

**(a) Youth Programme – African Youth Forum for Science & Technology (AYFST) National Meetings**

The African Youth Forum on Science and Technology (AYFST) was launched in 2006 as a forum to provide the youth with an opportunity to contribute and share ideas and views on topical and policy issues in STI as they relate to Africa's development. At the launch, AYFST members were given the opportunity to begin work by launching AYFST in their respective countries. Teams from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Malawi and Lesotho have taken up the challenge. Here follows reports of the launches that have taken place thus far.

**a. AYFST Ghana**

Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> African Youth Congress on Food Security and Health for Sustainable Development in Africa in Accra, Ghana, AYFST-Ghana convened a follow-up workshop under the theme *Health – A Key to Sustainable Development in Ghana: the Role of the Ghanaian Youth* from 28-29 March 2007 at the University for Development Studies (UDS), Navrongo Campus

The workshop aimed to introduce and popularize the activities of AYFST and to bring together diverse young Ghanaian professionals to dialogue on their role in the realization of sustainable development in Ghana with emphasis on health. The workshop also aimed to establish a northern sector network of representatives from each region for future collaboration with existing nationwide networks

Prof K S Nokoe, acting Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice Chancellor for the University for Development Studies (UDS) chaired the opening ceremony and launched the Ghana Chapter of AYFST. The District Chief Executive of the Kassena Nankana District, Hon. Emmanuel Chegweh represented the Upper East Regional Minister, Hon Boniface A. Gambilla on the political front. The Director of the Navrongo Health Research Institute was represented by Dr. John Williams represented the health sector.

Participants at the meeting discussed the peculiar health problems associated with Northern Ghana and said these issues could be combated by improving the people's socio-economic status through job creation, alternative livelihoods to farming, establishing mechanisms for the sustenance of the National Health Insurance Scheme, provision of adequate infrastructure in agriculture to enhance agriculture-led development (ALD) and the enrolment of the girl child in school.

During the meeting, the youth pledged to harness indigenous knowledge to bring about development especially in the rural communities. Participants were also encouraged to ensure sustainable development and make sure that resources are utilized in the best interests of present and future generations.

**b. AYFST Kenya**

AYFST-Kenya organized the AYFST National Youth Leaders Consultative workshop on March 2 2007 at the Milimani Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya. The primary goal of the meeting was to consolidate AYFST Kenya, and also to bring together youth leaders and various stakeholders to discuss Agriculture, ST&I and development in light of the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERS-WEC) 2003-2007, National Youth Policy and the current Kenya's long term Vision 2030. The meeting also aimed to provide a viable framework to engage young people in strategic actions and promote youth

participation in innovative systems and policy processes in Science & Technology, Innovation and Development.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Science and Technology (Kenya), Professor Crispus Kiamba, was the chief guest at the meeting and made a presentation titled *Emerging Issues on the National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy for Kenya*. In his presentation, Prof Kiamba emphasized the role of S&T to Kenya's Vision 2030 saying that the economic performance of any country is closely tied to the application of science and technology. He however acknowledged that there had been serious weaknesses in applying S&T to development in Kenya but reiterated the government's commitment to enhancing Kenya's scientific and technological capacity, inculcating a scientific culture, and integrating science and technology in the production and services sectors.

The meeting, which was attended by policymakers, youth leaders, development partners, media, private sector players and university representatives, and was organized with support from ATPS. A main output from the meeting was a position paper on the perspectives of the youth on the draft national STI policy. As a result of this intervention, representatives from AYPST Kenya were drafted into the National STI policy stakeholder's forum and participated the National ST&I Internal Stakeholders Consultative Workshop, from 8-11 August 2007 in Mombasa where they presented a position paper titled *"Youth perspectives in Science, Technology and innovation In Kenya, April 2007"*.

### **c. AYPST Nigeria**

AYFST-Nigeria was officially launched during a workshop under the theme *Basket of opportunities; refocusing the youth towards agriculture, wealth creation and HIV/AIDS prevention* on March 21 2007 at Nsukka, Enugu State.

The workshop aimed to mobilize Nigerian youth to actively participate in influencing development policies that directly affect them especially in regards to HIV/AIDS, youth employment, poverty reduction and wealth creation. The workshop additionally sought to provide a channel for policymakers to strengthen young people as partners in the policy formulation process.

In his opening remarks, Prof. M.C. Madukwe, ATPS-Nigeria national coordinator valued the significant roles ATPS has played to ensure accelerated development of Africa using S&T. He also challenged the participants to listen attentively as the information would help them build their leadership capacities. The AYPST-Nigeria coordinator Ms. Belinda Onyinye Ndubuisi, emphasized that the nature and essence of the workshop should be interactive to encourage active participation, to afford them the opportunity to map out the strategies that will help to affect the world positively. The forum was chaired by Mr. John Nnia Nwodo, former Minister of Information and Culture, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

In his keynote address, Dr. Osita Ogbu, Executive Director of ATPS spoke about how ATPS started as a small network in 2001 with an aim to create knowledge in the area of Science and Technology. He encouraged the youth to be constantly ready to learn because learning is a continuous process that does not end after completion of school. Dr Ogbu, challenged participants to seriously ponder the role of educational transformation and re-engineering in Africa's development and maintained that everyone should take up the responsibility of acquiring knowledge that will be useful in solving societal problems. As he was concluding, he urged the participants to join the AYPST network and also to take its message back to their respective departments and constituencies.

