

## Greenhouse Policy in Text: A Case for Sustainable Communication in Nigeria

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### **Abstract:**

*Nigeria confronts an escalating climate crisis, intensified by its agricultural dependence and vulnerability to extreme weather, necessitating effective implementation of greenhouse gas (GHG) policies like the Climate Change Act 2021 and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) targeting net-zero by 2060. Despite a robust policy framework, persistent communication gaps undermine public awareness, stakeholder engagement, and behavioral change, as technical documents remain inaccessible and top-down approaches prevail. This study integrates Environmental Communication Theory, Framing Theory, Goal Framing Theory, Moral Foundations Theory, and discourse analysis to interrogate these deficiencies. Analysis of policy texts, including NDC 3.0, reveals dominant technical-economic frames that alienate diverse audiences, exacerbated by low media coverage, limited local-language dissemination, and weak synergy between legal mandates and communication strategies. The challenges include inadequate public information, tokenistic participation, and culturally insensitive messaging, particularly in rural energy access contexts. The paper proposes sustainable communication strategies: audience-segmented framing, hybrid digital-traditional media campaigns, community-based participation, multi-stakeholder coalitions, and cultural adaptations leveraging storytelling and religious leaders. This paper advocates a National Climate Change Communication Strategy, capacity building, educational integration, and research on intervention efficacy. By embedding inclusive, participatory communication, Nigeria can mobilize societal support, enhancing policy success and fostering climate resilience. Effective communication is thus positioned as indispensable for translating policy ambition into equitable, low-carbon outcomes.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable communication; Climate policy; Greenhouse gases; Framing theory; Nigeria

## 1. Introduction

The global climate crisis presents an urgent and existential threat, demanding immediate and decisive action from all nations. For Nigeria, Africa's most populous country and largest economy, the stakes are particularly high (World Bank, 2023:15). The nation's vulnerability to climate change is exacerbated by its reliance on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture and its exposure to extreme weather events (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021:8). In response, Nigeria has developed a comprehensive suite of policies and legal frameworks aimed at mitigating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change. These include the Climate Change Act 2021, the National Climate Change Policy, and a series of ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

However, the existence of these policies alone is insufficient to guarantee their successful implementation. A critical, yet often overlooked, element in the climate governance equation is the role of communication. Effective communication is the lifeblood of policy implementation, serving as the bridge between policy formulation and public action (Ilesanmi, 2025:2). As scholars have noted, communication is essential for translating policy intent into public engagement and behavioral change (Kurath & Scherer, 2020:528). It is through communication that policy objectives are disseminated, public support is mobilized, and behavioral change is fostered. In the context of Nigeria's climate policy, a significant disconnect persists between the government's stated intentions and the level of public awareness, understanding, and engagement. This communication gap undermines the effectiveness of Nigeria's climate policies and hinders the nation's ability to meet its climate targets.

This paper argues that a transition towards a more sustainable and inclusive communication approach is essential for unlocking the full potential of Nigeria's greenhouse gas policies. It posits that by strategically embedding communication within the policy process, Nigeria can enhance public buy-in, promote behavioral change, and foster a more resilient and climate-conscious society. The central thesis of this study is that effective sustainable communication is not merely an adjunct to policy but a fundamental prerequisite for its success. This research seeks to answer the following questions:

- How is greenhouse gas policy currently communicated in Nigeria?
- What are the primary communication gaps and challenges that hinder the effective implementation of Nigeria's climate policies?
- How can sustainable communication frameworks be developed and applied to enhance the effectiveness of greenhouse gas policy in Nigeria?

Therefore, this paper aims to provide a theoretically grounded and empirically informed analysis of the role of communication in Nigeria's climate governance landscape. It will offer a set of actionable recommendations for policymakers, communicators, and civil society organizations seeking to advance a more sustainable and equitable climate future for Nigeria.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

This study is grounded in a multidisciplinary theoretical framework that draws upon insights from environmental communication, policy studies, and sociology. The framework integrates several key theoretical perspectives to provide a comprehensive lens for analyzing the complex interplay between greenhouse gas policy, communication, and public engagement in Nigeria.

