



THE AFRICAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

BRIEF HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The African Academy of Sciences (AAS) is an Africa-wide, professional, nonpolitical, and nonprofit organization of senior scientists, science policy experts, and science managers with its secretariat in Karen, Nairobi, Kenya. It is the brainchild of 22 prominent scientists who met in Trieste, Italy, on 6 July 1985, at the inauguration of the Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS). A task force under the chairmanship of Prof. Thomas R. Odhiambo completed and presented the constitution of the AAS within 6 months. On 10 December 1985, this constitution was ratified at a meeting held at the TWAS headquarters at the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste, Italy. Thirty-three African scholars who had taken part in the July and December meetings in Trieste became founding fellows. Prof. Thomas R. Odhiambo was elected the first president of the Academy, and Prof. Attia A. Ashour, Dr. Akoly Djodji Nyatepe-Coo, Prof. Raelina Andriambololona, and Dr. Christopher H. D. Magadza became vice-presidents for the northern, western, eastern, and southern Africa regions, respectively. Elected regional representatives were Prof. Ebenezer Laing (West Africa), Prof. Mohamed H. A. Hassan (East Africa), and Prof. Mahdi Elmandjra (North Africa). Nairobi, Kenya, was chosen as the legal domicile of the Academy. The inauguration of the Academy took place at the Duduville International Guest Centre of the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) at Kasarani, 17 km outside Nairobi, in June 1986.

VISION AND MISSION

The AAS vision is to be the engine driving scientific and technological development in Africa.

The AAS mission is to serve Africa, first, as an honorific society with the primary function of honoring African science and technology achievers, and second, as a development-oriented mobiliser of the entire African science and technology community with the fundamental role of facilitating the development of scientific and technological capacity for science-led development in Africa, promoting excellence and relevance in doing so.

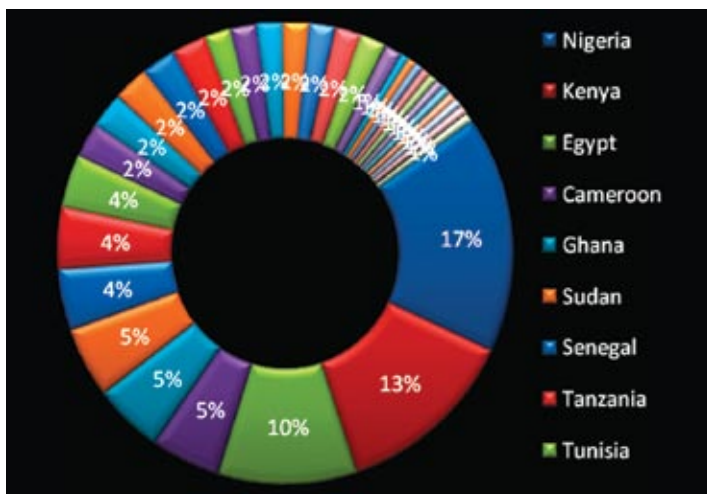
OBJECTIVES

To fulfill the AAS vision and mission, the following are the main objectives of the Academy:

- Promote and foster growth of the scientific community in Africa, and to stimulate and nurture the spirit of scientific discovery and technological innovation in order to serve socioeconomic development and regional integration and the cause of global peace and security.
- Stimulate, design, and coordinate regional interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary scientific research, development, and demonstration projects or activities of major regional interest or concern.
- Plan, convene, and coordinate science education programmes of crucial importance to Africa as a whole.
- Help in developing and nurturing high-level scientific and technological manpower in Africa by identifying young, talented scientists and technologists through recognition of their merit and by promoting the growth of their creativity.
- Facilitate, coordinate, and undertake the publication of scientific progress in various media, foster the dissemination of scientific knowledge throughout the continent, and facilitate mutual contacts between scientists in Africa.
- Undertake such other activities as the Academy shall from time to time decide.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE ACADEMY

The membership of the Academy consists of the following categories: Founding Fellows, Fellows, and Foreign Fellows. Founding Fellows are those senior African scientists and science managers who, in 1985, were fellows of the Third World Academy of Sciences and those scientists and science managers who participated at the 6 July and 9–10 December 1985 meetings in Trieste. There are 33 founding fellows. Fellows are elected every year by the membership from among active African scientists who have attained the highest international standards in their work. Foreign Fellows are also elected annually by the membership from among active and outstanding non-African scientists who have made a significant contribution to the development of science in Africa.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION: 2006–2010

Since 2006, AAS has undertaken activities around the following four core programmes:

1. Building capacity in science and technology
2. Mobilising and strengthening the African science and technology community
3. Publishing and disseminating scientific materials
4. Supporting research, development, and public policy advocacy

In implementing these programmes, the Academy has endeavored to accomplish the following:

- Champion the overall sustainable development of Africa's science-led development through science-propelled solutions to many of the current problems facing the continent by encouraging Africans to lead the way in the search for these solutions.
- Ensure the maximal use of expertise within and outside the Academy fellowship, including Africans in the Diaspora, and encourage networking in various scientific disciplines and regions, such as north-to-south and south-to-south interaction.
- Intensify its efforts to raise substantial funding that will, in the short term, make the Academy's endowment fund sufficient to support its major activities.
- Strengthen its secretariat with a modest full-time staff to ensure efficiency in the implementation of its core programmes.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The special niche and opportunities for AAS in enhancing its impact on the continent form the basis for defining core programmes. Some milestones achieved by AAS include the following:

