

## Fiofori, FRCN To Partner UniPort On Documentary Series

As part of efforts aimed at commemorating the historic Centenary of Port Harcourt attaining 100 years since its establishment by the British Colonial Government in August 1913, Mr Tam Fiofori and the South-South Zone of Federal the Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) in collaboration with Treasure FM, Port Harcourt, is producing a thirty-minute Radio Documentary programme that would trace the history, development and promising future of Port Harcourt as the undisputed capital of the South-South region of the country, reports *Mercy Adeniji*.

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Prof Okpako Enaohwo conferred with Fellowship of the Personnel Management Institute. Details next week -Editor



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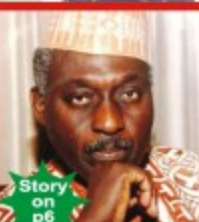


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Writers, Critics Pay Tribute To Awoonor



## Encomiums, As UniPort Hosts ITF Regional Meeting

By Otikor Samuel

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajienka, has charged the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) to keep up the good work of exposing students to the acquisition of practical knowledge through the Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) to complement classroom activities and better equip them in their various fields of study.

Professor Ajienka, who gave the charge when he received a delegation of the participating institutions in his office, penultimate Thursday, said the scheme offers students a rare opportunity to get hands-on training which would prepare them for the industry on graduation. He apologized for the disruption of the concluding part of the Orientation/Industrial Relations Day by protesting students at the Convocation Arena last April,

blaming it on a communication gap that would not be allowed to happen again.

Earlier, Leader of the delegation and ITF Area Manager for the Port Harcourt office, Mr Abdul-Rasaq Adeniran, said the meeting which pulled together officers from participating institutions in Bayelsa and Rivers States was aimed at charting a way forward for the scheme to achieve its operational objectives.

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# Whose National Dialogue?

**I**nconceivable! Incredible!! Ingenious!!! Our President is finally flowing with the current of public opinion at last. Mr. President is not clueless and bereft of good ideas as his opponents tended to portray him in the court of public opinion after all! Just call it what you will: Village Assembly or Town Hall Meeting, Sovereign National Conference, National Dialogue, Conference of Ethnic Nationalities of Peoples' Representatives or a deceptive Talk-shop of the Elite Class; it does not matter. What matters is that 11 wise men and two women have been inaugurated to fertilize the ground for what President Goodluck Jonathan calls National Dialogue. What is in a name you may ask those splitting hair over the appropriate name for the eagerly anticipated handshake across the Isles?

Conceptually, the demand for National Conferences across West and Central Africa gathered momentum in the 1990s, when self-flagellating dictators privatized the State and made themselves lords of the political estate to the exclusion of the people they were supposed to serve. Identity assertion manifested in retreat to ethnic cocoons with the proliferation of village associations, town unions, social clubs, old boys/girls associations and secret societies, amongst others, as an expression of corporate socio-political identity or survival instinct.

In Africa, the State is oppressive and violent to the core. When African rulers agree to allow the people the pleasure of a National Conference, they are only concerned with how to return to State authority as an exit option; while marginalized ethnic groups and progressive elements see such National congregations as possible end of the State. The demand by the masses for economic inclusion and the elite class for political participation resulted in multiparty systems in most dictatorial African States, such as Cameroon, Togo, Benin Republic, Central African Republic, Nigeria, Zaire, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Lesotho, Gabon, Congo and Chad. You are free to elongate the list. We don't all have to agree on the nomenclature, but there is a general chorus of agreement that the National Dialogue called by President Jonathan approximates what Francophone Africans call a 'second independence.' The Dialogue would enable us (the *talakawas*) to finally seek incorporation into the national mainstream without begging to be admitted by the WAZOBIA. After all, democracy thrives on strict adherence to the rule of law, accountability, transparency and respect for cultural and ethnic diversity.

But, come to think of it: what level and manner of representation are we expecting to have at Mr. President's National Dialogue? Especially in a country where authoritarian constraints are imposed on the people by their self-serving and hegemonic elite classes. Nobody should blame Uncle Bola Tinubu for wondering why Mr. President is suddenly interested in a national talk-shop in the first place. Tinubu wants a Conference of ethnic nationalities, while some respondents want a full-blown Sovereign National Conference. Mr. President chose his words very carefully; he must be a good student of Africa's not so palatable romance with the toxic nine letter word—"Sovereign." Let us look at some examples: ordinary people in parts of Africa bestirred themselves to challenge autocratic rule following independence and refusal of the new rulers to continue speaking the same democratic firebrand language they spoke against colonial rule.