Environmental Communication Theory provides the foundational underpinning for this research. This field of study examines how communication shapes our understanding of and relationship with the natural world (Cox & Pezzullo, 2021:45). The discipline encompasses a wide range of communicative practices, from media representations of environmental issues to interpersonal dialogues and public participation processes (Cox & Pezzullo, 2021:48). It encompasses a wide range of communicative practices, from media representations of environmental issues to interpersonal dialogues and public participation processes. Within this broad field, this study draws specifically on the concept of sustainable communication, which emphasizes the need for communication practices that are not only effective in achieving immediate goals but also contribute to long-term social and ecological well-being (Kurath & Scherer, 2020:527). Sustainable communication is characterized by its commitment to principles of inclusivity, transparency, and dialogue (Kurath & Scherer, 2020:530). Sustainable communication is characterized by its commitment to principles of inclusivity, transparency, and dialogue, and it seeks to empower individuals and communities to participate meaningfully in environmental decision-making.

Policy Communication and Framing Theory offer a set of analytical tools for understanding how policy issues are constructed and communicated to different audiences. Framing theory posits that the way in which an issue is presented, or "framed," can significantly influence how it is understood and evaluated (Entman, 1993:52). Frames operate by selecting and highlighting certain aspects of a perceived reality, thereby promoting a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation (Entman, 1993:55). Frames operate by selecting and highlighting certain aspects of a perceived reality, thereby promoting a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation. In the context of climate change,

framing plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of the issue's severity, causes, and potential solutions (Nisbet, 2009:15). Research has demonstrated that different frames can lead to substantially different public responses to climate policy proposals (Nisbet, 2009:18). This study will utilize framing theory to analyze the dominant frames used in Nigeria's climate policy documents and communication materials.

Goal Framing Theory and Moral Foundations Theory provide a more granular understanding of how different message frames can motivate pro-environmental behavior. Goal framing theory suggests that messages can be framed to appeal to three distinct goals: the hedonic goal (feeling good), the gain goal (improving one's resources), and the normative goal (acting appropriately) (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007:119). This theoretical framework has proven particularly useful for understanding why people engage in environmental behaviors (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007:122). Moral foundations theory, on the other hand, proposes that human morality is based on a set of innate psychological systems, or "foundations," which include care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation (Haidt, 2012:31). These foundations vary in their prominence across individuals and cultures, leading to different patterns of moral judgment (Haidt, 2012:35). Research has shown that framing climate change messages to align with individuals' moral foundations can increase their engagement with the issue (Feinberg & Willer, 2013:58). For instance, messages emphasizing the harm to vulnerable populations can be particularly effective for those with strong care/harm foundations (Feinberg & Willer, 2013:60). This study will draw on these theories to assess the potential effectiveness of different framing strategies for promoting climate action in Nigeria.

Finally, Discourse Analysis in Policy Studies provides a methodological approach for examining the role of language and communication in the policy process. This approach views policy not as a purely rational or technical exercise but as a communicative and discursive practice in which different actors compete to define problems, shape agendas, and legitimize their preferred solutions (Fischer & Forester, 1993:12). By analyzing the language and narratives used in policy documents and public debates, discourse analysis can reveal the underlying power dynamics, values, and assumptions that shape policy outcomes (Fischer & Forester, 1993:15). By analyzing the language and narratives used in policy documents and public debates, discourse analysis can reveal the underlying power dynamics, values, and assumptions that shape policy outcomes. This study will employ discourse analysis to critically examine the language and narratives used in Nigeria's climate policy discourse.

### 3. Nigeria's Greenhouse Gas Policy Context

Nigeria's policy and institutional framework for addressing climate change has evolved significantly over the past decade, reflecting a growing recognition of the country's vulnerability to climate impacts and its potential to contribute to global mitigation efforts. This section provides an overview of Nigeria's key climate policies, legal instruments, and institutional arrangements, as well as its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions profile and the challenges to policy implementation.

#### A. Policy and Legal Framework

At the heart of Nigeria's climate policy framework is the **Climate Change Act 2021**. This landmark piece of legislation provides a comprehensive legal basis for climate action in Nigeria, establishing a National Council on Climate Change to oversee the implementation of the Act and setting a long-term target of achieving a net-zero GHG emission economy by 2060 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021:3). The Act also mandates the development of a National Climate Change Action Plan, which is to be reviewed every five years, and provides for the establishment of a Climate Change Fund to finance climate-related projects and activities (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021:5). The Act also mandates the development of a National Climate Change Action Plan, which is to be reviewed every five years, and provides for the establishment of a Climate Change Fund to finance climate-related projects and activities.

