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Proceedings Of The Hybrid Inaugural Congress Of

SIBRED



The Sahelian Institute for Bamboo Research and Entrepreneurship Development

Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU),
P.M.B. 5025, Awka, Nigeria

THEME:

Unlocking African Bamboo Value Chains For Sustainable Development

Venue: Online and Onsite at Awka Window On America Hall, NAU, Awka

Held on: Thursday, 23rd November, 2023

Time: 11 AM - 3.30 PM

SIBRED's Initiator/Founding Director: Ir. John Agbo OGBODO

Email: sibred@dir.unizik.edu.ng

Central Planning Committee (CPC) Membership

1. **Prof. Ejetuluchukwu OBI – Chair, Central Planning Committee (CPC)**
   SIBRED's Co-Initiator and Deputy Provost, College of Health Sciences, NAU
2. **Prof. Nkiru Theresa MELUDU – Member**
   Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, NAU, Awka
3. **Ms. Roseline Nzube IKEH-UNEKWE – Member/ Secretary (CPC)**
   Head of Admin., Department of Forestry and Wildlife, NAU, Awka
4. **Dr. Temple Nneamaka NWANKWO – Team Lead, Rapporteurs**
   Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, NAU, Awka
5. **Dr. Dr. Mohammed KAITA – Member, Sub-Committee of Rapporteurs**
6. **Dr. Nma Okechukwu OKOROJI – Madam of Ceremony (MC)**
   Department of Cooperative Economics and Management, NAU, Awka
7. **Mr. Alfred AJAYI – Master of Ceremony (MC)**
   Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Awka Station, Mgbakwu
8. **Mrs. Chizoba CHIOKE – Chair, Ushering & Registration Sub-Committee**
   Department of Forestry and Wildlife, NAU, Awka
9. **Mr. Iroka F. CHISOM – Member, Ushering Registration Sub-Committee**
   Department of Botany, NAU, Awka
10. **Mr. Paschal Oshen ODEY – Chair, Venue Subcommittee**
    Department of Forestry and Wildlife, NAU, Awka
11. **Mrs. Nkem C. OKAFOR – Chair, Refreshment Sub - Committee**
    Department of Forestry and Wildlife, NAU, Awka
12. **Mr. Christopher Iordepuun AGAH – Member, Venue Subcommittee**
    SIBRED's Technical Assistant
13. **Mr. Matthew Adoga AGAMA – Chair, Awards Sub-Committee**
    Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze, Nigeria
14. **Mr. Ebuka Augustine UGWU – Member, ICT Subcommittee**
    SIBRED's Program Officer (Agroforestry)
15. **Mrs. Amarachukwu Sophia ANAGBOR - Member, Awards Sub-Committee**
    SIBRED Program Officer (Bamboo for wildlife nutrition)

SIBRED's Student members of the CPC

1. Ngozi Blessing OGAMBA
2. Nora Uchechukwu EJINKONYE
3. Nelly I. UMEH
4. Olivia Ugochi JOHN
5. Mesoma NWOKOYE
6. Uchenna OKEKE
7. Jennifer OBIAMALU

Introduction

1. One milestone of the Project-200 policy thrust of this university's administration of Professor Charles Okechukwu Esimone, FAS - the 6th Substantive Vice Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU), Awka in Nigeria – is the establishment of the **Sahelian Institute for Bamboo Research and Entrepreneurship Development (SIBRED)** as the First University–based Bamboo and Rattan Research Directorate outside the Continent of Asia.
2. Consequently, **Ir. John Agbo Ogbodo** of the Department of Forestry and Wildlife in the Faculty of Agriculture is appointed as **SIBRED's Founding Director**.
3. Accordingly, Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNIZIK), Awka in conjunction with the International Network on Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR), the Federal Ministry of Environment, Abuja and a Non-Governmental Organization, the Sustainable TransEnvironment International Foundation (STEi Foundation); inaugurated this first university-based Bamboo Research and Entrepreneurship Development Institute in Africa on Thursday, 23rd November, 2023 at a hybrid (i.e. online and onsite) event at **Awka Window on America Directorate's Building** which is located directly opposite the Faculty of Engineering, Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU), Awka in Anambra State, Nigeria between the hours of 9:30 AM and 3:30 PM.
4. The SIBRED's inaugural hybrid event had the theme: **Unlocking African Bamboo Value Chains For Sustainable Development.** It was chaired by the Honourable Minister of State for Environment, **Dr. Ishaq Salako** with the Vice Chancellor of UNIZIK, **Prof. Charles Esimone** as the Chief Host while the co-hosts were the Federal Director of Forestry at Federal Ministry of Environment Abuja, **Mrs. Hajara Sami,** the Regional Director for INBAR West African Office in Ghana, **Mr. Michael Kwaku** and the Director of

INBAR Central Africa Regional Office (CARO) - **Mr. Rene Kaam**. The Keynote Speaker was the Vice Chancellor of Dominion University Ibadan - **Prof. Abel O. Olorunnisola**. The Chinese Ambassador to Nigeria, His Excellency, **Mr. Cui Jianchun** together with His Excellency, the Deputy Governor of Anambra State, **Dr. Onyekachi Ibezim**, were both the Distinguished Guests of Honour at the event.

