

**REPORT OF THE 1st NIGERIAN RCEs FORUM INTERACTIVE SESSION
MINNA, 2017
HELD ON 12TH - 14TH MAY, 2017
AT DOKO HOTEL MINNA, NIGER STATE, NIGERIA**

Theme: The Role of the RCEs in the attainment of the SDGs in Nigeria



Photo: A group photograph with some Participants at the event **Photo Credit:** RCE Minna

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The RCEs in Nigeria, under the auspices of the African RCEs, for the first time organised the 1st Nigeria RCEs Forum Interactive Session to meet and discuss the ***“The Role of RCEs in the attainment of the SDGs in Nigeria”***. Currently, there are about 154 acknowledged RCEs across the globe, 35 in Africa and 5 in Nigeria. The 5 acknowledged RCEs in Nigeria are; RCE Kano, RCE Lagos, RCE Minna, RCE Port Harcourt and RCE Zaria. Representatives of 4 out of the 5 RCEs in Nigeria were in attendance.

1.2 The theme for the 2017 Nigerian RCEs interactive Session focused on the need to strengthen capacities of RCEs for multi-stakeholder engagement, implementation and monitoring of the SDGs targets. The theme desires to form a cohort of concerned stakeholders to serve as champions of the SDGs and to help monitor intended projects and contributes their own quota towards the success of the 15year long project. The session provided a platform for Nigerian RCEs to develop concrete and achievable action plans and to help monitor and implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) going forward.

1.3 The programme was with the support of Niger state government. Other partners were, New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) Niger state, Zuma Royal Institute, Niger state and the Nigeria Environmental Society (NES) Niger state Chapter.

2.0 The Sessions

2.1 The First day started with the Interactive session, with an opening remark by Dr. Abdul Husaini, Coordinator RCE Minna and President African RCEs on how RCEs were formed, the establishment and acknowledgement of RCEs in Nigeria and a brief on the activities of RCE Minna. There was welcome address by the Chairman of the event in person of Professor Muhammad Nasir Maiturare, Vice Chancellor Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University (IBBU), Lapai, Niger State. There were goodwill messages delivered by Dr Okoro U. O, RCE Coordinator Lagos, Dr. M.B. Nuhu, Head of Estate Management and Valuation Department, Federal University of Technology (FUT), Minna and Dr. Mrs. Diamond, Director, Abdulsalam Centre for Peace, Minna, Niger State.

2.2 Participants were drawn from the academia, government, NGOs, secondary schools, media and traditional institutions. The interactive session attracted over 150 participants.



Photo: Members of the high table at the event **Photo Credit:** RCE Minna

2.3 There were presentations made by students of RCE Minna School Clubs from Royal Hilton School, Minna on their participation in RCE activities, a short play on the effects of human activities on climate, presented by students of Bosso Secondary School Minna, followed by a spoken word presentation by Peter Kwamge of Hilltop Art Centre.



Photo: short play by Students of Bosso Secondary School at the event **Photo Credit:** RCE Minna

The State Cultural Troupe, Gwape International, was at hand to entertain the guests.



Photo: Cultural dance by Gwape Cultural group at the event **Photo Credit:** RCE Minna

3.0 Keynote Address

3.1 Professor Akpezi O introduced Professor Charles Hopkins by giving his brief profile and his current project on “Reorienting Education and Training Systems to improve the Lives of Indigenous and Marginalized Youth”.



Photo: Prof. Akpezi introducing Prof. Charles at the event **Photo Credit:** RCE Minna

3.2 Keynote address on **“The Role of RCEs in the attainment of the SDGs in Nigeria”** was delivered by Professor Charles Hopkins. His presentation centered on how the activities of man have affected the environment negatively (with specific reference to the Lake Chad in Africa) and has resulted to poverty and hunger, crises and insurgency and illiteracy.

3.3 He further stated that, education is vital in solving these problems. With reference to Goal 4 of the SDG, he highlighted the role of education for sustainable development in improving the lives of indigenous and marginalized people. Prof. Charles believed that without education most or all other Goals of the SDGs may not be achieved.



Photo: Prof. Charles Presenting at the event

Photo Credit: RCE Minna

Issues of Sustainable Development were discussed globally and locally as well as its relation to aspects of the human environment.

After the presentation by Prof. Charles, There were questions and interaction from the audience.



