Progress Report: SDG 13 (Climate Action) – Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU)

2024/2025 Session

Executive Overview

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) aligns its governance, research, and campus management with **Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG 13: Climate Action)** by embedding environmental stewardship and climate resilience into its institutional fabric. Under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Kate Azuka Omenugha and guided by the university's **"3Vs Agenda" (Values, Viability, Visibility)**, COOU addresses climate vulnerability in Anambra State through the **Centre for Climate Change, Environmental Sustainability, and Laboratory Services**, executive sustainability leadership, campus greening, and inter-sectoral research partnerships.

Key Areas of Progress & Implementation

1. Institutional Governance & Specialized Climate Infrastructure

COOU has embedded climate action into its administrative structure to oversee campus sustainability and regional climate response:

- **Executive Sustainability Mandate:** The university created the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Environmental Sustainability), ensuring climate mitigation and environmental health are integrated directly into capital planning and policy decision-making.

- **Centre for Climate Change, Environmental Sustainability, and Laboratory Services:** Serving as the central hub for climate research and environmental impact analysis, the Centre drives interdisciplinary projects on regional climate vulnerability, ecosystem restoration, and environmental health monitoring.

- **Cross-Sector Research Collaborations:** COOU deepens institutional partnerships with non-governmental organizations (such as JDPC), healthcare bodies (University on the Niger Teaching Hospital, Healthcode), and private sector entities to advance research-for-impact addressing climate change, public health, and environmental degradation.

2. Campus Climate Culture, Greening, and Eco-Enforcement

COOU translates climate awareness into institutional habits across its campuses in Igbariam, Uli, and Awka:

- **"Pick It" Environmental Campaign:** The university launched the "Pick It" culture, embedding waste responsibility and cleanliness as a lived campus standard to prevent drainage blockages and runoff pollution.
- The university introduced the **Green Campus Campaign**, an environmental sustainability and beautification effort managed through the Environmental Volunteer Vanguard.
- **Student Environmental Marshals:** The administration inaugurated student marshals and safety units tasked with enforcing environmental regulations and keeping learning spaces clean. Strict provisions in the university student handbook penalize environmental degradation and littering to promote accountability.

- **Reforestation & Tree Planting Drives:** COOU conducts routine tree planting initiatives across its campuses to enhance carbon sequestration, lower ambient campus temperatures, and mitigate soil erosion. COOU successfully planted over **5,000 economic and ornamental trees** across its campus, directly contributing to climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, and local environmental restoration. In recognition of these sustained efforts, the Nigerian Red Cross Society formally nominated and awarded Vice-Chancellor Prof. Kate Azuka Omenugha the title of **"Green Vice-Chancellor"**.

3. Climate Adaptation & Agricultural Resilience Research
Recognizing the threat of climate instability on local food security in Anambra State, COOU leverages academic research to build adaptive capacity:

- **Climate-Smart Agriculture:** Researchers at the Faculty of Agriculture (Igbariam Campus) investigate crop yield responses under fluctuating rainfall patterns, testing drought-resistant crop varieties and soil conservation strategies to support local farmers.
- **Agro-Forestry & Soil Conservation:** Faculty experts conduct baseline studies on gully erosion dynamics—a critical ecological hazard in Anambra State—advocating for bio-engineering soil stabilization and sustainable land-use practices.

4. Energy Transition & Decarbonization Initiatives
To lower greenhouse gas emissions associated with fossil-fuel power generation:

- **Solar PV Integration:** COOU has expanded decentralized solar photovoltaic arrays across key administrative facilities, ICT centers, and research laboratories, reducing reliance on diesel generators.

- **Clean Technology R&D:** Engineering departments conduct research on bio-composite upcycling, biogas generation from agricultural waste, and solar radiation forecasting to support Nigeria's broader energy transition goals.

Performance Summary against SDG 13 Targets

SDG 13 Target Area	COOU Operational & Academic Contribution	Impact Level
13.1 Strengthen Resilience & Adaptive Capacity to Climate Hazards	Gully erosion research, climate-smart agricultural outreach, and Centre for Climate Change impact analyses.	**High** (Anambra State & Regional Level)
13.2 Integrate Climate Measures into Institutional Policies	DVC for Environmental Sustainability portfolio, handbook environmental enforcement, and campus solar integration.	**High** (University Governance)
13.3 Improve Education, Awareness & Institutional Capacity	"Pick It" culture, student marshal enforcement, tree planting initiatives, and cross-sector climate symposia.	**High** (Campus Community)

Strategic Recommendations for Acceleration

1. **Publish a Formal Climate Action Plan (CAP 2030):** Develop and release a publicly available climate plan setting target dates for achieving campus net-zero carbon emissions, zero landfilled waste, and complete renewable transition for daytime operations.
2. **Establish Real-Time Environmental Monitoring Weather Stations:** Install micro-weather and air quality monitoring stations across the Awka, Igbariam, and Uli campuses to collect open-access climatic data for regional research and early warning systems.
3. **Launch a Student Climate Innovation Grant:** Allocate annual internal seed funding for student-led climate adaptation solutions, such as local gully monitoring tools, community composting, or campus solar hardware prototypes.

Signature:  Date: 24/09/2026

Prof. Kate Azuka Omenugha, Fnipr

Vice Chancellor