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## NEST launches Aba climate change adaptation scheme

*By Chinedu Uwaegbulam, Assistant Housing & Environment Editor*

**A** FRONTLINE environmental group has launched a climate adaptation scheme in five council areas in Aba, Abia State, which will be expected to stem rural-urban drift and tackle environmental degradation in communities.

The scheme, by Nigerian Environmental Study Action/Team (NEST), is a continental project backed by funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Climate Change Adaptation for Africa (CCAA). Tagged 'Inciting Rural-Urban interactions to cope with climate change: An Adaptation Experiment in Aba and its regions, South Eastern Nigeria,' the project is one of six approved by CCAA for Africa.

Others include Climate Change and Human Health in Accra, Ghana by the Regional Institute for Population Studies, University of Ghana; Exploring Urban-Rural Interdependence and the Impacts of Climate Change in Tanzania and Malawi, by Institute of Resource Assessment, University of Dar Es Salaam; and, Managing Water in the Rural-urban Interface in Ghana and Ethiopia: the Key to Climate Change Resilient Cities by the [International Water Management Institute](#).

The three-year project to be implemented in Ukwa East, Ohafia, Isiala Ngwa South, Aba North, Aba South and Osisioma Local Government Areas and was recently kick-started by the stakeholders, comprising non-governmental organisations in Abia, academia and community leaders. The aim of the two-day event was to create awareness of the purpose, expected outcome and the approach for the project, which is aimed at improving livelihoods in rural and urban settlements by strengthening capacities and reducing vulnerabilities of rural-urban interactions to climate change.

An earlier study revealed that the commercial city of Aba and neighboring communities are interdependent, exchanging people; ideas; goods and services to support livelihoods. The study also highlighted various challenges that threaten these relationships to include rapid urban congestion, indiscriminate waste disposal and flooding; degradation of forests in the rural areas due to ever increasing urban demand for fuel wood and housing materials facilitated by rural and urban wood/timber vendors; rural to urban migration now dominated by young men and women which negatively affected agricultural production due to the loss of critical farm labor and low income diversification in rural areas.

The CCAA programme strengthens the capacity of African scientists, organisations, decision makers and others to contribute to adaptation to climate change and supports adaptation by rural and urban people, particularly the most vulnerable as well as inform policy processes

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with good quality science based knowledge.

According to NEST, Programme Director, Dr. Emmanuel Nzegbule, the project will be executed by working with community associations and supervisory councilors in affected Local Government Areas to enable selected rural and urban communities and the municipal structures to explore and implement strategies and policies to increase the adaptive capacity of the rural -urban systems.

He said that the programme supports municipal and state government in the city of Aba to put in place needed mechanisms and interactions to reduce rural urban migration while also reducing environmental degradation, therefore reduce vulnerability and increase adaptive capacity of the rural-urban system to climate change.

"Associations in rural and urban communities in the city of Aba are aware of and adopt a number of livelihood options that allow them to earn a living while preventing environmental degradation. They are able to obtain necessary support from municipal and state level actors," he said.

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