

## PMB Charges Education Stakeholders on Nation Building

President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, has charged stakeholders in the education sector to fully utilize education as a tool for addressing national needs, describing it as the bedrock of national development.

He gave the charge in his Visitor's speech at the 27th convocation ceremony of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) Ogun State, held recently, where he stressed that education and skills were sacrosanct for nation building and urged the university products not to shy away from applying what they had acquired during their various trainings.

The visitor, represented by the Honourable Minister of State for Education, Hon. Chukwuemeka Nwajuba noted that government would continue to increase access of quality education to budding candidates desirous to actualize their dreams. He said

that Projects such as TETFund intervention had been put in

requirement for better learning environment.



**Muhammadu Buhari**  
President and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces

place to ensure that facilities and infrastructure meet the needed

The President implored universities to encourage

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research as this would ensure longevity and reiterated government's commitment to improving its investment within the education sector.

Nigeria could only compete globally and expand economically, if institutions stayed with the global trends. He assured all graduands that the

exhibiting much creativity and commended the institution for producing graduates capable of being self-reliant. He charged the university lecturers on the need to rid the country of corruption, explaining that universities and stakeholders in the education sector should be at the forefront of the nation's fight to stem the tide of graft in the country.



**Hon. Chukwemeka Nwajuiba**  
Representative of the Visitor

He called on Nigerians to view education as responsibility which everybody should make concerted contribution towards, noting that the provision of jobs must not be seen as the sole responsibility of government.

While congratulating the institution, awardees and graduands for the feat attained, he also expressed a profound sense of pride for the success recorded by the university.

The President implored all tertiary institutions to aim at global standards as a yardstick for measuring educational development. He said that

current administration was ready to support all honest efforts at truly creating jobs and being self-reliant.

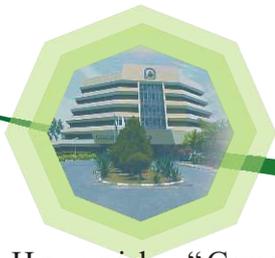
The Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission (NUC), Professor Abubakar Rasheed, who was represented by the Deputy Executive Secretary (Academics), Dr. Suleiman Ramon-Yusuf, seized the opportunity to charge FUNAAB, as one of the specialised universities to work more closely with industries to address the challenges of unemployable graduates. He explained that facing this issue head-on would mitigate the scourge of unemployment in the



**Alhaji Mohammed Nanono**  
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development delivering speech at the convocation

He said specialized institutions like FUNAAB have been

country.



He said, “Graduate un-employability is a big issue and we believe that specialised universities like FUNAAB have an advantage in creating truly entrepreneurial environments. We will like to implore specialised universities to look more closely at options and opportunities of collaborating with private sectors to address this troublesome phenomenon of un-employability of our graduates and try to create true entrepreneurship. “This is not only about skills acquisition; it is about the mind-set of finding creativity”, he said.

He disclosed that NUC had been working closely with the private sector and other sectors to ensure universities were positioned to add value to human capital development and national prosperity.

In his speech, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Alhaji Mohammed Nanono, highlighted the efforts of the Federal Government at improving the agricultural sector and reducing the nation's overdependence on the oil sector by adopting agriculture as the country's economy mainstay.

The minister observed that many challenges were facing agricultural production in the nation such as inadequate mechanisation and the relegation of research and development to

the background. He explained that though research and development had been relegated to the back, the nation could



**Dr. Suleiman Ramon Yusuf  
Representative of NUC, ES**

develop an agricultural research and make it fundamental interest of the century.

work together towards national development.

The Chancellor, FUNAAB and Obong of Calabar, His Eminence, Edidem Ekpo Okon, Abasi Otu V, appealed to the Visitor, to magnanimously restore the institution's courses in the College of Management Sciences (COLMAS) that were delisted about three years ago. He argued that the establishment of the College was borne out of the call for the diversification of academic courses in specialised universities with the assurance to retain agriculture as the flagship programme in FUNAAB. He stated that the restoration of COLMAS would add value to what the university was doing because of the strong inter-relationship between agriculture and management.



