

## OFAB NIGERIA IMPACT STORIES.....

- ❖ Students find need to study Biotechnology
- ❖ Niger State supports Biotechnology
- ❖ BSN appeals for the President's attention on Biotechnology
- ❖ OFAB Nigeria Coordinator receives an award from BSSN
- ❖ NSM seeks for Strengthened partnership with OFAB
- ❖ EDULINK UNN recognizes OFAB Nigeria's role in awareness creation.

### 1. Facilitate the study of Biotechnology.

In 2013, OFAB held two "Catch them Young" Programmes in 2 different Secondary Schools in Abuja, (Redeemers Private school Lugbe and Federal Government Girls College (FGGC) Bwari), that made a lot of impact in the students and guided them in their career choices. It was to that effect that OFAB organized another "Catch them Young" session with the Students of Government



The Students Listening to a presentation

Secondary School

Karshi, Abuja. The Students were introduced to the basic scientific principles of biotechnology, bioethics, the variety of careers options in biosciences, as well as biosciences regulation i.e. biosafety. This session gave the Students a basic understanding of biotechnology, career opportunities available and the impact it makes on society. The Students expressed joy in learning

about this new technology and ***most of them indicated interest in studying Biotechnology as a course in the University.*** They urged OFAB to keep doing the good work in order to see that the hindrances to the domestication of the technology are eliminated. The Principal of the school, Mr. Kobo Yahaya M. solicited for OFAB's assistance in getting their school's Laboratories equipped in order to be able to gain practical experience. He urged the students to pay careful attention to the presentations on biotechnology to enable them take



Group photograph with GSS Karishi Students

the message home to their parents especially those parents that are farmers.  
*Biotechnology can transform their farming systems*

The Senior Prefect, thanked OFAB team for choosing to come to G.S.S Karshi on biotechnology awareness. ***He said the forum will give hope to the less privileged and idle people in the society and that agriculture would be revived in the country.***



Rep. Of DG NABDA  
Obioh, G.I.B (Phd)  
Making a presentation



OFAB Nig. Coordinator  
responding to questions  
asked by the students



A Student asking Obioh, G.I.B  
a career question.



The V.P Admin. Of the school, Mrs  
Mbakwe I.N giving a vote of thanks

## **2. The Governor of Niger state pledges support for Biotechnology at the National Council on Science and Technology conference**

Similarly, OFAB Participated in the 13th Meeting of the National Council on Science and Technology (NCST) held, Monday, 23rd – Friday, 27th June, 2014 at Honourable Justice Idris Legbo Kutigi International Conference Centre, Minna, Niger State with the theme **“Science, Technology and Innovation Policy: Prospects and Challenges of its Implementation at the Grassroots”**. The Technical Session was attended by the Commissioners for Science and Technology from the 6 geopolitical zones of the country. Other participants included Directors from the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology (FMST) and States' Ministries of Science and Technology, Directors-General from Research Institutes, representatives of Federal and



OFAB Nigeria Coordinator handing OFAB  
reports to the Gov of Niger State, Dr  
Babangida Muazu Aliyu

State level MDAs, Academia, private sector, International Organizations, NGOs and the media. OFAB Nigeria's information materials were distributed among all participants of the conference and they were enlightened on the Benefits of Biotechnology. The delegates inspected exhibition stands mounted by inventors and innovators and expressed appreciation on the quality of information materials on display at OFAB Nigeria's exhibition stand. Some of the delegates wished to Partner with OFAB and NABDA. They were however advised to visit OFAB Nigeria's website, facebook and twitter<sup>1</sup> to keep getting more information on advances in agricultural biotechnology. The Executive Governor and Chief Servant of Niger State, Dr. Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu expressed satisfaction with the Ongoing Biotechnology activities in the country and pledged his support to promote Biotechnology in Nigeria. He urged NABDA to ensure that



Display of OFAB info materials at the event

the issue of Biosafety bill which has undergone first and second reading be stated in National Council Memo. The council However noted the efforts of NABDA in ensuring the speedy passage of the Bio-safety bill and implored the Commissioners of Science and Technology to encourage the legislators from their States to support the passage of the Bill.

### **3. Biotechnology Society of Nigeria appeals for Mr. President's attention on Biotechnology.**

OFAB Nigeria's participation at the Biotechnology Society of Nigeria conference which took place at the Nigerian Institute for Trypanosomiasis (and *Onchocerciasis*) Research (NITR), Kaduna from Monday 25<sup>th</sup> to Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2014 was a remarkable one. The conference brought together Biotechnologists,



Dignitaries present at the BSN conference



Academia, Biochemists, Microbiologists, Chemist, Industrialist, Private sector and also students from different universities under the umbrella of “Biotechnology Students Society of Nigeria”.

