



OFAB Nigeria Impact Stories 2

7.0 Biosafety bill passed by the Senate and House of Representatives.

8.0 OFAB Nigeria Frequently Featured in Nigerian Dailies, establishes Partnership with Media Trust Group and Radio stations.

9.0 Members of the Nigerian Bar Association Applauds OFAB and NABDA for a Knowledge filled workshop, asks for more.

7.0 Biosafety bill passed by the Senate and House of Representatives.

The Open forum on Agricultural Biotechnology (OFAB) Nigeria chapter did not relent in its effort to facilitate the passage of the Bill for an act to establish the National Biosafety Management Agency Bill in Nigeria. This Bill, which, was passed by the 6th National Assembly but was not assented to by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was returned to the National Assembly in November 2013. This Bill after it was read for the first time at the House of Representatives in February 2014, OFAB Nigeria in carrying out one of its mandate, organized a Sensitization workshop for the members of the house. This



Chairman, Senate Committee on Interior, Sen. Abubakar Atiku Bagudu

workshop enlightened them more on the purpose, which the bill seeks to achieve. This facilitated the passage of the bill for the 2nd time at the House of Representatives.

Similarly, the Bill underwent its first and second passage and subsequent referral to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Science & Technology in the Senate for Public Hearing. To that effect, the Joint Committee mentioned above held a Public hearing. OFAB Played a major role in Organizing this event which turned out to be a very great event as the President of the Senate,

David Mark was well represented by the Chairman Senate Committee on Interior who Stated: *“It is important for Nigerians to embrace biotechnology so as to enhance agricultural practices, improved healthcare for job and wealth creation”*.

The Public hearing brought together a large number of Biotechnology stakeholders from research institutions, Universities, Farmers Associations, lawmakers, Private companies, Professional Bodies, the media, the consumer protection councils, the seed companies and the public as a whole. At the Public hearing, Senator Robert Ajayi Boroffice, the Senate Committee Chairman on Science & Technology expressed delight on the large turn out of stakeholders, *“I thank you all participants for attending the all important public hearing on the proposed Bill in the keen interest of the Senate President on the Bill which he demonstrated by sending a capable representative in the person of the Senate Committee Chairman, Interior. The senate has an unequivocal stand on matters relating to biotechnology”*



Chairman, Senate committee on Science and Technology, Senator Ajayi Boroffice

Positive Memoranda submissions were made on the Bill. The Hon. Minister, Federal Ministry of Science and Technology, Dr. Abdu Bulama during his submission, said *“The regulation of Modern biotechnology is therefore to match safety with the potentials, modern biotechnology has to agriculture/food, growth and to avert possible environment and OFAB the Open Biotechnology in platform for the*



The Hon. Minister of Science and Tech. Dr. Abdu

offer in the field of improved medicine/health, Industrial environmental protection and adverse impacts on the human health” A forum like Forum on Agricultural Africa provides an excellent media, scientists and the

public to come together to share knowledge and information. It can through its ways of communication provide an unbiased view on the information provided by researchers and scientists alike to the general public. Thus, they can be further enlightened and the hypothetical fears about this technology would be alleviated”, the Minister explained.

In order to facilitate its third and final passage at the Senate and the House of Representative, the Minister further explained, OFAB will be carrying out one-on-one engagements with Senators and Members of the House of Representatives to enlighten them more on how beneficial this Bill is to the economy of Nigeria and to enhancing food security.

Senator Emmanuel Bwacha who is the Chairman Senate Committee on Agriculture recognised the general acceptance and recognition of the importance of this bill at the public hearing, which OFAB facilitated, he said: *“Mr.*



Senator Emmanuel Bwacha, Chairman Senate committee on Agriculture

President, the committee observed that modern Biotechnology is a gene specific tool that helps countries to achieve food sufficiency, industrial growth, environmental sustainability and improvement in health. Our country stands to gain immensely from the passage of this bill into Law in many ways: The effects of climate change will be reduced since it produces plants that can reduce greenhouse gases, Food quantity, Nutrition and consistence for healthy living will be greatly improved, The use of pesticides and herbicides will be reduced, Industrial growth and sustainable environment will be encouraged”

The Committee recommended that the Passage of the Bill will reaffirm Nigeria’s commitment to international treaties, provide necessary legal Backing to international best practices and energize the National Biotechnology Development agency into transforming the fortunes of the citizens of the country and the world at large.

