



1st ANNUAL CONFERENCE/ AGM

Opening of the Conference at the University of Port Harcourt

Association for Environmental Impact Assessment of Nigeria (AEIAN)

AN AFFILIATE OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR IMPACT
ASSESSMENT

aeian

The Association for Environmental Impact Assessment of Nigeria (AEIAN) is an interdisciplinary community of individuals and organizations from government, industry, academia and community bases. AEIAN aims to advance understanding of the impact of projects/programs/policies on development as well as systems (environmental, ecological, and social) locally and or globally. AEIAN represents the largest research network of the field in Nigeria.

AEIAN held their inaugural conference at the University of Port Harcourt on the 7th and 8th of November 2019, with theme “Impact Assessment: A Tool for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria”. It was the first of its kind to take place at a national level, with a core focus of mainstreaming impact assessment in policy within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The sub-themes of the conference were Addressing Climate Change and Pollution Challenges in Nigeria; Mainstreaming Health and Social Well-being of citizens into Economic Development Agenda; Improve the Resilience of our Infrastructure and Create Smarter Infrastructure Systems; Environmental Justice and Equality; and the Role of Impact Assessment in Achieving SDGs.



*Ahmed Sanda
AEIAN President
Delivering the welcome address*



*Mr. Yaw Amoyaw-Osei
Opening Address*

The AEIAN President, Ahmed Sanda, kicked off the meetings with the welcome address, where he revealed that the association is planning a regional conference for all the African countries in 2020 and in February 2020 AEIAN will be hosting the 5th Charlie-Wolf symposium in Abuja and will sponsor the two best paper presenters at inaugural conference to participate. Mr. Yaw Amoyaw-Osei, the Past President of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA; 2015/2016) and Former Director of the Environmental Protection Agency (Ghana), gave the opening address. In the address he pledged to support and work with Nigeria to help her host the IAIA conference in the next 4 or 5 years. He also identified key items that the organization should keep in mind moving forward. These items are as follows:

- There must be availability of local consultancy capacity to offer affordable impact assessment services.
- Avoid undue administrative bureaucracies such as extended delay of impact assessment reports that are submitted.

- Minimize the academic overdue and excessive academic demands in impact assessment as distinct from practical necessities and needs for decision-making.
- Emphasize the post-follow-up, which is part of the implementation phase management plan.
- Form strong impact assessment consultancy partnership.
- Establishment of local content laws and prohibit foreign firms from directly taking impact assessment contracts.
- Publish our experiences impact assessment in Nigeria in other to make indigenous literatures and materials available for trainings and instructions in our various tertiary institutions.



*Mr. John Alonge
Chairman of the Plenary Session*

The guest speaker, Vice Chancellor, University of Port Harcourt Prof. Ndowa E. S. Lale represented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Admin) Prof. (Mrs) Regina Ogali delivered her remarks and goodwill message. She declared that the University of Port Harcourt was a proud sponsor of AEIAN and will continue to support the organization in the coming years. The chairman of the board of trustees, Prof. Gbenle was represented by the vice president Ibrahim Salau to present a message from the association. The keynote address was delivered by Mr. James Obakpolor (ACPO-Sustainable Development), Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning on behalf of the Permanent Secretary.

Plenary session speakers included Mr. John Alonge, Director of Environmental Assessment in the Federal Ministry of Environment (Nigeria); Mr. James

Obakpolor, SDGs Focal Desk Officer in the Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning (Nigeria); Dr. Zulfikar Adamu, School of the Built Environment and Architecture, London South Bank University (U.K); and Dame. Prof. Mrs Roseline Konya, former Commissioner of Environment, Rivers State (2003-2007). The conference concluded with the Annual General Meeting. Throughout the conference, technical presentations and discussions provided a forum for participants to exchange experiences and ideas on how impact assessments help to achieve the SDGs and ways to improve decision-making regarding creation of laws and increasing the government's openness, accessibility, accountability and effectiveness.

The almost 300 participants attended the conference with representatives from the federal and state government, civil society, practitioners, students and other organisations both within and outside of Nigeria. A significant number of participants were students from the University of Port Harcourt.

Fifty-eight papers were presented in 11 parallel sessions. Session topics included climate change; health, social well being, and economic development; smart infrastructure systems; air quality, environmental justice and equality; waste management and cultural heritage; general research and development; and impact assessment and sustainable development

goals. Awards were given to the top presentations in each session. The top two winners Ibifubara Joshua Okoseimiema and Paul Samuel Ngbede will be sent to the next Charlie Wolf Symposium as representatives of AEIAN.

The conference concluded with the following recommendations: the impact assessment is a central tool for the actualization of SDGs and should be taken into consideration by all the implementation agencies of the government; a Business Council for Sustainable Development in Nigeria is needed; the introduction of ‘smartification’ in the conduct and certification of Environmental, Social and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) is needed in Nigeria to align with global best practices; stakeholders’ engagement in impact assessment should be enhanced and sustained throughout projects’ lifespan; and there should be continuous improvement in impact assessment processes in Nigeria with respect to emerging global issues such as cultural heritage and climate change.



*Prof. Regina E. Ogali
Deputy Vice Chancellor
The University of Port Harcourt*

The conference resulted in a “joint call for action”. This call encompassed the recommendations from presentations, work groups and discussions. It reinforced a clear pathway for AEIAN to work closely with the government and private sector towards the achievement of the SDGs via the implementation of impact assessment in Nigeria within the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

The University of Port Harcourt pledged its support for AEIAN. The AEIAN governing body and membership express their deep gratitude to the Board of Trustees, Faculty and Staff, and the Students of the University of Port Harcourt.



Award winners



A participant engaging during a session



The Planning Team



Paul Samuel Ngbede receiving his award for Outstanding Paper presentation



The University of Port Harcourt giving gifts to the Chairman of Plenary Session



Ibifubara Joshua Okoseimiema receiving her award for Outstanding Paper presentation