Purpose of the hybrid Event

5. The purpose of the inaugural ceremony was to officially unveil SIBRED to the international community of bamboo policy-makers, scientists, researchers, investors, non-governmental organizations, prospective students; most especially, governments and the general stakeholders working within the bamboo and rattan sectors in 16 Sahelian Africa countries of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal including their bordering nations of Benin Republic, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo.
6. The day's activity began with a **familiarization visit** to the Vice Chancellor (VC) of Nnamdi Azikiwe University (also known as UNIZIK) by a SIBRED delegation comprising of some early arrived dignitaries including members of the SIBRED's Central Planning Committee (CPC) at the VC's Conference Hall by 10:00 AM.



Group photograph with the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Charles Esimone, FAS flanked by the SIBRED's Director – John Agbo Ogbodo (to the left) and the Keynote Speaker – Prof. Abel O. Olorunnisola followed by Dara Chijioke Okechukwu – the Chairman of the Association of Heads of Federal Establishments in Anambra State (to the right); shortly after the courtesy call on the UNIZIK's VC.

Dignitaries Present at the event

7. **Virtual attendance**: The Chairman of the Occasion who doubles as the Honourable Minister of State for Environment, Dr. Ishaq Salako was represented **online** by the incumbent Federal Director of Forestry at the Federal Ministry of Environment, Abuja - Mrs. Hajara Umar Sami; including: Mrs. Alaba Modupeola Adzandeh (INBAR National Focal Point for Nigeria), Mr. Micheal Kwaku (Regional Director for INBAR West African Office in Ghana), Ms. Diana Doheny (SIBRED's Board Founding member from the USA), Mr. Ran Lichtner (Director of the Bamboo Centre in Israel), Mr. Samir Jamatia (Bamboo Technologist and Member, Indian Government National Bamboo Development Committee in Barjala, India), Prof. Jerome O. Ihuma (Director of Academic Planning, Bingham University, Karu, Nasarawa State), Prof. Nkiru Theresa Meludu – Incumbent Treasurer, Association of the Faculties of Agriculture in Nigerian Universities and, Mr. Ukeme Joshua Nyah (National President of the Bamboo Farmers, Processors and Marketers of the Federal Ministry of Trade and Investment, Abuja).



Right to Left: Prof. Charles Okechukwu Esimone, FAF (VC, Unizik), Dara Chijioke Okechukwu (Chair, Association of Heads of Federal Establishments in Anambra State) and Prof. Mathew N. Ono (representing Dean, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, COOU)

8. **Onsite attendees** included: the Chief Host of the Occasion and Vice Chancellor of UNIZIK - Prof. Charles Esimone, FAS; the Keynote Speaker and Vice Chancellor of Dominion University in Ibadan, Prof.



Prof. Ebele Ogbuagu and Prof. Josephat Ogbuagu 1st and 2nd respectively (back row), while Dr. Innocent C. Ezeomedo is 1st (front row)

Abel Olajide Olorunnisola; an awardee and the outgoing Vice Chancellor of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU), Igbariam - Prof. Greg Chukwudi Nwakoby who was represented by Dr. Innocent C. Ezeomedo; the Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences at COOU – Prof. Leonard Muoghalu (awardee) who also was represented by Prof. Mathew Nonyelu Ono– the Director of Open Space Allocation Directorate at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; and the Spiritual Director at this event who is the Rector of Pope John Paul II Catholic Major Seminary Okpuno, Awka – Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Cyril Udebunu (awardee). Other onsite attendees were: Dara Chijioke Okechukwu (awardee) – the Chairman of the Heads of Federal Establishments in Anambra State *cum* Anambra State Coordinator of the Raw Material Research and Development Council (RMRDC), Awka; the Director General of the Standard Organization of Nigeria (awardee), presented by Mr. Emmanuel Hussaini – S.O.N's State Coordinator Awka Office; Director General of the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (awardee) as represented by Mr. Celestine O. Nwokocha of the NESREA's Anambra Field Office; the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture - Prof. Cordelia Ebenebe, the former Provost of the College of Education (Technical) Umunze - Prof. Josephat Ogbuagu and his wife, Prof. Ebele Ogbuagu including Prof. Charles



Cross section of junior and senior students at FSTC, Awka led by their chemistry teacher – Mr. Friday Usang (in oxblood jacket)



Faces of some Police Officers' Wives Association (POWA) members at the event

Ishiwu of Food Science and Technology (FST) at UNIZIK, Associate Prof. Paul Okolie – Director of Chisco Transportation Studies; Rev. Sr. Associate Professor Adaoma Igwedibia – Deputy Director (TETFund), Associate Prof. Tochukwu Matthew Oguegbe – Deputy Director (Centre for Sustainable Development), and the HOD of Technology and Vocational Education in the Faculty of Education – Dr. Francisca N. Nnajiofor. Numerous members of the Anambra State Police Command of the Police Officers' Wives Association (POWA) and students of the Federal Science and Technical College (FSTC), Awka graced the epoch-marking event. Also present were the National President of the Bamboo Farmers Association of Nigeria at the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Abuja – Engr. Chief John Ajie Ogwu (KSM), Dr. Nma O. Okorji – National President of the Coconut Farmers Association of Nigeria, Alfred Ajayi of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) and Mr. Agama Matthew Adoga – a lecturer with the Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze who is also a Program Officer of Sustainable TransEnvironment International Foundation (STEi Foundation).



