



# FUTA NEWS

**UNIVERSITIES ,INDUSTRIES AND GOVERNMENT MUST IMPROVE INTERACTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

**-NBL ADVISER**



The Corporate Affairs Adviser of the Nigerian Breweries Plc, Mr. Kufre Ekanem has advocated for a well-coordinated interactions between the university, industry and the government to attain national development. He stated this while delivering the first distinguished lecture of the International Strategy Office (ISO) of the Federal University of Technology, Akure on Friday 7th September, 2018. Ekanem who spoke on the topic Global Perspectives on Collaborations and Partnerships between Universities

and Industries said “for our nation to be competitive in the global economy, synergetic interactions between the universities, industries and the government are vital for good progress. The universities are needed to produce and apply knowledge and to produce knowledgeable and well skilled workers across the skills spectrum-education sector, industries and government.”

Defining a university and its expected role in national development, Ekanem said “universities develop knowledge through scholarship and research, and transmit such knowledge through instruction, and subsequent application through private or public service. Universities have an important role to play in the development of any nation and basically should be linked to industries and government. They help a nation in giving it economic vitality, scientific prowess, cultural and social consciousness and global competitiveness through scholarship, research and innovation.” He urged FUTA, a university of repute, to take the lead in further uplifting academia-industry relations in Nigeria.

On the part of the industry, he said it should continue to provide or support platforms for the universities to actively participate in products development by innovative processes and projects, students’ practical training and experiences and staff training among others.

Describing the relationship between the university, industry and government as the Triple Helix needed for national development, he quoted Etzkowitz who said “the internationally recognized model for understanding entrepreneurship, the changing dynamics of universities, innovation, socio-economic development and relations between the triumvirates of university-industry-government is often referred to as the Triple Helix model. It emphasizes the growing triadic relationship between university-industry-government in the contemporary knowledge society.”

Ekanem said for the Triple Helix Model to thrive the enabling environment including good governance and policies, funding, incentives, infrastructure etc. should be created for collaborations and partnerships between academia and industry. The universities must help the nation to take adequate advantage of the platform of globalization to be active players in the exploitation of science, technology and innovation for national development.”

On the role of the university in the Triple Helix Model, Ekanem, a Fellow and Member of many

professional bodies said “the university that best suites the Triple Helix must be entrepreneurial. The academics third mission of involvement in socio-economic development (community service), next to the traditional missions of teaching and research is most salient in entrepreneurial university.” He called on FUTA to live to its motto ‘Technology for self-reliance’ by providing students with new ideas, skills and entrepreneurial talents. “FUTA products should not just be the new generations of professionals in various scientific, agricultural, engineering, business and other disciplines, but further trained and encouraged to become entrepreneurs and firm founders, contributing to economic growth and job creation in a society that needs such outcomes more than ever” he said.

Ekanem highlighted best practices for university-industry cooperation to achieve national development as : definition of project’s strategic context, selection of boundary-spanning project managers, understanding and synchrony of visions of partners, investment in long-term relationships, establishment of strong communication linkage between partners, awareness of project within each organization and support for the project internally both during the contract and after.

He also suggested collaborations through international organisations like the University-Industry Demonstration Partnership (UIDP) in the United States of America whose membership comprises some of the finest innovation companies and best research universities in the world with high commitment to participation in pursuit of excellence in University-Industry collaboration and partnership. He said FUTA can, through its International Strategy Office, join the UIDP and may nominate Nigerian Breweries as the industrial partner.

Ekanem, Chairman of Rosemary’s Group of companies, who also sits on the advisory boards of several Small and Medium Scale (SME) enterprises in Nigeria stressed the importance of Agriculture to improve the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation. He cited the examples of Cadbury cereal conversion plant programme through a partnership with Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Soya Bean popularization and production project between Nestle Nigeria and the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta and that of Nigerian Breweries and any local and international institutions as viable collaborations that can revamp the agricultural sector.

Ekanem who propounded a formula for collaboration  $\text{Need} + \text{Ability} + \text{Resilience} \text{ to power } c \text{ Credibility (N} \times \text{A} \times \text{R)}_c = \text{Collabo}$ ) said “establishing collaborations and partnerships are not a walk in the park. It is a tortuous journey in many instances. There are a dozen failures before one success can occur. To expedite collaboration between universities and industry, we must have translations or better still, teams that speak both dialects. Industry must understand what makes successful academic work. On the other hand, partners in the academia must make effort to understand the way of industrial work, especially the urgency of getting things done. Many of us in the private sector are willing to think along with you. We have societal and industrial needs we can put on the table to kick start your thinking and ultimately your proposal.”

Chairman at the event, a seasoned human resource management professional and Executive Director, NetConstruct Nigeria, Mr. Abiola Popoola, emphasized the importance of collaboration between the University and Industry for national development. According to him, the time for such lecture and topic is apt so as to ensure effective collaboration between the town and the gown. He encouraged students of FUTA to make the best use of what they learned at the lecture and described Ekanem as someone who always works his talk. “Kufre is not just a talker. He has lived his life in the industry. He understands collaborations” he said.

Both Ekanem and Popoola were conferred with Goodwill Ambassadors of the university. Responding to the award, Popoola said “we are happy about your attainment as a university and we promise having a better relationship with your institution. Let us watch our character anywhere we find ourselves.

Manners make a man.”

In his address, the Chief Host and Vice Chancellor, Professor Joseph Fuwape said “the benefits of aligning priorities and cultivating a stronger relationship between the Industry and the University are enormous. However, understanding the need and a desire to cooperate are the prerequisites. I believe a conscious effort to build a strong town-gown relationship will act as a catalyst for economic development.”

Similarly, the Director, International Strategy Office (ISO), and Host, Professor Tom Ofuya who

expressed his delight at the excellent delivery of the lecture said the essence of the lecture was to support the internationalization of the university as a world class institution that can hold its own the global academic arena.