The resultant effect was the demand for Sovereign National Conferences or "National Dialogue" (excuse me Mr. President). The ambiguity of the terms of reference for the just-inaugurated Committee shows

## Asks Williams Wodi

how impossible it would prove to navigate this ship. For expositional convenience, there is no agreement on the number of ethnic groups in Nigeria that would be eligible to attend the proposed Dialogue. Will my village Rumuigho be represented at the table? What is now obvious is that the elite class are bent on using the National Conference to subvert the genuine demand of the people for democratic reforms through a Sovereign National Conference (SNC). The National Dialogue proposed by President Jonathan on October 1, 2013, is understandably being treated with contempt and derision in some discerning quarters; while Government is saying there is "no no-go areas" at the same time as it is announcing that the sovereignty of Nigeria is non-negotiable. Some roads already have the "diversion" sign. Anyway, doublespeak is an accepted lexicon of African political discourse.

Let us look back on how the SNC evolved in some African countries in the 1990s. Mathieu Kerekou was

Interim Prime Minister, Cheiffon Amadou became President following a general election.

Kenneth Kaunda's pre-emptive strategy to retain power in copper-rich Zambia also backfired as he grudgingly conceded to the popular demand for a referendum in May, 1990. The opposition led by Frederick Chiluba defeated the old fox with 76 per cent of the vote. Kaunda was forcefully retired from politics.

Didier Ratsiraka faced rebellion from the Malagasy opposition coalition under *Force Vives*, which insisted on a National Conference. The coalition later annulled the sham election of 1989 in 1991. It set up a provisional government with retired General Jean Rakotoharison as President. In the election of 1993, Albert Zafy defeated Ratsiraka with a 67 per cent majority. Mali's democratic forces marched against Moussa Traore, who was arrested by Lt. Col. Amadou Traore. Amadou initiated a national Conference that mid-wifed the election of April 12 and 26, 1992 with Alpha Konare emerging as President. In Gabon, the bogus Omar Bongo thrived on superficial pretence to reforms. Sensing the groundswell of opposition to his autocratic

rule, he quickly convened a National Conference in March, 1990, which promptly legislated a multiparty system. It unfortunately did not whittle down Bongo's awesome powers. Paul Biya, like Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, is still presiding over his self-extinction in Cameroon.

President Nyasimbe Eyadema of Togo, who was used to reveling in manufactured adulation, was forced to accede to a National Conference that began in July, 1990. Eyadema was rattled

by the unaccustomed criticism and freedom that transpired on the floor of the Conference. He annulled the Conference on August 26, 1990 by Presidential decree, which delegates ignored and gave Togo a new constitution. They elected a Prime Minister and set up a Supreme Republican Council to run the government in a transitional phase. Claiming a *sore throat*, Eyadema excused himself from the closing ceremony of the Conference on August 28, 1991.

Kenya, Cameroon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, had similar democratic stillbirths as Togo. The case of Nigeria is too well-known to be rehearsed here. Should President Jonathan be weary of the Ides of National Dialogue? Professor Ben Nwabueze's withdrawal from the preparatory Committee is an ominous sign of what is to come. There is a rising tide of public indignation on the direction of the country and this National Conference will do nothing to douse the tension in the air. We are still a democracy without democrats as they say in this country. This hastily-conceived National Dialogue could either make us a better version of ourselves or blow up in our faces with its ruins as a monument to how not to build a nation. Welcome to the Dialogue folks!



President Jonathan (fifth left), Sambo (fourth right) with members of the Presidential Advisory Committee on National Dialogue and Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) Anyim Pius Anyim (back row right), after inauguration of the panel in Abuja

compelled to end power monopoly and convene a National Conference against opposition from his own inner cabinet. When it opened shop in February, 1990, delegates declared the Conference sovereign! It was too late for Kerekou to force back the gin into the bottle. The National Conference promptly transformed into the Benin National Assembly, annulled the old constitution and elected a Prime Minister, Nicéphore Soglo, who defeated Kerekou in the Presidential election that followed the Conference.

Cape Verde under President Aristide Pereira, who fought alongside the legendary Amílcar Cabral for the independence of Guinea Bissau in 1950, went the same way of democratic redemption. A nominally good reformer, Pereira initiated a constitutional reform in 1990, which culminated in a multiparty system in 1991. Aristide was, however, defeated in the Presidential poll by Carlos Veigo with assistance from citizens living abroad—especially in the Boston area of America.

In Niger Republic, Seyni Kountche made cosmetic concessions to pacify rampaging democratic forces, which compelled him to initiate a controlled civil rule programme in 1983. A "National Charter" set out to determine the ground rules for a new constitution, from which the agency for democratization emerged like a sphinx in the form of a National Council for Development with a draft constitution in 1987. Kountche died in November 1987 and was replaced by Ali Saibou, who pretended to love democracy more than the Greeks.