The yellow robed National President of the Bamboo Farmers Association of Nigeria – Engr. Chief John Ajie Ogwu (KSM) seated among the participants at the venue in Awka



The Agbogidi XXIII of UNIZIK flanked by the student queen and traditional prime minister

In the same vein, various Heads of Departments from the Faculty of Agriculture of UNIZIK attended the event, including: Dr. Eunice Ezembu (Food Science and Technology), Dr. Leonard Ugwuowo (Animal Science and Technology), Dr. Chinwe Isibor (Agricultural

Economics and Extension), Dr. Anselm E. Egwunatum who represented the HOD (Forestry and Wildlife), Dr. Akudo Onunwa who represented the HOD (Soil Science and Land Resources Management) as well as the immediate past HODs of Agricultural Economics and Extension and that of Crop Science and Horticulture Department - Associate Prof. Chinyere Charity Okeke and Associate Prof. Okorie O. Ndukwu, respectively. Dr. Tope Adeyemisi Victor-Adulogu who is the immediate past ASUU Faculty Representative for the Faculty of Agriculture and the Student Igwe – Azodo Chizotele (*Agbogidi XXIII* of UNIZIK) together with his cabinet members; attended the occasion.

Participants at the event

9. The participants were drawn from bamboo and rattan stakeholders within and outside Africa, ranging from International Network on Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR), investors, research Centres, relevant line governmental ministries, department and agencies (MDAs), the academia, national commodity associations, nongovernmental organization, police officers' wives' association (POWAR) and students. In total, over 125 participants attended the event (online and physical), comprising of 75 females and 50.



Cross-section of some onsite participants at the SIBRED's commissioning event held at Awka Window on America

Opening Prayer

10. The opening prayer was said by the Spiritual Director at the SIBRED's inaugural ceremony who is the Rector of Pope John Paul II Catholic Major Seminary Okpuno, Awka – Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Cyril Udebunu at 11:05 AM. After which, there was breaking of kola nuts by Prof. M.N. Ono.



Prof. M.N. Ono performing the kola nut rites in line with Igbo culture

Welcome Address by the SIBRED's Director – John A. Ogbodo

11. In his welcome address, the Founding Director of the Sahelian Institute for Bamboo Research and Entrepreneurship Development (SIBRED), Ir. John Agbo Ogbodo welcomed the dignitaries and participants to the occasion. SIBRED's Founding Director described his appointment as an uncommon one in the history of UNIZIK, and appreciated the Vice Chancellor for allowing his vision to see the light of the day. According to Ogbodo, "SIBRED aims at promoting bamboo research for innovations, industrialization and entrepreneurship development in Africa. Ogbodo further expressed, quote: "as a professional forester, I can confidently say that the whisper of bamboo in African forests has now become a roar like a lion". He added, "Asian nations, especially China, garners the largest portion of benefits from bamboo-based sectors including everything from luxury flooring and cuisines to paper manufacturing and scaffolding. Hence, there is dire demand for bamboo as raw materials. But, prior to SIBRED establishment, there is no such bamboo research entity in Africa. Congratulation, Nigeria, Congratulations, UNIZIK". According to the SIBRED's Director, SIBRED will provide services to stakeholders in a total of sixteen (16) Central and West African countries of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal of the Sahelian Africa including their neighbouring countries such as Benin Republic, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo. For the benefit of doubt, Nigeria, administratively, is under the jurisdiction of INBAR Regional Office in Ghana.



The SIBRED's Director, John Agbo Ogbodo, welcoming his guest to the event

12. Membership of SIBRED's Advisory Board: The SIBRED's Director during his welcome remarks, stated that, after due consultation with the Federal Department of Forestry at the Forestry Ministry of Environment Abuja (which is the national focal authority of INBAR in Nigeria); the Honourable Minister of Environment would be the Chairman of SIBRED's Board of Advisors with the Vice Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, as the Co-Chair of SIBRED's Board. The Member-Secretary of the Board is the Regional Director (INBAR's West Africa) in Ghana while SIBRED's Director is the under-secretary and member of the Board. Other members include: representative of the Chinese Ambassador to Nigeria, the Director of INBAR Central Africa Regional Office (CARO) in Yaoundé, Cameroon - Mr. Rene Kaam, FAONG representative, UNTAD Nigeria representative, IFAD Nigeria representative, Ms. Diana Doheny (Decarbonization Investor from USA), Mr. Fred Hornaday (CEO of Bambu Batu, Spain), Ran Lichtner (Director, Bamboo Center, Israel), Prof. Abel O. Olorunnisola (Vice Chancellor of Dominion University Ibadan and Member, Global Taskforce on Sustainable Bamboo Management, INBAR, China) and Sustainable TransEnvironment International Foundation (STEi Foundation) including some specialized government agencies such as: Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, S.O.N (standard Organization of Nigeria), NIRSAL (National Incentive-based Risk Sharing system for Agricultural Lending), SMEDAN (Small and

Medium Scale Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria), ITF (Industrial Training Fund), NASENI (National Agency for Science and Engineering), NEPC (Nigeria Export Promotion Council), RMRDC (Raw Material Research and Development Council), NABTAB (National Business and Technical Examination Board), TotalEnergies, Central Bank of Nigeria. For emphasis, SIBRED's initiator – John Agbo Ogbodo and Prof. Ejeatuluchukwu Obi (SIBRED's Co-Initiator) are the permanent members of the Board of SIBRED.