**Prof. Julius Okojie being robed after conferred with Honorary Degree  
(Honoris Causa)**

Alhaji Nanono congratulated Dr. Akinwumi Adesina on his award and challenged FUNAAB and other agricultural institutions, to

The Pro-Chancellor and Chairman, Governing Council, Dr. (Barr.) Aboki Zhawa, lauded



the President for his resounding victory at the polls, assuring him that the team of Council members had continued to key into the President's mission of fight against corruption; mechanisation and modernisation of agriculture, and the provision of quality education. The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Kolawole Salako, admonished graduates of the University to uphold FUNAAB's

important profession and business in the world, which must be supported to alleviate the challenge of food insecurity in the world. The President of AfDB advised the Federal Government to develop an integrated agricultural value chain, to make Nigeria more competitive in the food and agriculture industry.

The convocation ceremony also witnessed the appointments of

University included a Jumat and interdenominational church services, press conference, theatre performance, commissioning of projects, as well as a research and agricultural fair.

There was also a Convocation Lecture titled, "The Beast Unburdened Once Again: Artificial Intelligence and Life More Abundant", delivered by



Cross section of graduands at the event

core values of academic and moral excellence in their endeavours as such attributes would distinguish them among their peers, by making them good ambassadors.

The Honorary Awardee, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, who was conferred with of Honorary Degree (Honoris Causa) on Sciences, disclosed that agriculture remained the most

two Professor Emeriti, who were former vice-chancellors of FUNAAB. They were: Prof. Julius Okojie, immediate past Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission (NUC); and Prof. Israel Adu, National President, Nigerian Institute of Animal Science (NIAS).

Major highlight of the 27th Convocation Ceremony of the

the Executive Director, The Nation newspapers, Prof. Adebayo Williams, under the Chairmanship of Prof. Ayoade Ogunkunle of the Department of Agronomy, University of Ibadan, Oyo State.

A total of 3,226 students graduated from various disciplines, out of which, 122 bagged first class honours of the University.



## Rasheed Tasks Varsities on Quality Data Documentation

The Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission (NUC), Professor Abubakar Adamu Rasheed, MFR, FNAL, has

(NUS) had expanded over the years and currently has 172 Universities.

This growth, he said, was largely due to increased

or national levels, adding that for the 2019 publication, a full-fledged web-based database system would be deployed.



Fourth right is ES, NUC, Prof. Abubakar A. Rasheed; NUC Directors, L-R: Boniface C. Odum, Dr. (Mrs.) Maryam Sali, Dr. Esther Adesina; Dr. Noel B. Saliu, Ibrahim Usman Yakasai, Mal. Aminu Abba and Mr. Farouk Lawan

implored Nigerian Universities to imbibe a harmonized system of quality data documentation and dissemination for public referencing, research and planning in the Nigerian University System (NUS).

He told Directors of Academic Planning (DAPs), and Directors of Information and Communication Technology (DICTs) of Nigerian Universities, at a one day sensitization workshop hosted by the NUC recently that the Nigerian University System

demand for diverse high-level human resource for national development and increased demand for university education occasioned by population growth and awareness.

He said: “No organization or nation can successfully report on its mandates or implement development agenda without good quality data.

He said that, statistics played a major role and was indispensable for planning and development at organizational

According to him the essence of this meeting was to present the new application to DAPs and DICTs from Nigerian Universities in preparation for data collection; and to discuss how best to speedily collect the data and solicited for meaningful contributions on the process from the participants who he described as critical partners.

He emphasised that the meeting with the DAPs and the DICTs, was very crucial considering the fact that the



Commission had continued to deploy web-based applications for the collection of data and



**Prof. Abubakar A. Rasheed**  
delivering his speech

information from the NUS, thereby providing an enabling platform for information sharing among the universities.

The NUC scribe explained that it was in the light of this that the NUC, in the last two years, revamped the data collection processes to which it had successfully published two editions (2017 and 2018) of the Nigerian University System Statistical Digest. According to him, this document had served as rich resource for the Government, Universities, World Bank, Development Partners as well as other stakeholders in the higher education business.

He stressed that the collection of data for the year 2019 was to provide information and data on various segment of the NUS within the 2018/2019 academic session.

