishes why infrastructure matters, explains how expectations have evolved, recognises ESG as a major advance, and only then identifies the implementation gap. That narrative makes readers much more receptive to FIPRE in the subsequent volumes because the framework emerges as a response to a demonstrated problem rather than the starting premise.

Here's the continuation in the same tone and structure. The aim is to **avoid overselling FIPRE**, present it as a measured scholarly contribution, and create a natural transition to Volume II.

Lessons from Professional Practice and the Integration Challenge

The case for improving infrastructure decision-making is not based solely on academic literature or international policy discussions. It is also informed by decades of professional practice across diverse institutional, geographic, and sectoral contexts.

Throughout my career in environmental management, climate policy, infrastructure governance, engineering, and sustainable development, I have worked with governments, development finance institutions, regulators, private-sector organisations, and communities on projects ranging from national policy development to infrastructure planning, environmental and social risk management, climate resilience, institutional capacity building, and regulatory reform. These experiences have reinforced an important observation: the greatest challenges facing infrastructure are rarely attributable to a single discipline or technical deficiency.

Engineers generally understand how to design safe and reliable assets. Economists can evaluate financial viability and broader economic impacts. Environmental specialists identify ecological risks and mitigation measures. Social practitioners assess community impacts and stakeholder engagement. Governance institutions establish procurement rules, oversight mechanisms, and accountability frameworks. Climate scientists provide increasingly sophisticated projections of future risks.

Each discipline contributes valuable knowledge. Yet these perspectives are frequently developed through separate processes, assessed using different methodologies, and implemented under different institutional mandates. Integration often occurs late in project development, after fundamental design decisions have already been made, or is treated primarily as a compliance exercise rather than a core design consideration.

The consequence is not necessarily poor engineering, poor governance, or inadequate environmental management. Rather, it is fragmented decision-making.

This fragmentation is particularly evident in infrastructure projects where technical objectives are achieved, but broader societal outcomes fall short of expectations. A transport corridor may improve connectivity while increasing flood vulnerability. A water supply project may meet engineering specifications but prove financially unsustainable because lifecycle maintenance costs were underestimated. An energy project may strengthen electricity generation while creating avoidable

social tensions due to insufficient stakeholder engagement. Conversely, projects designed with strong environmental and social safeguards may struggle because technical reliability or operational sustainability received insufficient attention.

These examples illustrate a common pattern. Infrastructure performance depends not only on the quality of individual assessments but also on the quality of their integration.

Professional experience across multiple African countries has consistently demonstrated that institutions rarely lack technical guidance. International standards, engineering codes, safeguard policies, sustainability frameworks, and regulatory requirements are widely available. The greater challenge lies in helping decision-makers synthesise these diverse perspectives into coherent choices that can be implemented consistently throughout the infrastructure lifecycle.

This observation aligns with a growing body of international scholarship emphasising systems thinking, integrated planning, lifecycle management, resilience, and adaptive governance. Collectively, these fields suggest that infrastructure should be understood as an interconnected socio-technical system rather than a collection of isolated engineering assets.

The practical implication is clear. Better infrastructure requires better integration.

Why Better Decisions Matter

Infrastructure decisions create consequences that extend far beyond the completion of construction.

A decision made during project conception may influence maintenance requirements for decades. Choices regarding alignment, location, materials, drainage, energy efficiency, ecosystem protection, accessibility, procurement, financing, or community engagement can shape environmental performance, operating costs, public acceptance, resilience to climate change, and economic opportunity throughout an asset's lifecycle.

Because these decisions have long-term and often irreversible consequences, improving infrastructure outcomes depends less on correcting problems after



construction than on making better decisions before construction begins.

This perspective represents a subtle but important shift.

Traditional infrastructure management has often concentrated on improving project delivery—delivering projects faster, reducing costs, strengthening quality assurance, or improving construction supervision. These remain essential objectives. However, they cannot compensate for weaknesses embedded within earlier strategic decisions.

An efficiently delivered project based on incomplete or fragmented decision-making may still generate avoidable environmental impacts, social inequities, fiscal pressures, or resilience challenges. Conversely, projects that integrate technical, environmental, economic, governance, and social considerations from the outset are generally better positioned to deliver lasting value while reducing lifecycle risks.

The emphasis, therefore, shifts from correctly building infrastructure to deciding what the infrastructure should achieve and how competing objectives should be balanced before detailed engineering design is finalised.

In this sense, infrastructure decision-making becomes a strategic capability rather than simply an administrative process. It requires multidisciplinary collaboration, transparent governance, evidence-based analysis, and an appreciation of long-term public value.