13. The SIBRED's Director concluded his welcome remarks by expressing his immediate vision for SIBRED as thus: "It is our desire that, in the next five years, SIBRED shall graduate two (2) PhDs, five (5) MScs. and fifteen (15) certificate course holders; from at least three (3) African countries other than Nigeria".

Chinese Ambassador's Message to the Event – His Excellency, Mr. Cui Jianchun

14. In his letter of support to the event (dated 13th November, 2023), the Chinese Ambassador to Nigeria, His Excellency, Mr. Cui Jianchun congratulated SIBRED and affirmed China as a leader and pioneer in bamboo sector development. Ambassador Jianchun however, expressed regrets for his inability to attend this SIBRED's inaugural ceremony as a result of work arrangements. He however, expressed excitement over SIBRED's goals and initiatives as an institute that is committed to fostering applied research excellence and knowledge for sustainable innovations in Sahelian Africa. He accordingly pledged to support SIBRED's ideals in the pursuit of goals relating to bamboo research, education, and value chain development in Sahelian Africa.



Message to the event from Ambassador Cui Jianchun

Welcome Remarks by the Vice Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka – Prof. Charles Esimone, FAS

15. In his welcome remark, the Chief Host and Vice Chancellor, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Prof. Charles Esimone, FAS, described the event as a historic milestone for the Ivory Tower because, SIBRED has been acknowledged as the first University-based bamboo research and entrepreneurship development Institute in Africa.

16. Accordingly, Prof. Esimone expressed joy that, SIBRED was established under his administration as the 6th substantive Vice Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka in Nigeria. He therefore, welcomed all the dignitaries including the Chairman of the Occasion and Honourable Minister of State on Environment – Dr. Ishaq Salako and the keynote speaker cum Vice Chancellor of Dominion University, Ibadan - Professor Abel Olajide Olorunnisola; to the epoch-making event. Furthermore, Prof. Esimone expressed that his university which has nurtured generations of leaders in various disciplines, would also nurture SIBRED to becoming a world-class citadel research Centre that would turn bamboo science and engineering discoveries into widespread economic benefits in the African continent.



The Chief Host and Vice Chancellor of UNIZIK presenting his welcome address, with Dara Chijioke Okechukwu (first left), representative of the Director General of S.O.N and the Rector of Pope Johnpaul Catholic Major Seminar (in white shirt), were listening to the VC

17. The VC stated, quote: "Today, through the initiative and tireless efforts of two of our sustainable development researchers, John Agbo Ogbodo of the Department of Forestry and Wildlife and Professor of Toxicology and Pharmacology, Prof. Ejetuluchukwu Obi, the first university-based Bamboo Research and Entrepreneurship Development Institute has become operational in Africa under my administration as the sixth substantive Vice Chancellor. "I have no doubt that this new Sahelian Institute for Bamboo Research and Entrepreneurship Development, (SIBRED) would become the leading citadel of learning and research that would turn bamboo science and engineering discoveries into widespread economic benefits in the African continent".

18. In conclusion, the Vice Chancellor, thanked the Chinese Ambassador to Nigeria, His Excellency, Ambassador Cui for expression of willingness to support SIBRED in the pursuit of goals related to bamboo research, education, and value chain development in Sahelian Africa. He finally enjoined the Anambra State government and all awardees by always providing SIBRED researchers with consultancy projects supports or financial assistance towards ensuring the vision and mission of SIBRED in Africa.

19. Prof. Esimone finally expressed hopes that, SIBRED would be strengthening its collaborations with the International Network on Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) and its affiliate Agency – the International Network of Universities and Research Centers Related to Bamboo (RIUCI bamboo); including international investors and partners like the Yunnan Bamboo Nursery, China through Prof. Lihua Jiang (who is nicknamed as the Chinese Bamboo Queen); Ms. Diana Doheny (USA) who is attracting a huge bamboo plantation investment to Nigeria; Fred Hornaday – the CEO in Bambu Batu, Spain; Ran Lichtner – the Director of Bamboo Centre, Israel, and, the Standard Organization of Nigeria.

Chaiman's Opening Remarks – Dr. Ishaq Salako

20. The Chairman of the occasion and Minister of State for Environment, Dr. Ishaq Salako represented by the Director of Forestry in the Federal Ministry of Environment, Abuja, Mrs. Hajara Umar Sami, started by expressing heartfelt congratulations to all those involved in the establishment of SIBRED, particularly INBAR, Sustainable TransEnvironment International Foundation (STEi Foundation) and the Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UniZik). He said, "the vision, passion, and unwavering commitment demonstrated by all of you have been instrumental to bringing us to this point. Your tireless efforts have laid the foundation for a center of excellence that will undoubtedly contribute significantly to the advancement of knowledge and innovation. I want to specially thank the Vice Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Professor Charles Esimone, *FAS, FPSN* for believing in the initiators to establishing this first ever known University - based bamboo research Centre in Africa".



Mrs. Hajara Umar Sami – the representative of the Hon. Minister of State on Environment

21. He thereafter, pledged the commitment of the Federal Government towards ensuring that Nigeria begin to take advantage of bamboo value chain especially in its fight against climate change. It gives me great pleasure to be here today to mark the commissioning of this esteemed research institute – the Sahelian Institute for Bamboo Research and Entrepreneurship Development (SIBRED) at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State.

