



FUTA NEWS

FUTA HOSTS FIRST AFRICAN SPACE GENERATION WORKSHOP

Young professionals and students from Africa recently converged on the Federal University of Technology, Akure at a forum of interaction on global space issues as it affects Nigeria and the African region in the first African Space Generation workshop. The workshop was hosted by the Centre for Space and Research Applications (CESRA), FUTA in collaboration with the Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC). The SGAC is a global non-governmental organisation and network of University students and young professionals, located in Vienna, Austria and established to promote awareness, research and education in space-related activities of the United Nations Committee On the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUOS). The African Regional Coordinator of SGAC, Mr Isaiah Oniosun, a former president of FUTA's space club said the workshop was put together to strengthen both the national and regional network of students and young professionals in Nigeria and Africa as a whole and to also examine the challenges of active participation by students and young professionals in the space enterprise.

The Chair of SGAC Mr Ali Naseeri said the organisation aims to create a global volunteer base of university students and young professionals who have a passion for making a difference in the space sector with a commitment to action. He said SGAC aims to give the next generation of space sector leadership opportunities and a voice in global space policy, adding that the workshop will articulate the strategies for international cooperation in university/polytechnic satellite technology development in Nigeria and Africa as exemplified by the recent launch of the Birds 1 satellites including Nigeria edusat 1. He was optimistic

that the workshop would provide a forum for challenging discourse in the areas of space investment, space exploration, human space right and exploitation of space resources to improve human security and living conditions.

While declaring the workshop open, the Governor of Ondo state, Arakunrin Rotimi Akeredolu who was represented by the Deputy Governor, Honourable Agboola Ajayi said the Ondo state government is passionate about space education in Nigeria as it is part of the government's five point agenda which is to put in place a framework geared towards encouraging students and young professionals in space. He said he was proud to be associated with FUTA, an institution which has distinguished itself as the foremost in championing space learning. He added that the role of space technology in the overall advancement and development of the continent cannot be overemphasized, hence the focus of African countries of space technology in tackling current and future challenges. The Governor said satellite technology can solve challenges in agriculture, population planning, and health and conflict resolution with emphasis on state and international bodies without relying on data from external sources. Akeredolu said he was optimistic that the decision reached at the end of the workshop will be conveyed to relevant agencies and assured of prompt implementation. He commended CESRA and FUTA for their commitment in building and launching in collaboration with other space agencies, the Nigerian Edusat-1. He promised that his government will support science innovations and programmes geared towards improving the socio economic wellbeing of the state and the nation.

Delivering the keynote address, Chief of Defence, Space Administration, Abuja, Major General E. G. Whyte represented by Brigadier General Daniel Adeyemi said the place of Space in every aspect of human endeavour cannot be overemphasized. Speaking on the Workshop Theme: Space: The Driver of the Desired Future in Africa, he said "if Space is one of the ingredients needed to create the desired future for Africa, then our interest in space must transcend more rhetorics". He added that despite the challenges

facing the continent, it must take the front burner in space related activities and efforts aimed at publicising space and galvanizing support for space activities must be encouraged and supported. Major General Whyte called on relevant public, private and nongovernmental stakeholders to help shape and provide insight into the future of space in Africa. He said “I have never been more convinced that our collective effort is capable of propelling our continent to the desired height in space. No doubt our continent missed out on the industrial revolution; we must not allow ourselves to be left out of the space revolution”.

In his address, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Fuwape represented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Olatunde Arayela said CESRA kick started its flagship project titled “Pioneering International Cooperation in University Satellite Technology Development in Nigeria” in 2015. He said the project has brought a strategic partnership between FUTA and Kyushu Institute of Technology, (Kyutech), Japan in a cross border international project culminating in the building and launching of a CubeSat into the earth’s lower orbit, leveraging on the existing collaboration between FUTA and the National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA), Abuja.

The Vice Chancellor said FUTA has started work on follow-up satellite projects and is open to collaboration with other Nigerian Academic Institutions particularly with the participation of students and young professionals. He was optimistic that the workshop will provide a forum to get enlightenment on the sustainability of the satellite programme and make useful contributions on several other burning space related issues. Giving an overview on BIRDS 1 CubeSat project, the duo of Professor George Maeda of the Kyushu Institute of Technology, Japan and Mr. Ibukun Adebolu of FUTA’s Mechanical Engineering Department who represented Nigeria on the project, enlightened participants on the requirements of the project stating that the highest requirements is a passionate interest in space technology as it is a growing

industry in Africa. The workshop attracted students and young professionals from Ghana, Togo, Uganda, Kenya, Mauritius, India, Ethiopia, Malawi, Japan and Nigeria