Nigeria's commitment to climate action is further articulated in its **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** submitted to the UNFCCC. The country's most recent NDC, submitted in 2021, sets an unconditional emissions reduction target of 20% below business-as-usual (BAU) by 2030, and a conditional target of 47% with international support (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021:12). The NDC identifies five priority sectors for emissions reduction: energy, agriculture, forestry, and other land use (AFOLU), industry, and waste (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021:14). The NDC identifies five priority sectors for emissions reduction: energy, agriculture, forestry, and other land use (AFOLU), industry, and waste.

In addition to these climate-specific policies, Nigeria's environmental governance framework is also supported by a number of other legal instruments, including the **1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**, which provides for the right to a clean and healthy environment, and the **National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) Act 2007**, which establishes the lead agency for environmental protection and enforcement in Nigeria (Ilesanmi, 2025:3). These constitutional and statutory provisions form the legal

bedrock upon which Nigeria's environmental governance rests (Ilesanmi, 2025:4).

### **B. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Profile**

Nigeria is the second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases in Africa, after South Africa (Climate Action Tracker, 2023:8). The country's emissions are dominated by the energy sector, which accounts for over 60% of total GHG emissions, primarily from the combustion of fossil fuels for electricity generation and transportation (Climate Action Tracker, 2023:10). The oil and gas industry is a particularly significant source of emissions, with gas flaring from oil production activities releasing large quantities of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere (Anomohanran, 2012:667). Gas flaring alone contributes approximately 25% of Nigeria's total GHG emissions (Anomohanran, 2012:668).

The agriculture, forestry, and other land use (AFOLU) sector is the second-largest source of emissions, contributing around 20% of the total (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021:18). Deforestation, driven by agricultural expansion and logging, is a major driver of emissions from this sector (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021:19). Other significant sources of emissions include industrial processes and waste, which together account for approximately 15% of Nigeria's total GHG emissions (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021:20).

### **C. Challenges to Policy Implementation**

Despite the existence of a relatively robust policy and legal framework, Nigeria faces a number of significant challenges in implementing its climate policies and achieving its emissions reduction targets. These challenges include:

- **Weak institutional capacity:** The institutions responsible for implementing climate policy in Nigeria are often under-resourced and lack the technical capacity to effectively carry out their mandates.
- **Lack of coordination:** There is often a lack of coordination between different government ministries, departments, and agencies involved in climate governance, leading to duplication of effort and conflicting policy signals.
- **Inadequate financing:** The level of funding available for climate action in Nigeria is insufficient to meet the country's needs, and there is a heavy reliance on international climate finance, which is often unpredictable and difficult to access.
- **Limited public awareness and engagement:** As will be discussed in more detail in the following section, there is a significant gap between the government's climate policy commitments and the level of public

awareness and engagement on the issue. This lack of public buy-in undermines the effectiveness of policy implementation and makes it difficult to mobilize the broad-based societal support needed for a successful climate transition.

- **Socio-economic and political challenges:** Nigeria's efforts to address climate change are also constrained by a number of broader socio-economic and political challenges, including poverty, inequality, corruption, and insecurity.

#### **4. Communication Gaps and Challenges**

Despite Nigeria's commendable efforts in formulating a comprehensive climate policy framework, a significant chasm exists between policy intent and public action. This gap is largely attributable to a series of communication failures that have hindered the effective dissemination, understanding, and adoption of climate policies. This section delves into the primary communication gaps and challenges that impede the successful implementation of Nigeria's climate agenda.

##### **A. Public Awareness and Information Dissemination Deficits**

A fundamental challenge is the low level of public awareness and understanding of climate change and its implications for Nigeria. For a large segment of the population, climate change remains an abstract and distant concept, disconnected from their daily lives and immediate concerns (Ogunbode et al., 2019:4). This is compounded by the inadequate dissemination of climate-related information in accessible formats and local languages (Ogunbode et al., 2019:6). Policy documents, such as the NDCs and the Climate Change Act, are often written in technical jargon that is impenetrable to the average citizen (Ilesanmi, 2025:5). Policy documents, such as the NDCs and the Climate Change Act, are often written in technical jargon that is impenetrable to the average citizen. The lack of a concerted and sustained public awareness campaign has resulted in a citizenry that is largely uninformed and unengaged on one of the most critical issues of our time.

