

COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF THE TWO-DAY ANNUAL NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AND BIOSECURITY CONFERENCE HELD AT THE FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE, UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA, GIRI, FROM 28TH-29TH NOVEMBER, 2022.

1.0 PREAMBLE

The National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA), in collaboration with the University of Abuja (UniAbuja), Program for Biosafety System (PBS) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), organized a two-day Annual National Biosafety and Biosecurity Conference (NBBC) 2022, which marked its 6th edition since inception. The theme of this year's Conference was: ***Biological Safety – An Imperative for Increasing Population, Food Security and Environmental Sustainability***. The event, which took place from Monday, 28th November, to Tuesday, 29th November, 2022 at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Abuja Main campus, had in attendance 285 physical and virtual participants drawn from line Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Development Partners, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), as well as the Academia.

2.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE CONFERENCE

The objective of the Conference was to provide a platform for stakeholders in the biotechnology and security sectors to rub minds on the various challenges facing the country particularly as it pertains to achieving food security, environmental sustainability and biosecurity. This follows the national and global population growth, climate change, and the rising profile of biothreats such as the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus that caused the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

It was aimed at discussing these emerging issues in biotechnology and biosecurity, bearing in mind the *National Biosecurity Policy and Action Plan 2022 -2026* which was approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC), and the draft *Implementation Strategies* for the plan that was subsequently put in place by the Agency earlier in the year.

3.0 PARTICIPANTS

Participants at the Conference were drawn from 25 organisations namely:

1. All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN)
2. African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)
3. Environmental Capacities and Sustainability Institute (ECASI)
4. Federal Ministry of Environment (FMENV)
5. Federal Ministry of Justice (FMJ)
6. Federal University of Technology Minna (FUTMinna)
7. Federal University, Lafia (FUNLAFIA)
8. Institute for Agricultural Research (IAR), Zaria
9. National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC)
10. National Agency for the Control of Aids (NACA)
11. National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA)
12. National Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA)
13. National Parks Service (NPS)
14. Niger State College of Health (NSCH)
15. Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)
16. Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA)
17. Potato Farmers Association of Nigeria (POFAN)
18. Program for Biosafety System (PBS)
19. Sheddha Science and Technology Complex (SHESTCO)
20. Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON)
21. The Nigerian Police Force (NPF)
22. University of Abuja (UniAbuja)
23. University of Agriculture, Makurdi
24. Value Seeds Ltd.
25. Voice of Nigeria (VON)

4.0 OPENING CEREMONY/GOODWILL MESSAGES

The Welcome remark was delivered by Prof. Basil Gbadin on behalf of the Vice Chancellor of the host University, Prof. Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah, while the Director-General/CEO of the National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA), Dr. Rufus Ebegba, gave the opening remarks. There were goodwill messages delivered by: Judy Chambers (Director, PBS), Dr. Jeremy Ouedraogo (Director, ABNE), Dr. Matthew Dore (Country Director, PBS),

John Komen (PBS), Representative of the Conservator-General, National Parks Service, Representative of the National Security Adviser, and Professor Emmanuel Kwon-Dung (Federal University of Lafia). The Conference was declared open by the Honourable Minister of Environment, who was ably represented by the Director, Human Resources of the Ministry, Mr. Lawrence Adigwe, while the DG/CEO of the NBMA chaired the event.

5.0 TECHNICAL SESSIONS

The keynote lecture was delivered by Professor Celestine Aguoru of the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, with theme – *Biological Safety: Imperative for Increasing Population, Food Security and Environmental Sustainability*. Other papers presented on day one were - *Biosafety in Nigeria: Successes, Challenges and Prospects* by Mrs. Scholastica Bello; *Flooding in Nigeria: Its Implication on Biosecurity* by Prof. Polycarp Anyaegbu; and *Combating Biological Threats in Nigeria: The Nigerian Biosecurity Policy and Action Plan 2022-2026* by Dr. Agha Ukpai Agha.

