



# FUTA NEWS

## **ASTRONOMY: FUTA CATCHES THEM YOUNG**

The old nursery rhyme “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” reechoed recently at the Hilltop Auditorium of the Federal University of Technology, Akure when a United States of America based Space Specialist, Dr. Michael Paulooci directed a workshop for pupils and students from Ondo and neighbouring states on Space, Astronomy and their configurations. Paulooci who was in Nigeria under the Auspices of FUTA’s Centre for Space Research and Applications (CESRA), spoke on the topic “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star: Promoting Astronomy among schools in Nigeria”. He said astronomy was essential to life noting that it had expanded human knowledge of outer space and given insight on the universe and its workings.

Dr. Paulooci, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Slooh, a US-based Space Observation Organization said astronomy was very critical to mankind, describing it as the scientific study of stars, planets and other objects in outer space. He explained that the secret to astronomy is imagination and that curiosity was key to studying celestial bodies. He pointed out that though ordinary eyesight will see a few stars, a telescope makes 500,000 stars visible, with each star having its own solar system.

He also added that government institutions alone cannot track asteroids and other celestial bodies which may pose threat to earth and urged all stakeholders to partner with organizations like Slooh to observe and monitor outer space so as to preserve and protect mankind from obliteration. He said by training the young ones FUTA was sowing seeds that will germinate and lead to the production of tested scientists and space experts in the future.

Declaring the Workshop open, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Adebisi Daramola expressed delight at being the first Institution in Nigeria to host the Dr. Michael Paulooci-led organization. He said he was highly optimistic of a mutually beneficial relationship between Slooh and FUTA. Describing FUTA as a major stakeholder in space research, the Vice-Chancellor reiterated that FUTA was a citadel of learning whose quest for uncommon intellectual enquiry led to the establishment of the Centre for Space Research and Applications (CESRA), a purely academic centre that spear heads and coordinates teaching and research in Space Science. Also, speaking at the event, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Development), Professor Tolulope Akinbogun said

Nigeria could not afford to be left behind in space education. He therefore called for a pragmatic approach to enlighten the future generation on astronomical tools and the thorough exposition of outer space to the young at heart.

In an address, Director, CESRA, FUTA, Professor Joseph Akinyede said while the vastness of the universe may humble man, it also provides infinite stimulus for human curiosity which is being unraveled through the study of astronomy. Citing the 100th year remembrance of the enormous damages caused by a falling asteroid on Tunguska which burnt 20 square kilometres of forest, the Professor advocated for more vigilance to ensure the protection of the environment.

Earlier, the Director/CEO of the African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in English (ARCSSTE-E), Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (OAU), Dr. Ganiyu Agbaje said that by using the “catch them young approach”, the outreach programmes of the centre have been designed to inspire young leaders and develop their interest in the Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in order to encourage them to pursue careers in Space, Science and Technology.

Goodwill messages also came from the Commissioner for Education, Ondo State, Architect Jide Adejuyigbe who was represented by Dr. Kunle Adediji, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academics), Ekiti State University (EKSU) and President, Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OSWD) EKSU Chapter, Professor (Mrs.) Ibiyinka Ogunlade, Chairman Committee of Deans and President OSWD, FUTA Chapter, Professor (Mrs.) Ibiyinka Fuwape. The trio urged participants to avail themselves the unique opportunity of participating fully at the workshop in order to gain knowledge to be part of the future indigenous space scientists and engineers with international level competence who can solve national problems.

The two-day workshop was organized by the Centre for Space Research and Applications (CESRA), Federal University of Technology, Akure in collaboration with the African Regional centre for Space Science and Technology Education in English (ARCSSTE-E), Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OSWD), FUTA Chapter