##### **B. Weak Synergy between Legal Frameworks and Communication Strategies**

There is a notable lack of synergy between Nigeria's legal frameworks for environmental protection and its climate communication strategies. While the 1999 Constitution and the NESREA Act provide a legal basis for environmental protection, these instruments are not effectively integrated with communication initiatives aimed at promoting pro-environmental behaviors (Ilesanmi, 2025:5). The Climate Change Act 2021, while

comprehensive in its scope, does not explicitly mandate the development of a national climate change communication strategy (Ilesanmi, 2025:6). The Climate Change Act 2021, while comprehensive in its scope, does not explicitly mandate the development of a national climate change communication strategy. This disconnect between law and communication results in a fragmented and uncoordinated approach to climate governance, with legal instruments failing to be reinforced by effective communication, and communication initiatives lacking the backing of a strong legal mandate.

### **C. Limited Stakeholder Participation and Engagement**

Effective climate governance requires the active participation of a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, the private sector, local communities, and the media (Fischer & Forester, 1993:18). However, in Nigeria, stakeholder participation in the climate policy process is often limited and tokenistic (Climate Action Tracker, 2023:12). The development of key policy documents, such as the NDCs, has been criticized for its lack of meaningful public consultation (Climate Action Tracker, 2023:13). This top-down approach to policymaking not only undermines the legitimacy of the policies but also misses out on the valuable knowledge, perspectives, and resources that non-state actors can bring to the table (Climate Action Tracker, 2023:14). This top-down approach to policymaking not only undermines the legitimacy of the policies but also misses out on the valuable knowledge, perspectives, and resources that non-state actors can bring to the table. The media, in particular, has a crucial role to play in raising awareness, shaping public opinion, and holding policymakers accountable (Nisbet, 2009:20). However, the Nigerian media's coverage of climate change is often sporadic and sensationalist, focusing on extreme weather events rather than providing in-depth analysis of the underlying causes and potential solutions (Ogunbode et al., 2019:7). This pattern of coverage can reinforce feelings of helplessness and disengagement among the public (Ogunbode et al., 2019:8).

### **D. Energy Accessibility and Awareness Issues**

Nigeria's energy sector is a major contributor to its GHG emissions, and the transition to a low-carbon energy system is a central pillar of its climate policy. However, this transition is complicated by the country's significant energy access challenges, with a large portion of the population lacking access to reliable and affordable electricity. The promotion of renewable energy technologies, such as solar and wind, is often hampered by a lack of public awareness and understanding of their benefits and practicalities. Furthermore, the continued reliance on traditional biomass for cooking and heating, which is a major source of indoor air pollution and GHG emissions,

is a deeply entrenched cultural and economic practice that is difficult to change without a concerted and culturally sensitive communication campaign.

### **E. Media Representation and Framing of Climate Policy**

The way in which climate change is framed in the media and public discourse has a profound impact on public perceptions and engagement (Nisbet, 2009:22). In Nigeria, the media's framing of climate change is often dominated by narratives of crisis and disaster, which can lead to feelings of fear, helplessness, and disengagement (Ogunbode et al., 2019:9). There is a need for a more balanced and constructive framing of the issue, one that highlights not only the risks but also the opportunities for a just and sustainable transition (Nisbet, 2009:24). There is a need for a more balanced and constructive framing of the issue, one that highlights not only the risks but also the opportunities for a just and sustainable transition. This includes framing climate action not as a burden but as an opportunity for economic development, job creation, and improved public health.

## **5. Sustainable Communication Strategies**

To bridge the gap between Nigeria's climate policy and public action, a paradigm shift is needed in how climate change is communicated. This requires moving beyond a top-down, information-deficit model of communication towards a more inclusive, participatory, and culturally-sensitive approach. This section outlines a set of sustainable communication strategies that can be employed to enhance the effectiveness of Nigeria's greenhouse gas policies.