The Executive Secretary said the scope of the data collection had been expanded to among other things include those at programme level and affiliate institutions; with an extension to other variables in subsequent exercises. He told the universities to understand that the data collection was not meant for programme evaluation, but for statistical purposes only. In his remarks,



**Mr. L.M. Faruk**  
Director, DRICT

the Acting Director, Directorate of Research, Innovation and Communication Technology

(DRICT), NUC, Mr. Lawal Faruk, informed the Participants that the 2019 Statistical Digest and Data Inputs was crucial, reiterating

that the Commission had published two sets of the (NUS) Statistical Digest and had commenced the process of publishing the Third Edition.



**Pharm. M.A. Audu**  
Dep. Director, Research Planning and Administration

In his words, “It is exciting that the Commission has initiated a convenient and reliable process of data collection, collation, analysis, and dissemination using ICTs. As we all know, data collection is a challenging task and it involves many issues that must be addressed so as to win the confidence of all players before the commencement of such exercise”.



Mr. Farouk stated that the planning phase for the Third Edition had a lot of changes made to the data fields over the first and second editions, thereby introducing another platform for

Saliu, who gave a breakdown of relevant areas through which data could be collated, said universities were to provide information on cost of teaching, report on research, reports on community service as well as

programmes run in their respective institutions, data on students' enrolment for the year 2019, total students graduated, academic and non-academic staff, amongst others.



Cross section of participants at the event

data collection and collation different from the earlier ones deployed. The changes, he said, necessitated the need for the meeting to demonstrate the processes and usage of the data inputs tools, and arrive at time frame for the exercise.

The NUC Director of Academic Planning, Dr. Noel

report on academic development of the university within the period under review.

Dr. Saliu also said that universities should provide information on the physical development of the university, challenges as well as prospects for 2020. He stressed the need for universities to provide up to date information academic

The meeting also had in attendance the NUC Directors of: Directorate of Executive Secretary's Office, Mr Chris Maiyaki; Accreditation, Dr. Maryam Sali; Human Resources, Mr. Boniface Odum; Ag. Director, Directorate of Students, Mrs. Laurreta Achor.



# Africans Capable of Solving own Problems

## — Stakeholders @ ACE I Project

Stakeholders in the World Bank-sponsored result-based African Centres of Excellence (ACE) project after reviewing the progress of the ACE I, during the Regional Workshop held recently in Abuja, had in a common voice

Some of these successes include the outstanding contribution of one of the centres in Nigeria, the ACE in Genomics of Infectious Diseases (ACEGID) at the Redeemers University, Ede, which played a major role in the

and PhD levels, participation of students in impactful internships, high Masters and PhD graduate output, student participation in the short courses, publications in internationally acclaimed



ACE Impact Project Manager, AAU, Dr. Sylviac Mkandawire Secretary Gen. AAU, Prof. Etienne Ehile, Perm Sec. FME, Arch. Sunny Echono, ES, NUC, Prof. Abubakar Rasheed; Operations Manager World Bank Nigeria, Kathleen A whimp AFD Country Director, Paschal Grangereau

said that African higher education institutions have good stories to tell, thus proofing that with the right atmosphere and attitude, Africans could solve their own problems.

The 12th (ACE I) and 3rd ACE for Development Impact, Regional Workshop, which signaled the end of ACE I (winding down this March 2020) and the commencement of the ACE for Development Impact, recorded some outstanding successes across the host universities of the West and Central African countries that participated in the ACE I Project.

containment of the spread of the Ebola Virus in Nigeria in 2014.

With the ACE in Phytomedicine Research and Development (ACEPRD) at the University of Jos breaking grounds in the development of World's First Plant-Based Anti-Snake Venom Vaccine and set for Clinical Theory, the Pharmaceutical industry would soon begin the production of new products in this field.

Across the regional levels, the ACEs recorded feats in the areas of enrollment of national and regional students at the Masters

journals, increase in externally generated revenue, partnerships and collaborations as well as achievement of national and international accreditation of programmes.