22. Again, the Honourable Minister of State on Environment stated, quote: "This is indeed a momentous occasion being International Bamboo and Rattan Organization's First University-Based Centre of Excellence in Africa. You may wish to note that the institute aims at sharpening the entrepreneurial skills of young men and women through the offering of certificates, MSc. and PhD courses towards curbing youth unemployment, promote value addition and cross-edge technology in bamboo and rattan sector as well as boosting policies towards the attainment of sustainable industrial innovations, entrepreneurship education and green economy in West and Central Africa".

23. The Chairman of the Occasion further informed participants of some core efforts of the Federal government. In his words: "On our side, the Ministry is focusing amongst other areas on the development of Bamboo Sector to increase forests and ecosystems conservation, enhance livelihoods, access to markets and value chain development. Consequently, we are currently planning the commemoration of World Bamboo Day on 13th December, 2023 where highlights of our Action Plans will be discussed. Also, the Ministry is also building its first bamboo factory processing plant in Lokoja. This will create avenue to foster strong collaboration with SIBRED. Additionally, our commitments to this noble course will be complemented by raising bamboo plantations and improved seedling nurseries in our bid to restore degraded lands".

24. In conclusion, the Honourable Minister of State on Environment was optimistic that, SIBRED would help to curbing youth unemployment and promote value addition and aid technology in bamboo and rattan sector as well as boosting policies towards the attainment of sustainable industrial innovation and green economy in West Africa and Central Africa.

Goodwill messages

25. The **Deputy Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Army, Rt. Hon. David Agada Ogewu**, who is the current Honourable Member at Federal House of Representative, Abuja, representing the good people of Oju/Obi Federal Constituency in Benue State through a letter dated 8th of November, 2023 sent his heartfelt appreciation to the Vice Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Professor Charles Esimone, FAS, FPSN - for finding one of his own Constituent, Ir. John Agbo Ogbodo, worthy of appointment as SIBRED's pioneer Director.



Rt. Hon. David Ogewu, Deputy Chairman, House of Reps. Committee on Army

26. **Ms. Diana Doheny (American SIBRED's Advisory Board member):** who made her presentation virtually, stated on quote: "Thank you for inviting me to this inaugural event for the Sahelian Institute for Bamboo Research and Entrepreneurship Development. It is both my honor and privilege to address you today as a founding member of SIBRED's governing board. It was a little more than one year ago when I first traveled to Nigeria in search of communities and people who were interested in the powers of bamboo. By God's grace, I met Mr. Ogbodo, a man who has demonstrated his passion not only for the research and development of bamboo but also more importantly, for supporting rural communities with ecosystem restorations and the amazing regenerative powers of bamboo for biodiversity. Having worked with Mr. Ogbodo now for a year and a half, I am fully confident not only in his gifts of intellect and curiosity but also his ability to lead and grow this institute into a globally recognized



Ms. Diana making her presentation, virtually

organization that will contribute significantly to the knowledge base of the bamboo focused science community. According to Diana, many countries in Asia have already embraced the powers of bamboo. And given the plethora of bamboo in Africa, there are tremendous prospects to employ this natural resource to develop both purpose-grown plantations and smallholder farms. These prospects will improve economics, support sustainable infrastructures and ecosystems, and create risk mitigation strategies against climate change in both urban and rural environments. And of course, provide a bounty of opportunities for bamboo research that we can share with the international community. Finally, expressed, quote: "Again, I am honored to come before you today and offer my support to SIBRED. Congratulations to the Vice Chancellor and the University as well as to Anambra State and the country of Nigeria for this bold and progressive decision to support this institute. May God bless us with success that benefits not only the university, your communities, Anambra state, and the country but also biodiversity and nature as we accelerate our fight against the negative impacts of climate change".



Goodwill messages from POWA (1), FSTC students rep (2) and Dean, Faculty of Agriculture in UNIZIK (3)

27. Other messages of support came in from **Mr. Michael Kwaku**, the Director, West Africa Regional Office of the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR) in Ghana, the Chairperson of the Police Officers Wives Association (POWA), Anambra State Command, **Mrs. Bolanle Adeoye**, represented by the Treasurer, Mrs. Melody Obili; the Dean of the

Faculty of Agriculture, UNIZIK – **Prof. Cordelia Ebenebe**; the Deputy Director of the Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD) in UNIZIK, **Prof. (Associate) Tochukwu Matthew Oguegbe**; the National President of the Bamboo Farmers Association of Nigeria at the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Abuja – **Engr. Chief John Ajie Ogwu (KSM)**, **Dr. Nma O. Okorji** – National President of the Coconut Farmers Association of Nigeria, **Miss Lucy Udonkwo –** on behalf of the students of the Federal Science and Technical College, Awka; as well as from the Student **Igwe – Azodo Chizotele** (*Agbogidi XXIII* of UNIZIK).

28. Likewise, SIBRED's Co - Initiator and Deputy Provost of the College of Health Sciences- Prof. Ejetuluchukwu Obi who was unavoidable absent due to the NUC Accreditation exercises that were ongoing in his domain at Nnewi, sent in his words of happiness over the birth of SIBRED.

29. Accordingly, both, Emeritus Prof. Ikenna Onyido and Prof. Peter C. Nnabude who are the Occasion's Fathers of the Day sent their fatherly blessings from Lagos and Germany, respectively.

