THIRD EAS ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

EAS held its Third General Annual Assembly on November 29, 2014 at the Sarem International Hotel. Twenty-four Fellows and Thirty-two Associate Fellows were inducted while ten Fellows and four Associate Fellows were elected by the General Assembly for induction at its next meeting. This brings the Academy’s membership to 97 Fellows, 33 Associate Fellows and an Honorary Fellow.

Annual and Auditor’s reports were also presented at the Meeting followed by a lively discussion. The Meeting ended with a reception held at the same hotel.

Professor Masresha, EAS Executive Director, reported that the Ethiopian Young Academy of Sciences (EtYAS) is in the process of being established. Founding members will soon draft their bylaws and elect their leaders. EtYAS will be one of the Working Groups organized under EAS. EtYAS has now 28 founding members. List of founding members has been presented and the General Assembly has endorsed it.

Members of the General Assembly and invited guests also attended an induction lecture titled, *Ethiopian plants and the people who use and study them – examples from 250 years of botanical observations, encounters and exchanges of ideas between locals and foreigners* by the newly inducted Associate Fellow, Professor Ib Friis of the Danish National Museum of Natural History. Professor Friis is a senior Botanist who has been actively engaged in botanical research and field studies in Ethiopia since 1970.
FIRST NATIONAL PLENARY OF THE ETHIOPIAN PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The First National Plenary of the Ethiopian Panel on Climate Change (EPCC) was held 20-21 November 2014 at the Ghion Hotel.

The objectives of the Plenary were to review the draft First Assessment Report of the EPCC, to discuss and enrich EPCC strategy and to launch EPCC website. After reviewing studies and reports, identifying gaps and policy-relevant recommendations, the five Working Groups and sub-Working Groups of the EPCC had prepared a report on the impact, vulnerability, adaptation and mitigation of climate change on the different sectors in the country. The Assessment Report was expected to contribute to the successful implementation of the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) of the country.

Participants from universities, civic societies, sector ministries, federal and regional environmental authorities and bureaus, INGOs, and NGOs had taken part in the Plenary.

WORKSHOP ON ENHANCING APPLICATION OF AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY IN ETHIOPIA

The Ethiopian Academy of Sciences organized the two-day Enhancing Application of Agricultural Biotechnology in Ethiopia National Workshop 17 - 18 November 2014. H.E. Ato Mohamouda Ahmed Gaas, State Minister for Science and Technology, officially opened the workshop.

The aims of the Workshop were to assess the status of application of biotechnology in the different fields of agriculture; to review the national capacity for research, education and innovation in biotechnology; to deliberate on existing policy and legal frameworks for application of biotechnology in the country; and to identify and recommend specific measures that need to be taken to enhance safe and sustainable application of the technology to improving agricultural production and productivity.

The Workshop was a follow up on the international conference on Biotechnology for Africa’s Development organized by EAS in November 2013 in Addis Ababa as part of the 9th Annual Meeting of African Science Academies (AMASA-9). It brought together policy makers, academics, research institutes, Federal and Regional governments; non-governmental and international organizations; and the private sector. The Forum inspired discussion on the pros
and cons of wider application of biotechnology and on the need for safety requirements.

The Workshop was financially supported by the United States Departments of Agriculture. A Workshop report, summarizing the proceedings and the major conclusions, will be published and circulated to major stakeholders.

**EBOLA VIRUS EPIDEMIC: MYTH AND REALITY**

The Ethiopian Academy of Sciences organized a Panel Discussion on the Ebola Virus in collaboration with the Ethiopian Public Health Association (EPHA). The Panel Discussion was held on November 19, 2014 at the Ghion Hotel. The objective of the Panel Discussion was to educate and empower the public about the Ebola virus.

Dr. Taye Tolera, Head of State Minister’s Office and Advisor at the Federal Ministry of Health, made the opening remarks. In his address, Dr. Taye noted that Ebola has serious socio-economic and political repercussions on West African countries affected by the outbreak. He stressed that no incidence of Ebola virus has so far been reported in Ethiopia. He also informed participants that prevention and control measures are being taken by the Government of Ethiopia to prevent an Ebola outbreak in the country.

Experts on infectious diseases and community health discussed the epidemiology of the virus; its modes of transmission; clinical features and management; current outbreaks; public health interventions; and national preparedness and expected collaborations.

**TENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF AFRICAN SCIENCE ACADEMIES (AMASA-10)**

The Tenth Annual Meeting of African Science Academies was held 10-12 November 2014 in Kampala, Uganda. The three-part meeting kicked off with the African Science Academies Development Initiative (ASADI) Board meeting in which Professor Masresha Fetene, EAS Executive Director, participated. Each Academy had to make a presentation on existing and future projects on which collaboration could be forged with the US National Academy of Sciences (US NAS). Professor Masresha made two presentations: on *Enhancing Ethiopia’s response to climate change* (an existing project that of the EPCC) and on *Contributing to quality science education in schools in enhancing knowledge of science of society through information education*. Both presentations were well received by the Meeting.

The Meeting agenda also included an evaluation report by ASADI. A Panel of experts, assigned by the Inter Academy Council (IAC), had visited EAS from 31 March to 01 April 2014 to review implementation and impacts of the African Science Academies Development Initiative’s (ASADI) financial support to EAS. The report was very sympathetic and appreciative of EAS.
The second part of the Meeting, AMASA 10, was held 10-12 November. The highlight of the opening session was the report on *Mindset shifts for ownership of our continent’s development agenda*. The study identified five major levers of development for post-2015 Africa.

The Smart Villages project, a Workshop organized by NASAC, was the third and last component of the Meeting. The project was designed to formulate strategies for the provision of affordable energy to off-grid communities worldwide. Feedback was given on a number of issues raised during discussion and the final report will be released in 2017 with deliberations of AMASA-13 which may be organized by EAS.

**INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATIONS FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA MINISTERIAL FORUM**

Dr. Brhane Gebrekidan, Vice President of EAS, attended the Ministerial Forum pre-meeting at the invitation of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). The meeting took place on 14 October 2014 at the Hassan II Academy of Science and Technology in Rabat. Ministers of health, information and communication, science and technology experts and high-level officials from international and private organizations such as the World Bank, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation had participated in the event.

The meeting was called to underscore the importance of investment in digital infrastructure and tools (such as mobile phones, internet, etc) to speed up the development of Africa’s health sector.

Dr. Brhane took part in the 10th Annual General Meeting of Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) held on 14 October 2014 in Rabat. A primary issue to the new NASAC Board has been to address the Network’s sustainability (establishing and endowment fund) and relevance (ensuring relevance of NASAC support to its members). Efforts are underway to collaborate and seek partnerships with both public and private organizations that share NASAC’s vision for Africa.

Dr. Brhane also attended the Ministerial Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa held 15-17 October. The purpose of the Forum was to assess the current state of science, technology and innovation in Africa, promote global best practices and innovation in water, energy, natural resources etc., and to make informed choices about information and communication technology applications and to improve effectiveness in development.

The Forum ended with a statement issued by participants to harmonize polices; increase applied research; strengthen links between research and enterprise development; reinforce the teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics; develop higher education
research; strengthen the catalytic role of public investment; and to encourage private initiatives and entrepreneurship.

CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE FOR POVERTY ERADICATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A CALL FOR ACTION

Professor Bahru Zewde, Vice President of EAS, attended the Science for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development Conference organized by the Brazilian Academy of Sciences as a follow up to the Interacademy Panel (IAP) General Assembly held in Rio D Janeiro in February 2013. The Conference was held in Manaus, Brazil 3-5 December 2014.

The Conference was hosted by the National Institute for Amazonian Research established to foster research and public education on the rich biodiversity of the Amazon. The conference addressed the following major themes:

- Science for food security: Tackling the Challenge of Feeding the World
- Science for water security: Enhancing Global Access to Water
- Science for Health: Ensuring Universal Access to Health
- Building Equity through Social and Economic Policies

Jeffry Sachs, the famous economist, gave the keynote speech and Professor Bahru also made a presentation titled, A Call for Action: the Role of Science Academies.

AFRICA SUMMIT OF THE GLOBAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Professor Tsige Gebre-mariam and Professor Masresha Fetene took part in the Africa Regional Consultation of the Global Research Council (GRC) Africa Summit held 23-26 November in South Africa. The Meeting was organized by The National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa and the Namibian Council on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST).

The purpose of the meeting was to construct a strategic and value-added program for the next GRC meeting through the representation of all science granting countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The Meeting focused on Research Funding for Scientific Breakthrough and Education Capacity. Professor Masresha was a discussant on the Research Funding for Scientific Breakthrough paper tabled for discussion. It was agreed that research councils in Africa need to voice a strong message on the need to support research activities driven by the free ideas of researchers for scientific breakthroughs.

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