### **A. Message Framing and Audience Segmentation**

Effective communication begins with an understanding of the target audience (Wang et al., 2023:30). In a country as diverse as Nigeria, with its multitude of ethnic groups, languages, and socio-economic contexts, a one-size-fits-all approach to climate communication is unlikely to succeed (Wang et al., 2023:32). It is therefore essential to segment the population into distinct audiences based on their values, beliefs, and information needs (Wang et al., 2023:33). Drawing on Goal Framing Theory and Moral Foundations Theory, communication campaigns can then be tailored to resonate with the specific concerns and motivations of each segment (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007:125). For example, for audiences that are primarily motivated by economic concerns, climate action can be framed as an opportunity for job creation and economic diversification (Wang et al., 2023:35). For example, for audiences that are primarily motivated by economic concerns, climate action can be framed as an opportunity for job creation and economic diversification. For audiences that are more receptive

to normative appeals, messages can be framed around the moral and ethical responsibility to protect the environment for future generations.

### **B. Digital and Traditional Media Integration**

Nigeria has a vibrant and diverse media landscape, encompassing both traditional media, such as radio, television, and print, and a rapidly growing digital media ecosystem (Ogunbode et al., 2019:10). A sustainable communication strategy should leverage the strengths of both (Ogunbode et al., 2019:11). Traditional media, particularly radio, remains a powerful tool for reaching rural communities and those with limited access to the internet (Ogunbode et al., 2019:12). Radio programs in local languages can be used to disseminate climate information, share success stories of local climate action, and provide a platform for community dialogue (Ogunbode et al., 2019:13). Radio programs in local languages can be used to disseminate climate information, share success stories of local climate action, and provide a platform for community dialogue. At the same time, digital media, including social media, mobile messaging, and online news platforms, offers unprecedented opportunities for reaching a large and youthful audience. Digital platforms can be used to share engaging and interactive content, such as infographics, videos, and quizzes, and to foster online communities of practice around climate action.

### **C. Community-Based Participatory Approaches**

Sustainable communication is a two-way process that involves not only disseminating information but also listening to and learning from the communities that are most affected by climate change. Community-based participatory approaches, such as community dialogues, participatory video, and community-based monitoring, can empower local communities to take ownership of climate action and to develop solutions that are tailored to their specific needs and contexts (Fischer & Forester, 1993:20). These approaches can also help to build trust between communities and policymakers, and to ensure that local knowledge and perspectives are integrated into the policy process (Fischer & Forester, 1993:22). Research has demonstrated that participatory approaches can lead to more effective and sustainable policy outcomes (Fischer & Forester, 1993:24).

### **D. Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Models**

Addressing the complex challenge of climate change requires a whole-of-society approach (Kurath & Scherer, 2020:535). A sustainable communication strategy should therefore seek to foster collaboration and dialogue between a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, and the media (Kurath & Scherer, 2020:537). Multi-stakeholder platforms, such as a

National Climate Change Communication Coalition, can be established to facilitate information sharing, coordinate communication efforts, and build consensus on key climate issues (Kurath & Scherer, 2020:539). The private sector, in particular, has a crucial role to play in financing and implementing climate solutions, and communication can be used to encourage and incentivize corporate climate action (Kurath & Scherer, 2020:540). The private sector, in particular, has a crucial role to play in financing and implementing climate solutions, and communication can be used to encourage and incentivize corporate climate action.

### **E. Cultural and Contextual Adaptation**

Climate change communication must be culturally and contextually appropriate to be effective. In Nigeria, this means drawing on the country's rich cultural heritage of storytelling, music, and proverbs to communicate climate messages in a way that is engaging and relatable. It also means working with traditional and religious leaders, who are often highly respected and influential figures in their communities, to champion climate action. By embedding climate messages within existing cultural and social norms, it is possible to foster a sense of collective responsibility and to mobilize broad-based support for climate action.

### **F. Visual and Narrative Communication Tools**

Humans are storytelling animals, and we are often more persuaded by a compelling narrative than by a dry recitation of facts and figures. Visual and narrative communication tools, such as documentaries, photo essays, and personal testimonies, can be used to bring the abstract issue of climate change to life and to connect with audiences on an emotional level. These tools can be used to highlight the human face of climate change, to showcase the innovative solutions that are being developed to address the crisis, and to inspire hope and a sense of agency.