Saibou ignored the peoples' agitation for an SNC. Ordinary Nigeriens raised the money themselves to continue the Conference when Government cut off funds obviously to frustrate the talk-shop. The Conference which began on July 29, 1991, promptly declared itself sovereign, insisting that its decisions would be the supreme law of the land. It deposed the head of the Army, thus rendering President Saibou a political vegetable by dissolving his Government, with Directors-General directly reporting to the Conference.

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# Fiofori, FRCN To Partner UniPort On Documentary Series

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Receiving the team in his office, last Thursday, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajenka said, "Arts is one thing I take very seriously. I thought we should by now be having a Garden City Photos. We are into partnership Trend Television to establish a Film School in the University. We have a building in the old administrative block that would not only house Writers-in-Residence, but also Artist-in-Residence in an enabling environment to practice their trade. Professor Ajenka, who thanked the team for the visit, expressed optimism that the partnership would continue.

"We can work together in terms of developing Radio Programme. There is so much to do and we do not want to be leaving in isolation; we want to cultivate a symbiotic relationship with the larger society as a way of making our impact felt", the Vice-Chancellor disclosed.

Also speaking, initiator and Project Consultant, Mr. Fiofori said: "We have come to pay a courtesy visit on Management of the University of Port Harcourt, because we believe that the University has been over the years a very important stakeholder in the various segments we want to cover which include: History and Geography, Transport, Sports, Arts and Culture, Oil and Gas and also Business and Commerce.

"We admire the fact that the University has been producing First Class manpower in the Oil and Gas industry. The University of Port Harcourt through the theatre programme has produced a lot of actors and actresses for the Nigerian home video industry, known as *Nollywood*. We also acknowledge the fact that the University has a thriving Arts Village and a vibrant theatre life that dated back to the days of late Ola Rotimi. The entrepreneurial vision of the present administration is in top gear. We have come to appreciate the University, with a view to partnering it to achieve our lofty goal of transforming Port Harcourt into the undisputed



V-C, Prof Ajenka (second right) flanked by Dr Okofu (right), Fiofori and Prof Agberia (left)

entertainment capital of Nigeria and West Africa." Mr. Fiofori said, expressing gratitude to Management for the assurance to partner his organization on the project.

Mr. Fiofori, who is an accomplished Film Maker and Photographer, disclosed that the radio documentary series would examine specific sectors of development of the Garden City over a period of 100 years. "This project we are working is titled: "Port Harcourt at 100". Port Harcourt became 100 on August 30<sup>th</sup> this year, so FRCN South-South zone and I are working on this important project."

Also speaking, Taskforce Chairman, Mr. Anthony Okofu said the Radio documentary series is targeted at over 80 million listeners across the socio-cultural, political and economic groups in Nigeria, stating that the project would run 13 episodes.

"In addition to the documentary series, a

companion book of the same title Port Harcourt at 100" will be published. The book will contain full length interviews with participants, stakeholders in the Radio series, visual photographs, as well as advertisement and other relevant information, because you cannot celebrate Port Harcourt without the past leaders and foot soldiers, who made the strategic city what it has turned out to be".

In a sideline interview, Occupant of the Prince (Dr) Yemisi Adedoyin Shyllon Chair in Fine Arts and Design, Professor John Agberia said: "We are going to work in the area of child development in Fine Art, Textile and printed materials in the Niger Delta in the Arts and we would also bring in other specialists to ensure that this programme is achieved to specification as envisaged by the organizers."

## Registrar Donates Air Conditioners To Athletes' Hostel

By Ethel Timi-Johnson

As part of personal efforts aimed at boosting morale of athletes, the Registrar, Mrs Matilda Nnodim, has donated four split units of half horse power Air Conditioners to the common room in the athletes' hostel, in the Sports Village, University Park.

Briefing *UniPort Weekly* on the donation last Tuesday, Mrs Nnodim said that she was prompted to make the donation based on the outstanding achievements recorded by the athletes at successive competitions, starting with the Nigerian Universities Games Association (NUGA) in 2004. "These athletes have consistently made the University proud and so I thought it befitting to make their common room very cozy and comfortable for relaxation. There is a Hall of Fame chronicling the history of sporting participation and victories. It's a beautiful sight to behold", she added, promising to continue support for *Team UniPort* to the best of her ability.