Keynote Paper Presentation by Prof. Abel Olajide Olorunnisola

30. In his keynote address, the Vice Chancellor of Dominion University, Ibadan, Prof. Abel Olajide Olorunnisola, an INBAR's Global Taskforce member on Sustainable Bamboo Management, commended the choice of the theme "**Unlocking Africa's Bamboo Value Chains for Sustainable Development**", as very apt given the fact that the continent is yet to tap into the huge potential of bamboo. He defined 'a value chain' as the full lifecycle of a product, including material sourcing,



Prof. Abel Olajide Olorunnisola standing while his citation is been read, preparatory for his paper presentation

production, consumption and disposal/recycling. As such, a bamboo value chain would mean the process by which bamboo related businesses receive raw materials, add value to them through production, manufacturing, and other processes to create a finished product, and then sell the finished bamboo-based product to consumers. Simply put, bamboo value chain — from farmers to markets— can aid sustainable development in Africa in several ways.

31. The erudite Professor of wood science technology further asserted that, quote: "Bamboo value chain from farmers to markets can aid sustainable development in Africa in several ways. Commercial bamboo farming which involved planting, maintenance and harvesting, has the potential to create thousands of jobs". According to the Keynote Speaker, a bamboo plantation of 1000 hectares can provide about 30,000 tons of wood resources, and thus render unnecessary the cutting of over 50 thousand hardwood trees per year. He however, stated that, "the challenge of wood scarcity in Africa can be readily addressed by substituting wood with bamboo in the production of furniture, floor parquet, wall siding, match stick, tooth pick, plywood, particleboard, fibreboard, tissue paper, writing paper, paperboard, etc."

32. According to the Keynote Speaker, bamboo can be a relatively cheap material for water conveyance compared to other piping materials as an ecofriendly solution for Irrigation Water Supply in Nigeria (Figure 1).

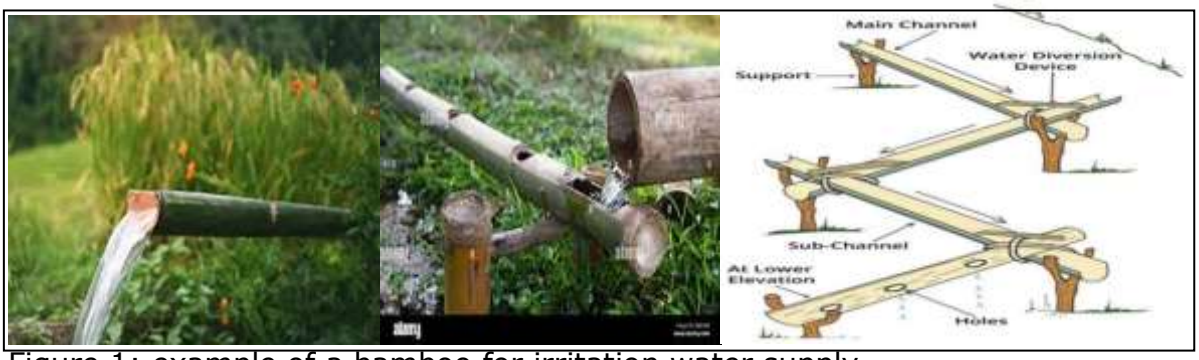


Figure 1: example of a bamboo for irritation water supply

33. Prof. Olorunnisola noted that, one way of promoting rapid standardization of bamboo and rattan products in Africa is by moving product manufacture from artisanal level dominated by semi-literate craftsmen to science-driven professional level.

34. The erudite scholar and lecturer with the University of Ibadan emphatically declared as thus: "Indeed, it is time for the bamboo value chain to be unlocked in Africa!" According to him, "African countries can unlock the full potential of the bamboo value chain, leading to economic growth, job creation, environmental sustainability, and the empowerment of local communities." Prof. Olorunnisola is on the opinion that, to fully benefit from the bamboo boom, the private sector needs to be at the heart of green economy development in order to drive demand and provide investment.

35. Therefore, for all bamboo stakeholders to contribute to **Unlocking Bamboo Potentials in Africa**, Prof. Abel Olorunnisola who is a member of the NBAR's Global Taskforce on Sustainable Bamboo Management suggested ten (10) paramount recipes, as follows:

i. **Awareness Creation:** The first step toward change is awareness. The second step is acceptance. For modern bamboo products to be accepted, the public has to be informed and

educated with the intention of influencing their attitudes, behaviours and beliefs towards bamboo.

ii. **Research and Development:** We must invest in research to understand the local species of bamboo, their growth patterns, and their suitability for various uses. This could involve collaborations between research institutions, universities, and local communities.

iii. **Cultivation and Farming:** We must promote bamboo farming by providing training, resources, and incentives to farmers. This includes educating them on sustainable cultivation practices, proper harvesting techniques, and efficient management of bamboo plantations.

iv. **Processing and Manufacturing:** We must establish processing facilities for bamboo. This includes setting up facilities for bamboo treatment, such as drying, preserving, and laminating, as well as manufacturing units for producing various products like furniture, housing materials, paper, textiles, and even biofuels.

v. **Market Development:** We must identify and develop markets for bamboo products locally and internationally. This involves creating awareness about the benefits of bamboo, marketing its eco-friendly aspects, and demonstrating its diverse applications to potential buyers.