The Biosafety Bill has, however, undergone its final passage at the House of Representatives and the Senate and OFAB is still working relentlessly to get the Bill assented to by Mr. President.

8.0_OFAB NIGERIA STORIES FREQUENTLY FEATURED IN NIGERIAN DAILIES, ESTABLISHES PARTNERSHIP WITH MEDIA TRUST GROUP AND RADIO STATIONS.

8.1: OFAB Nigeria Stories frequently featured in Nigerian Dailies

OFAB Nigeria is gradually becoming a brand name in Nigeria as our news come up in most Publications of the Nigerian Dailies. At every OFAB event, the Media are part of it and they take active role. They give us captivating headlines and publications ranging from pictures, painting good image of biotechnology, quarter page publications, to full-page publications.

The following are the exciting Publications that have made great impact in Nigeria.

- **“Scientists reiterate Support for Biotechnology”**. This publication was made by the Nigerian Pilot on 9th July after the press conference that was held by the National Biotechnology Development Agency through OFAB. Journalist Stated categorically that there is no harm in consuming genetically modified crops adding that the opponents of the technology are enemies of development.
- **“Biotech will improve Agricultural Productivity”** This was a publication on the Vanguard Newspapers after the Agra Innovate conference that brought many private and government owned agricultural companies where the OFAB Nigeria Coordinator Mrs. Rose Gidado spoke as a panellist on GM/ Hybrid seeds technology: innovations, potential applications and benefits for Nigeria. The Paper highlighted many important benefits of Agricultural biotechnology and the need to pass the Biosafety Bill.
- **“Boosting cotton Production: why Nigeria needs biosafety law”** by the vanguard newspapers stating the advantage that Burkina Faso has over Nigeria since it has already deployed and commercialized biotechnology in their country. This story highlighted the benefits of Biotech crops and emphasised o the need for the biosafety bill to be passed so that Nigerians can also reap the benefits of Bt. Cotton.
- **“Nigeria Missing out on the \$500 global genetic products market”**: A Business day Publication that made a cover page story. The paper brought to light, what Nigeria Stands to Loose if the Biosafety bill does not get passed and assented to by the President.
- **“Reps pass biosafety agency bill, raise committee”** by Daily trust newspaper informing the public on the success story of the biosafety bill which has been passed.

- **“Over 70 million farmers to Benefit from Modern Agricultural Biotechnology”** A Leadership Newspaper publication after the farmers’ press conference that was held on 12th march 2015. This story dwelt on the urgent need for the president to sign the biosafety bill into law as requested by a coalition of Nigerian farmers.
- **“Biotechnology, Panacea for Bio-economy”**, a leadership newspaper publication after the ISAAA global status of commercialised biotech crops report launch. The Publication stated that Nigeria needs biotechnology in its quest to feed and provide for our teeming population and many other things.
- **“GM crops will be produced in commercial quantity”** by the blueprint newspaper after the ISAAA report launch. This story covered the support and the pledges made by the hon. Minister of science and tech, Dr. Abdu Bulama and rtd. General Abdusalam Abubakar on the adoption and commercialization of GM crops in Nigeria as it will enhance food security and improve the GDP especially in this era when the government is moving away from oil to a non-oil economy.
- **Biosafety law:** Minister raises farmers hope on presidential assent by the People’s daily Newspapers also on the signing of the biosafety bill into law.

These and so many more publications in the links below have been made about biotechnology and Biosafety Bill in Nigeria. A lot of OFAB events have also been aired on Nigeria’s Television networks: The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) African Independent Television (AIT) and Channels Television.