Stressing that she was personally motivated to make the common room which has been designated as a place of relaxation more comfortable for the all conquering team, the



Mrs Nnodim, Registrar

Registrar called on public spirited individuals and organizations to contribute to lifting the

standard of the hostel through donations of furniture and other gift items as a way of encouraging the Team to even greater victories in future competitions. "These athletes work hard in between lectures and practice—a no mean feat for even the most brilliant students anywhere in the world. I want to encourage people who have a similar passion for *Team UniPort* to support the athletes to continue to give of their very best. I can attest that items donated would be used judiciously and not be vandalized, because I can readily vouch for the discipline and great maintenance culture of the Sports Management Committee under the capable leadership of Professor Mark Anikpo, Professor Matthew Wegwu and the Director of Sports, Dr Ken Anugweje, amongst others. The athletes are students of integrity and good character on and off the pitch", Mrs Nnodim remarked.

Commending the efforts of the Director of Sports, Dr Ken Anugweje, she noted that a greater part of the sporting victories recorded so far could be attributed to his untiring effort at grooming the athletes and the high level of discipline that he has instilled in the Team. "The level of maturity and discipline these athletes exhibit during outings make other universities go green with envy and the happiest part is that they also emerge victorious in the end", she added.

The University of Port Harcourt Branch of the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian University (SSANU) has commended Management of the University for clearing the outstanding salaries owed non-teaching staff by the Federal Government.

Chairman of the branch, Mr Bikume Syder made the commendation in an interview with *UniPort Weekly*, last Tuesday, stating that "there is excitement on Campus over the development, because families were kept in serious suspense while the situation lasted. So, when the August and September salaries were paid, we all heaved a big sigh of relief."

"As a Union, we greatly appreciate the positive steps taken by Management in ensuring that workers were paid their due entitlements, because we were also aware that the Federal Government had not fulfilled its statutory obligations to Nigerian Universities, resulting in the declaration of a strike action by our National Secretariat. We are indeed appreciative of the Joint Action Committee (JAC), which comprises SSANU, National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT) and Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU). I want to, on behalf of these three Unions under whose auspices the agitation for payment of salaries was made, say a big thank you to Management of the University under the capable leadership of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajiinka".

The Chairman disclosed that the relationship

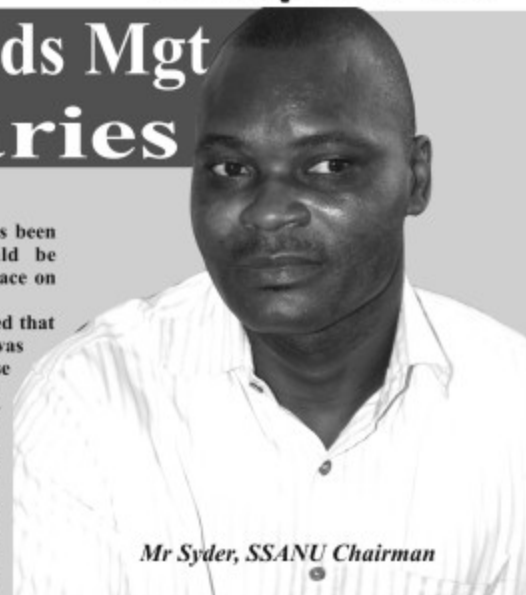
## SSANU Lauds Mgt On Salaries

By Mercy Adeniji

between Management and the Unions has been very cordial, promising that it would be maximized to the fullest for industrial peace on Campus.

On Earned Allowances, Mr Syder disclosed that the 2009 Agreement on that component was meant to better the lot of workers, whose take home pay needs upgrading to enable them put in their very best and take care of their families. The Chairman noted that the Implementation Monetary Committee (IMC) has taken a position that on or before 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2013, Universities should dispense with the issue of Earned Allowances as released by the Federal Government. "As a branch, we are appealing to our Management and the Committee to expedite action on the contentious Allowances before the stipulated deadline, so that our University would not be listed as one of those to be sanctioned by the National Secretariat of SSANU."

Mr Syder appealed to Government to release Personnel Grant owed to the Universities for the



Mr Syder, SSANU Chairman

month of September, to make the issue of strike a thing of the past in the university system. He, however, warned that the UniPort branch of SSANU may be compelled to embark on a solidarity strike with its members in other universities if Government refuses to pay them their salaries.

## World Teachers' Day 2013

# Wither Nigerian Teachers?

As teachers the world over mark World Teachers Day, HUMPHREY OGU examines the place of Nigerian teachers in the comity of nations

It is a common saying that 'no nation can rise above its educational system'. It is in realisation of this self-evident truth that every nation works hard to ensure that its educational system meets minimum global benchmarks. This, however, can only be achieved through the collective efforts of policymakers and teachers.

It is on the basis of the foregoing that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) set aside 5<sup>th</sup> October every year as a day to mark World Teachers Day. This is marked alongside its partners, including the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and Education International (EI).

"A Call for Teachers!" is the theme of the 2013 World Teachers' Day.

"Since teachers are the most powerful force for equity, access and quality education, a call for teachers means calling for quality education for all." That was how UNESCO explained the theme in a message on its website.