This is increasingly consistent with the direction of international infrastructure practice. Development finance institutions now emphasise project preparation, lifecycle thinking, climate resilience, stakeholder engagement, and governance as critical determinants of project success. Investors seek greater assurance regarding environmental, social, and governance performance. Governments face growing expectations to demonstrate value for money while advancing national development priorities and international sustainability commitments.

The question is no longer whether these considerations matter. The question is how to integrate them systematically into infrastructure decisions.

Introducing the FIPRE Framework

It is within this context that the Function, Impact, Prosperity, Resilience, and Equity (FIPRE) Framework has been developed.

FIPRE did not emerge from dissatisfaction with engineering standards, ESG principles, sustainability frameworks, or existing institutional guidance. On the contrary, it draws extensively upon these well-established bodies of knowledge. International engineering standards provide the technical foundations for safe and reliable infrastructure. ESG has strengthened

environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and governance. Sustainability science has expanded understanding of long-term environmental and societal outcomes. Resilience research has highlighted the need to prepare infrastructure for uncertainty and climate change. Development economics has deepened appreciation of infrastructure's role in productivity, inclusion, and prosperity.
Each has made an important contribution.
FIPRE begins from the premise that these contributions are complementary. Its purpose is not to replace existing frameworks but to help integrate them into a coherent decision architecture that supports infrastructure planning, appraisal, design, implementation, operation, and long-term asset management.
The framework is organised around five interdependent dimensions of infrastructure value:
Function, which considers technical performance, safety, reliability, operational effectiveness, and engineering quality.
Impact, which examines environmental stewardship, social outcomes, and the broader consequences of infrastructure for communities and ecosystems.
Prosperity, which evaluates the contribution of infrastructure to economic productivity, financial sustainability, livelihoods, and long-term development.
Resilience, which assesses the capacity of infrastructure to anticipate, withstand, adapt to, and recover from changing environmental, climatic, technological, and socioeconomic conditions.
Equity, which considers fairness, accessibility, inclusion, participation, and the distribution of infrastructure benefits and burdens across society.

Together, these dimensions encourage the evaluation of infrastructure not only by what it does but also by the enduring value it creates.

Importantly, FIPRE should be understood as an evolving decision framework. Its continued refinement will depend upon practical application, empirical research, institutional learning, and engagement with engineers, policymakers, researchers, investors, regulators, and communities. It is offered as a contribution to the continuing evolution of infrastructure decision science rather than as a definitive or exclusive solution.

Conclusion and Bridge to Volume II
Infrastructure has entered a period of profound transformation.
The challenges confronting governments and practitioners are increasingly interconnected. Climate change influences infrastructure resilience. Social inclusion affects project legitimacy. Governance shapes public confidence. Economic sustainability determines long-term operational performance. Environmental stewardship influences ecosystem services upon which communities and economies depend.

These dimensions can no longer be treated as separate considerations addressed by different institutions at different stages of project development. They must become part of a more integrated approach to infrastructure decision-making.



The evolution of ESG, sustainability science, resilience thinking, lifecycle management, and systems engineering demonstrates that this transformation is already underway. The next step is to strengthen the practical integration of these complementary perspectives so that infrastructure decisions consistently translate strategic aspirations into measurable public outcomes.
This is the challenge to which FIPRE responds.

The volumes that follow move from diagnosis to application. They examine the conceptual foundations of the FIPRE Framework, explain its underlying principles and decision architecture, and explore how governments, engineers, investors, regulators, and communities can apply an integrated approach to planning, evaluating, delivering, and managing infrastructure that creates enduring public value.

The ambition is not simply to build infrastructure that performs well today, but to help shape infrastructure systems that support prosperous, resilient, equitable, and sustainable societies for generations to come.

Dr. Eugene Itua

Dr. Eugene Itua is a sustainability expert with over 28 years of experience advising governments and development partners across Africa on climate finance, infrastructure governance, and policy development. He co-led the technical team supporting Nigeria's Climate Change Act 2021, spearheaded the development of Nigeria's Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy, and has served as a safeguard consultant for the World Bank and African Development Bank. He is an accredited trainer for UNDP SDG Impact Standards and has presented on just transition in Africa at Chatham House. He serves as Principal Advisor to AGESI (African Green Economy and Sustainability Initiative).



The 2026 Stanbic IBTC Nigeria Business Summit

The 2026 Stanbic IBTC Nigeria Business Summit was a two-day event held on Wednesday, April 1 and Thursday, April 2, 2026 in Lagos, Nigeria. The summit brought together industry leaders, policymakers, and entrepreneurs to discuss strategies for economic growth and enterprise development in Nigeria.

The Theme of this year summit was: "Nigeria Means Business: Powering Sectors, Growing Sustainable SMEs & Unlocking Global Trade". The Keynote Speaker: Mr. Wale Edun, Nigeria's Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy.

