

## **“Recent Developments in Organic Chemistry Industry, Research and Teaching in Kenya”**

**23<sup>rd</sup> July 2010**

**SPS Boardroom, Chiromo Campus**

### **Discussion on the Way Forward**

Presentations were made by representatives from the Department of Chemistry from the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta, Moi, Egerton and Maseno Universities. Most of the presentations indicated that research in the Organic Chemistry is mainly based in Natural Products which involves extraction, isolation, characterization and bioassay of phytochemicals. This situation may be attributed to their abundance in Africa. Areas such as polymers, organic synthesis, etc are however under developed due to many limitations.

Prof. Ray Jones representing the Organic Division, RSC and Dr. Paul de Fraine from Syngenta also gave talks on the state of organic chemistry research in the UK.

Some of the challenges facing researchers in Africa were raised and these include:

- Lack of research grants for basic sciences
- Lack of reliable equipments
- Most reagents are expensive and not available
- Once the reagents are ordered for, the delivery time takes too long

### **Suggestions on the way forward**

1. PACN should organize a scoping workshop to find out the state of Organic Chemistry research in Kenya
2. Develop Centers of Excellence in Natural Products so as to add value to what is already available. Linkages may be created with colleagues in the UK especially in post doctoral programmes.
3. Develop a joint Technopark/Science Park. The challenge with this suggestion is lack of indigenous industries.
4. Intellectual Property Rights issues need to be addressed
5. There is need for short updating courses to improve the basic Chemistry
6. All the chemists need to think beyond their boundaries and work together – interdisciplinary research
7. There is a big disconnect between researchers and the policymakers. Scientists must therefore advocate and lobby. e.g. The Kenya Chemical Society could join with other scientists and involve industry and government in policy and decision making. PACN website needs to be linked to other university websites.

### **Potential Resolutions**

1. Create Organic Division in the Kenya Chemical Society so that they collaborate with the Organic Division in the UK
2. PACN to organize another workshop for the Organic Division

3. Send samples to Prof. Ray Jones or to Syngenta for analysis – Possibilities for this need to be evaluated
4. Send junior researchers to the midland regional meetings
5. Organize academic visits, training visits, student exchange