"Quality education offers hope and the promise of a better standard of living. There is no stronger foundation for lasting peace and sustainable development than a quality education provided by well trained, valued, supported and motivated teachers," the statement added.

In the words of UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova: "Teachers' professional knowledge and skills are the most important factor for quality education. This World Teachers' Day, we call for teachers to receive stronger training upfront and continual professional development and support..."

Is the Nigerian teacher part of the world teachers talked about in the above quotes? The answer to the question is obvious. But it is difficult to

understand how the stakeholders in the sector have worked towards actualisation of the vision of the UNESCO. As at the time of filing this report, there were outcries over very poor teaching and learning situation in the country. Some teachers are currently on strike, while others are threatening to go on strike.

A few days ago, the

umbrella body of teachers at the primary and secondary levels of education—the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) threatened to embark on a solidarity strike with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), which has been on industrial action for three months now. Their counterparts in the polytechnics have also downed tools.

The problems of the Nigerian teachers range from poor condition of service to the presence of semi-literate personnel masquerading as teachers in the classrooms of various institutions of learning across the length and breadth of the country. Worried by this situation, Governor Adams Oshiomhole of Edo State personally assessed teachers' competence in his State. And to the utter amazement of all, an illiterate woman was shown to the world in what seemed like a farce; but it was a very serious matter. That was just one case!

Surprisingly, while so many young graduates with the requisite teaching qualifications are walking the streets in search of jobs, the story elsewhere is that the educational system is crying for more hands in the teaching profession.

Why a call for teachers? This is a question asked by UNESCO, and the answer? "It is because there is a huge shortage of professional, well-trained and well-supported teachers to achieve better quality education. The challenge of recruiting teachers does not lie just in the numbers, but in the provision of quality teachers. Far too often, teachers remain under-qualified, poorly paid and with low status in a society where politicians are kings." That was UNESCO's answer to its own question.

"At UNESCO headquarters in Paris, the focus of the 2013 World Teachers' Day celebration on 4 October will be on tackling the teacher gap, barriers to better quality education and teachers' role in developing globally-minded citizens," the UNESCO message added.

One only hopes that Nigerian teachers are part of world teachers being referred to in the UNESCO report. One also hopes that the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), Ministries of Education and other stakeholders would heed UNESCO's clarion call for qualified, service-oriented professional teachers to save our educational system.



Prof Ebi Bio Awotua-Efebo, Dean Faculty of Education



As part of efforts aimed at expanding the operations strides at the Gladys Cookey International Daycare and Nursery School, the University of Port Harcourt Women Association (UPWA), has laid the foundation stone for a two-storey multi-purpose hall with provision for office spaces, primary school, auditorium and a computer centre, amongst other facilities.

Performing the Turning of Sod ceremony, last Friday at the project site inside the school premises along Aluu Drive, University Park, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajienka, commended the Association for initiating the laudable project, which he said would expand the scope of activities of the Centre and add to the aesthetics of the University. Disclosing that a Children's Park would soon be commissioned to serve as a recreational centre, Professor Ajienka expressed gratitude to UPWA for its numerous contributions towards the growth of the School in particular and the University generally.

The Vice-Chancellor called for a functional partnership between the Faculty of Education and the School to enhance service delivery in line with the lofty dream of the founding fathers in establishing the school. "let us all join hand to ensure the speedy completion of the project so that you will be proud to show off an edifice that was borne out of the collective efforts of members in future", he advised the Association.

UPWA President, Mrs. Mercy Ajienka, who disclosed that the proposed multi purpose hall was part of plans to incorporate Montessori training into the School's curriculum, said that when completed, the hall would also provide office spaces for teaching staff and a standard hall for social and academic activities.

"The multipurpose hall would provide accommodation to meet the growing number of children seeking admission into the School, which now offers quality education to children of staff and other clients. It would also provide facilities that would boost extracurricular activities", she said, disclosing that a Primary School section had been added to the School to cater for the growing needs of school age children in the neighbourhood.

Also speaking, Secretary of the Association, Mrs. Caroline Nnabuo, thanked Management of the University for supporting the activities of the Association, disclosing that a formal launching of the multi-million naira project would hold in December. She urged public-spirited individuals, organizations and government to donate generously towards the speedy completion of the project.



V-C, Prof Ajienka (right) laying the foundation stone, while UPWA members and Senior Officers of the University watch on. Inset: UPWA EXCO and V-C (centre)

## V-C Turns Sod On UPWA Multipurpose Hall Project

By Ethel Timi-Johnson

The Contractor handling the project, Mr. Hyacinth Nmecha of Hytech Global Investment Resources Nigeria Limited, promised to deliver the exact prototype of the

building, adding that he shared UPWA's vision of providing quality Montessori education to Nigerian youths. He assured the Association of judicious use of available resources to ensure timely completion and delivery of the project.