Photo: A youth asking question at the event

Photo Credit: RCE Minna

4.0 EVENING WITH CHARLES

4.1 The evening session, tagged, ‘Evening with Charles’ attracted youths from tertiary institutions around Minna. The session, which was organized by the RCE Minna Youth Network, has as its theme ***“The Role of Youth in Reorienting Education and Training Systems to improve the lives of Indigenous and Marginalized Youth”***. The Coordinator of RCE Minna youth network, Ibrahim Akibu Ja’afaru, gave an overview of the RCE Youth Movement across the globe, specifically in Nigeria. He stated that the youth movement has been relatively effective in making more RCEs vibrant and hope that with the knowledge of Prof. Charles, the network will even do more. In his presentation, Prof. Charles highlighted the need for youth to take active role towards achieving the SDGs. He started by saying that the concept of Sustainable Development is like a business plan for the world and further stated that no country can take care of itself with depending on others. He called on the youth to be very active in influencing the implementation of the SDG in their immediate environment.



Photo: Group picture at the Youth Session

Photo Credit: RCE Minna

4.2 There were questions and answers during the interactive session, issues bothering on inclusive education was raised as a participants asked to know how some people in the society, like the disabled, could be included in educational facilities plan so as to address inappropriate design (staircase) that could hinder active participation of certain group of people from going to school and also separate school facilities been provided for such people for example school of the blind. Also, how can a struggling youth in a country such as Nigeria, who is trying to make ends meet live with sustainable development in mind. Finally, there were contributions on how RCE Minna could carry out awareness and sensitization amongst schools within the state.

4.3 Major outcome at the youth session was the resolution to maintain the group that participated at the session to be part of the RCE Members to champion discussion on the theme of the session. 30 youths from the higher institutions across Minna participated.

5.0 VISITATIONS

5.1 After the morning session, Prof. Charles Hopkins, his wife Katrin Kohl and RCE Coordinators/Representatives found time to go round Minna, where they paid

a courtesy call to the National President of Islamic Education Trust (IET) Sheikh Ahmed Lemu in his office.



Photo: Visit to National President of Islamic Education Trust (IET) Sheikh Ahmed Lemu

Photo Credit: RCE Minna

5.2 From there, the team moved to Bosso Secondary School, Minna to commission a block of toilet facility built by Hon. Binta Mamman, Member representing Gurara Local Government Area of Niger State, through the Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Minna. The final finally made a short stop over at RCE Minna Resource Centre and the RCE Minna garden.



Photo: Commissioning of a block of Toilet at Bosso Sec. School. Minna **Photo Credit:** RCE Minna

6.0 Visits to Zuma Royal Institute and Yar'adua Center

6.1 On the second day , participants had the opportunity to experience the rich, serene atmosphere of Niger state through visitations to the **Zuma Royal institute for Training and Human Capital Development** and the famous Zuma rock in Niger State both on the outskirts of Abuja. The institute lies on six hectares of land along Kaduna-Abuja express way in Niger state (just about 40km drive to the capital city of Nigeria, Abuja).



Photo: Prof. Charles and wife with participants at the roof top of the Zuma Institute, with famous Zuma Rock at the background **Photo Credit:** Dr. Justin Gabriel

6.2 On the 3rd day of the programme, Prof. Charles and his wife Katrin, paid a visit to **Yar'adua Foundation, Abuja**, where they met the Director General of the centre, Ms. Jacqueline Farris, who happens to be a schoolmate of Prof Charles, expressed her happiness for meeting him and told him that she has been enjoying a good relationship with RCE Minna. Thereafter, she extended an invitation to Prof. Charles and his wife to attend the German Day at the German embassy, Abuja. They were later taking on a tour to Abuja Central Mosques and later to craft centre. Indeed it was a memorable day for them.



Photo: Prof. Charles and wife and others at German Embassy and National Mosque Abuja

Photo Credit: Katrin

7.0 MAJOR OUTCOMES

The major outcome of the interactive session and visitations were as follows:

- i. Increased understanding and knowledge about the Regional Centres of Expertise (RCE) and more awareness about the roles they play across the world and particularly in Nigeria as crusaders of Education for Sustainable Development.
- ii. Increased awareness about the role of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in enhancing livelihood.
- iii. Facilitate stronger networking among RCE community within Nigeria.
- iv. There is the need for RCEs to engage with key stakeholders in the educational, businesses and policy makers as a means of achieving the goal of GAP and SDG.

8.0 CLOSING

The first Nigeria RCEs Forum/Interactive Session and Meeting will remain a big step towards improving the visibility of RCEs in Nigeria and enhancing the capacity of the Nigerian RCEs towards achieving the SDG.