



NIGERIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NIGERIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

The Nigerian Academy of Science (NAS) was inaugurated on 8 January 1977. Its inauguration marked the climax of 5 years of renewed effort by concerned Nigerian scientists under the auspices of the Science Association of Nigeria (SAN) in order to overcome the obstacles that had plagued previous efforts of about 20 years to found an Academy of Science. The main antecedent to the founding of the Academy was the formation of a committee of Fellows of SAN, to prepare a paper on the formation of NAS. On 22 March 1975, the Committee adopted the draft statutes and approved a list of 45 Foundation Fellows for the Academy. The Committee also appointed a Steering Committee to prepare for the inauguration of the Academy which took place on 8 January 1977. Today, the initial group of 45 Foundation Fellows has grown to 120, covering all areas of science, engineering, and technology.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the Academy are to promote the growth, acquisition, and dissemination of scientific knowledge and to facilitate its use in the solution of major problems of national interest. The Academy strives to do this by:

- Providing advice on specific problems of a scientific or technological nature presented to it by the government and its agencies as well as by private organizations;
- Bringing to the attention of the government and its agencies problems of national interest that science and technology can help solve; and
- Establishing and maintaining the highest standards of scientific endeavour and achievement in Nigeria, through:
 - publication of journals and reports
 - organization of conferences, seminars, workshops, and symposia
 - recognition of outstanding contributions to science in Nigeria
 - development of a working relationship with other national and international scientific bodies and academies

UNIQUE COMPETENCIES

The Academy's uniqueness is reflected in the following areas:

- Access to the leading experts both within and outside the country.
- Ability to examine controversial issues without deference or regard to politics or special interests.
- Being the foremost scientific body in the country provides the opportunity for demonstrating corporate social responsibility, with impact on various fields of science.
- A rigorous process for balancing views and avoiding conflicts of interests, thus enabling the Academy to provide impartial and unbiased evidence.
- A rigorous process of internal and external review of reports to ensure high quality and credibility.

ACTIVITIES OF THE NIGERIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

The Academy has established a tradition of organizing or sponsoring conferences, symposia, workshops, and public lectures periodically. Specifically, since 1989 the Academy has embarked on lecture tours of the various states by Fellows as part of its campaign to popularize science and technology in Nigeria. Apart from the conference and other fora, the Academy also holds periodic lectures on topics of scientific nature but with applications for the larger public. Other activities of the Academy include:

- **The Dissemination of Scientific Information:** The Academy produces reports, newsletters, journals, and other related publications. These serve as credible sources of unbiased scientific information.
- **Consensus Studies:** The Academy seeks to assemble committees of experts to undertake special studies, which provide comprehensive reports with recommendations on major policy issues.
- **Program and Research Activities:** The Academy reviews proposals and evaluates research and intervention programs as a service to other parties, including the government.
- **Rewarding Excellence:** The Academy sponsors competitions to seek out the best university students in science and the best young students nationally.
- **Public Lectures:** The Academy organizes special lectures such as the *Sir Kashim Ibrahim Annual Lectures* (sponsored by the Borno Forum) to engage the public at large.
- **The Forum on Evidence-Based Health Policy Making:** Founded in 2006 under the African Science Academies Development Initiative (ASADI), the forum (standing body of distinguished representatives drawn from academia, government, industry, and non-governmental organizations with an interest in health) serves as a neutral platform for discussion of emerging health policy issues in Nigeria.

FORUM ACTIVITIES

- **Workshop on Effective Primary Health Care Delivery in Nigeria (May 2008):** The workshop critically examined the issues contributing to a near collapse of primary health care in Nigeria. The outcome of the workshop is a consensus study yet to be commissioned.
- **Workshop on Health Systems in Nigeria (October 2007):** The multisectoral meeting was held in Abuja on 31 October and 1 November 2007. The workshop offered solutions for improving health indices by strengthening the delivery of health care services in Nigeria.
- **Reducing Child Mortality in Nigeria (July 2007):** The workshop explored the trends of child mortality across Africa, the major causes of child mortality in Nigeria (including the interventions and challenges to the successful implementation of

these), the current immunization effort in the country, and the possibility of integrating interventions as compared to running vertical programs.