## Teacher Education Centre Trains UDSS Teachers

As a way of sharpening staff skills to impact optimally on students who recently resumed for the 2013/14 session, Management of the University Demonstration Secondary School (UDSS) in concert with the Centre for Teacher Education and In-Service Training (CTEIT) mounted a two-day training workshop for teaching staff of UDSS.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the training exercise which held penultimate weekend at the new Multipurpose Hall of the School, Dean, Faculty of Education, Professor Ebi Bio Awotua-Efebor, who said that the world is fast evolving with new technologies that aid teaching and learning, affirmed that:

By Otikor Samuel

"Students today have access to information more than most of their teachers. They get these pieces of information through the Internet, television and other new technologies," expressing hope that the training would offer the teachers a rare opportunity to refresh and learn new teaching methodologies.

The Dean, who declared the Workshop open, praised the Principal, Mr Ogechi Anele for initiating progressive measures aimed at restoring UDSS to its former pride of place amongst Secondary Schools in the country, describing him as a diligent

administrator, who is determined to leave a good legacy in the School.

In her speech, Acting Director of the Centre, Dr Abiodun Ogunkunle, who was represented by Dr John Dike, recalled that UDSS is the first beneficiary of activities of CTEIT, believing that the workshop would contribute to the intellectual development of participants. The Director expressed satisfaction with the collaboration, advising the trainees to fully utilize what they learnt at the Workshop in the classrooms.

Earlier in his address, the Principal, Mr Ogechi, said that the training was intended to expose both new and old teaching staff of the School to latest teaching techniques. "When I assumed office, I found out that there were deficiencies in presentation, evaluation and methodology of lesson notes of some teachers. It was on that basis that I requested the Board of Governors to approve the training to enable all the teachers perform optimally in the line of duty," the Principal said.

Mr Ogechi, who was highly delighted for the realisation of the workshop, expressed gratitude to God and the Board for working closely with the administration of the School.

Goodwill messages were presented by the Associate Dean, Faculty of Education, Professor Chinenyerem Madumere-Obike, Professor Oledimma Nwanna-Nzewunwa, Drs Morufu Oyebamiji and Nkechi Abraham, while Drs Cecilia Okoro, Gospel Kpee, Abdulrahman Yusuf presented topics on "Interpretation of the School Curriculum in Secondary Schools, School-Based Assessment in Secondary Schools, Effective Classroom Management in Secondary Schools, Using ICT to facilitate Record Keeping in Secondary School, Innovative Practices in Teaching Secondary School Subjects and Practical Demonstrations of Innovative Practices for Teaching, amongst other topics.



Participants at the workshop. Inset: Dean, Education, Prof Awotua-Efebor, Principal, Mr Anele (5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> from right) and others

Cont'd from p1

# Encomiums, As UniPort Hosts ITF Regional Meeting

"We rotate our meetings among participating institutions in Rivers and Bayelsa States and it is the turn of University of Port Harcourt to host us. We are grateful for the warm reception always accorded us each time we visit this great University. UniPort, I must continue to say, is a place to be. There is no time that we come here without being warmly received and it is to the credit of the Vice-Chancellor, who by his background as a Petroleum Engineer, values what we are doing at SIWES," the Port Harcourt Area Manager said, urging Management of the University to sustain the cordial relationship for the overall good of the students and society.

Also speaking, Director of SIWES Unit, Professor Regina Ogali, who is also an Internal Member of the Governing Council of the University of Port Harcourt, stressed the importance of the meeting to the activities of SIWES in the coming year. Professor Ogali, who also thanked the Vice-Chancellor for his support, reiterated the Unit's commitment to ensure that students make judicious use of the scheme.

Other SIWES officers who were part of the delegation included: Idongesit Akpan (Area Manager, Yenagoa), Emmanuel Isiwu (Head of Training, ITF, Port Harcourt), Mrs Gloria Abeki (Head of Training, ITF, Yenagoa), Pomark Kaatpo (Head of Finance and Account, Port Harcourt), Chijioke Ikenwa (Head of Finance and Account, Yenagoa), Samuel Emovwerha (SIWES Accountant, Yenagoa), Dr Chinogorm Chuku (SIWES Director, RIVCAS), Zuokemefa Patience (Head SIWES, Bayelsa College Arts Science, Yenagoa), Adesina



Profs Longmas Wapmuk, ITF DG and Regina Ogali, SIWES Director, UniPort



Olufunmilayo (Ag. SIWES Director, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt), Evangel

Augustine (SIWES Director, RivPoly) and Joseph Kidi (SIWES officer, RivPoly).

