

Report of Inauguration of GENES Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Project/Screening of first Cohort of Awardees Held in Ebonyi State University Abakaliki, Nigeria, on 2nd August 2018

Introduction

The EU funded GENES Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Project aimed at building capacity in the use of genomic technologies in crop improvement in African universities was inaugurated on the 2nd of August 2018 in Ebonyi State University, Nigeria. The meeting was a huge success and was well attended. The project consortium members were fully in attendance except one. They include Prof. Enoch G. Achigan Dako of the University of Abomey-Calavi in Benin Republic, Dr. Hermine Bille Ngalle of the University of Yaounde I in Cameroon, Prof. Eric Schranz of the Wageningen University in the Netherlands (the project Technical Partner) represented by Deedi Sogbohossou and myself, Prof. Happiness O. Oselebe of Ebonyi State University Abakaliki in Nigeria (the project Coordinator), while Dr. Wosene G. of Jimma University in Ethiopia was unavoidably absent. The Ebonyi State Government functionaries (Ministries of Agriculture and Education), members of Ebonyi State University Management including the Vice Chancellor, Vice Chancellors of Universities in the Southeast Nigeria including Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Abia State University, and Federal University Ndufu-Alike Ikwo were in attendance. Other guests were members of Ebonyi State University Community including Deans and Directors of academic programmes, HODs of related academic programmes and students of the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Faculty of Sciences in large number.



The Vice Chancellor of EBSU, Prof. Chigozie N. Ogbu, presenting his welcome address and declaring the event open



Int'l Coordinator GENEs Project, Prof. Happiness Oselebe, Presenting her welcome address



A cross section of members of the high table



A cross section of the participants with MoBreed scholars in the front row

Activities

The event was declared open by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Chigozie N. Ogbu, followed by a welcome address by the project Coordinator (Prof. Happiness O. Oselebe). Addresses/goodwill messages by the dignitaries including the Representative of the Technical Partner (Prof. Eric Schranz), the Vice Chancellors of universities in the Southeast of Nigeria, Ebonyi State Commissioners for Agriculture and Education and a host of other dignitaries were presented. In these speeches, the speakers applauded the Project Coordinator, for attracting the project to the region describing it as very imperative for food security in the face a changing climate. The event also featured entertainment by the unique cultural dance from Ebonyi State Arts and Culture Department.



The Representative of the Technical Partner (Ms Deedi Sogbohossou) presenting her address



Prof Enoch Achigan-Dako, Consortium member



Dr Hermine Ngalle, Consortium member



A cross section of the participating members of Ebonyi State University community



Ebonyi State Cultural troupe performing



The Consortium members with key officers of Ebonyi State University

Selection of the First Cohort of GENES Scholarship Awardees

Prior to the inauguration event, the Consortium members paid a courtesy visit to the Vice Chancellor for familiarization and briefing on the GENES project and visited the experimental farms of MoBreed Students (also EU funded project) before settling down for business. They developed evaluation criteria for screening the GENES scholarship applications and screened/selected the first Cohort GENES scholarship awardees. A total of 10 PhD and 15 MSc awardees were selected. Owing to the large volume of applications screened coupled with the absence of one of the Consortium members, the Consortium co-opted Dr. Celestine A. Afiukwa, the Head of Biotechnology Department of Ebonyi State University, to assist in the evaluation of the applications - a job he performed satisfactorily.

Conclusion

The event ended peacefully, the Consortium members enjoyed their stay in Abakaliki and all travels were safe.



Entertainment by the Ebonyi State Cultural troop