Meanwhile by stroke of fate, the National Universities Commission (NUC), at the instance of the Government of Nigeria, where the project was officially launched in November 2014, had the privilege of playing host to the Regional Workshop, where searchlight was beamed on the performance of the Science,



Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) as well as the Agriculture and Health priority projects across board in all the regional universities that



**Arch Sunny Echono**  
Perm Sec. FME

won the ACE I.

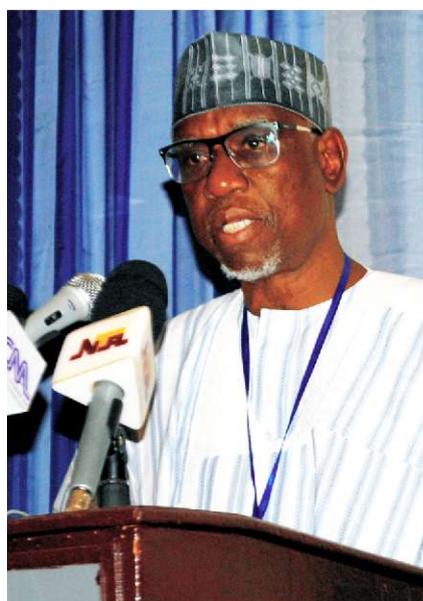
In his address, the Honourable Minister of Education, Malam Adamu Adamu, whose speech was read by the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education, Arch. Sonny Echono, recalled that the project was launched with the broad objective of producing a critical mass of professionals, at the Masters and PHd levels, to meet the labour market demands for skills within specified areas where there were skill shortages affecting development, economic growth and poverty reduction.

The Minister expressed his elation that Nigerian ACEs, in particular, where able to a large extent meet the Disbursement

Link Results DLRs, which measured the performance of the ACEs against set targets as well as the fact that the project encouraged internationalisation of higher education in Africa, with the enthronement of regional students in the various Centres of Excellence. .

He commended all the stakeholders for their painstaking efforts and commitment in seeing that the project was carried out successfully ranging from the World Bank, Association of African Universities (AAU)

and other facilitators of the project, all the representatives of the participating countries, who are also members of the Project



**Prof. Abubakar Rasheed**  
ES, NUC

Steering Committee (PSC) as well as the ACEs in the region, their Vice-Chancellors as well as the NUC, as the host institution, on behalf of Nigerian ACEs. He

noted that the government of Nigeria allowed all Nigerian

universities, irrespective of proprietorship to enlist in the ACE Project since they also supply human resources required in the labour market. According to him, it showed that excellence was the top priority of the government,



**Dr. Joshua Atah**  
Project Coordinator

especially with the reports of the outcome justifying that decision in the case of Redeemers University. He applauded the entire ACE I institutions for their contributions towards the development of Africa's higher education as well as tackling the challenges facing the region, in the area of healthcare.

The HMSE also drew the attention of the ACEs to the current case of Coronavirus



codenamed (Corod-19), a killer disease and virus threatening the world, expressing confidence that ACEGID team would be equal to the task and rise up to the situation as it did with the Ebola virus. He stressed that this was what the ACE Project represented, which is addressing common regional challenges and strengthening institutional capacities to deliver high quality training and applied research.

Hon. Nwajiuba acknowledged that the ACE Impact was initiated to leverage on the successes recorded in ACE 1, noting that

in terms of research and postgraduate training and also hoped to adopt the result-based approach and the Disbursement Link Indicator methods of the ACE Project to reward excellence in the Nigerian University System (NUS).

He also said that the government, through the Ministry of Education would continue to work hard to ensure the sustainability of the project beyond its life cycle, as it intend to build synergies with various funding agencies such as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund

MFR, FNAL, noted with pride that all the host universities in Nigeria had in the last five years recorded tremendous achievements.

He listed them to include: enrolment of regional students from West and Central African countries into the Nigerian University System, for the first time in more than two decades; ACE project's contribution to the production of high-level skilled manpower in specialized areas; encouragement of interdisciplinary research in the NUS as well as institutional and



Meeting Session

the objective was to improve the quality, quantity and development impact of postgraduate education through regional specialisation and collaboration. He stated that the Federal Government had through the ACE experience revolutionised higher education

(TETFund), Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) among others.