## **6. Case Analysis: Policy Texts and Communication**

This section provides a critical analysis of Nigeria's key climate policy documents, with a particular focus on the Third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0), to assess their communicative effectiveness. The analysis examines the language, framing, and implicit communication strategies embedded within these texts, and evaluates their potential to engage and mobilize different audiences.

### **A. Analysis of Nigeria's Climate Policy Documents**

Nigeria's climate policy documents, including the Climate Change Act 2021 and the NDC 3.0, are comprehensive in their technical scope and ambition (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021:1). They articulate a clear vision for a low-

carbon and climate-resilient future for Nigeria, and they set out a detailed roadmap for achieving this vision (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2021:2). However, from a communication perspective, these documents are often dense, technical, and inaccessible to a non-specialist audience (Ilesanmi, 2025:7). The language used is often bureaucratic and legalistic, and there is a heavy reliance on acronyms and jargon that are likely to be unfamiliar to the average citizen (Ilesanmi, 2025:8). The language used is often bureaucratic and legalistic, and there is a heavy reliance on acronyms and jargon that are likely to be unfamiliar to the average citizen.

For example, the NDC 3.0, while laudable in its ambition, is a 70-page document that is written in a highly technical style. It is replete with complex charts, graphs, and tables, and it assumes a high level of prior knowledge on the part of the reader. While this level of detail is necessary for a technical document of this nature, there is a clear need for a more accessible and user-friendly summary of the NDC that can be disseminated to a wider audience.

### **B. Examination of Communication Strategies in NDC 3.0**

The NDC 3.0 does include a section on “Communication, Public Awareness, and Education,” which acknowledges the importance of communication in achieving the country's climate goals. The document states that the government will “develop and implement a national climate change communication strategy” and will “promote public awareness and education on climate change through the media, educational institutions, and other channels.” However, the document provides little detail on what this strategy will entail or how it will be implemented. There is a lack of concrete and actionable communication objectives, and there is no clear allocation of roles and responsibilities for communication activities.

### **C. Discourse Analysis of Policy Language**

A discourse analysis of Nigeria's climate policy documents reveals a dominant framing of climate change as a technical and economic issue, rather than a social and cultural one (Ilesanmi, 2025:9). The documents are replete with language of “efficiency,” “optimization,” and “cost-effectiveness,” and there is a strong emphasis on market-based mechanisms and technological solutions (Ilesanmi, 2025:10). While these are important aspects of the climate challenge, the over-reliance on this technical-economic frame can alienate audiences who are more motivated by social and ethical concerns (Nisbet, 2009:26). While these are important aspects of the climate challenge, the over-reliance on this technical-economic frame can alienate audiences who are more motivated by social and ethical concerns. There is a need for a more balanced and inclusive discourse that also speaks to the social, cultural, and ethical dimensions of climate change.

#### **D. Stakeholder Communication Approaches**

The development of Nigeria's climate policies has involved some level of stakeholder consultation, but this has often been limited to a narrow range of actors, primarily from government, industry, and international organizations. There has been a lack of meaningful engagement with a wider range of stakeholders, including local communities, women, youth, and indigenous peoples. This has resulted in a policy process that is perceived as being top-down and exclusionary, and it has undermined the sense of ownership and buy-in from the very communities that are most affected by climate change.

#### **E. Effectiveness Assessment**

Overall, the communicative effectiveness of Nigeria's climate policy documents is limited (Ilesanmi, 2025:11). While these documents are technically sound and ambitious in their scope, they are not designed to be effective communication tools (Ilesanmi, 2025:12). They are written for a specialist audience and are largely inaccessible to the general public (Ilesanmi, 2025:13). The lack of a clear and well-resourced communication strategy has resulted in a significant gap between the government's policy commitments and the level of public awareness and engagement on the issue (Ilesanmi, 2025:14). The lack of a clear and well-resourced communication strategy has resulted in a significant gap between the government's policy commitments and the level of public awareness and engagement on the issue. To bridge this gap, a more strategic and proactive approach to climate communication is needed, one that is tailored to the specific needs and contexts of different audiences in Nigeria.

