



ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNICATION SCHOLARS & PROFESSIONALS OF NIGERIA

... the future is here

Communiqué of the 6th Annual Conference of the Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN) held at the Park Inn by Radison, Abeokuta, Ogun State from 4 - 5th September, 2019

PREAMBLE

The Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN) held its sixth Annual Conference with the theme: “National Interest, Freedom of Expression and Governance in Africa” between September 4 and 5, 2019 at the Park Inn By Radison, Abeokuta, Ogun State. The conference was also organised to celebrate 160-years of Journalism in Nigeria from 1859 to 2019.

Dignitaries at the Opening Ceremony of the conference were Araba Tola Adeniyi, former Managing Editor and Managing Director of Nigerian Tribune and Daily Times newspapers respectively, Chief Taiwo Alimi, former Director General, Voice of Nigeria, as well as many notable communication scholars and professionals from Nigeria and abroad.

The Keynote Address on " Marketing Government Communication and Programmes in Africa: Issues and Prospects for National Interest and Development", was delivered by Prof Bolanle Idowu Akeredolu-Ale, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta while Prof. Muyiwa Popoola of Ajayi Crowther University, delivered the Lead Paper on "Who Defines National Identity: Perspectives on Media and Governance".

Other significant features of the opening ceremony were;

1. ACSPN Book Series 4 titled " Fake News and Hate Speech: Narratives of Political Instability ", edited by Nosa Owens-Ibie, Majority Oji and Joyce Ogwezi, was presented by a veteran journalist and public relations specialist, Oba Olufemi Ogunleye, Towulade of Akinale, Owu, Abeokuta.
2. The first ACSPN Diaspora Visiting Fellow, Prof. Adebayo Fayoyin, currently the Regional Media and Health Communication Adviser, East and Southern Africa, UNFPA, Johannesburg, who will be on voluntary service in Nigeria from 2019-2020 under the Initiative, was unveiled.

3. The ACSPN-UNESCO collaboration on the Media and Information Literacy Non-Curricular Activities Project, was showcased to participants.

There were special panels on “Journalism, Media Sustainability and the Consolidation of Democracy, 160 years after”, and a Female Researchers Panel on “Media Empowerment and National Interest”, as well as four masterclasses on “Getting Published”, “Communication Strategies and Tools for Engaging Oil Industry Publics”, “Negotiating Deals in Media Marketing”, and “Developing a Digital Strategy & Roadmap”.

The Special Panel on “Journalism, Media Sustainability and the Consolidation of Democracy, 160 years after” featured Mr. Lanre Idowu, the CEO, Diamond Awards for Media Excellence, as Chairperson; and Dr. Niran Malaolu, CEO of Rock City FM; Mrs. Stella Jibrin, Director, Nigerian Press Council; Prof. Bayo Oloyede of Redeemer’s University; and Mr. Eddy Aina, former Director of Operations, National Broadcasting Commission, as panelists.

There were nine syndicate sessions in which scholars and professionals presented research papers on various sub-themes of the conference.

A notable aspect of the conference was the re-launch of the simulated copy of "Iwe Irohin fun Awon Egba ati Yoruba", being the first newspaper to be published in Nigeria by Henry Townsend from his base at Abeokuta. The relaunch was done at the palace of the Alake of Egbaland, His Royal Highness, Oba Michael Aremu Gbadebo (CFR). The royal father presided over the event while former Judge of the International Court of Justice, at the Hague, former Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, and Proprietor of Crescent University, Abeokuta, Prince Bola Ajibola, was the Chairman of the session at the Palace.

Participants made the following observations and recommendations at the end the conference:

OBSERVATIONS

1. There is clamour for social media regulation among politicians and scholars.
2. Government has not adequately exploited big data to drive its development initiative and ensure e-participation in governance.
3. There is a dearth of books and academic papers on the oil industry which needs to be addressed in order to provide contextual explanation and eventually guide the society and students in protecting the interest of the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Social media regulation should be initiated in order to ensure that national interest is reflected but without affecting the freedom of expression.
2. Professionals should take control of social media in order to ensure professionalism and protection of freedom of expression.
3. ACSPN researchers should conduct communication studies on oil industry in order to guide and protect the interest of the country.
4. Nigeria should use big data to improve data generation and analysis so that it can drive development especially the Sustainable Development Goals.
5. Government should establish e-participation initiative in order to improve and strengthen governance.

6. Conventional media organisations should be engaged in producing programmes that will curtail fake news in Nigeria.
7. Film professionals should be sensitive to cultural and ethnic stereotyping through names given to characters in their films to avoid conflicts in the society. Regulatory bodies should take steps to correct film makers in this respect.
8. Broadcasting should be used to promote agricultural production in Nigeria by establishing community radio stations in all local government areas in the country.
9. Television stations should promote programmes fighting human trafficking.
10. Stakeholders should come up with national communication policy that articulates and addresses national development and governance challenges
11. Journalists should be trained and retrained for professional practice.
12. Media practitioners should engage in research to back up their stories and desist reporting merely from press releases issued by agencies and organisations
13. Media options such as plays and music should be explored as tools for public sensitization and mobilization.
14. Nigerian newspapers should give prominence to editorials in discussing violence during elections.
15. Journalists, media professionals and academics should not associate themselves with anything that is fake, they should rather do whatever is possible to bring Nigeria into the right path through professional reportage.



Prof Nosa Owens-Ibie
General Secretary
September 8, 2019