- **Blood Safety in Nigeria (November 2006):** The scope of the workshop was to review, appraise, and discuss the scientific and policy issues related to blood safety in Nigeria using an evidence-based, multidisciplinary approach.

PRIORITY PROGRAMS/ STUDIES PENDING FUNDING

Consensus Studies

The Academy will convene specialized technical committees to examine pertinent scientific matters in the country and provide evidence-based guidance to relevant government policy making bodies, the private sector, or the public in general. To convene such a specialized committee and conduct studies (which entails rigorous processes of elimination of bias and information gathering) is expensive but highly rewarding.

Representation in National and International Bodies

The Academy enjoys a good working relationship with several international organizations such as:

- Science Academies of Hungary, Pakistan, China, Canada, and South Africa
- The United States National Academies
- The Royal Society, United Kingdom
- The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- The International Council for Science (ICSU)
- The Academy of Science for the Developing World (TWAS)
- The Network of African Science Academies (NASAC)
- The InterAcademy Panel on International Issues (IAP)
- The InterAcademy Medical Panel (IAMP)

At the national level, the Academy has strong collaborations with key national agencies such as:

- The Federal Ministry of Science and Technology
- The Federal Ministry of Health
- The Federal Ministry of Education
- The National Universities Commission (NUC)
- The National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI)
- The Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC)

- The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA)
- The National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA)
- The Nigerian Economic Summit Group

STRATEGIC DIRECTION— BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

A New Vision for the Nigerian Academy of Science

The long-term vision and strategic plan of the Nigerian Academy of Science is for science-led development of the Nigerian nation where the society at large is the beneficiary of a better quality of life due to the purposeful application of science and technology to improve human health, provide affordable shelter, increase the yields of agriculture, and create better facilities with equitable access for human welfare.

As part of the process of translating the vision into action, NAS has identified five key issues and is striving to achieve them:

Membership:

- Strengthening membership with respect to gender and geographical spread

Resource Development:

- Developing resources by increasing the funding base to support programs and activities
- Developing and maintaining human and material infrastructure to facilitate its ability to achieve goals and objectives
- Attracting, developing, and retaining highly qualified staff
- Building and maintaining strong relationships with the donor community

Science and Technology Policy:

- Stimulating the demand from the government and other stakeholders for science policy advice from the Academy
- Generating policy advice from the Academy and monitoring the implementation of science policy
- Providing government and stakeholders with information and reliable advice on critical issues of science affecting the nation
- Promoting the representation of the Academy on scientific policy bodies and having a mechanism for responding to emerging policy issues

Outreach:

- Generating interest and informing the public on science by providing relevant and usable scientific information through Academy publications and activities
- Positioning the Academy as a source of credible science information
- Forming partnerships by collaborating with other academies, stakeholders, and non-governmental organizations

Promoting Quality Practice of Science:

- Raising the standard of science practice by disseminating information on global knowledge and scientific development to the Nigerian scientific community

PUBLICATIONS

The Proceedings (a highly reputable and prestigious journal in which Fellows as well as scholars sponsored by Fellows may publish the results of recent research)

The Discourse (texts of lectures delivered at the quarterly ordinary meetings of the Academy)

Nigerian Journal of Science and Technology (published by the Academy on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology)

Science Today in Nigeria (compilation of review articles on the state of science in Nigeria)

Reports of Workshops and Forums

- *Establishing a Forum for Evidence-Based Health Policy Making in Nigeria: Summary of a Planning Meeting*—Nigerian Academy of Science
- *Blood Safety in Nigeria: Summary of a Workshop*—Nigerian Academy of Science
- *Reducing Under-Five Mortality in Nigeria: Summary of a Workshop* (in preparation)—Nigerian Academy of Science
- *Health Systems in Nigeria: Summary of a Workshop* (in preparation)—Nigerian Academy of Science
- *Mobilizing Science-Based Enterprises for Energy, Water and Medicine* (in collaboration with the U.S. National Academies)



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