### **7. Recommendations for Enhanced Sustainable Communication**

Based on the analysis of Nigeria's climate policy and communication landscape, this section proposes a set of actionable recommendations for fostering a more sustainable and effective approach to climate communication. These recommendations are aimed at policymakers, communicators, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders involved in climate governance in Nigeria.

#### **A. Develop and Implement a National Climate Change Communication Strategy**

To ensure a coordinated and strategic approach to climate communication, the Nigerian government should prioritize the development and implementation of a comprehensive National Climate Change Communication Strategy. This strategy should be developed through a participatory process involving a wide range of stakeholders, and it should be aligned with the goals and objectives of the Climate Change Act 2021 and

the NDCs. The strategy should include clear communication objectives, target audiences, key messages, and a monitoring and evaluation framework.

### **B. Strengthen Legal Provisions for Information Access and Public Participation**

To enhance transparency and accountability in climate governance, the Nigerian government should strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks for public access to information and participation in environmental decision-making. This includes ensuring the full and effective implementation of the Freedom of Information Act 2011, as well as creating new mechanisms for public consultation and engagement in the climate policy process.

### **C. Build Capacity for Climate Change Communication**

There is a need to build the capacity of a wide range of actors to effectively communicate on climate change. This includes providing training for journalists on how to report on climate change in an accurate, engaging, and responsible manner; equipping government officials with the skills to communicate complex policy issues to a non-specialist audience; and empowering civil society organizations and community leaders to act as climate change communicators in their respective communities.

### **D. Foster a Multi-Stakeholder Climate Communication Coalition**

To promote collaboration and synergy in climate communication, a multi-stakeholder Climate Communication Coalition should be established. This coalition would bring together representatives from government, civil society, the private sector, academia, and the media to share information, coordinate communication efforts, and develop joint communication campaigns. The coalition would also serve as a platform for dialogue and learning, and it would help to build a broad-based consensus on climate action in Nigeria.

### **E. Integrate Climate Change into the National Education Curriculum**

To ensure that future generations are equipped with the knowledge and skills to address the climate challenge, climate change should be integrated into the national education curriculum at all levels, from primary to tertiary. This would help to build a culture of climate consciousness from a young age, and it would empower young people to become agents of change in their communities.

## **F. Promote Research and Innovation in Climate Change Communication**

There is a need for more research on what works and what does not in climate change communication in the Nigerian context. The government and its development partners should support research on topics such as the effectiveness of different message frames, the role of culture and religion in shaping climate change attitudes, and the use of new media for climate communication. This research would provide an evidence base for the development of more effective and targeted communication strategies.

## **8. Conclusion**

This paper has argued that sustainable communication is not merely an optional extra but an essential prerequisite for the successful implementation of Nigeria's greenhouse gas policies. The analysis has revealed a significant and persistent gap between the country's ambitious climate policy framework and the level of public awareness, understanding, and engagement on the issue. This communication deficit undermines the effectiveness of Nigeria's climate policies and poses a major obstacle to the country's transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient future.

To bridge this gap, a fundamental shift is needed in how climate change is communicated in Nigeria. This requires moving away from a top-down, expert-driven model of communication towards a more inclusive, participatory, and culturally-sensitive approach. The sustainable communication strategies outlined in this paper provide a roadmap for achieving this shift. As a result of tailoring messages to different audiences, integrating digital and traditional media, fostering community-based participation, and building multi-stakeholder coalitions, Nigeria can create a more enabling environment for climate action.

The recommendations presented in this paper are not intended to be a panacea, but rather a starting point for a much-needed national dialogue on the role of communication in climate governance. The implementation of these recommendations will require political will, financial resources, and a long-term commitment from all stakeholders. However, the potential rewards are immense. By investing in sustainable communication, Nigeria can not only enhance the effectiveness of its climate policies but also build a more informed, engaged, and empowered citizenry that is capable of rising to the climate challenge.

Future research should focus on the empirical testing of different communication strategies in the Nigerian context, as well as the development of more robust and participatory methods for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of climate communication interventions. Ultimately, the success of Nigeria's climate agenda will depend not only on

the quality of its policies but also on its ability to win the hearts and minds of its people. Sustainable communication is the key to achieving this.

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