## Writers, Critics Pay Tribute to Awoonor

**Kofi Awoonor was a leading African writer and poet of Ghanaian origin, whose life was cut short by Islamic militants at a shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya, last September. How do the UniPort Literati perceive the demise of this great writer? asks HUMPHREYOGU**

The name Kofi Awoonor means different things to different people. To the University of Port Harcourt community, it is one name that has a pride of place in the literary annals of the University. This is because the renowned poet was among distinguished writers that graced the maiden edition of Garden City Literary Festival (GCLF) co-hosted by the institution in September 2008. Other guests at that edition of the festival included Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka, Elechi Amadi, Okey Ndiye, amongst others.

It was during that visit to the University that most Nigerians met him in person for the first time and probably the last time. Of Course, they have been encountering him in novels and poetry on the review pages for several decades before that September. The

Ghanaian-born novelist was on what looked like a similar trip to Nairobi Kenya, last September, when he met his untimely death in the hands of Islamic fundamentalists known as *Al Shaaba*. That was six Septembers later!

Dr Gabriel Okara is the oldest living African Writer today. Describing Awoonor as an outstanding writer and poet from Ghana, whom he first met during a literary conference at the famous *Taj Mahal* Hotel in New Delhi, India, Okara recalls: "Awoonor was instrumental to my becoming a member of the Pan African Writers Association (PAWA) based in Ghana."

Okara, who is a Writer-in-Residence in the University, notes that "although Awoonor's death will not take away anything from the growth of African literature,

he will continue to remain a reference point; he will always remain a role model to up-and-coming writers not only in Ghana, but also in the whole of Africa."

Another Writer-in-Residence in the University and a frontline novelist and playwright, Dr Elechi Amadi observes: "Obviously, he was one of the pioneers of African literature; there is no doubt about that. I didn't know him intimately, but I have read him—I have read *This Earth, My Brother*. I have also taught it at the degree level and I find the book very fascinating. It is a book structured in a very unusual way, but very fascinating. He was a very great contributor to African literature. His death was a terrible tragedy worsened by the circumstances in which he died."

Chidi Maduka is a Professor of Comparative Literature and a notable critic of African literature. He says of the literary sunset in Africa: "Kofi Awoonor was a great cultural nationalist, who wanted to recover the essence of African culture, which was mutilated by European colonialists," citing his exploits in *Ewe* oral poetry. "He was a great prose-poet, although this has not been fully explored by critics. Other African writers in this category include *Okot p'Bitek*, Gabriel Okara, and Mazisi Kunene." Maduka, who is also known as the meta-critic, urges younger writers to emulate Awoonor, especially in the area of infusing oral techniques in their works.

Dr Obari Gomba is a Lecturer in the Department of English Studies and a rising star in the African literary firmament, whose latest poetry volume is on the shortlist of the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) Prize for Literature and the Association of Nigerian Authors Prize for Poetry. "In his modesty, Kofi Awoonor is a lamp to the world. I speak in present tense, because those who have killed his flesh cannot extinguish his lamp. His ideas will outlive the mullahs of terror," he says.

On a personal level, I first encountered the Awoonor in his poem, "Songs of Sorrow", which was in the Literature-in-English syllabus of the West African Examinations Council's Senior School Certificate Examination, when I took the examination. I drew a lot of inspiration from that very poem. It was only at the maiden edition of GCLF in September 2008, that I met him in person in the University of Port Harcourt. As the great poet takes his exit from the stage, we can only take solace in the fact that: "The Firewood of this world is for only those who can take heart..." as Awoonor says in "Songs of Sorrow". So, let's take heart! Adieu, great bard!



R-L: Drs Okara, Amadi and Prof Maduka

## GUIDE POST

## BRIEFS FROM OTHER VARSITIES

## APPOINTMENT

**Professor Edith Elenwo**, Department of Plant Science & Biotechnology, Faculty of Biological Sciences, reappointed *Director*, Centre for Bioresources Development and Conservation. The re-appointment is for two years and terminates on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2015.

## STUDY LEAVE

**Mrs Ifeoma Asianuba**, Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering, granted *Extension of Study Leave* with pay for another year.

**Mr. Edward Membere**, Department of Environmental Engineering, Faculty of Infrastructure Systems Engineering, granted *Change of Study Leave Commencement Date* to enable him pursue a post-doctoral degree at the Newcastle University, Upon-Tyne, United Kingdom, effective September 2013 to August, 2016.

## REVIEW OF STATUS

**Mr Diepiriye Okujagu**, Department of Geology, Faculty of Physical & Information Technology, College of Natural and Applied Sciences, promoted *Assistant Lecturer*, effective 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2011. This supersedes our earlier publication.