<http://www.eyeway.ng/nigerian-farmers-demand-jonathans-assent-to-biosafety-bill/>

<http://www.voiceofnigeria.org/nigeria/nigeria-s-bio-safety-bill-awaits-president-s-assent.html>

<http://www.voiceofnigeria.org/nigeria/nigeria-s-bio-safety-bill-awaits-president-s-assent.html>

<http://www.worldstagegroup.com/worldstagenew/index.php?active=news&newscid=21171&catid=2>

<http://newsdiaryonline.com/between-nigerian-farmers-biosafety-bill-and-goodluck-jonathan/>

<http://www.aitonline.tv/post-nass-harmonises-national-bio-safety-bill-awaiting-presidential-assent>

<http://dailytimes.com.ng/70m-farmers-await-presidential-assent-on-bio-safety-bill/>

<http://www.championnews.com.ng/jonathan-to-sign-biosafety-bill-soon/>

<http://www.nta.ng/2015/03/13/assent-to-bio-safety-bill/>

<http://www.monitor.co.ug/Magazines/Farming/A-lesson-from-Nigeria/-/689860/2656432/-/51krvj/-/index.html>

8.2 OFAB Nigeria Establishes Collaboration With Media Groups

OFAB has also succeeded in establishing a strong partnership with the Media Trust Group. This was made possible through the **advocacy visit** which OFAB Nigeria Paid to the Media Trust



Head office in Abuja.

The Daily Trust

(l-r) Ms. Modesta Abugu, P.A OFAB, Mrs. Aisha Umar, I.O OFAB, Ismaila Umaru Lere, Managing Editor, Daily trust newspapers, Mrs Rose Gidado, OFAB Nigeria Coordinator, Mr. Rufus Ebegba, DD FMEnv and Daily Trust Editor, Nasir Imam



represented by the Managing Editor, Daily trust newspaper Mr. Ismaila Umaru Lere was highly impressed by the work OFAB is doing, Pledged his full support to Biotechnology and promised to play his part by publishing stories that will promote biotechnology in Nigeria and for speedy assent of the Biosafety Bill by the President.

8.2 OFAB partners with Ray Power FM to reach out to the public and famers.

OFAB Nigeria is currently running a **Farmers' Diary** programme on 100.5 Ray Power FM inviting different stakeholders to speak on different topics on agricultural biotechnology after which Listeners call in to ask questions. This Programme is assisting in erasing some of the misconceptions about biotechnology.

9.0 MEMBERS OF THE NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION APPLAUDS OFAB AND NABDA FOR A KNOWLEDGE FILLED WORKSHOP; ASKS FOR MORE.

On the 25th of November 2014, a sensitization workshop was organized by OFAB for the members of the Nigerian Bar Association. This workshop was designed with a focus on creating awareness and capacity building of members of the legal profession on various biotechnology and biosafety legal issues. Efforts were made by the presenters to convey the message of biotechnology to the lawyers in simple terms that they could understand. After the training, members of the NBA applauded OFAB Nigeria and NABDA for an enlightening workshop. They said: “Biotechnology is a strange field, the workshop

enlightened people more than enough, but more enlightenment programs like this is required for the Judiciary personnel and other professions”. They added that they need to learn more about the law to protect human life and environment as a result of the practice of modern



Members of the Nigerian Bar Association with the DG NABDA, Prof. Lucy Ogbadu and Mrs. Rose Gidado OFAB Nigeria Coordinator (Centre)

biotechnology. For this reason, they asked for more engagement with lawyers in passing the Bio-safety Bill.

They asked relevant questions on IPR issues, suggested a ways forward and made a Request for the drafted bio-safety bill to be given to them as the technology has captured their interest. Finally, the training brought new generation of legal experts who will provide Nigeria’s Biosafety authorities with solid legal advice and guidance.

¹ **Contact:** [Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology in Africa \(Nigeria Chapter\)](#)

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