The 2026 Stanbic IBTC Nigeria Business Summit concluded with a strong emphasis on transitioning Nigeria into an export-driven economy to diversify foreign exchange earnings and unlock global trade opportunities.

Key discussions centered on the following core areas:
Trade Expansion & Economic Growth: Transitioning Nigeria into a leading, export-driven economy, driving intra-African trade, and exploring cross-border and offshore opportunities.

SME Economy & Enterprise Growth: Emerging trends for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), accessing finance, scaling female-led enterprises, and the structural management of family businesses.

Sector-Specific Opportunities: Deep dives into agribusiness, renewable energy, telecommunications, and the integration of technology and healthcare.

Emerging Technologies: The growing influence of artificial intelligence (AI), secure digital infrastructure, and electric vehicle (EV) banking.



Why Your Reforms Keep Failing: The Triangle We Ignore

Across governments, good ideas die not for lack of courage but for lack of wiring between Leaders, Institutions, and the Public. A simple triangle can show where reforms will break

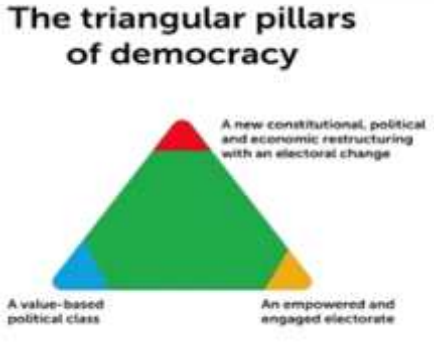
Introduction
Public reforms fail far more often than they succeed. We tell ourselves these failures are about bad ministers or the wrong party. Most of the time, they are not. They happen because we treat change as a straight line from 'big idea' to 'implementation' when, in reality, it behaves like a triangle.

The more common story is simple: an idea appears, it gains attention, it is announced, sometimes it is even legislated, and then it stalls. The law is passed but never implemented. The programme is launched but never maintained. The movement rises but cannot build a lasting structure. After a while, fatigue takes over and the Public becomes cynical. The reform becomes one more entry in the archive of "promises made, nothing changed."

This piece argues that these failures are not random. Many reforms fail because they are built on an incomplete structure called the Triangular Framework for Meaningful and Lasting Public Change.

A Brief History of the Triangular Idea
In 2020, Dr Oby Ezekwesili presented research developed during her time as a Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow on the relationship between the quality of politics and the economic performance of countries. From that work, she articulated what she called the triangular pillars of democracy. In her framing, the pillars are the electorate (the demand side), the politicians and political class (the supply side), and the regulatory, constitutional, legal, electoral, and Institutional context within which politics happens. She argued that the quality of outcomes depends on the relationship between these three pillars. This logic became a foundational lens for the Fix Politics movement, a citizens-led movement focused on structurally changing and innovating politics in Nigeria, across Africa, and beyond.

What we do in this piece is expand the power of that triangular insight beyond electoral politics into the wider public policy world. The triangle is not only a theory of democracy. It is a deeper observation about how durable change is built in public life.



The core claim
Meaningful and lasting Public change does not emerge from single actors or linear processes. It emerges when three distinct but interdependent pillars are present, aligned, and mutually reinforcing.
In the Fix Politics language, the pillars are:
(i). Leaders
(ii). Institutions
(iii). The electorate, or the Public

Where one pillar dominates, reform becomes brittle. Where one pillar is missing, reform becomes unstable. Where all three interact properly, reform gains durability. This framework allows you to predict failure modes before they happen. It gives you a method for designing reforms that survive the messy reality of Public life.

What the three pillars actually do
To use this framework properly, you cannot treat the pillars as labels. You have to treat them as types of work. If the work is not being done, the pillar is not active, even if a named Institution exists on paper.

