

## *Plastic Pollution:*

### *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!*

The justifiable outcry by anti-plastic activists over the preceding decade has won commitments and actions across the globe from key decision makers. Governments and corporations now echo their longstanding question, 'Why destroy the ocean with plastic when it can be recycled?' Packaging is the main source of the plastic pollution that is clogging the ocean and is expected to exceed the weight of all fish by 2050 at current rates. The food industry is largely responsible for this growing packaging problem.

Although slow in proliferation, due chiefly to a lack of infrastructure and financing; a key aspect we are leading in and expect to see more financial institutions take a cue from and delve into. In addition to the former, less than ideal public awareness and execution of recycling policies also slows the progress in plastic mitigation.

A successful approach to overcoming the plastic problem must be multi-pronged. As governing bodies take decisive actions that steer our desired change, companies have to be responsible for managing their waste output into the environment and ensure it does not exacerbate a bad situation, and a better informed public will naturally ease into a new reality that does not disrupt their existing one, but instead improves it.

At Access Bank, minimizing our environmental footprint is one of our greatest concerns, one in which we have invested concerted efforts. The Bank pioneered a waste recycling project for proper disposal and management of paper, plastic, glass and aluminium canned waste at the Head Office and Annexes, a first of its kind in the Nigerian banking industry. This initiative is being continuously expanded to new branches and service locations, thereby, significantly reducing the Bank's waste footprint.

Additionally, comprehensive training on sustainable waste management practices are continually organized to educate the Bank's employees on environmentally responsible waste management practices, which has led to a paradigm shift in their perspective of waste as a resource. Furthermore, the Bank donated recycling trucks to local recycling companies to further improve their capacities and support the growth of local businesses.

Taking recycling a notch further, Access Bank partnered with stakeholders locally to develop robust end-to-end processes for recycling efforts (now adopted in industry), as well as initiated a partnership on tyre upcycling.