vi. **Policy Support:** Governments can play a crucial role by formulating policies that support the sustainable growth of the bamboo industry. This could include offering subsidies, providing tax incentives, and implementing regulations that promote responsible harvesting and manufacturing practices.

vii. **Skills Development and Employment:** We must offer training programmes to develop skills related to bamboo cultivation,

processing, and product development. This can create job opportunities and empower local communities while fostering entrepreneurship.

viii. **Partnerships and Collaboration:** We must encourage partnerships between government agencies, private sector companies, NGOs, and international organizations. Collaboration can bring in expertise, technology, and funding necessary for the growth of the bamboo industry.

ix. **Environmental Conservation:** We must continue to emphasize the environmental benefits of bamboo cultivation, such as soil conservation, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity preservation. Highlighting these aspects can attract support from environmentally conscious consumers and investors.

x. **Financial Support and Investment:** We must attract investment in the bamboo value chain by showcasing its potential for high returns, especially in industries such as construction, furniture, and renewable energy.

36. In conclusion, the Vice Chancellor of Dominion University in Ibadan - Prof. Abel Olajide Olorunnisola posited the question: **What Can SIBRED do to Help Unlock Africa's Bamboo Value Chain**? In an attempt to answering the foregoing question, he proffered the following eight (8) take-away points required for SIBRED's operations:

1. Promotion of modern bamboo silvicultural practices.
2. Publication of research briefs, extension notes, etc.
3. Annual technology fairs/exhibitions mounted to show-case new process and product innovations.

4. Regular dialogues with key players in the private sector, cognate government ministries, parastatals and agencies.

5. Empowering bamboo processors in the country and beyond through transfer of adaptable innovative processing technologies that meet international standards.

6. Supporting the National Bamboo and Rattan Growers, Processors and Marketers Association of Nigeria.

7. Supporting development of national and regional standards for bamboo products.

8. Collaborating with other institutions in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa on bamboo research and development (R&D).

Wrap-up sessions

37. There was a 'questions and answers' session during which the Keynote speaker and SIBRED's Director directly provided answers to those participants that asked salient questions.

38. Highpoints of the ceremony was **presentation of partnership awards** to: the Honourable Minister of Environment (State) - Dr. Ishaq Salako; Prof. Charles O. Esimone, FAS – VC, NAU; Federal Department of Forestry, Federal Ministry of Environment, Abuja; INBAR's West Africa Regional Office, Ghana; Prof. Abel Olajide Olorunnisola – INBAR Expert and Vice Chancellor of Dominion University, Ibadan; Prof. Greg Chukwudi Nwakoby – Outgoing VC, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU); Prof. A. H. Bichi, OFR – Vice Chancellor,



Dr. Martha Chidimma Egenti – the Deputy Director of Awka Window on America receiving award on behalf of her Directorate at the event



The Keynote Speaker posing with his award shortly after making his keynote paper presentation

Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State; the Rector of Pope John II Major Seminary, Okpuno, Awka - Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Cyril Udebunu; Dara Chijioke Okechukwu – Chairman, Association of Heads of Federal Establishments in Anambra State; High Chief Maja Umeh – Former Commissioner of Information, Culture and Tourism, Anambra State, Prof. Leonard Muoghalu - Dean, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, COOU; Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON); National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA); and Awka Window on America, UNIZIK.

39. As part of the commissioning ceremony, dignitaries paid a visit to SIBRED Office and bamboo research farm.



Dignitaries inside SIBRED office at Old ASUU Secretariat as part of the inauguration of SIBRED on 23rd November, 2023

40. The closing prayer and final blessings were given by the event's Spiritual Director/Rector of Pope John Paul II Catholic Major Seminary Okpuno, Awka – Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Cyril Udebunu at 03:30 PM. The participants departed after the Nigeria's national Anthem was sang.



Participants during prayer and singing of National Anthem signaling the closure of the SIBRED's inauguration held on Thursday, 23rd November, 2023 in Awka, Anambra State

Appreciation

41. The Central Planning Committee (CPC) profoundly appreciates the Vice Chancellor and all those who contributed towards the success of the official hybrid commissioning of the First Bamboo and Rattan University-based research Centre of Excellence outside Asia as domiciled in UNIZIK, Awka.

Indeed, i*t has ended in Praise.*

To God be the Glory!

Photo Speaks (Annexture 1)



Dr. Mrs. Temple Nwankwo - Chief Rapporteur at the event



Members of the Central Planning Committee (CPC)



Solidarity to SIBRED's Director by his colleagues in the Department of Forestry and Wildlife, UNIZIK



Faculty of Agriculture Staff with Prof. C. Ishiwu (in blue)



Alfred Ajayi – the Master of Ceremony



Smiling Dr. Nma Okorji - the Madam of Ceremony



SIBRED's Director with CPC members (student wing)



Student Igwe Agbogidi XXIII of UNIZIK speaking

Recipients of Awards of Partnership from SIBRED

















Order of photo arrangement

1. Prof. A. Olorunnisola
2. Fr. Dr. Cyril Udebunu
3. Dr. Akudo on behalf of VC (UNIZIK)
4. Dara Okechukwu
5. Prof. Ono on-behalf of Prof. Leonard Muoghalu
6. S.O.N Representative – Mr. Emma Hussaini
7. NESREA Representative - Mr. C. O. Nwokocha
8. Dr. Innocent C. Ezeomedo representing Prof. Greg Chukwudi Nwakoby – Outgoing VC, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU)