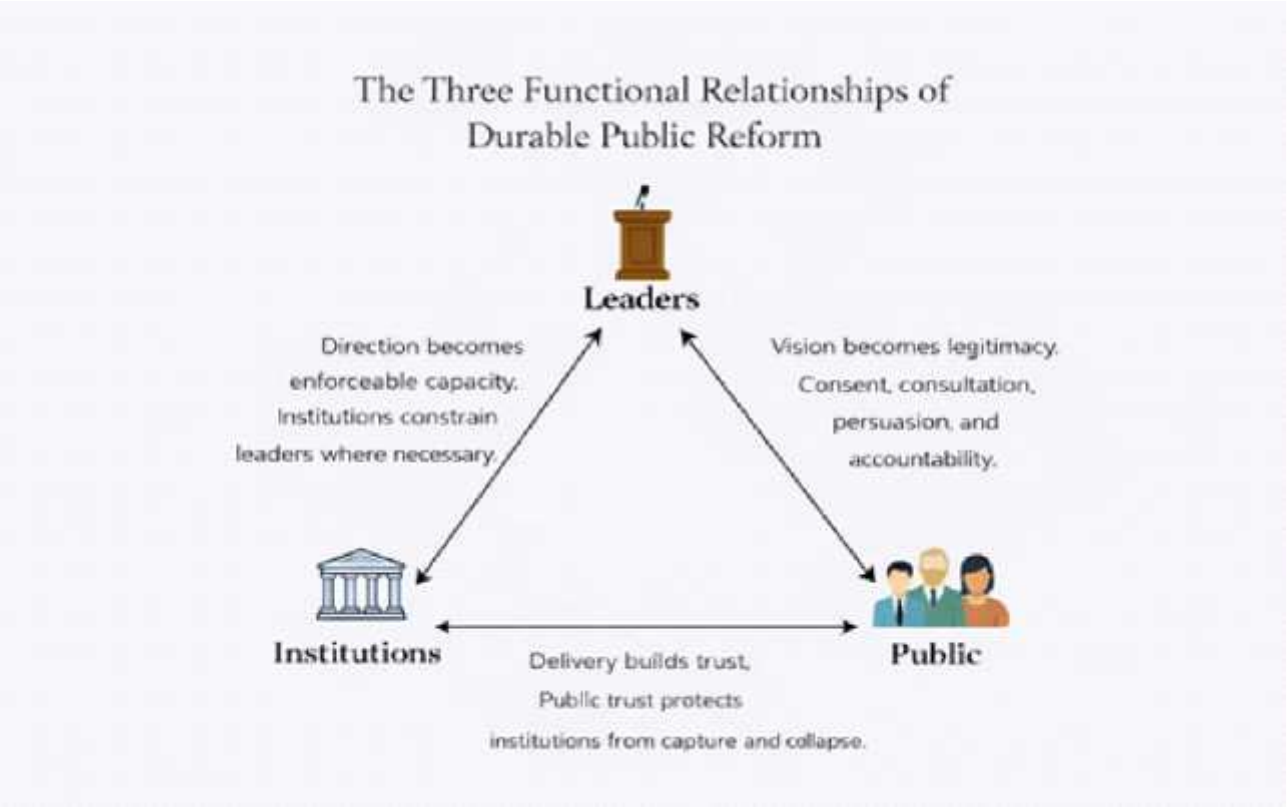
Pillar 1: Leaders
Their job is direction**.** Leaders do the "why" and "what" work. They define the purpose, frame the problem, set goals, and draw red lines. They name what must not be compromised, and what trade-offs are acceptable. This includes elected Leaders, movement Leaders, policy entrepreneurs, and agenda setters. When Leaders fail at this work, reform will always drift, the goals shift with headlines, and implementation becomes reactive.

Pillar 2: Institutions
Their job is capacity. Institutions do the "how" work. They translate the intent into systems and enforce rules consistently. They deliver repeatable action, not one-off miracles. When Institutions fail at this work, reforms will exist only as speeches and paperwork. Delivery becomes personality-dependent and easily reversed.

Pillar 3: The electorate, or the Public

Their job is legitimacy. The Public does the "does this hold?" work. They confer legitimacy or withdraw it, comply or resist. They defend Institutions or abandon them. Their lived experience determines whether a reform becomes normal life or becomes a dud. When the Public is excluded, reforms will face resistance, cynicism, and eventual collapse. Institutions lose the social backing needed to enforce rules fairly and Leaders lose the permission required to sustain long-term discipline.

The rule that makes the triangle real
If you are using a triangular framework, you must account for all three bidirectional relationships. Otherwise, you will be describing a line, not a triangle. If any link becomes weak or one-way, failure is inevitable.



What happens when the triangle is unbalanced (failure modes)? The absence or dominance of any pillar produces common failure modes:
Leaders without Institutions lead to ideology, moralism, drift, and slogans without delivery.**Institutions without Public legitimacy** lead to technocracy, coercion, authoritarian tendencies, and brittle enforcement.

Public pressure without direction leads to populism, volatility, constant reversal, and short-termism.

When only two pillars interact strongly while the third is missing, additional dangers appear: capture becomes likely; exclusion deepens; trust erodes; reforms oscillate rather than stabilise.
The triangle is not decorative. It is the minimum viable complexity for durable Public change.

Case Studies: The Triangle in Motion

Case study 1: Participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre

Leaders ↔ Public: Leaders opened structured channels for citizens to propose and prioritise spending. Citizens participated in assemblies and took ownership of trade-offs, which created legitimacy for the process.