#### **d. AYFST Uganda**

The interim committee of AYFST-Uganda (known as Uganda Youth Association of Science and Technology Innovation (UYASTI)) organized their in country workshop on 13 April 2007, at the Makerere University.

UYASTI, as an association, hopes to play a key role in the development/creation of an information society among young people and further aims to support poverty eradication efforts through the promotion of competitiveness and sustainability in youth initiatives.

Prof. Joseph Obua, the ATPS-Uganda national coordinator opened the meeting and expressed his pleasure at the wide representation of youthful energetic faces at the meeting. The Commissioner for Industry and Technology, Engineer Sam Ssenkungu was the chief guest at the workshop and said that it was impossible for a country could have a booming economy without science and technology. Engineer Ssenkungu further said he would like to see capacity building diversification in the organizations' membership addressed in UYASTI constitution.

The workshop attracted young scientists from Makerere University, Kyambogo University, and Makerere University Business School (MUBS), Kampala International University (KIU) and other members from the private sector.

During the same meeting, elections of UYASTI executive members were carried out resulting in a leadership team consisting of Jackson Tumwiine as the Chairperson, Harriet Pamara as the Vice chairperson and Daniel Okello as Treasurer.

#### **e. AYFST Sierra Leone**

The African Youth Forum on Science and Technology-Sierra Leone chapter (AYFST-SL) held its first national youth workshop on science and technology focusing on the Sierra Leonean youth perspective on *food security & health for sustainable development*. The meeting was held at the St. Edward's Hall in Freetown, Sierra Leone on 6 and 7 April 2007 and aimed to sensitize Sierra Leonean youth on the current trends in food security and health in the country and break the chain of social exclusion of youth in policy division-making for socio-economic development in the country

Mr. Anthony A. Koroma, the Director of Youth and Sports, represented the Honourable Minister for Youth and Sports at the meeting and in his keynote address lauded the Sierra Leonean youth for organising the workshop which he said can drastically improve the production techniques, marketing skills and export growth of the Sierra Leone economy. The director also pointed out that science and technology should be embedded in the entire productive sector in Sierra Leone to ensure development and embraced the idea of integrating S&T in the national youth policies which would serve to improve the human resource capacity of the youth.

In his opening remarks, Mr Teddy Morlai, the AYFST-SL Team Leader said the meeting marked another new beginning for Sierra Leone, which was not poor in terms of natural, and human resources but lacked human capital investment and the recognition of S&T as development tools.

At the end of the workshop, the young participants including agriculturist, medical practitioners, engineers, technologists, social scientists, researchers and journalists produced a communiqué addressing impediments, opportunities and recommendations for effective application of S&T in Sierra Leone's development

The Sierra Leonean youth recommended that there was need to inject youth morale into science and technology for socio-economic development in Sierra Leone. Some of the policy recommendations made by the youth included an immediate and sustainable improvement in the supply of electricity and water management system, an immediate integration of science and technology policies in the national youth policies in Sierra Leone; and the involvement of young Sierra Leoneans in the formulation and implementation processes of such policies.

#### **f. AYFST Lesotho**

AYFST Lesotho was enthusiastically launched on 28 June, 2007 to deliberate on how Lesotho youth can help attain the Millennium Development Goals especially the ones concerned with achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and ensuring environmental sustainability.

The launch was held at the Institute of Southern African Studies auditorium in the National University of Lesotho (NUL) was attended by participants drawn from the university and neighboring high schools. The launch further aimed to establish the AYFST Lesotho chapter as well as establish the district and regional AYFST Offices.

The meeting was held with support from the African Technology Policy Studies Network(ATPS), the African Youth Forum for Science and Technology(AYFST) and the Einstein Minds Lesotho(EML), an organization that focuses on promoting science and technology in Lesotho high schools. EML is an organization where young scholars in the field of science and technology have joined hands to spur interest of Science and Technology issues in the country. EML's mission is to help in the performance of scientific subjects in the curriculum in order to increase chances of students enrolling at tertiary level of education and specifically in Mathematical dependent courses.

Prof E.M Sebatana, the acting Vice Chancellor of the National University of Lesotho (NUL) officially opened the meeting terming it as historic because it marked the beginning of youth involvement in S&T and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) issues in Lesotho. Other key guests at the meeting included Ms Bontle Mokotso, Science Coordinator Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO, Mr Thabiso representative from the Ministry of Communications Science and Technology and Dr Spirit Tlali, the National Coordinator ATPS Lesotho Chapter and NUL ,Deputy Dean.