Welcoming participants, the Chairman, ACE National Project Performance Review Committee (NPPRC) and Executive Secretary, NUC, Professor Abubakar Adamu Rasheed, mni,

private sector collaborations at national and international levels.

Others were the spearheading of RUN, Ede, to the containment of the Ebola Virus outbreak in 2014 and subsequent development of a 10-minute testing kit for both the Ebola and Lassa Fever



viruses; the anti-snake venom vaccine known as COVIP-Plus, among others. He noted that

including language barriers, but noted that regardless of this, they were able to overcome and since

postgraduate education (defined to include Masters and PhD degrees as well as short-term professional courses and training) in selected universities, through regional specialisation and collaboration.



Participants at the event

He said that the ACE PSC and the various NPPRCs have worked together with all the ACEs in the past five years, learning in the process and supporting one another in an effort to achieve their common goals, adding that all the centres would continue to support one another and work harmoniously towards the success of the ACE Impact Project.

NUC was in the process of setting up a team that would document all the achievements of ACE 1 and make appropriate recommendations to Government on sustaining the gains of the project.

then had never looked back, stressing that the lessons learnt had placed them in a better position for the ACE Impact and other projects.

He used the opportunity to thank the HMSE and other

The NUC scribe stated that the

The NUC scribe noted that despite the strings of successes, there were some challenges in the case of Nigeria such as late commencement of the project, hiccups in project implementation due to the enforcement of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) in 2015, with the associated delay in processing payments, security challenges, strikes and irregular academic calendar, amongst others.



More Participants

Prof. Rasheed said that ACEs in other regions faced their own peculiar challenges too

ACE Impact was initiated with the objective of further improving the quality, quantity and development impact of

Ministers of the Federal Government of Nigeria, the World Bank and the AAU for the brilliant support to Higher



## Education in Africa.

In her remarks, the World Bank Task Team Leader for the ACE Project, Aisha Garba Mohammed stated that the ACE institutions had done excellently well as they were able to draw from the combined commitment of the Bank, a total of 550million

issues of the management of the ACEs by the Various Centre leaders, Procurement Practice, Funding Disbursement and Utilisation, Measurement and Evaluation, Project Management Challenges and Feedback on the Disbursements Link Results and DLIs.

achieved exceptional feats and got additional World Bank commitment to qualify as beneficiaries of the ACE for Development Impact would continue to enjoy monetary interventions in the programme.

The meeting was preceded by a meeting of the Project Steering



Group photograph of the ES NUC, Prof. Rasheed and Arch. Echono (7th and 8th right) other participants of the ACE

dollars. According to her the bank was proud to note that majority of the ACEs made some impressive impact in the use of the funds, reminding them that the project in no way belonged to the financial institution but that of the universities and their countries.

At the technical sessions, the Workshop witnessed so many breakouts and parallel group discussions that centred on

The ACE 1 involved countries like, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo.

Some of the countries as new entrants into the ACE Development for Impact Project in the West and Central African region include, Niger, Djibouti, and Guinea.

Among the resolution at the Week long meeting was that those that

Committee PSC of the countries in the West and Central Africa, an Enlarged meeting with the French Agency for Development AFD and meeting of NPPRCs of the different countries.

At the meeting were Vice-Chancellors of the ACE participating universities, their Centre and Deputy Centre leaders and other Focal Officers involved in the ACE Projects.



