

## **PAN AFRICA CHEMISTRY NETWORK: A RIVITALIZING MOVEMENT TO AFRICAN CHEMICAL SCIENTISTS**

To be a chemist evokes passion to discover, to elegantly synthesize new products useful for the economy, health and protection of the environment. It is this passion that moulds young students to desire to choose a career in chemistry. However, to be successful chemist requires more than passion. It involves hard work, critical thinking skills, and productivity. In addition to all the above named being a chemist means working with others, having networks and team skills. It requires continuous improvement and delivery of new knowledge. The Pan Africa Chemistry Network aims to evoke a spring of activities in the young and old chemical scientists in the continent in order to fulfil their passion for the subject.

Today's scientific and societal challenges are so exciting and the stakes so high that it will blow us away. The basic science needed for solving the problems that our African society faces are based in chemistry-in most cases, chemistry that we have yet to discover. Our society needs us to discover that chemistry. The new discovery will bring new knowledge that enables us to undertake simulation of chemical behaviour in solutions, engineer functions into materials, model environmental chemistry, and control excited states/free radicals and build cells. In other words expansion of academic knowledge will pave the path for transforming the African people's lives through chemistry.

Africa needs to be an active partner and player in finding solutions to global issues. Some of the pertinent global issues include finding alternative and low cost energy sources, coping with global change due to unsustainable energy sources, promoting rapid economic growth through job creation, and establishment of just and democratic society through science, to name but a few. Chemistry has a role to play in all these issues. Rapid economic growth requires massive direct foreign investment. Such investment has its high side and low sides. It is attractive because it creates jobs and produce wealth, However, the jobs created may be short lived because attractive investment is based on cheap labour and resource exploitation which are subject to change with time. Furthermore the extreme environmental damage some of these exported industries may cause may affect the livelihood of our people for generations to come and the resource once depleted may not be restored. It is through chemical sciences that we may discern the best ways to adapt to the incoming technologies. Hence globalization must be environmentally responsible.

The network is to promote training and research, create favourable environment for exchange of ideas, staff and students, and improve networks of chemical scientists with one another, policy makers and society. The network will involve students, academic staff and government officials in finding solutions to the challenges named above together. Ladies and gentlemen, these are the activities which the network you launch today aspires to do.

Thank you.