

Report on the ISN Educational Symposium on 'History of International Society for Neurochemistry (ISN) in Africa' during the 14th International Conference of the Society of Neuroscientists of Africa (SONA) and 17th Annual Conference of the Neuroscience Society of Nigeria (NSN), 23-27 March, 2019 at Radisson Blu Hotel Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria.

Organizer/Chair of Symposium: Amadi O. Ihunwo, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Despite the initial acceptances to participate at the Symposium, Professors Michael Zigmond (USA) and Prof Alfreda Stadlin (United Arab Emirate) declined participation due to concerns on a likelihood of post-election security challenges in Nigeria. However, they were replaced by the first African ISN Councillor, Professor Polycarp Nwoha from Nigeria and Dr Lekpa K David on the recommendation of the Chair of the ISN Young Scientist Steering Committee (YSSC), Dr Eva-Maria Blumrich. The approach adopted for the symposium was to look at the History of the ISN activities in Africa in terms of the past (Prof Nwoha) the present (Prof Ihunwo) and the future (Dr Lekpa), and then opportunities for postgraduate trainings in Holland (Ms Overbeek). The titles of the talks were presented in the order below.

- a. *'ISN in Africa – my perspective'* by **Professor Polycarp Nwoha** of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria (First African ISN Councillor)
- b. *'ISN at Present and Benefits and Funding Opportunities through the International Society for Neurochemistry (ISN) for African Neuroscientists: My journey so far'* by **Professor Amadi O. Ihunwo** (2nd African ISN Councillor), University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
- c. *'The future of ISN as envisaged by the 'ISN Young Scientist Steering Committee (YSSC) and presented by Dr Lekpa K. David* of the University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
- d. *'Study in Holland: Open to International Minds'* by **Ms Marlies Overbeek**, Director Marketing & Admissions - The Netherlands at Navitas.

The symposium provided insights to the several roles ISN had played from way back in 1999 to the present. Professor Nwoha, provided the historical interactions at the 1999 Joint conference of the ISN/ESN in Berlin, Germany, between the then ISN Secretary General, Professor Bernd Hamprecht and Professors Polycarp Nwoha and Amadi Ihunwo which ignited the interest of the African region in ISN activities (see Flashback Photos 1 and 2). Professor Hamprecht had extended an invitation to individual members of the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO) in 1999, which was how Professors Nwoha and Ihunwo became aware of the ISN. Professor Nwoha's interest in ISN resulted in his election as the first African Councillor on the ISN Council. Following from this conference the ISN-CAEN began a deliberate attempt in incorporating members from Africa into its committees and increased funding to those from the continent. Subsequently, Prof Amadi Ihunwo presented the continuous roles played by several past Chairs of ISN-CAEN to continue the growth of ISN activities and funding on the African region beginning from the time of Professor Roger Butterworth. Professor Butterworth was recognised a providing a great motivation for members of ISN from Africa with funding opportunities and engagement with the Society of Neuroscientists of Africa (SONA). Other chairs of the ISN-CAEN such as Steven Pfeiffer, Francisco Barrantes, Mike Cousin, Vilma Martin, Roberto Cappai, Caroline Rae and to the present chair Alessandro Prinetti have maintained these interactions with members from the African continent. Professor Ihunwo then shared his personal story from that 1999 ISN meeting in Berlin to receiving the ISN-CAEN funding for the two research visits to Prof Reinhard Schliebs laboratory at Paul Flechsig Institute for Brain Research, University of Leipzig, Germany in 2001 and 2002. Subsequently Prof Ihunwo received travel grants for conference attendances and became an active member of ISN. This was followed with activities as a member of ISN-CAEN under four different chairs, election as a Councillor (2011-2015) and membership of ISN School Initiative Committee. During Prof Ihunwo's tenure, more members from the African continent began engaging the ISN Community and received several funding. These funding increased the use of different neurochemical techniques in brain research projects on the continent.

Dr Lekpa David, a member of YSSC was mandated by their Chair to talk on the plans of the YSSC to further the vision and goals of the ISN. Considering that most attendees were either postgraduates, postdocs and young faculty, the Organizer, Prof Ihunwo invited Ms Marlies Overbeek from Holland to present opportunities for postgraduate and postdoctoral opportunities in the Netherlands (Holland). The symposium was attend by about 100 participants. Some current members of ISN who had benefitted from ISN funding were also among the participants (See Table below) and shared their current status and research activities following the grant received from ISN.