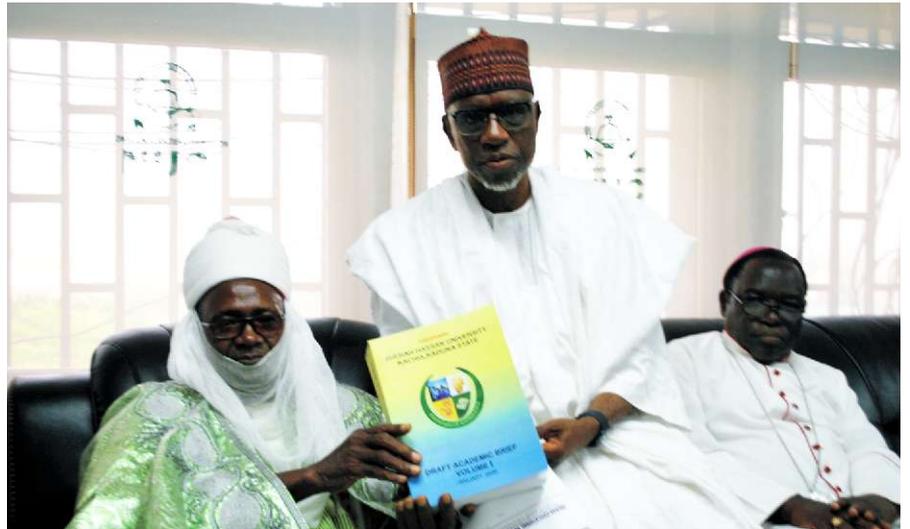
## Bishop Kukah Presents Documents for Proposed Private University in Kachia

The Bishop, Sokoto Diocese of the Catholic Church, His Holiness, Hassan Matthew Kukah, last Wednesday led a team of distinguished Nigerians to visit the Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission (NUC) Professor Abubakar Adamu Rasheed, mni, MFR, FNAL, to present a bid document for the establishment of its proposed Sherah Hassan University Kachia, Kaduna State.

The documents handed over to the Executive Secretary were the Master Plan, Academic Brief, Soil Investigation report as well as the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), amongst others.

The Chief Promoter, Bishop Kukah, who discussed issues concerning the proposed university described Professor Rasheed as a ‘detribalized leader’ and ‘bridge builder,’ who had continued to bring people together from all parts of the country, with only one single mission of promoting educational development in Nigeria.

While commending the Executive Secretary for his above religious differences and endeavours to consciously



Prof. Abubakar A. Rasheed receiving the Academic Brief of the University from Kpop Ham, His Royal Highness Danladi Maude Gyet while the Chief Promoter, Bishop Kukah watch

efforts in promoting quality university education in Nigeria, he stressed that the presence of NUC as a regulator was felt by all, most especially stakeholders in private universities. He noted that the proposed university would be the first private University in Southern Kaduna, and pledged his readiness to work with the Commission to ensure that the dream was realised.

In the words of Bishop Kukah, “education has no religion.” In the light of this, he therefore, stressed that the north must rise

educate its people in order to restore peace and economic development of the region.

In his response, the NUC Executive Secretary, Professor Rasheed, noted that though the development of public universities education in Nigeria began in the early 1960’s, it was not until 1999, that the first set of private universities were licensed to commence operation.

Giving a breakdown of private universities in the country, Professor Rasheed disclosed



that Nigeria presently have 79 privately owned universities.

The NUC scribe acknowledged that the proposed Sherah Hassan

profit making venture, but a social investment that must be seen as an opportunity to invest in the development of the minds of the people.



Prof. Rasheed addressing the guests

In the proposed University team were Kpop Ham, His Royal Highness Danladi Maude Gyet; Vice-Admiral Ishaya Iko Ibrahim (Rtd); Air-Vice Marshal (AVM) Muhammed Rabiu Dabo (Rtd); Professors Lazarus Yusuf and Maicibi Alhas Nok, amongst others.

Based on the geographical spread, he stated that 13 were located in the South-South, 14 in the South-East, 36 in South-West, 11 in North-Central States, 2 in North-East as well as 3 in North-west, respectively.

University, Kachia, was not only the first private University in Southern Kaduna, but the first indigenous University in the region. He, however, warned that University education was not a

At the event were the NUC Director of the Directorate of Executive Secretary's Office (DESO), Mr. Chris Maiyaki and the Deputy Director, Internationalization Division, Mr. Musa Zamuna.

From this breakdown, he recounted that it was obvious that the entire northern States needed to invest more in education in order to remain relevant and economically viable. According to him, it was against this backdrop that the commission had continued to encourage all well-meaning northerners to give back to the society by investing in the sector.



Group photograph: E.S NUC Prof. Rasheed (7th right); from left, Bishop Kukah (8th) and Kpop Ham, Danladi M. Gyet (7th left) with the Proposed University delegation and other NUC Management Team