Day two of the Conference began with a recap of the first day's proceeding by Prof. B.C. Akin-Osanaiye of the University of Abuja. Following the recap, more papers were presented including - *Biosafety: A Means for Food Safety and Food Security* by Oghenero Kumane; *GMO Detection and Analysis in Nigeria: NBMA Laboratory as a Case Study* by Josephine Amedu; *Biosafety as Key Driver to Bioeconomy* by Onyeka Nwosu; *Implementation Strategy of the National Biosecurity Policy and Action Plan of Nigeria* by Joy Onwude; *Current Global Status of Biosafety* by Dr. Matthew Dore; *Nigeria Biosafety Regulatory Instruments (Framework) for Safe and Sustainable Agriculture* by Ignatius Osegbe; *The Role of Academic Community in Biosafety and Biosecurity* by Prof. Rebecca Ndana; and *Public Awareness in Biosafety and Biosecurity* by Gloria Ogbaki.

6.0 RESOLUTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the presentations and deliberations, the Conference recognized and resolved as follows:

1. The Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) and other security Agencies should propose for researches on Biosecurity and Biodefense in partnership with the Academia.

2. In view of their expertise, representatives of Academia, through the Ministry of Education and/or individual research institutions, should be included as stakeholders in the implementation of the National Biosecurity Policy and Action Plan (NBP&AP).
3. NBMA should engage with the National Universities Commission (NUC) to ensure mainstreaming of Biosafety in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
4. The endowment of research chairs on biosafety and biosecurity should be encouraged.
5. The Agency should engage more with the general public to boost awareness of Biosafety and its role in ensuring the safety of GMOs and the practice of modern biotechnology.
6. Government should mobilize public and private sectors to kick-start Bio-economic growth in line with the Nigeria Bio-Economy Strategy.
7. Government should empower the National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA) through adequate funding and provision of accommodation to contribute effectively and efficiently to supporting biotechnology research, bio-economic growth, biosecurity, and food security.
8. Public and private sectors should actively embrace and implement the One-Health Approach to achieve sustainable and holistic economic growth and development in Nigeria.

7.0 APPRECIATION

The NBMA expresses its appreciation to all line MDAs, Development Partners and other stakeholders for their active participation in the 2022 ANBC. The Conference wouldn't have been successful without you. Thank you all.

***DONE ON THIS DAY TUESDAY 29TH NOVEMBER, 2022 AT ABUJA,
NIGERIA***

Endorsed by:

SN	ORGANIZATION	NAME OF PARTICIPANT	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
1.	All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN)	Daniel Okafor	President	
2.	Environmental Capacities and Sustainability Institute (ECASI)	Mopelola Akeju	CEO	
3.	Federal Ministry of Environment (FMENV)	Lawrence Adigwe	D,HRM	
4.	Federal Ministry of Justice	Habiba Chime	AD	
5.	Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi	Prof. C.U. Aguoru		
6.	Federal University of Technology, Minna (FUT-Minna)	Muh'd Aminu Nuhu		
7.	Federal University of Lafia (FUNLAFIA)	Prof. E.H. Kwon-Ndung		
8.	Institute for Agricultural Research (IAR), Zaria	Prof. Rabiu Adamu	Researcher	
9.	National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC)	Kadiri Haleemat		
10.	National Agency for the Control of Aids (NACA)	Popoola O. O.	D.D	
11.	National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA)	Scholastica Bello	D.D	
12.	National Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA)	Dr. Oladimeji Salami	ADR	

13.	National Parks Service (NPS)	ACG Oladipo	ACG	
14.	Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA)	Jesse Dinju	PSO/AD	
15.	Shedda Science and Technology Complex (SHESTCO)	Dr. Andrew Iloh		
16.	Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON)	Gidado Aminu		
17.	Nigerian Police Force (NPF)	Michael C. Nwawo		
18.	University of Abuja (UniAbuja)	Prof. R.W. Ndana		