The Opening remarks made by the Dignitaries ***focused on the need for the speedy passage of the Biosafety Bill and for commercialization of Biotechnology in Nigeria as that will lead to socio-economic development. Director-General Nigeria Institute for Trypanosomiasis (and Onchocerciasis) Research (NITR) Kaduna, Professor Muhammad Mamman said that in the absence of a Biosafety Law, the nation shall continue to be a consumer (unknowingly) but not a producer of biotechnology products and innovations. Prof Diran Makinde noted that Africa has problem of food insecurity, the minister of Agriculture in 2012 said \$12million is spent on food importation, health, environmental and industrial challenges. “I want to encourage the society to keep up with the good work, it often said that If Nigeria gets it right, then other African countries will get it right”, he said.***

***While the Vice Chancellor, National Open University of Nigeria, Professor Vincent Tenebe appealed to BSN to approach President Goodluck Jonathan and make him ensure that biotechnology is used to empower Nigerians before the end of his tenure. “The president is a scientist, after his tenure he will come back to the field and meet us, he should open the gate for the practice of biotechnology, with biotechnology we can fight food insecurity, hunger and unemployment”, he added.***



(l-r) Dr Akinbo, Prof Diran Makinde  
from ABNE-NEPAD and other participants



Group Photograph of Dignitaries  
at the conference



Participants at the conference

#### **4. OFAB Nigeria Chapter Coordinator receives an Award from BSSN**

The Biotechnology Students Society of Nigeria) BSSN) gave an Award of Excellence to the OFAB Nigeria Chapter Coordinator, Mrs Rose Gidado, in recognition of her efforts in promoting Biotechnology Awareness in Nigeria.



**Mrs Aisha Umar receiving BSSN Award on behalf of OFAB Nigeria Coordinator, Mrs Rose Gidado**

Mrs. Gidado, in response, thanked the Students for the recognition accorded her and the Nigerian Chapter as a whole and promised to do more for



the country in the area of moving biotechnology forward. *"Awareness campaign is never enough, this will spur us to put in our best", according to her.*

In an earlier presentation made by the Coordinator at the Opening Ceremony, she indicated that malnutrition and hunger are great challenges in the continent and so called for the need to increase advocacy/awareness campaigns and capacity building especially to ensure the speedy passage of the Biosafety Bill and subsequent assent by Mr. President.

Her presentation also included the Impact of OFAB in Nigeria, which featured the video of a Nigerian farmer asking for the deployment of biotechnology in Nigeria and the need to pass the Biosafety bill. This part was of so much



**OFAB Nigeria exhibition stand at the BSN conference**

interest to the participants. They Congratulated OFAB on the job the Forum is doing in taking information on Agricultural Biotechnology to the grassroots. OFAB Information materials were also distributed to the participants at the venue.

## **5. Nigerian Society for Microbiologist seek for strengthened partnership with OFAB**

The Nigeria Society for Microbiology hosted its 37th Annual Conference and review meeting at the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014 with the Theme: “Microbial Biotechnology as a panacea for Sustainable Development”. The event featured scientists from all round the country and the Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology (OFAB) Nigeria Chapter Participated fully in the event as an Exhibitor. A lead paper presented by the Director-General/CEO,



**Participants at the Event**

NABDA, Prof. Lucy Ogbadu who was represented by Dr Gloria Obioh, on “The role of Microbial Biotechnology in Environmental Protection and Sustainability”, stated, *“Our survival would depend mainly on our ability to adapt, develop and deploy modern innovative technologies to support livelihoods. Microbial technologies hold a great promise in contributing to ensuring environmental protection and sustainability. Local adaptation of these technologies will not only provide solution to environmental challenges, but will also create jobs and wealth as well as products of international trade in addition to oil and gas”.*



**OFAB Exhibition stand at the NSM conference**

OFAB Nigeria distributed information materials to all participants present. Curious Participant all gathered round OFAB Nigeria’s exhibition stand asking questions on how they can collaborate with OFAB Nigeria to promote biotechnology in Nigeria. The survey conducted at the conference showed that 60% of the participant have heard of Biotechnology and will consume genetically modified food.



**Curious participants at the OFAB Nigeria stand**

## **6. EDULINK UNN recognizes OFAB as an awareness creation forum.**

<sup>i</sup>OFAB Nigeria Chapter in its efforts to continued strategic alliance for creating synergy and optimization of resources through convening and encouraging inter-institutional biotechnology space participated at the Edulink-Food Security and Biotechnology Awareness (FSBA) programme at the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN). The Edulink-FSBA Project shares the same objectives with OFAB especially in the area of boosting food security in Africa. Recognising the role of OFAB in awareness



**Group Photograph of the Participants at the Edulink Programme**

creation, OFAB was invited to make a presentation on **“The Global, African and Nigerian status of Genetically Modified Crops, their impact and economic benefits”**.

More information was sought on the journey so far on the Biosafety Bill and OFAB Nigeria Coordinator gave a befitting answer to the entire question put up. The Participants encouraged OFAB not to relent in disseminating information across the nation as that will strengthen the domestication of biotechnology when the bill is passed.

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