

African Universities Advised to Adopt EBSU'S Model of Research and Spinoffs

The fifth bi-annual African Regional Conference of Vice Chancellors and Deans of Science, Engineering and Technology (COVIDSET2013) took place on 6th and 7th November, 2013 at Gaborone International Convention Centre Gaborone • Botswana 6 -7 November 2013. It was organised by the African Network of Scientific and Technological Institutions (ANSTI), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) project in partnership with German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the University of Botswana. The Conference is affirming UNESCO/ANSTI's commitment to make the forum for Africa's leaders responsible for university training, research and innovation and policy makers an important platform for exchange, debate of ideas, capacity building and design of concrete actions to improve the impact of high-level training, research and innovation on Africa's sustainable development and socio-economic transformation.

The theme of COVIDSET 2013 follows the logic of previous ones in strengthening teaching and research and in preparedness for post millennium development goals, dubbed Post 2015 Development Agenda. The theme for COVIDSET 2013 was 'Enhancing Capacity in Science, Technology and Innovation in Response to Emerging Industrial and Socio-economic needs in Africa: The Role of Universities and Research Institutes'.

The role of universities in the generation of knowledge for driving the socio-economic development of Africa is more urgent now than ever before. Economies of sub-Saharan African countries are growing at a very fast rate (World Bank Africa Pulse, 2012). Discoveries of new oil, gas, and minerals in the last ten years are bringing the prospects of large revenue for newly resource-rich countries. At the same time, Climate change with its adverse effects on basic needs of health and nutrition, food security, energy access and efficiency, water availability and environmental sustainability; youth unemployment, sprawling urban development and global fragile economy pose threats to Africa's economic resilience if appropriate measures are not taken to curb them. Africa must harness the opportunities that these challenges bring and be ready for this new economic resurgence.

Interestingly EBSU took part in the conference and presented two papers. One of the papers titled: "Nigerian University Training and Spinoffs: Implications for Sustainable Development by Prof. Dr. Isaac I. Osakwe and the Vice Chancellor, Engr. Prof. Francis I. Idike was presented during the plenary session. The second paper titled "Climate Change Adaptation Technologies: Difficulties, Barriers, Successful Experiences and Other Potential Methods" by Prof Dr. Johnny Ogunji and Dr Happiness Oselebe was presented during one of the parallel sections. Prof. Dr. Ogunji, Dean of PG School, presented the two papers.

The papers outlined the capacities of EBSU to carry out problem solving researches in many areas especially the climate change related researches. Spinoff activities of Biotechnology Research and Development Centre, Building Material Research Centre and Alternative Protein Sources Research Group of Agric Faculty were highlighted. The registration of companies like, EBSU Agribusiness Enterprises Limited was presented as an important research spinoff of EBSU. The company now has about 50 contract farmers in her cooperative and brought into the coffers of EBSU up to fifteen Million Naira (₦15,000,000.00) in 2012.

It may interest you to know that all participants to the conference while developing the communiqué agreed to include the following as item no 3: Ebonyi State University Nigeria model should be adopted by all Universities and institutions in Africa. The University attempts to research into Climate Change adaptation and research solutions are developed into products via spin-off companies that are marketed. The funds generated then complement to University finances.

EBSU Research Bulletin Congratulates EBSU, the Vice Chancellor and indeed all researchers that are helping EBSU conquer new heights!