## STOP PRESS

## SECOND REGISTRY DAY CELEBRATION

The second Registry Day holds on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 with a Keynote Address on *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Registry in an Emergent Economy: Challenges and Prospects* to be delivered by Mr Shodimu Oluwa-Rotimi, retired Registrar of University of Lagos. A *Thanksgiving Service* will hold on Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 at Chapel of The Annunciation, Catholic Chaplaincy, University Park.

## UNN HONOURS PIONEER SET 50 YEARS AFTER GRADUATION

**F**ifty years after their graduation, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, has rolled out the drums to honour the 1963 class. Vice-Chancellor, Bartho Okolo, said that the University is celebrating the pioneering set because it earned its reputation for excellence based on their performance on graduation, adding that the Golden Jubilee celebration was part of activities to mark the 53<sup>rd</sup> Founders' Day. Records show that 150 persons graduated from the University in 1963. UNN was the first full-fledged wholly indigenous university in Nigeria, founded by the legendry Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe.

## COVENANT, UNIVERSITY OF JO'BURG PARTNER ON RESEARCH

**C**ovenant University (CU) and the University of Johannesburg are seeking platforms to establish research collaboration. This was the high point of a meeting between a 13-man delegation from the University of Johannesburg led by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ihron Rensburg and top Management of Covenant University.

CU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Charles Ayo, said that the University is desirous of proffering solutions to certain issues that have plagued Nigeria and the black man.

## NUC SET TO TIDY VARSITY SYSTEM

**T**he Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission (NUC), Professor Julius Okojie, has said that the Commission is set to tidy the university system to enable it stand the test of time.

Okojie, made the assertion while declaring open the Nigeria University Doctorate Award Scheme (NUDTAS) in Abuja. He noted that there is still hope for the system despite the various challenges plaguing the

education sector.

## WEBSTER VARSITY TO COMMENCE ADMISSION 2014

**W**ebster University, New Accra, Ghana has been approved by the Higher Learning Centre (HLC) in the United States to offer dually accredited degrees for its graduates. Following the approval by HLC, Webster University graduates will hold degrees that will be recognized in both Ghana and US. In addition to its Ghana and North America locations, Webster University has traditional residential campuses in Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United Kingdom.



Nyesom Wike  
Ag Minister of Education

DATE	TEMPERATURE HI LO (°C)	HUMIDITY (%)	WIND DIRECTION	RAIN (MM)	SUNRISE AND SUNSET (AM) (PM)	SUMMARY
SUNDAY, 13 Oct, 2013	32.0 25.0	70	NE	8.8	6:18 6:19	Thunderstorm predicted. Partly sunny and warm day forecasted.
MONDAY, 14 Oct, 2013	32.0 24.0	73	N	16.5	6:17 6:18	Thunderstorm expected. Mostly cloudy and warm day forecasted.
TUESDAY 15 Oct, 2013	32.0 24.0	80	NE	17.8	6:17 6:18	Strong thunderstorm expected. Mostly cloudy and warm day forecasted.
WEDNESDAY 16 Oct, 2013	31.0 23.0	79	NE	-	6:19 6:18	Mostly cloudy and warm day expected.
THURSDAY, 19 Oct, 2013	32.0 23.0	77	NE	5.6	6:17 6:17	Isolated thunderstorm anticipated. Partly sunny and warm day is expected.
FRIDAY, 11 Oct, 2013	32.0 23.0	80	N	4.1	6:17 6:17	Thunderstorm expected early in the day. Partly sunny and warm day predicted.
SATURDAY 12 Oct, 2013	32.0 23.0	77	NE	5.4	6:17 6:17	Isolated thunderstorm expected. Mostly cloudy and warm day forecasted.



## 26<sup>th</sup> Annual CON Confab

Curriculum Organisation of Nigeria (CON), hosted its 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in the University on 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2013, Pictures below as captured by **MITCHELL EBI-EKIYOR** show scenes from the event.



Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Admin), Prof Ethelbert Nduka, welcoming delegates during the courtesy visit



Professor Nduka handing over copies of UniPort Weekly to CON President, Prof Akon Esu



CON Ex-Officio, Okorn Osam, Treasurer, Joseph Ukwungwu, and Editor-in-Chief, Prof Theresa Kanno



CON President, Professor Esu



Chairman, Local Organising Committee, Dr Abiodun Ogunkunle



University Librarian, Dr Obiageli Nwodo, representative of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Joseph Ajenka



Prof Mike Maduabum delivering his address



CON Delegates during the courtesy visit



Guests at the High Table



A cross section of participants



Keynote speaker, Prof Maduabum, CON President, Prof Esu and University Librarian, Dr Nwodo standing for prayers



Group Photograph of CON Delegates with Principal Officers of the University