Some SONA Attendees who acknowledged receiving funding from ISN in the past

Name	ISN Grant Received	Year	Purpose	Current Research Activities
David, Lekpa Kingdom	ISN-CAEN, Visit to another lab.	2015	Research Visit to Prof. Amadi Ihunwo's Lab. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa	Completed Postdoc Fellowship in Prof Jack Martin Lab at the City College of New York, USA. Currently working on animal model of konzo disease
	Travel	2017	ISN/ESN Conference, Paris, France	
Omotoso, Gabriel Oliya	Advanced School	2013	ISN Advanced School, Cancun, Mexico	Cuprizone model of Demyelination
	Travel	2015	ISN/APSN Cairns conference, Australia	
	ISN-CAEN	2016	Research Visit to Dr. Jurongli's lab	
	Travel	2017	ISN/ESN Conference, Paris, France	
Ijomone, G Omamuyovwi	ISN CAEN IA	2015	Research Visit to Another Lab	Establishing a lab at FUTA, Nigeria. Focus on mechanisms of heavy metal neurotoxicity, specifically N & Mn
	Advanced School	2015	To attend ISN Advanced school and conference, Australia	
	ISN CAEN 1B	2018		
Azeez, Idris Ayodeji	ISN-CAEN	2013	Research Visit to Another lab	Drexin-neuron synaptic plasticity
Lydia D lor		2017	Research Visit to another lab in 2018, University of Verona, Italy	Rounding up on my PhD and interested in movement disorders
Ajao, Moyosore S	ISN-CAEN	2009	Research Visit to Another Lab. Univ of Zurich, Switzerland	Neurotoxicity

Following the presentations, all the attendees received the ISN General Information flyer and that of the 2019 ISN/ASN Montreal, Canada conference courtesy of the YSSC. The newly elected ISN Councillor from the African region, Prof James Olopade, attended the session too. It was an awesome symposium with questions on the ISN thereafter.



Flashback Photo 1. Tea break at the Joint Conference of ISN and ESN Berlin, Germany, August 8-13, 1999. L to R: Prof Bernd Hamprecht (ISN Secretary), Nwoha Polycarp and Roger Butterworth, ISN Treasurer



Flashback Photo 2. L to R: Polycarp Nwoha, Leszek Kacmarek (Warsaw, Poland), Amadi Ihunwo (attended from Uganda) at the Joint Conference of ISN and ESN Berlin, Germany, August 8-13, 1999.



Prof Nwoha delivering his talk



Prof Ihunwo delivering his Talk



Cross section of the participants that attended the ISN Symposium



Ms Marlies Overbeek delivering her talk



Dr David about to deliver his talk



Speakers:L-R: Dr D. Lekpa, Prof AO Ihunwo, Prof P Nwoha and Ms Marlies Overbeek



ISN Flyers at the Registration desk for SONA 2019, Lagos Nigeria.

Financial Report

Item	US Dollars
Travel Costs for Speakers	
Prof Polycarp Nwoha (Nigeria)	150.00
Dr David K. Lekpa (Nigeria)	250.00
Prof Amadi O. Ihunwo (Johannesburg, South Africa)	650.00
Subtotal (Flights & Ground transportation)	US\$ 1,050.00
Hotel Accommodation and meals 23-28 March 2019	
Prof Polycarp Nwoha 150 X 5	750.00
Dr David Lekpa 150 X 5	750.00
Prof Amadi O Ihunwo 150 X 7	1,050.00
Subtotal (Hotel)	US\$ 2,550.00
Others	
Conference Registration for Speakers X4	400.00
Venue Audiovisual and Assistant & Stationaries	300.00
Cancelled flight booking for Prof Alfreda Stadlin	*470.00
Subtotal	US\$ 1170.00
Grand Total	US\$ 4,770.00
Four thousand seven hundred and seventy US Dollars only	

*Unfortunately, the confirmed air ticket for Prof Stadlin was cancelled a week before the conference and so we could not recover this amount for the air ticket.