

# DG, FIIRO Charge Researchers to Solve Economic Slowdown

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*For Nigeria to take its place among the committee of nations, it needs to address pertinent issues that obstruct development. Consequently, Biochemists and Molecular Biologists in the country have been charged to deliberate on concrete strategies for solving these issues in order to make Nigeria a better place for all.*

Director-General, Federal Institute of Industrial Research Oshodi (FIIRO), Lagos, Dr. (Mrs) Gloria Elemo, gave the charge on Wednesday, November 2, 2016, in her Keynote Address at the 35th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (NSBMB 2016) at Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State.



Director-General, Federal Institute of Industrial Research, Oshodi (FIIRO), Dr. Gloria Elemo, delivering her Keynote Address

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Elemo, who spoke on the theme, "Catalyzing National Development through Biochemistry and Molecular Biology," noted that the theme would not have come at a better time than now when the nation is currently facing economic slowdown, characterized by the challenges of dwindling oil revenue, depreciating currency, massive scale of poverty, worsening unemployment, relocation of industries to other countries, decay in infrastructure, impoverished living standard, and protracted experience of violence and brutality. This, according to her, could only be fixed by clear thinking, inward and forward looking development professionals like the members of the NSBMB.

"The time when research efforts would not solve an identified problem in Nigeria is now over because it is becoming clearer to government and the private sectors the critical role research and development has to play in advancing national development. If cancer is to be cured, solutions are to be found to the world's energy crisis, or if the pollution of the planet is to be cleaned up, it will probably be the Biochemists and Molecular Biologists that will carry them out," she said.

Dr. Elemo, who is the first female Director-General of FIIRO, also identified challenges for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology research in Nigeria which include little or no local input to research and development by large industries as well as slow uptake of already developed local technologies which could solve many local problems.

She also decried the over reliance of the nation on oil and gas as a major source of revenue to the detriment of other sectors, a development she blamed on lack of administrative skills to manage both physical and human resources.

"Nigeria as a country is generously endowed with abundant natural resources (both physical and human resources), yet the economic growth rate has been low, 0.1% from 1965-1996, with per capital income of \$790. This shows that physical and human endowment, without administrative skill, may make a country not realize its economic potentials," she explained.

The DG however proffered the way forward, calling on universities and research institutions to carry out multidisciplinary research and redefine their role not only for education but as a source of competence and solution provider for the society. She also charged the industry to invest in education, research and training to improve quality of skills in the labour market that would eventually benefit the industry.

In her remarks, the President, NSBMB, Professor S. O. Malomo, noted that science, innovation and technology have a major synergistic role in the achievement of sustainable development at the local, national and global levels. Scientific research, according to her, is an instrument that could foster sustainable development.

“Research is not only key to a better understanding of the problems of sustainable development, but also in the elaboration of concrete measures and design of efficient solutions. It is essential to mobilizing scientific and technological knowhow to identify and achieve alternative forms of integration into our economy and thereby contribute to the much-needed sustainable development,” she said.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Covenant University, Professor Shalom Chinedu, who stood in for the Vice-Chancellor, Professor AAA. Atayero welcomed the participants to the conference hosted for the first time in a private university and expressed hope that their knowledge would increase at the end of the event.

Eminent personalities in the government and private sectors, academia and research institutes were in attendance. These included the Honorable Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, Ogun State, Mrs. Modupe Mujota, Chairman Ado-Odo/Ota Local Government, Vice-Chancellors and former Vice-Chancellors, Dean, College of Science and Technology, Covenant University, Professor Nicholas Omoregbe, HOD, Biological Sciences, Covenant University, Professor Adesola Ajayi, Chair LOC, Professor Emeka Iweala, College of Fellows of NSBMB, Professors, Researchers and students.

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