Leaders ↔ Institutions: Political leaders not only invite participation; they formally embedded the process into municipal governance. They worked with the budget office and city departments to design rules, timelines, scoring systems, and weighting formulas that ensured poorer districts were fairly represented. Institutions, in turn, accepted this mandate and operationalised it. Civil servants translated citizen priorities into technically feasible projects and integrated them into the formal investment budget. Leaders provided direction and political protection. Institutions provided administrative discipline and continuity. This relationship ensured the reform moved from political promise to structured governance.
Institutions ↔ Public: Delivery was visible and reported back to communities, reinforcing trust and increasing participation, which then fed back into political support for sustaining the system.
Participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre is widely documented as a process in which institutionalised citizen participation shaped budget priorities and created a reinforcing cycle between participation and delivery. The lesson here is structural: when citizen participation is not theatre, it can become a durable legitimacy engine that strengthens both Institutions and Leadership.

A Current UK Case: Student Loans and The Triangle In Breakdown
The UK student finance system is currently under visible public pressure. The National Union of Students has publicly criticised the government, staging protests and

using “loan shark” language against the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, in response to repayment threshold freezes and ongoing interest concerns. All three pillars exist, but the relationships between them are strained.

What is missing right now

Leaders ↔ Public: Many graduates report that the system feels like a stealth tax, and that the original Public messaging did not match lived reality. When Leaders defend the system primarily with technical arguments or fiscal necessity, while the Public is experiencing anxiety and perceived unfairness, legitimacy erodes. In a triangle, Leaders do not only defend. Leaders also reframe, clarify trade-offs, and renew consent. If the only channel for Public feedback is outrage or protest, then the triangle is already failing.

Institutions ↔ Public: Operational Institutions such as the Student Loans Company and HMRC can enforce repayment through PAYE, but enforcement is not the same as legitimacy. Many borrowers do not receive simple, personalised explanations of likely lifetime repayments, likely write-off outcomes, and the effect of interest and threshold changes across different income paths. When the Public cannot easily understand the system that shapes decades of their life, trust degrades and misinformation fills the gap.

Leaders ↔ Institutions: The system contains Institutional expertise and long-run forecasts, including official student loan forecasts and parliamentary briefings. But the political system often reacts after pressure peaks, rather than embedding a predictable cycle of review and recalibration. In a functioning triangle, Institutional evidence does not only inform internal analysis. It forces clear political choices that can be explained to the Public. This piece is not arguing for one specific policy lever. It is arguing for a governance design that can sustain whichever policy settlement is chosen. At minimum, that means a regular public 'settlement cycle' on student finance, a duty for institutions to provide personalised lifetime-repayment scenarios, and an independent advisory body that publishes scenarios before ministers tweak thresholds or interest.

Call to action: what the triangle asks of each pillar

If we want reforms that last, each pillar has a job.

Leaders: Stop treating Public backlash as noise. It is system feedback. Commit to re-consent, not just defence. Bind your own discretion through transparent rules, not just speeches.

Institutions: Treat legitimacy as part of delivery, not a separate communications task. Make the system explainable to ordinary people. Build interfaces where lived experience can shape redesign without crisis.

Electorate, and the wider Public: Shift from outrage-only participation to structured demand. Demand transparency, demand fairness, and demand predictable review mechanisms. Defend Institutions that behave fairly, and expose those that do not. The end goal is not simply to “win” an argument about student finance. The end goal is to build a system that is governable, explainable, adaptable and sustainable.

Conclusion

Public reform fails not because people lack ideas, courage, or intent, but because change is too often designed linearly rather than structurally. The triangular framework offers a way to see Public change as a design challenge. It forces us to ask: which pillar is missing, which relationship is broken, and what feedback loops are not functioning?

Lasting change is rarely the product of one force acting alone. It is the result of Leaders, Institutions, and the electorate moving together in mutual, reinforcing relationships.

That is the central lesson of this piece. And it is also the invitation. Wherever you find yourself trying to change Public life, do not start by asking only what policy to implement. Start by asking what triangle you have built, and which link is already fraying. **If we keep ignoring that triangle, we already know why our next round of reforms will fail.**

Rex Isio Rim – Rukeh writes from London
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Bio-Waste:

Seven Ways to Cut Your Food Waste

Food waste is defined as any edible item that goes uneaten at the retail or consumer level. An estimated 31% of all food sold and prepared at these levels is ultimately wasted. Reasons for this waste include over-purchasing by both retailers and consumers, and over-sized portions. This often results in the over preparation of food for meals, which results in food waste.