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS (Annexture 3)		
OFFICIAL COMMISSIONING OF THE SAHELIAN INSTITUTE FOR BAMBOO RESEARCH AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT (SIBRED), NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA, NIGERIA **Venue:** Awka Window on America, Opposite Faculty of Engineering, NAU, Awka. **Date:** Thursday, 23rd November, 2023		
TIME	**AGENDA**	
9:00 – 11:00 AM	Arrival of dignitaries and Participants	At: Awka Window on America Building
9: 30 – 10:00 AM	The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Charles O. Esimone briefly familiars with SIBRED's dignitaries	At: VC's conference room
10:00 – 10:15AM	Visit to SIBRED's Office and proposed Bamboo green laboratory and offering of prayers	At: Old ASUU Secretariat / around arena
10:15 – 10:30 AM	Brief visit to Bamboo Research Farmland	After Emelda Hotel
10:30 – 11:00 AM	Recognition of dignitaries to High Table	At: Awka Window on America Building
11:00 – 11:05 AM	National Anthem followed by UNIZIK Anthem	
11:05 – 11:10 AM	Opening Prayer by the Spiritual Father of the Day and Rector of Pope John II Major Seminary, Okpuno, Awka **- Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Cyril Udebunu**	
11:10 –11: 25 AM	Breaking of Kola nuts	
11:25AM – 11:35AM	Welcome Address by the SIBRED's Founding Director – Ir. John Agbo Ogbodo	
11:35 – 11:50 AM	Remarks by the Honourable Minister of Environment (State) and Chairman of the Occasion - Dr. **Ishaq Salako**	The Honourable Minister (State) **joins event virtually** together with the Federal Director of Forestry - Mrs. **Hajara Umar Sami** and Mrs. Alaba Adzandeh – Assistant Director/INBAR Focal Point in Nigeria
11:50 – 12:10 PM	Opening Address by the Chief Host and Vice Chancellor – Prof. Charles O. Esimone, FAS, FPSN	
12:10 - 12:20 PM	Remarks by His Excellency, the Deputy Governor of Anambra State – Dr. Gilbert Onyekachukwu Ibezim	
12:20 – 12:25PM	Goodwill Message - **Ms. Diana Doheny** (USA)	Virtually
12:20 – 12:27PM	Goodwill message - Mr. **Michael Kwaku**, Director, West Africa Regional Office of the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR) Ghana	Virtually
12:27 – 12:30PM	Goodwill message - **Mr. Rene Kaam**, Director, INBAR's Central Africa Regional Office (CARO), Yaoundé, Cameroon	Virtually
12:30 – 12:35PM	Citation of the Keynote Speaker – **Prof. Abel Olajide Olorunnisola**, Vice Chancellor of Dominion University, Ibadan.	Action by MC
12:35 – 1:00PM	Keynote Paper Presentation on: '**Unlocking African Bamboo Value Chains For Sustainable Development'**	
1:00 – 1:10PM	Questions/Answers	

1:10 – 1:15PM	Group Photograph/Music interlude	
1:15 – 1:30PM	Brief Goodwill Messages: ▪ Prof. Lihua Jiang (China) ▪ Ran Lichtner (Israel) ▪ Fred Hornaday (Spain) ▪ Prof. Paluku KAZIMOTO (Democratic Rep. of Congo) ▪ Chair, Police Officers Wives Association (POWA) ▪ DG, Standards Organization of Nigeria ▪ Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, NAU - Prof. Cordelia Ebenebe (on behalf of Deans and Directors in the University)	Virtually/onsite
1:30 – 2:00PM	Award Presentations and responses by Awardees	**Partnership Awardees:** 1. **HME (State) - Dr. Ishaq Salako** 2. **Prof. Charles O. Esimone, FAS** – VC, NAU 3. **Federal Department of Forestry,** Fed. Ministry of Envt, Abuja 4. **INBAR's West Africa Regional Office,** Ghana 5. **Prof. Abel Olajide Olorunnisola** – INBAR Expert and VC (DU) 6. **Prof. Greg Chukwudi Nwakoby** – VC, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) 7. **Dara Chijioke Okechukwu** – Chairman, Heads of Federal Establishments in Anambra State 8. **High Chief Maja Umeh** – Former Commissioner of Information, Culture and Tourism, Anambra State 9. **Prof. Leonard Muoghalu** - Dean, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, COOU 10. **Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON)** 11. **National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency**

		(NESREA) 12. **Prof. A. H. Bichi, OFR –** Vice Chancellor, Federal University Dutsin-Ma 13. **Awka Window on America,** UNIZIK
2:10 – 2:15PM	Vote of Thanks By **Prof. Ejetuluchukwu Obi** – Chair, Central Planning Committee and SIBRED Co-Initiator	
2:15 – 2:20 PM	Closing Prayer and blessing by the Spiritual Father of the Day - **Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Cyril Udebunu**	
NB:	Refreshment	At appropriate time during the programme, lunch will be served
Master of Ceremony:	Alfred Ajayi - Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN)	
Madam of Ceremony:	Dr. Nma Okorji - Department of Cooperative Economics, UNIZIK	