

**COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE THIRD NATIONAL BIOSAFETY
CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY MANAGEMENT
AGENCY (NBMA) HELD AT THE CONFERENCE HALL, TURKISH
NILE UNIVERSITY, ABUJA ON 14TH SEPTEMBER 2017**

1. PREAMBLE

The National Biosafety Conference is an interactive platform created for stakeholders in the academia, MDAs, NGOs and the public to express opinions and contribute towards driving an effective and sustainable Biosafety Regulation regime. This is in line with the mandate of the National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA) to raise public awareness and participation. The Third National Biosafety Conference was held at the Conference Hall, Nile University, Abuja on 14th September 2017. The theme of the Conference was “**Biosafety, Paving the Way for Safe and Sustainable Environmental Management, Agricultural Development and Economic Recovery.**”

2. ATTENDANCE

In attendance were Senator Suleiman Hunkuyi who represented the Senate Committee Chairman on Environment; Dr. Shehu Ahmed, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Environment and Dr. Jeremy Ouedraogo, Head of African Biosafety Network of Expertise/New Partnership for African Development (ABNE/NEPAD). Participants were also drawn from the Program for Biosafety Systems (PBS), African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), National Assembly (NASS), Nile University, MDAs, Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), NGOs and the general public.

3. OPENING CEREMONY

The Conference was chaired by Dr. Hussaini Doko, the Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC) who was ably represented by the Director of Agriculture and Agro-Allied, Dr. A.A. Ogunwusi. It was declared open by the Honourable Minister of State for Environment, Ibrahim Usman Jibril followed by goodwill messages by representative of the Senate Committee on Environment, Senator Suleiman Hukuyi; representative of the Program for Biosafety Systems; representative of the Biotechnology Society of Nigeria; Vice Chairman, Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs; Vice Chancellor of Ambrose Ali University Ekpoma, Edo state; National President, All Farmers Association of Nigeria; representative of the Civil Society Groups, Engr. Chike Chikwendu; Deputy Vice Chancellor, Nile University, Abuja and the National Vice President of NIBSA, Abiodun Denloye. They all commended the efforts of the NBMA at ensuring that the nation enjoys the dividends of modern Biotechnology by instilling confidence in the minds of Nigerians in the application of modern Biotechnology and use of its products.

4. DECORATION OF BIOSAFETY CHAMPIONS AND HANDING OVER OF CONFERENCE CHAIRMANSHIP AND HOSTING RIGHTS

About forty-six persons were decorated as Biosafety Champions with the Agency's hand band. After the decoration ceremony, the Chairman of the Occasion and Host of the Second Edition of the National Biosafety Conference, DG/CEO, (RMRDC), represented by the Director of Agriculture and Agro-Allied, Dr. A.A. Ogunwusi, handed over the Plaque to the ViceChancellor of Nile University of Nigeria as the host of the third edition of the conference. Following this, the Vice Chancellor of Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, Edo State accepted to host the fourth Edition of the conference in 2018.

5. TECHNICAL SESSIONS

The meeting considered the following presentations at the technical session.

- i. A Documentary on 25 years of Biosafety in Nigeria by Dr. Matthew P.O Dore
- ii. Global views on developments in modern biotechnology
- iii. NBMA: The journey so far - Successes, Challenges and Future Prospects
- iv. Mainstreaming Biosafety in Secondary and Tertiary School Curriculum
- v. The Imperatives of ABNE in the Evolving Africa
- vi. Development of Transgenic Pod Borer Resistant Cowpea: Status and Biosafety Perspective
- vii. Constructive Activism for Strengthening Modern Biotechnology Regulation in Africa (statement)
- viii. Environmentalists Perspective on the Adoption of GMOs
- ix. Socio-economic Consideration in Biosafety Management
- x. Impact of emerging biotechnologies on economic growth
- xi. Role of the Media in building a holistic and vibrant National Biosafety System (statement)

6. RESOLUTION

After exhaustive discussions and deliberation on the various presentations, the meeting resolved as follows:

- i. The NBMA has the capacity to regulate the activities of Modern Biotechnology and the use of its products with the view to preventing any adverse effect on human, animal, plant and environmental health.
- ii. The Agency should work with NUC and Federal Ministry of Education to mainstream Biosafety into the educational system.
- iii. There is need for increased awareness and publicity creation in collaboration with celebrities, environmental media practitioners and other stakeholders.
- iv. There is need to reactivate the extant stewardship structure to ensure effective upstream and downstream flow of the technology and bridge the gap between Research, Extension interface and farmers.
- v. That adequate budgetary provisions be made by Federal Governments for the implementation of NBMA activities.