Wasted food is one of the largest contributors to landfill in United States (US) and has major environmental and economic impacts. A recent report by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) stated that of the municipal solid waste sent to landfill in 2014, 29 million tonnes, or 21.6% of all waste, was discarded food. This is a concern, as by-products have the potential to contaminate land, water, and air. Greenhouse gases (GHG) released by food decay contribute to climate change, increasing global surface temperatures, and have the potential to effect health and wellbeing around the world. GHG include carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), and nitrous oxide (N_2O), which combined are calculated as CO_2 equivalents (CO_2E). The continual release of GHG into the atmosphere increases solar energy absorption, and the global temperature cyclically climbs, effecting animal and plant biodiversity, reducing freshwater resources, worsening acidification of oceans, and depleting the ozone layer. Impacts on human health include more natural disasters, famine-induced malnutrition, and severe mortality rates during extreme weather events. Positive associations have been reported between climate change and a rising risk of infectious diseases, especially vector-borne and water-borne illnesses. Mosquito-borne diseases, cholera, and salmonellosis outbreaks are expected to amplify with increased atmospheric temperatures; even seasonal allergies will surge with extended pollen seasons. With such severe implications to environmental and human health, approaches to prevent GHG emissions and the resultant damage to the atmosphere should be paramount and incorporated into all industries.

Not only is this a tremendous waste of the resources that go into food production, processing and transportation, it also means that every day consumers discard 1.3 meals for each person in the world impacted by hunger. This a human tragedy on a colossal scale. It is also a major driver of climate change – up to 10 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions come from food that is ultimately squandered.

Solving this problem demands collaboration across the entire food system, connecting public policy to agri-business and retail practices. There is plenty we as individuals can do to ensure that our food ends up in our bellies and not in the bin. Here are seven tips.

Shop mindfully: Roughly 60 percent of all food waste comes from household – more than 1 billion meals being wasted every day. Often, this starts with the choices we make with our wallets – buying food we never get the chance to eat or getting lured into impulse purchases by marketing strategies and sales. Plan your meals before heading to the store, and stick to your shopping list – that way you're more likely to buy only the food you know



you'll use. Check your fridge ahead of time to avoid buying more than you need or doubling up on what you already have.

Cook smart: Cooking more than you can eat can lead to food waste, as many leftovers eventually get thrown away. Unless you are batch cooking, measure portion sizes of rice and other staples as you cook to ensure you prepare only as much as you or the group you are cooking for are likely eat in a single sitting. And if you do have leftovers, don't let them go to waste. Let them replace an upcoming meal you would have otherwise bought, or incorporate leftover ingredients into a new recipe.

Store wisely: Understanding the storage requirements of different types of food is essential to minimizing food spoilage and waste. Store dry foods in airtight containers, fresh meats in the freezer or chill compartment of the fridge, and onions and potatoes in a cool, dark place. Keep fresh fruits and vegetables in your fridge's vegetables drawer, and make sure any previously opened packaging is tightly sealed. For anything perishable, be sure to maintain a system of "first in, first out" to keep food from going bad.

Learn what "best before" labels mean – and what they don't: Studies have found that many people assume food should be discarded after the "best before" date printed on the packaging. In the EU, 10 percent of annual food waste is due to expiration dates, and in the U.S., 84 percent of consumers throw away some food simply because of the date on the label. But unlike a "use by" date – after which food is no longer safe to eat – "best before" simply indicates the date by which the manufacturer can no longer guarantee the product's optimum quality, taste or texture. Food is often perfectly safe to eat past this point – just give it a quick visual inspection, a sniff and a taste before digging in.

Prize the imperfection: Almost half of all fruits and vegetables are wasted. In part, this is due to consumer preferences for produce that looks "perfect" or "normal"; nearly one-third of all produce is rejected between the farm and the supermarket shelf because of its appearance. Keep in mind when seeing a crooked carrot or blemished apple that it's still perfectly fit for consumption. By choosing it, you are not only helping reduce food waste, but also the resources that go into fruit and vegetable production – water, seeds, soil, labour and fuel. Shopping locally and seasonally, when possible, can further help reduce the emissions and resources needed to transport, store and sell food far from where and when it was grown.

Sharing is caring: Sometimes life gets in the way, and we just cannot eat everything we buy or cook. But maybe your friends or neighbours can. Reach out to share your food within your neighbourhood to find out where your surplus ingredients will be put to good use. For non-perishable goods that haven't yet reached their sell-by date, consider donating to a local food bank, where your surplus food can help feed more vulnerable members of the community.

Compost the rest: Some waste is unavoidable, like eggshells, watermelon rinds and onion skins. But when food waste ends up buried in landfills, it breaks down without access to oxygen, and thus creates methane – a potent greenhouse gas. The Environmental Protection Agency of the U.S. estimates that 58 percent of methane emissions from municipal solid waste landfills in the country come from food waste. Composting this waste returns vital nutrients to the earth, improves soil structure and sequesters carbon. And if you have a garden of your own, your plants will thank you for it.



Sustainable Mobility & Travel

Sustainable mobility and travel involve designing transportation and tourism systems that meet social, economic, and environmental needs. The goal is to minimize carbon emissions, reduce pollution, and support local economies, creating healthier, more livable communities while preserving destinations for future generations.