- Steady growth in the number of AAS fellows from the initial 33 founders in 1985 to 162 fellows in 2007 from 32 African countries.
- Science and technology capacity building in several development areas, particularly in forest management, soil and water conservation, and education of girls and women.
- Publication of two editions of Profiles of African Scientists and Profiles of African Scientific Institutions.
- Launching, together with several African national science academies, the Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) in December 2001.
- Regular publication and dissemination of scientific materials through the indexed journal *Discovery and Innovation* and the magazine *Whydah*.
- Networking and collaborating with various scientific bodies in Africa through the Network of African Scientific Organizations (NASO) initiative.
- Supporting free journal distribution to all universities and higher learning institutions in French- and English-speaking African countries so as to strengthen their libraries.
- Enhancing information technology in African countries through the establishment of a database of African scientists and African scientific institutions. Two editions of these databases are in book form.
- Awards and prizes for the contribution to the advancement of development-oriented science and technology in Africa.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Through its activities and various programmes in Africa, the AAS has forged partnerships with several African governments and signed partnership agreements to that effect.

On 12 May 2005, the government of the Republic of Kenya and the AAS signed a headquarters agreement granting it international status and recognition. Similarly, the Federal Republic of Nigeria has contributed toward the Academy's endowment fund. The AAS also has an observer status with the African Union (AU) and has established affiliation with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) through the Network of African Science Academies (NASAC), whose formation it initiated in December 2001. The AAS houses the NASAC Secretariat, which is a platform for interaction and collaboration for science academies in Africa. The AAS also houses the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS) chapter in Africa, and it serves as the official TWAS regional office in sub-Saharan Africa (TWAS-ROSSA). To formalize partnerships and collaborations within and outside of Africa, the Academy has signed memoranda of understanding with various organizations pursuing similar objectives.

PROGRAMS AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES

AFRICAN FOREST RESEARCH NETWORK (AFORNET)

AFORNET is currently the AAS flagship programme. It focuses on science and technology capacity building in several development areas, particularly in forest management. AFORNET is a network of individual scientists who are active in tree and forest research in Africa. AFORNET connects people, ideas, and information on trees and forests. The network helps forest scientists to improve skills, access resources for research, collaborate among themselves, and better target research on development needs. AFORNET operates two competitive, merit-based, and peer-reviewed research grant programmes. The Young Scientist programme targets scientists at the early stage of their career to help them acquire essential skills and qualifications needed to undertake quality research. The Thematic Research programme targets teams of senior scientists from at

least two African countries. It aims at fostering collaboration across political and institutional boundaries, to capture economies of scale, and prevent duplication of effort. Visit <http://www.abornet.org>.

SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY EUROPE AFRICA PROJECT (ST-EAP)

ST-EAP is a scientific and technological cooperation framework between European and African scientists funded by the European Union (EU) in mid-2007. Its main objective is to create an appropriate mechanism for the enhancement

of the participation of African researchers in EU funding plans. African institutions will also benefit by increasing their science and technology base and will also obtain tremendous opportunities for increasing their human resource development. ST-EAP also seeks to create an increased awareness of the role of the European Union's Framework Programmes (FPs). Visit <http://www.st-eap.org>.

PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Academy Science Publishers (ASP) was established as a joint venture between AAS and TWAS as a semi-autonomous unit within AAS to publish important new knowledge relating to Africa. ASP edits, typesets, designs, publishes, markets, and distributes scholarly books at tertiary and research levels for use as university texts or reference books. ASP started and continues to publish:

- *Discovery and Innovation*, an international, peer-reviewed, and multidisciplinary journal launched in 1989 that is widely abstracted by international databases and abstracting periodicals.
- *Whydah*, a magazine launched in 1987, with an international readership, including African university and institutional libraries. All fellows of the Academy receive it.

ASP publications give prominence to global issues to highlight and address the pressing socioeconomic problems facing the world. ASP

AFRICAN CLIMATE CHANGE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM (ACCFP)

ACCFP is a program designed to develop indigenous capacity in Africa for advancing and applying scientific knowledge for climate change adaptation through fellowships that enable early and mid-career professionals and graduate students to obtain relevant experience, education, and training. The program is supported by a grant from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, and is implemented in collaboration with the International START Secretariat, Institute for Resource Assessment (IRA) of the University of Dar es Salaam, and the African Academy of Sciences.



REGIONAL INITIATIVE IN SCIENCE AND EDUCATION (RISE)

RISE aims to strengthen higher education in the sciences and engineering by increasing the population of skilled Ph.D. and M.Sc. scientists and engineers teaching in Africa's universities. RISE is supported by a \$3.3 million grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York and Science Initiative Group (SIG) at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS). SIG is leading the RISE initiative in consultation with the AAS as the initiative's co-administrator. Visit <http://sites.ias.edu/sig/rise>.

THE AFRICAN MATHEMATICS MILLENNIUM SCIENCE INITIATIVE (AMMSI)

AMMSI was established in 2004 as a distributed network of mathematics research, training, and promotion throughout sub-Saharan Africa. It has five regional offices located in Botswana, Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso, with the headquarters situated in Nairobi, Kenya. AMMSI was originally established through the Millennium Science Initiative (MSI), but it currently operates under an operational agreement with the African Academy of Sciences (AAS), through which the AAS hosts AMMSI and provides specified financial and other administrative services. The collaboration is expected to lead to the development of joint research projects between AAS and AMMSI.

is strategically placed to promote, market, and distribute AAS publications to scholars from Africa and the developing world and provides an avenue for them to publish and disseminate their research findings.



GOVERNING COUNCIL MEMBERS

Prof. Mohamed H. A. Hassan (President; Sudan)
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