Why Sustainable Mobility Matters

Modern transportation accounts for a significant portion of global greenhouse gas emissions. Moving toward sustainable mobility changes this dynamic by:

Improving Public Health: Shifting away from gas-powered vehicles significantly reduces harmful particulate emissions, which are linked to tens of thousands of pollution-related deaths worldwide.

Reclaiming Urban Space: Cities that prioritize pedestrians and cyclists over private cars experience less noise and safer daily commutes.

Equitable Access: Comprehensive public transportation and shared transit networks provide mobility for everyone, not just private car owners.

The Pillars of Sustainable Travel

Sustainable travel relies on minimizing your carbon footprint while boosting the economic and social well-being of the host communities. Key principles include:

Slow Travel: Choosing to stay longer in one destination and traveling by train or bus instead of frequent, short-haul flights.

Supporting Local Economies: Buying from local artisans, dining at neighborhood restaurants, and participating in community-led tours.

Eco-Friendly Accommodations: Booking stays at hotels or lodges that actively prioritize renewable energy, waste reduction, and water conservation.

Effective Strategies and Solutions

Many cities and tourism boards are adopting innovative approaches to tackle mobility challenges:

Mobility as a Service (MaaS): Smartphone apps that integrate public transit, bike-sharing, and ride-hailing to create a seamless journey without the need for a private vehicle.

Shared Micromobility: E-bike and e-scooter schemes that act as first-and-last-mile solutions, making it far easier to connect with major public transport hubs.

Low-Emission Zones: Implementing car-free areas in central districts to encourage active transportation like walking and cycling, which also boosts local business foot traffic.

Public Transit: Utilizing buses, trains, and subways rather than single-occupancy personal vehicles.

Carpooling: Sharing rides with coworkers or neighbors to decrease active vehicles on the road.

Smart Driving: Maintaining consistent driving speeds and keeping tires properly inflated to optimize fuel efficiency if driving is necessary.



Practice Healthy Eating

Healthy eating means consistently consuming a balanced, nutrient-dense diet that provides your body with the necessary energy and nutrients to function optimally, defend against diseases, and maintain long-term health. Rather than practicing strict calorie deprivation or severe food restrictions, it focuses on choosing whole, minimally processed foods that nourish your body and fuel your daily activities.

According to global guidelines from organizations like the World Health Organisation, a healthy diet is built on four core principles:
(i). It supplies enough essential nutrients and fiber to meet the physical demands of your body. (ii). Food is consumed in appropriate ratios across major food groups—fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and healthy fats.

(iii). It features a wide variety of colorful foods from different groups to ensure you get a broad spectrum of vitamins and minerals.
(iv). Portion sizes are controlled to manage caloric intake, ensuring you consume only what your body needs to maintain a healthy weight.

How to Practice Healthy Eating Every Day

When most people think about "healthy eating", they usually focus on *what* they eat. That might mean trying to eat more fruit and vegetables or less fast food, or counting calories. But there's a lot more to healthy eating than just dietary intake. Behaviours and attitudes around food are also important. Research suggests that shifting the focus from food itself to our experience of eating can have a range of health benefits. Clearly, something needs to change in how we think about healthy eating. Transitioning to a healthier diet relies on sustainable, conscious habits rather than temporary fixes. Let's take a look.

Listening to your body: A growing body of research on intuitive eating has found this approach has an array of health benefits. Intuitive eating means trusting internal body cues that tell us when, what and how much to eat. For example, tuning into your stomach growling telling you it's time to eat, or noticing feeling full or satisfied, or that you may crave certain foods because your body wants specific nutrients (such as protein after exercising). Studies have shown this approach can lead to better physical and mental health as well as better diet quality, and is associated with lower BMIs.



Fill Half Your Plate with Fruits and Vegetables: Incorporate dark leafy greens, red tomatoes, and orange carrots to maximize your vitamin and antioxidant intake. Try to eat at least 400 grams (about five portions) of fruits and vegetables every single day.

Understand Your Environment: Most of us are surrounded by food environments that make healthy eating difficult. Unhealthy food environments promote overeating and encourage us to override our innate signals of hunger and fullness. When we are surrounded by cheap and accessible sugary snacks, fast foods and large portions and lots of marketing, it can be hard to develop a positive relationship with food. The issue is particularly acute for people in more disadvantaged communities.

Prioritize Whole Grains Over Refined Carbs: Choose brown rice, oats, whole-wheat bread, and millet over highly processed white varieties. Whole grains support digestive health and offer sustained energy throughout the day.

Diversify and Lean Out Your Proteins: Mix animal proteins like poultry, fish, and eggs with plant proteins like beans, lentils, peas, and nuts. Reduce your intake of bacon, cold cuts, and sausages, which are often high in sodium and unhealthy preservatives.

Restrict Unhealthy Fats, Sodium, and Added Sugars: Use liquid vegetable oils like olive or canola oil for cooking instead of solid butter or cheese. Keep your daily sodium intake under 2 grams (roughly one teaspoon of salt) to help protect your heart health. Limit sugary beverages, packaged snacks, and ultra-processed meals that pack hidden sugars and trans fats.

Hydrate Correctly and Mindfully: Make water your primary beverage to stay hydrated without drinking excess empty calories. Strictly cut back on sodas, energy drinks, and highly sweetened coffees or teas.

Eating with people: If you normally eat by yourself or "grab and go", see if there is a way to plan more time for meals and include other people whether this is more family meals or group lunches with coworkers.

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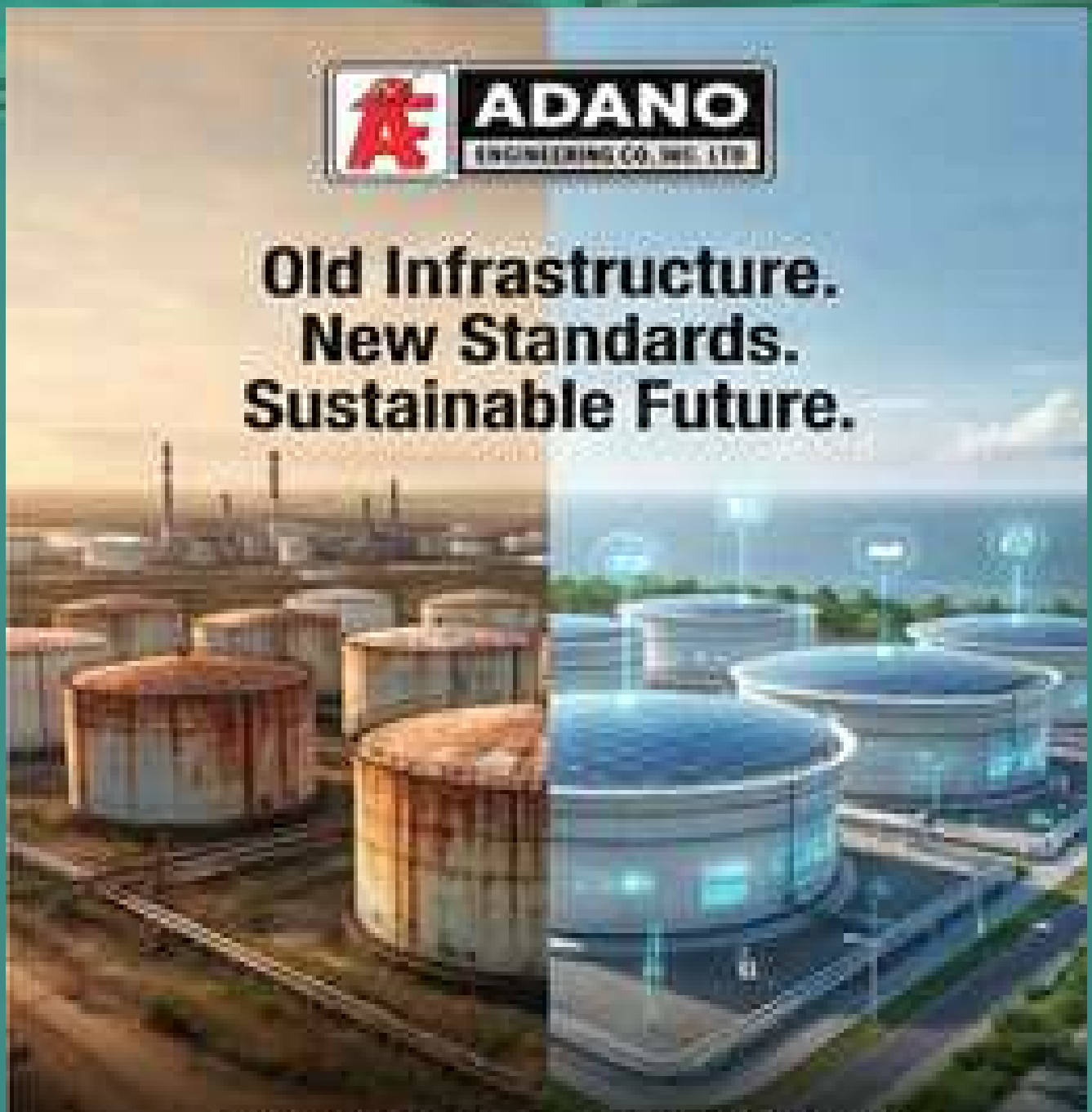
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